

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation:

The Question of True Thanksgiving

Editorial:

Parochialism and our Philosophy of Education

Sabbath Observance in the Business Community

(see: All Around Us)

Our Mission Activities

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

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

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Church News Editor: Mr. Donald Doezeema

1904 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

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Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
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Meditation

The Question of True Thanksgiving

Rev. M. Schipper

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

Psalm 116:12, 13

For all His benefits toward me!

This gives rise to, and is the occasion for the question: What shall I render unto the Lord?

His benefits!

Nor does the psalmist have in mind material benefits! Nowhere in the Psalm is there any indication of this. This cannot mean that there were no material

benefits for the psalmist to enjoy. Nor does it mean that if he was in possession of them that he would neglect to mention them in his praise and thanksgiving. But his viewpoint is wholly spiritual! And the benefits, without which there can be no other, are those of salvation. This is the tone of the entire Psalm.

"I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice

and my supplications. Because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will call I upon Him as long as I live . . . The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; o Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and He helped me. Return unto thy rest, o my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.”

Indeed, the central benefit around which all other benefits revolve, is his deliverance from the lowest hell, from sin and misery; and deliverance unto the highest state of bliss and blessedness in eternal glory. In one word, the benefit the psalmist by faith enjoyed was Christ and all the saving benefits attached to His great work of salvation. And because he was the recipient of this central benefit, all other things are benefits too. For all things are made subservient unto his salvation. Not only prosperity, but also adversity. Not only health, but also sickness. Not only joy, but also sorrow. Not only light, but also darkness. All these are benefits, because He makes all things work for good unto them that love Him, who are the called according to His purpose.

Benefits toward me!

Benefits are those works or acts of God whereby He intends to show His favour, His lovingkindness toward the recipient of them. In the light of this definition, it should easily be perceived that only the child of God can be the recipient. Not to the world of the wicked are benefits ever given. The wicked experience God's acts, and they perish. The wicked are never the objects of His love. Upon the wicked His wrath abides, O, indeed, the Lord provides the world with all it possesses; for they have nothing or it is from Him — but it is that they may be destroyed forever. Perfectly good gifts He gives them, but never benefits. Nor should we conceive of it so that each child of God receives all of the benefits alone. In the deep sense of the word all things are for the church of God. With the apostle Paul (I Cor. 3:21-23) we say: “For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.” Apart from the body of Christ, therefore, we have nothing. And it is God's good pleasure to dispense all His lovingkindness upon His church.

However, there is and must be a personal appropriation and acknowledgement of these benefits. This is what the psalmist is doing in the words of our text. Standing as it were in the midst of all the redeemed church, he exclaims: “all His benefits toward me.”

And this becomes the occasion for the question concerning true thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving!

Not a national virtue! For thanksgiving is a fruit of grace. And grace is never common!

Indeed, the nation can and does celebrate what it calls: Thanksgiving Day. The world can celebrate as it counts its treasures. It can and often does rejoice in the material prosperity such as it is. And in this rejoicing it may often appear to be very religious. In their temples where they meet to rejoice in the abundance of things received, they can be and often are confronted with the question: What shall we do with our abundance? They can even be prevailed upon to make rich donations to the less fortunate, in order that they may be able to read in daily papers how gracious they were. But the thanksgiving of the ungodly is an abomination unto the Lord. He is far from their prayers of thanksgiving, and their offerings provoke Him to wrath. He who searches the hearts, pronounces this sentence upon them: “The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”

Thanksgiving is very particular, because grace is particular! God bestows His grace only on the objects of His eternal love. And since thanksgiving is a fruit of grace, only the children of God give thanks, and they do it with great difficulty.

The children of God are thankful always — not only on a certain day; and they are thankful for all things, not merely for abundance. They are thankful for the sweet, but also for the sour; for prosperity, but also for adversity; for fruitful, but also for barren years; for health, but also for sickness. Were this not so, then in seasons of drought, adversity, and trouble, he would have occasion to murmur and rebel. But so it may never be. He learns in whatsoever state he is, therein to be content, and to rejoice in the Lord His God Whose tender mercies fail not. But always with great difficulty. For he knows his sins and unworthiness. He has not merited the least of Jehovah's mercies. And exactly because of this he asks the question: What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?

It is the question concerning true thanksgiving!

What shall I render unto the Lord?

But what does the psalmist mean? Does he have in mind to somehow reimburse the Lord for His goodness? Is the psalmist reasoning thus: that whereas the Lord has been so gracious to him that now he would do something for the Lord in return? God forbid! Nay, rather, the question implies a negative answer. He realizes that he is wholly impotent to bring anything to the Lord. How could finite man ever reward the Infinite? Is He not the All-Sufficient One in Himself? What is there that could make Him richer or more glorious than He is? And what can the creatures bestow on the Creator which He does not already possess? Is there anything in the world that is not His? Reward the Lord? You? I? Are not all the cattle on a

thousand hills, and all the gold and silver His? Nowhere is there anything that I could bring to Him that He does not already claim as His own. What then?

The answer to the question is: NOTHING!

God-glorifying answer!

The sinner who thinks he can repay the Lord, does not know Him! The sinner who is crushed, overwhelmed by Jehovah's goodness, knows he can bring nothing. He knows that his God has given him all these benefits in such a way that he could never give anything in return, in order that God alone would receive all the glory.

Is there no way then in which the child of God can give expression to the thanksgiving which overwhelms his heart?

O, indeed, there is! Let the psalmist show you!

I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord!

The cup of salvation!

The cup is a figure of what is allotted to one, what one receives — whether good or bad. Scripture speaks of the cup in several different ways: cup of blessing, cup of iniquity, cup of wrath, etc. Here it is the cup of salvation, that is, the salvation allotted to me in God's favour. Symbol of Jehovah's great deeds in effecting our salvation.

That cup the psalmist resolves not only to take, but to lift up! He will hold it high, as before the face of His God, and in the sight of all men. He would have it to be known what has made him to rejoice and for which he is so thankful; namely, that all of Jehovah's benefits which flowed to him in such abundance came to him from the God of his salvation. All of these benefits were with the divine intention to save him. He was lost in sin and misery, he was undone, and utterly unable to save himself. Jehovah delivered him from the sorrows of death. Jehovah dried up all his tears, and kept his feet from falling. In Christ Jesus he now is righteous before God, and counted worthy of eternal life and glory.

And lifting up the cup of salvation, he will call upon the name of the Lord!

You see, the name of Jehovah is upon each benefit which is in the cup of salvation. As the psalmist lifts up the cup and beholds all the benefits of salvation it contains, he sees also written upon each one the name of Jehovah his God. And seeing the name of Jehovah emblazoned on each benefit, he calls out that name.

He cannot keep this wonderful observation to himself. He must call out loudly, so that all may hear him.

This is true thanksgiving!

The only thanksgiving pleasing to God!

For you see, in that cup of salvation which the psalmist lifts up, and which each child of God should lift up, is revealed the God of his salvation in all the work of His saving grace, saving us unto the uttermost. In that cup of salvation he sees the God of his salvation coming down to him in the Person of His Son and uniting Himself to our nature, in order that in that nature He could assume our guilt and pollution, so as to remove it. In that cup he sees the Son of God in our nature and in our stead, hanging on the accursed tree, under the vials of divine wrath, satisfying God's justice for our sins. In that cup he sees his Saviour suffering, dying, and rising again from the dead as a testimony of our justification. In that cup he sees the Captain of his salvation lifted up into the highest heavens to God's right hand, where He receives power over all things to overcome the devil and his hosts, and to apply His salvation to our hearts. In that cup he sees the God of his salvation through the Spirit of Christ sanctifying and delivering His own from sin's corruption, renewing their hearts, and making them in principle new creatures, transforming them into the image of His Son. In that cup of salvation he sees also all the graces of Christ as they have been made to dwell in his own heart: love, joy, peace, and thanksgiving, etc. O, yes, also thanksgiving. That, too, has the name of Jehovah his God attached to it. So that when he thanks God for His great salvation and for all things, he is doing nothing more than reflecting the name of the God of his salvation. It is never so that God saves us, and we thank Him. But it is always so, that we must thank Him that we may thank Him; for also thanksgiving, true thanksgiving, is the fruit of His saving grace.

So, in the entire matter of our salvation, God, and God alone is the Author and the Finisher from beginning to end, in order that His also may be all the praise and thanksgiving.

What then shall the children of God render unto God for all His benefits toward them? Nothing! Absolutely nothing!

All they can do, yea, must do, and forever will do by His sovereign grace, is lift up the cup of salvation which contains all the benefits of salvation meted out to them, and on which is emblazoned the name of Jehovah their God — and then call out so that all may hear it — the Name of Jehovah, their God.

This is the thanksgiving that is pleasing to Him!

Have you ordered your copy of *Therefore Have I Spoken?*

Editorial

Our Schools and Government Subsidy (11)

PAROCHIAID AND OUR PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

Parochiaid seems to be on its way to a trial in the State of Michigan. A one billion dollar "School Reform Bill" has been passed by the state senate; and in this bill, which included many of the items recommended by Michigan's Governor Milliken, is an item calling for \$25 million worth of parochiaid. It remains to be seen, of course, whether the house of representatives will also approve this bill. But predictions have been that this, or a very similar bill, will be passed, and whatever form the final law will take, it will include some form of parochiaid. If and when the aid bill is passed, according to news reports, the state legislature itself will seek a State Supreme Court ruling on its constitutionality. If the latter test is met, parochiaid will be a reality in Michigan. It makes no essential difference that the initial amount will be relatively small, — only \$25 million. The main question is that of the principle. Besides, if the principle is upheld in the legislature and in the courts, it may be expected that the amount of aid will soon be increased; in fact, there are some already who have openly claimed that non-public schools are entitled to *total* government support, and should press for such financial equality with the public schools. I report this development in order to underscore the fact that sooner or later this parochiaid issue will confront our schools in very concrete fashion; and we should be ready to make our decision and give our answer. Moreover, that answer should be "an answer concerning the reason of the hope that is in us," I Peter 3:15. To this end the *Standard Bearer* has been furnishing a detailed study of the entire subject of parochiaid.

We have seen in recent editorials that parochiaid, in whatever form it has thus far been proposed, allows the government in various ways to wrap the tentacles of state control around our schools. And we criticized such state control and made the claim that our school societies *may not* permit it. The basis of this claim, you will recall, does not lie in the fact that we prize individual liberty over against the socialistic trend of government control. But it lies in the fact that we believe, on the basis of the Word of God, that education of our covenant children is the prerogative and duty and responsibility of the *parents*, not of the state and not of the parents and the state jointly.

Closely connected with the whole matter of control is the fact that parochiaid and the acceptance thereof

involves one in a denial of the very principles of education for the sake of which we have established our schools. There are not only the mechanics of government controls written into these parochiaid proposals; but there are also various built-in controls, limitations, stipulations, conditions, written into these proposals, concerning the *kind* of education which the state will subsidize. These latter stipulations not only *imply*, but literally *express* a philosophy of education which is diametrically opposed to ours. And it is a foregone conclusion, therefore, that the moment we would accept parochiaid as it includes these stipulations, at that moment we would fundamentally deny everything that our schools stand for.

This I want to demonstrate in the present editorial. *Parochiaid — With Conditions*

There are especially two conditions attached to parochiaid. These conditions are closely related. And both of them strike at the very heart of covenantal education.

The first concerns the purpose of education. Various parochiaid proposals have given expression to an alleged purpose of education in various ways. But all of these expressions agree. House Bill 2424, which was before the last session of the Michigan legislature, spoke of the "public good and the general welfare of the people of this state." Last year's report of the Joint Legislative Committee on Aid to Non-Public Schools sought to justify parochiaid on similar grounds and referred frequently to a "secular educational purpose."

Now these high-sounding phrases may seem to be rather vague, and even rather harmless, at first glance. But that first glance is deceiving, probably because we ourselves sometimes do not think as antithetically as we ought to think. The language of public school authorities abounds in phrases of this kind. Without entering into the details of what may or may not be included in this "public good and general welfare" and this "secular educational purpose," let us note at once that all such language points to a purpose of education which is purely *humanistic*. According to this language, the purpose of education lies in *man*. Education is man-centered. It is this-worldly. It is without God and His glory. It has nothing to do with the kingdom of Christ. It has no purpose which is at all concerned with the world which is to come. It is as it states:

secular. That word "secular" comes from a word which means "a race, age, the world." It means: "of or pertaining to the worldly or temporal as distinguished from the spiritual or eternal." The term rather correctly describes the educational goal of the public educational system. But remember at the same time that education which is without God and without Christ is in fact *anti-God* and *anti-Christ*. Such is the nature of public education in our land; and the fact that in recent years religion and the Bible have been expressly prohibited has not really changed the nature of public education; it has only given formal and legal expression to what was already a fact.

Now it is this same "secular educational purpose" which is one of the conditions attached to parochiaid. To accept the latter is to accept the former. To allow the state to give our schools subsidy is to allow the state to declare the purpose of that subsidy, and thus to declare the purpose of education in our schools.

The second condition attached to parochiaid is inseparably tied to the first. It concerns the subjects for which the state would be willing to subsidize non-public schools.

Sometimes these subjects are simply defined as those which serve a "secular educational purpose." Sometimes they are called "non-religious subjects." Thus, according to news reports, the bill just passed by the Michigan senate provides \$25 million to be used toward the salaries of teachers in non-public schools who teach such non-religious subjects. Sometimes these subjects have been specified as including: mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, English, humanities, social sciences, physical education. Notice that this includes the entire curriculum of a school with the exception of courses such as Bible and Church History.

The important fact to remember about these subjects is the fact that they are classified as *non-religious* and that as such they serve a *secular educational purpose*.

Now it has been argued that this condition and the distinction between religious and non-religious subjects which it makes is not really so harmful. The argument is that the purpose of this terminology is only to distinguish between subjects which are directly of a religious nature (such as Bible and Church History) and subjects which are not directly of a religious nature (all the remaining subjects). To say the least, however, it is very doubtful whether this argument holds water. In the first place, last year's bill even provided for tests to determine whether the "secular educational purposes" were being achieved in the teaching of so-called non-religious subjects to the children of non-public schools. In the second place, I believe this argument presupposes too great a degree of ignorance as to the real issues on the part of legislators and educators. In the third place, however, even if this argument is factually

correct, we should remember that the distinction made by this language is a false distinction. Whether the legislators are aware of this or not, we know that there are no secular subjects in the curriculum of a Protestant Reformed school. We know that all the subjects are "religious." How, then, could we possibly accept subsidy for the teaching of "non-religious" subjects in one of our schools? We should simply be accepting their false educational philosophy, according to which our schools are institutions in every respect like the public schools, except that in our schools there are also "religious" subjects taught.

Again, effort has been made in the bill just passed by the Michigan senate to prevent the expenditure of any parochiaid funds except upon such schools as have been totally denuded of their distinctive character. Foes of parochiaid intend to see to it that if private schools want government subsidy, then they will be reduced as much as possible to the status of the public school. And the reasoning makes sense from their point of view. In the first place, they do not want to pay for any school but their own kind of school. And, in the second place, once they have reduced private schools to the level of the public school and stripped the private schools of their distinctive character, there is absolutely no reason for private schools to exist any longer. Hence, a civil rights "rider" was attached to the current bill, adding to it a ban against discrimination on the basis of religion, creed, race, color, or national origin. Such a ban against discrimination on the basis of religion or creed would apply both to pupils and to teachers. Imagine what kind of staff one of our schools would have if our school boards in the hiring of teachers might not discriminate on the basis of religion or creed.

Once more, remember that these provisions are part of the whole parochiaid "deal." If you accept the money, you accept the strings attached. And the strings attached involve one's entire philosophy of education.

Unconditionally Unacceptable

My evaluation of such conditional parochiaid may be very brief. There can be absolutely no question for our schools about the fact that it is unacceptable.

In the first place, it is unacceptable because it is constitutionally impossible. I am referring now, of course, not to the state or federal constitution, but to the constitution of our schools. If parochiaid were in every other respect acceptable, it would be unacceptable in respect to the principles of education involved because the constitutions of our schools specifically state what their basis and purpose is. The only aid we could accept would be aid whose avowed purposes would be the purposes set forth in *our school constitutions*. The point is this: by accepting parochiaid as described above, we would in effect be changing the constitutions of our schools in an illegal manner. Still

more, we would be changing those constitutions in respect to articles which are constitutionally unchangeable.

In the second place, it is unacceptable because of the very principles stated in the articles of the school constitutions to which I referred above. Those articles set forth the very principles of our system of education. They express the whole reason for which our schools have been brought into existence. To deny them is to deny the right of our schools to exist. To deny them is to deny any necessity of our schools. And if we do that, it will not do to play at having separate schools. Then we should honestly close our schools, dispose of our assets, and send our children to the public schools, to be assailed by all the devils of unbelief.

I need not belabor this point.

A simple comparison of the two articles concerning the basis and purpose of our Adams St. Prot. Ref. Christian School will make this abundantly clear to anyone who can read. Here they are:

“Article I – Basis. This organization is based on the following principles:

“A. The Bible is the infallibly inspired, written Word of God, the doctrine of which is contained in the Three Forms of Unity, and as such forms the basis for administration, instruction, and discipline in the school.

“B. Our Sovereign, Triune, Covenant God has from eternity chosen and in time forms a people unto Himself, that they may stand in Covenant relationship to Him and live to His praise in friendship and loving service in all spheres of life, in the midst of a sinful world.

“C. The training of the Covenant child in the school as well as in the home and in the church must serve to prepare him to follow his life-long calling to reveal the glory of his God in a life lived from the principle of regeneration by grace.

“Article II – Purpose. The purpose of this organization is to provide a system of education maintaining and developing the principles sketched in Article I.”

From the above, it is plain: 1) That we know of no

“secular purpose of education.” 2) That we know of no non-religious subjects in our schools. 3) That the philosophy of education involved in parochial and that of our schools are totally divergent. 4) That therefore for our schools the acceptance of parochialism on the state’s basis is in the nature of the case impossible.

Conclusion

This brings to a close for the time being our editorials on this subject. As the occasion requires, we will report any important new developments to our readers.

Yet I do not want to close on a negative note.

The positive side of this whole discussion, briefly, is as follows: 1) Let us highly esteem the fact that we may have separate, covenantal schools where we may, in harmony with our God-given prerogative as parents, as well as in harmony with our calling and responsibility, train our children in a distinctive manner. And let us – parents, boards, teachers – work at making a separate, covenantal education for our children more and more of a reality. I cannot understand the attitude of Protestant Reformed people who deliberately – for whatever may be the alleged reasons – turn their back on Protestant Reformed education in favor of the existing Christian schools or even, in some instances, the public schools. Taking all the short-comings of our schools into account, the fact remains that in our schools we have something which we should esteem highly and which we should thankfully use. 2) Let us zealously support our schools, even to the point of sacrifice; and let us count it a privilege that we may do so. After all, it is folly to expect that the world is going to support our institutions for us, – whether that be the worldly state or the world in any other form. This is totally unrealistic. The world supports its own. Let us not be afraid to be separate. Let us not be afraid of the cost of being a separate people. Instead, let us count it a privilege. We know not how long it will be possible yet to have and to enjoy our separate position unmolested. All indications are that the time is short. But let us labor while it is day; the night cometh, in which no man can work!

All Around Us

Church Tax Privileges Out? Sabbath Observance in the Business Community

Prof. H. Hanko

CHURCH TAX PRIVILEGES OUT?

In several courts throughout the land the church’s

traditional right to tax exemptions is being tested. Before the Supreme Court of the United States is a suit

brought by a New York lawyer questioning the whole theory of tax exemption of church property. There is little personal stake in the case for the lawyer bringing the suit. He owns a 22 by 29 foot plot of ground on Staten Island valued at \$100.00 and taxed at \$5.24 per year. But he insists that this tax is too much. His argument is that tax exemption for churches violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution because tax exemption for the churches increases his own taxes, puts money into the hands of the churches and thereby establishes religion. If his contention were supported by the Supreme Court, it would have a profound effect upon the nation's churches whose real estate holdings are estimated at \$102 billion.

While it is unlikely that the present tax exemption status of churches will be changed, there is a problem of another kind which has long plagued the government. This problem has to do with businesses and real estate holdings owned by various church groups which bring oftentimes huge profits into the church, but which are also tax exempt under present law. It is quite likely that this system will presently be changed.

California has already passed a law which requires state corporation taxes to be paid on income from businesses unrelated to church activities. All churches and religious organizations must file an annual form with the state specifying their income.

The United States House of Representatives has also passed a similar measure by a wide margin. The bill includes the following particulars:

- People who make contributions to religious organizations can still deduct these contributions from their income tax.

- Foundations operated by religious groups are still exempt from tax.

- Businesses purchased by churches and leased back to private individuals will be required to pay taxes if the bill becomes law.

- Any businesses owned and operated by religious groups will be required to pay the same tax as any corporation.

Present day trends and re-interpretations of the meaning of the First Amendment suggest that the possibility is very real that the government will collect more and more money from religious groups.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Grand Rapids is probably unique among big cities in the United States in that, for many years, most business places have remained closed on Sundays. For many years, in many cities, stores remained open on the Lord's Sabbath and conducted business as usual. Grand Rapids has been one exception. Not as if all stores remained closed on Sunday — there were always gas stations, restaurants, a few small "liquor stores"

open. But the large stores, the chains, the department stores remained closed.

This is apparently about to change.

It had been coming on for quite a while. Here and there a larger store would announce Sunday shopping hours as well as week-day opening times. Some in the church fussed about it. But it all attracted little attention.

Now suddenly the issue has come into the headlines. And it all happened because one large chain of stores, Meijer Inc., decided to open some of its stores on Sunday. Apparently many "church people" shopped at these stores because the ruckus created at the announcement of their opening could be heard all over Western Michigan.

The result has been that many church people have banded together in order to force these stores to close once again. The weapon at their disposal is the boycott of these stores. Bumper stickers, ads, radio announcements, and pamphlets constantly urge upon us to do our shopping in stores that are closed on Sunday. And this is done in the name of religion.

There is something extremely distasteful to me about the whole controversy.

I do not want to be misunderstood. There is a grievous sin involved in doing business on Sunday. This is the desecration of the Lord's Day. It is a deliberate trampling down of God's sacred laws. It is a sin as great in magnitude as the breaking of all or any of God's commandments. And those who open their stores and do business on Sunday shall have to answer to a holy God for their awful violation of His holy law.

But there is hypocrisy here, and one can smell it a mile away. The hypocrisy is, of course, first of all, on the side of Mr. Meijer. In an ad which appeared in the local newspaper, Mr. Meijer wrote: "But the facts are undeniable. Many people want the opportunity to shop on Sunday. And they express their desire in the strongest possible way, by shopping in great numbers at the many stores already open on Sunday. We cannot deny them that right. If we expect to stay in business we must serve people when they want to be served. That's our job. Please remember we must serve all the people of Western Michigan." This is a miserable justification for Sunday opening. The whole ad is apparently intended to convey the impression that the only reason the stores of Meijer Inc. are opening is the noble desire to do service to the people of Western Michigan. The ad leads the impression that the management of the stores has the obligation to give people some "right" which is inherently theirs. But the crass commercialism is so thinly disguised as to be almost funny.

The trouble is that the hypocrisy is on both sides. For one thing, all Meijers Stores are not open on Sunday here in town, but have been open for many years in other cities in Michigan, such as Kalamazoo. For another thing, while we are urged to shop at stores

closed on Sunday, many of these stores which are closed here in town are members of large chains which are open in other cities, where there are not so many people who object. Why are not protests raised against all these stores? And why were not protests raised long ago against Meijers for being open in Kalamazoo?

But this is not all. Many stores which are closed on Sunday have stickers in their windows which read: "Out of respect for the Christian tradition, this store is closed on Sunday." This in itself is not a very good reason to be closed. If a store is only closed "out of respect for the Christian tradition," whatever that may mean, there is certainly no Sabbath observance involved in those who own, manage, or operate these stores. Their reasons for being closed are not God's reasons for demanding Sabbath observance.

Besides, many people who are creating a big fuss about the new policy of Meijers are the same people who themselves think nothing of travelling on a summer or winter vacation on Sunday; who in some instances are glued to their TV sets all Sunday afternoon to watch professional football or other favorite programs, who themselves violate the Sabbath in many ways as evil as opening a store. It might be well to cast the beam out of our own eye before we try to remove a mote from someone else's.

Does all this mean that we should passively sit by and watch the Sabbath desecrated? I do not think so. I am not in favor particularly of the use of boycotts to gain the point. This is the use of coercion — economic coercion; and this is an illegitimate weapon at best. But, this is not really the point yet. The point is that economic coercion does little to bring about true Sabbath observance. Supposing that the boycott works — something highly dubitable. In that case the stores will all be closed; but that will certainly not guarantee any wonderful change of heart in those who operate their businesses. It will not guarantee Sabbath observance on the part of those now opening their stores. It all comes down to the old question: are we interested in outward character reform, social change? or is our concern the

inward change of the heart? the true observance of God's law from the heart?

There is altogether too much emphasis on this outward observance of the commandments today. To cite but one pertinent example, it is ironic in the extreme that these same people who speak so loudly about stores closing on Sunday nevertheless hail, as outstanding Christians, various sports heroes in professional football and baseball who, while they profess the Christian faith, play their games before huge paying crowds every Sunday of the year. Why are their actions condoned?

Does this mean that we need take no interest in the whole matter? I think not. It is certainly legitimate for the Christian to protest such Sabbath desecration. It is even legitimate to want stores closed in order that the church of Christ may worship God in an atmosphere conducive to worship. Paul urges upon Timothy, in a different situation, to pray for those in authority that "we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." And indeed, our concern is legitimate when we see the trend of the times towards more and more Sunday labor depriving the people of God of their jobs and their livelihood.

But any protest we make must be on the basis of God's Word. It must be directed to the principle of the thing. It must be concerned with the true and full observance of the law of God and not some mere outward observance. It must be a protest made properly and not through the use of force. Probably such a protest will go unheeded. This is not the point. We must not be tempted to use force because, as it is said, these men understand only the language of the pocketbook. Hurt them in the pocketbook and they will listen. Listen to what? Listen to a club over their heads? Listen to a plea for some "respect for the tradition of religion in the community?" They must listen to the Word of God. And if they will not do that, we must commit the matter into the hands of our God Who has told us that all these things, and many more, will take place before the Lord comes back.

Come Ye Apart... And Rest A While

"The Abomination Of Desolation"

Rev. C. Hanko

"The Abomination Of Desolation."

Does not the very name send the cold chills up and down your spine?

Scripture tells us of the coming of the Abominable One, who is so foul, so detestable in the sight of God that only God's forbearance causes Him to wait until

the day when this Beast has served his purpose and has made full the measure of his iniquity, then to be cast with the devil into the lake of fire and brimstone where he will be tormented forever.

In the meantime this Abominable One brings havoc, complete desolation upon the earth. He can do nothing

else, for the curse of the Most High rests upon him. In spite of his proud boasts, he actually wants nothing else in his hatred against God and his lust for all that is evil.

Prophets of old spoke of the abominations of the heathen. They referred to the idols that the heathen sought in their defiance of the living God. (Romans 1:21-23). Even carnal Israel committed whoredoms with these abominations, digging themselves empty cisterns, because they had forsaken the Fountain of living waters. (Jeremiah 2:13).

Daniel speaks of this Abomination in his prophecies, even three times; once in chapter 9:27, again in 11:31, and again in 12:11. Along with the coming of the Messiah, this detestable person will make his appearance. He will stand in the temple of God, will cause the daily sacrifice to cease, and will spread destruction until the entire sanctuary is made a desolation. In the end the church is saved; the desolate ones, who follow this deceiver, will perish with him.

Daniel's first reference was to the antichrist of the old dispensation, who made his appearance shortly after the captivity, Antiochus Epiphanes, the Madman (as the name Epiphanes designates) who stood in the holy temple of Jehovah sacrificing swine's flesh on the altar and pouring out the fat throughout the temple to the horror and disgust of the Jews.

Jesus reminds His disciples that another Abomination was still to come to destroy Jerusalem. He referred to the Roman emperor who would lay both Jerusalem and the temple in ashes. When his day came the believers should escape to seek refuge wherever possible. For in Matthew 24:15-18 Jesus tells His disciples: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand!) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains . . ."

But both Daniel and Jesus saw the ultimate fulfillment of their prophecy in that world power that must still arise, the Abhorrence that will stand where he has no business to stand, (see Mark 13:14) polluting the sanctuary of the only true God. He will exalt himself and sit on the throne ruling the nations of the earth *as if he were* God! What a presumption! Then the church will sing Psalm 79 as she has never sung it before:

In Thy heritage the heathen
Now, O God, triumphant stand;
They defile Thy holy temple,
They destroy Thy chosen land;
Ruthless, they have slain Thy servants,
They have caused Thy saints to mourn,
In the sight of all about us
We endure reproach and scorn.

No, the world will never accept that name that God has given him. That follows quite naturally from the

fact that darkness always contradicts the Light. But that follows also from the fact that the world of unbelief is in perfect agreement with this detestable thing in its hatred against God. The world delights in this monstrosity with its seven heads and ten horns, who carries on his heads the name of blasphemy. (Revelation 13.) She is deceived by his partner, the second beast, who has the appearance of a lamb, the savior of the world, who brings peace, prosperity, and an abundant life, yet who should be readily recognized by the fact that every time he opens his mouth he speaks the language of the devil in opposition to God.

His strong appeal is in his great research, his vast knowledge, his amazing discoveries in the universe, his mighty accomplishments through his great inventions. He seems to be able to cure men's ills, to bring comfort and security, luxury and pleasures, seemingly removing the bitter consequences of sin in which all indulge so freely. Admiringly they ask: Who is like unto the beast? Who can give us such an abundant life? Surely not the God and the Christ of the Scriptures — Whose very names must be wiped out from the face of the earth!

But before God he is the MAN of sin, the culmination of the sin of the ages.

Pharaoh once proudly asked: "Who is Jehovah that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" Only as he swirled to his death in the waters of the Red Sea did he fully realize Who Jehovah is. Nebuchadnezzar's great sin was pride in exalting himself above God. And he became like a beast of the field to remind him of what he actually was. The Herods coveted the worship of men, and they perished in their evil corruption. Yet their sin is no different from the sin of the Rich Fool, whose only recorded sin was that he boasted: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." For the cardinal sin of mankind is the sin of *unbelief*. Jesus reminds us, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth on him*." He is given over to his sin until the time when nothing is restrained from him that he imagines to do. Genesis 11:6.

That Abominable One is given over by God to make desolation.

As I sit here typing I can hear the groan of creation. No, I hear no chirp of the cricket, no hum of the bee, no song of the birds. These are drowned out by the swishing of racing cars on the freeway, interspersed by the rumble of heavy trucks. Every now and then there is a deafening roar of a heavy transport plane struggling to gain altitude, while from somewhere comes the blare of a radio or a TV set.

With my mind's eye I see the soil pollution, the contamination of once crystal clear streams, the oil slick on the waters of the ocean, the yellowish, stinking smog creeping in from the west, the dead orange

groves making room for smoke belching factories, the junk yards heaped high with the crumpled and broken gods of vain man, the beer can strewn highways, the billboards, painted signs of protest, the endless array of devastation that wipes out all the beauty of creation.

It is not hard to imagine the day when the church doors will be closed, the voice of the two witnesses will be silenced, as they lie dead on the streets of Jerusalem. Revelation 11.

The wrath of God is revealed from heaven also in that.

Man cannot help doing his share in bringing about

the devastation of the vials mentioned in Revelation 19.

Sin breeds sin, even unto death; for the soul that sins must die.

Let the church of Jesus Christ take time out to read the signs of the times. Let her note that there is no fellowship between God and Mammon, between light and darkness.

And let her heed the call: "Come ye out from among her, and be ye separate," saith your God.

And by all means keep on praying: "Come, Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly."

From our Mission Committee

OUR MISSION ACTIVITIES

Rev. J. Kortering

The Mission Committee is one Synodical Committee that does not have the luxury of a year's time to do its work. Synod's decisions and directives have to be implemented immediately. Our monthly meetings have been long and arduous, an indication that God has given us work to do and that zeal for this work abounds.

The committee consists of the following members, Revs. Heys, Kortering, Lubbers, Schipper, Van Baren, Veldman, and the brethren J. Kalsbeek, D. Kooienga, H. Meulenberg, and G. Pipe. We voted to have Rev. Schipper continue to lead us as our capable president and Rev. Van Baren to serve as our diligent secretary.

The Synod of 1969 gave our committee a broad mandate to continue to work in Jamaica at our discretion. Since Rev. J. Heys has declined the call to be missionary, we have considered different ways in which our work can be intensified while First Church of Grand Rapids, the calling church, extends the call to other ministers. It is our inmost desire and prayer that God may lay the call to full-time service in Jamaica upon the heart of one of our ministers. In the meantime we must advance the cause of the gospel as best we can, believing that God will use it to further gather His people in Jamaica and strengthen those already made part of the body of Christ.

In pursuing this goal, we requested the Southwest Consistory to release Rev. Lubbers for a period of five months, in order that he might labor for this duration in Jamaica. The Consistory of Southwest decided that they would be willing to release their minister for this period of time, but that if it were possible for another minister to go for three months, they would prefer that Rev. Lubbers be released for three months and

another minister for the second three months. Our committee contacted Holland's Consistory and requested the release of Rev. J. Heys for three months. This was also graciously granted by the Holland Consistory. The Lord willing Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers will leave Nov. 4 for a three months stay in Jamaica, and this will be immediately followed by Rev. and Mrs. Heys' presence for the months of February through April. As committee and churches we are grateful that God has laid it upon the hearts of these brethren and their wives, their consistories and congregations, to give of themselves for the advance of the work of Christ in Jamaica. May our personal, daily prayers, our congregational prayers on the Sabbath day, be prayers of intercession that God may sustain them in their work and bless it unto the glory of His name through the salvation of His Church.

Looking forward to an extended stay on the part of these missionary-pastors, our committee decided that it would be in the interest of good business management and proper use of the Lord's money, that we invest in certain items that are essential to the work. We have already leased a house in Montego Bay for 1 year, subject to renewal for another year. We authorized the purchase of used furniture that can be secured in Montego Bay and if necessary later on, resold to the seller, a dealer in real estate and new and used furniture. We also authorized the purchase of a Ford, Cortina. Though it involves a larger investment, on the long run it is much cheaper than renting an auto, especially for more than six months. In all these details, the Lord has opened a way, and, we are confident, will continue to do so in the future.

The deacons of Southwest Church have completed a

clothing drive and during the week of October 12 have shipped via truck approximately three thousand pounds of used clothing. This will travel "piggy-back" from Miami to Kingston, Jamaica and finally by rail to Montego Bay. The adage, "Practice makes perfect" applies to our shipping used clothing. The shipment will arrive there D.V. when Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers will be there, hence they can assist in cutting the red-tape of duty free entrance and assist in the distribution. Instead of wrapping all dresses in one box, ladies' hats in another, and men's suits in still another, a quantity of each was placed in each large box and the names of the different churches on the outside. Instead of Lucea getting all ladies hats, hopefully they will get an assortment of clothing. Also in the gathering and sending of this clothing, our people have shown the love for the cause and with openness of heart shared in this expression of mercy.

We would like to remind our readers that there are a number of different causes to which we can contribute financially. For the purpose of clarification and encouragement to give, we enumerate the following. Synod requested all our churches to take up four collections during the year 1970 for the church building expenses. There is a good possibility that the legal problems concerning clear deed of land and ownership of property can be ironed out soon and the congregations properly incorporated. Once this is done, progress can be made on building improvements. The money for these collections should be sent to our Synodical Treasurer, Mr. C. Pastoor. There continues to be a real need for benevolence, the care of the poor. This includes the support of widows, orphans, medical expenses, and other ways. The money should be sent to the diaconate of Hudsonville Church, Mr. Gerald Cnossen the treasurer. In addition to these, there are two other special funds. The first is for future students in Jamaica, who aspire to the ministry of the Word. Synod decided to begin this fund and recommend it to our societies and different organizations. This is a long-term fund which is begun now, with a view to being available as soon as such a student(s) will be selected. Money for this fund should be so designated and sent to our Synodical Treasurer, Mr. C. Pastoor. Finally, there is the fund for travel expenses of Revs. Frame, Elliott, and Ruddock. Requests for this cause have been sent by our Jamaica sub-committee to all our consistories and societies and will be handled by them. This money should be sent to Mr. H. Meulenberg, who will process these requests on behalf of our committee.

As a concluding note on Jamaica, we also would like to make known the need for Psalters and Bibles. Many of the Psalters and Bibles sent in the past were used, and these do not last very long in the humid climate. Any of our churches or individuals that have extras or desire to supply new ones, should be aware of the fact

that this need persists. Either Rev. Lubbers or Heys will be able to tell you where they should be sent.

The Mission Committee has decided to become involved in another area outside the shores of our country, namely Indonesia.

As many of our readers know, the congregation of Lynden, Washington under the enthusiastic leadership of her pastor, Rev. B. Woudenberg has been engaged in an active and interesting literature and tape distribution program. Each week this little congregation advertises locally and encourages her members and all interested people in the area to meet together for Bible discussion. These discussions center around a study sheet prepared by Rev. Woudenberg and distributed ahead of time. While this material is being discussed, it is also recorded on tape and both the study sheets as well as a taped version of the meeting is made available to anyone interested. These study sheets are sent all over our country each week, totaling on an average of one thousand in number, and the tapes of the study class number about thirty-six each week. This congregation is to be commended for this zeal in reaching out with the witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Besides all this, the Sunday church service is broadcast over the local FM radio station on Sunday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. and on the reverse side of the tapes containing the study class discussion, there is recorded one of the sermons preached on Sunday. Any of our readers interested in receiving this material may contact Rev. B. Woudenberg, 8541 Depot Rd., Lynden, Washington 98264 for information.

By means of this witness, interest has been stimulated in different areas. Brian, Ohio is presently receiving bulk mailings of the study sheets. Last winter, Rev. Woudenberg conducted a study class each week in the Ladner, Canada area. Contact has been established with some of the Primitive Baptists in the south. These sheets also found their way to a former missionary to Indonesia, Mr. Harold Gerring, who presently operates Evangelical Scripture Mission, a business enterprise which prints, distributes, translates, and handles correspondence relating to gospel material sent to Indonesia.

Mr. Gerring contacted the Lynden Consistory and requested that if at all possible, these study sheets of Rev. Woudenberg would serve as an excellent correspondence course for newly converted Moslems who have been converted to the Reformed faith and were aspiring members of the Reformed Church of Indonesia. Mr. Gerring informed them that fifteen thousand copies of a 16 lesson booklet could be translated into the native tongue, printed, and distributed for the cost of about \$500.00, or thirty thousand copies for about \$850.00. By means of an appeal to those who received the study sheets and other interested people, Lynden was able to raise the money necessary for a first printing of fifteen thousand copies. Prior to this however, they had requested our Mission Committee to

furnish money for this work and support this cause. Synod did not have sufficient information on this project, so it was returned to our committee to investigate and come to some decision. This we did at our October meeting; we decided to forward the \$350.00 balance which is necessary for an initial printing of thirty thousand copies.

Two things are worthy of note in this decision. The first is that this demonstrates a good and proper relationship between the local congregation and the Mission Committee. The zeal for witnessing and the drive for church extension must come from our people in the local congregation. When this prospers under the blessing of God, the local congregation seeks the assistance of the Mission Committee when this is needed, and if a way is open for working intensely in a new area, that can then be turned over to the Mission Committee whose work it is to regulate such mission work. In the second place, we must give the fruits of this work over to God who controls the spread of the gospel. Obviously, this is something new for our churches. Even as radio broadcasting is directed by God to the hearers, so these printed correspondence courses will go into this foreign land and be guided by God to whomsoever He will. We have requested Lynden Consistory to keep us informed as to what

response they receive from this project, and this we will forward to our interested readers. We now have another cause that must be remembered in our prayers, the distribution of the printed word to converted Moslems in Indonesia.

As a concluding note, our readers who also listen to the Reformed Witness Hour will hear, during the month of January, an appeal to send in cards and letters indicating the station to which they listen. This will be in harmony with the decision of Synod to conduct a letter month. On the basis of the return to this appeal, we will evaluate each station and judge whether we should continue broadcasting on that station or not. We urge our readers to participate in this appeal.

Once we determine the effectiveness of our radio broadcast, we hope to decide on some new area outside the immediate scope of our churches in which we can concentrate our witness and co-ordinate the witness of the radio, printed page, and eventually the preaching of the Word.

May God bless our efforts at home and abroad, whether we labor in the office of all believers or the special office of minister, elder, or deacon, that the Church may be gathered and God be praised as the God of our salvation.

In His Fear

Sowing The Seed

(Concluded)

Rev. John A. Heys

With this contribution to our department we plan to bring this report, filed with the Mission Committee and read at the 1969 Synod, to a close.

In the last installment we were reporting about the shipment of clothing which had been sent to the brethren and sisters in Jamaica and which we were to supervise as to obtaining it from customs and distributing to the churches. The report continues.

Thursday, Rev. Ruddock came with his truck driver for his share of the clothing, but he was late, and we missed him. To make sure we went back in the afternoon to the freight house and found that his little station wagon could not hold all the bundles. There still were two left, no, one was a wooden box of hats and purses. We squeezed the bundle into the back seat of our compact and got the box in the trunk being forced to keep the lid open. Back at the villa we opened the box and spread the hats and purses on papers on the floor of the trunk. For we had to go to

Porters Mt. that night and could not go that way with the trunk open. The bundle squeezed in the back seat had to stay there; and since Mr. Feenstra was ill, there was still room for the three of us.

We had held a service Wednesday night and Rev. Ruddock explained to us that his truck driver had disappointed him and did not show up because he had a bigger hauling job that day which would pay more.

The service that Wednesday night was at Sunderland, and we enjoyed it even though we were ridiculed and mocked by young men at the bottom of the hill. Our car was parked there in the vicinity of the origin of the mockery and blasphemy that came upward to our ears. We were somewhat fearful of more flat tires, but our covenant God took care of us. Two flat tires there would mean that we would have to stay there all night. We were almost to the end of the road which ran dead up against the mountain. Help could not be obtained until morning. You just do not find a gasoline

station around every corner in the Jamaican hills! And Mr. Feenstra was at home very sick and alone with no way at all for us to send him word. We experienced again that "underneath are the Everlasting Arms."

Thursday night we did deliver the last of the clothing. The Southeast deacons did an excellent job of packing, and the goods arrived in perfect condition. The brethren and sisters expressed their great appreciation for the clothing. The service that Thursday night was on Porters Mt. in a Baptist church building. The whole neighborhood was invited to attend. The Porters, after whom the mountain was named, were also there. There was good attention to the sermon on Rev. 22:12, a text that Rev. Ruddock had requested for this service. And we do here wish to underscore the words of Rev. Frame and Rev. Elliott, "Some will leave, but many will stay and do follow for the spiritual bread." How else shall we explain that here on Porters Mt., where we have no church, but where Rev. Ruddock lives, his people from Fort William came for the service? They began to walk up the mountain from Ft. William at 4 P.M. and arrived at 7 P.M., a three hour walk up, which meant also a three hour walk down in the dark after the service.

They did not come that night for shillings or material goods. Nor did the people from Hope Hill, who came by truck way across the island for that last Sunday which we spent on the island. We gave them no money for travel, gave no one any money for travel with the exception of the ministers when we sent them on an errand. We gave no money for group travel or for individuals to travel, unless it was to go to the doctor. We gave them the Word. And they came back and travelled great distances *for that Word*. They desire money greatly for their buildings and for their needs; and they do need better buildings to meet the standards of the government, which is a requirement, if their ministers are to be given the right to perform the marriage ceremony. We explained to them, and told their ministers to explain to them, that we could give nothing for these buildings until their properties were legally secured.

Our last Sunday was memorable. The three of us went to Lucea in the morning and were pleased to see these Hope Hill people there. At night groups from all over the island were present. Rev. Heys took his courage in the morning and preached a simplified version of his lecture on "The Last Hour" preaching on I John 2:18 where this expression appears. We were surprised at the contact that was made and was held throughout the entire sermon. This congregation at Lucea does seem to be able to dig into the truth more deeply than some others. Instead of taking along a packed lunch we went back home for lunch since Mr. Feenstra wanted to be at that farewell sermon at night if at all possible. He really was not fit, but the spirit was willing, even though the flesh was weak; and he did go back with us.

We had a very enjoyable hour in our group discussion, this time on the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. At night Rev. Heys preached on those words of Paul, "... much more in my absence work out your own salvation . . .", Philippians 2:12, 13.

The parting was hard. All present one by one filed across the platform to shake our hands and to wish us God's blessing. We find it hard to believe that these men (and this time it was men) of a different race and color, weeping as they came forward to such an extent that they did not dare to say a word but only gripped your hand firmly and walked on, have not also grasped the Word of God firmly in the truth which we preached. We left, sad at parting but wonderfully encouraged in soul that our labors were not in vain. They sang, "God be with you till we meet again." And we went down the hill with that ringing in our hearts, wondering whether that would ever be again in this life. We remember Dr. Schilder's words, "Saying farewell is dying a little."

Monday a goodly group was at the airport — even from Reading and Islington — to see us off. It was a far bigger group than last year. Safe journeys home were ours; and though the work is behind, our thoughts return to those with whom we worked *every day*; and we present them in their spiritual need to our churches, but above all to our covenant God Who gave us the privilege to serve in this field.

Considering all the above it will become plain that we had eight action-filled weeks. And if this is not sufficient to show it, then the fact that our little compact had 3,620 miles more on it, when for the last time we parked it at the airport than when we picked it up there, will indicate this fact. Phone service is of no consequence, even though we had one at the villa. So few people have one and so few establishments. You have to ride over to see and meet. Mail service on the island is slow and poor. And with the exception of that trip to Accompong in the cockpit country we took no excursions or sightseeing tours.

In all, then, we attended 32 services and covered the churches on the island as fully as possible. We met with most of the congregations on Sunday for our Bible discussion sessions; and this year stayed with the people as much as possible and became better acquainted with them. We found them to be a simple but sincere people, having the same weaknesses of the flesh that we have, but spiritually eager to hear what we have to say from God's Word.

Wishing you God's blessing and
fruit upon all your difficult
and important labours
we remain,

Fraternally
The Emissaries of 1968
W.S. John A. Heys
W.S. Thys Feenstra

And so ends the report of the emissaries of 1968. We do like to add a few lines of information. In our own churches we are deeply concerned with the shortage of ministers to serve our congregations. The matter is even more critical in the Protestant Reformed Churches in Jamaica. Rev. Elliott is a man in his sixties, and at the time of the labours of 1968 was serving eleven churches. Making a continuous circuit this means that each congregation can see him only once in eleven weeks! And there are no Seminarians or professors to occupy these other ten pulpits – or for that matter as much as one of them! – but the elders take over. Rev. Frame is only a little younger and has five churches to serve, which means that even if he kept up a circuit, his people would see him no more than once a month. And so often it happens less than this. The same is true with Rev. Ruddock, who has five churches, and is one year younger than Rev. Frame.

Add to this the fact that these ministers do *not* have cars to drive from church to church and the fact that these churches are so scattered; and you can see that travel between two churches on a Sunday is not the easiest thing, nor very apt to happen.

It becomes plain, then, that young men must be trained for the ministry in these churches. This is a must! It is encouraging to know that there are young men who desire to prepare for this work. But due to the past history of the island there are few who are prepared to receive any training before finishing the equivalent of a high school education. The Jamaican government since their independence six years ago has made tremendously large and rapid strides in building schools and of educating the youth of the land. But it

is quite late as far as our needs are concerned for young men with education and ability to serve in the ministry. One redeeming feature, however, is the fact that these Jamaicans have keen and quick minds. They have much to learn of the Reformed Faith because they were never taught it before. But they are quick to grasp the truth and to see its beauty. Rev. Elliott expressed it for them all, no doubt, when he told the emissaries of this year that after being taught these five points of Calvinism he can now see what he always believed but could not see so clearly, namely, that nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Indeed, so it must be! For these five points of Calvinism display the certain perseverance of the saints through all trial and tempest, because they declare a basic truth of the Word of God, namely, God everything; man nothing! They present a *totally* depraved sinner whose election will have to be and is *unconditional*, for their depravity, according to Ephesians 2:1, consists in this that they are *dead* in trespasses and sin. On the other hand, these five points speak of a God Who elects and by this election *limits* the atonement achieved by Christ, and then *irresistibly* draws these by His grace. Of man they say that, being dead, he does nothing. Of God they say that ALL of our salvation is of Him, through Him and unto Him. Then we can be sure that dead men are not only made alive but stay alive and persevere to the end. God is everything, also in that perseverance.

We commend these brethren and sisters, whose color and temperament complements ours in the body of Christ, to God's grace and care, and to you in your prayers on their behalf.

A Cloud of Witnesses

The Revolt of Sheba

Rev. B. Woudenberg

And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

II Samuel 20:1

Nathan the prophet had told David after the death of Uriah, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife." Little did David at that time realize how painfully true this would be. And it continued to be so after he had returned to the throne of Jerusalem after his fleeing from Absalom.

It began with what could only be considered a picky

little squabble. The men of the tribe of Judah, after first hesitating to give any indication of support to David at all, had suddenly turned under the requested encouragement of Zadok and Abiathar the priests to meet David with a rousing welcome at the ford of Jordan. In fact, the whole ceremony of welcome all of the way from Jordan to Jerusalem was so completely dominated by them that the rest of the tribes felt slighted. Judah had been the leading tribe in Absalom's

rebellion, it had been the last to urge his return, and yet it had received almost exclusive recognition in his restitution. Angered, the rest of the tribes sent a hot message to David complaining, "Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?"

It was not, however, the king that gave the answer. Whether through the neglect of David or what, the men of the tribe of Judah heard of the complaint and immediately sent off a reply in the same unbrotherly tone, "Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? Have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift?"

Here was something which David's kingdom at this point did not need and could not stand — an arrogant claim of superiority by one tribe over against the others. Already the feelings of the eleven tribes were smarting, and for Judah now to claim that it had a right to special privileges and considerations because the king was of their kin was too much. Quickly the wounded answer came back from the other tribes in their own defense, "We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?" But the men of Judah felt themselves to be in the position of power, and they were not about to share it with any others.

It was a time when David surely should have stepped in and used some of his natural discretion. When before the eleven tribes had invited his return while as yet the tribe of Judah was unheard from, he had had the wisdom to wait and to see to it that Judah was encouraged, so that willingly he might be received back by the same nation. And now it was just the other way around: the men of Judah had drawn close to him while the other tribes felt alienated and distant. Just a few words of kindness and recognition was all that was needed. But David was growing old, and through all of the hardships of recent years, he had lost a great deal of his former versatility. It was becoming so easy for him to draw back and let things go their own course in the hope that they would take care of themselves. And so he did here.

In fact, it might have even worked, had it not been for the fact that there was an opportunist waiting to take advantage of his failure. It was a man named Sheba, of the tribe of Benjamin and possibly relation to the family of Saul. He had no particular ability and there was no particular reason why he should ever be granted any special recognition. But the possibility was there to create trouble and he was unscrupulous enough to use it. The people felt forsaken and rejected and were open to any suggestion that might seem to restore their own feelings of importance and self-respect. It didn't matter who gave it.

Thus Sheba took to himself a trumpet and blew it.

This was the customary sign for the giving of an important announcement or the starting of a campaign of one kind or another. When a crowd had gathered around, this is what he said, "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel." It spoke to the hearts of the people, for this was exactly how they felt. Quickly the word spread through all of the nation and soon there were sizeable numbers of every tribe but Judah which had turned from David and were claiming allegiance to Sheba.

David, when he heard of this new development, was agitated and even frightened. Hardly had one rebellion been stomped out and there was another one in the making. This time, however, he was not going to wait to give it time to grow and fester. Immediately he called his new captain, Amasa, and instructed him, "Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present."

As it was, however, Amasa was hardly an experienced leader. He had served in the position of captain for only a short time under Absalom and that quite unsuccessfully. The men under him were strange and suspicious; it had been so very shortly before that he had been fighting against them as a rebel and an enemy. And then besides, he was not particularly courageous. Delay as was followed by Absalom was much more easily followed than quick and decisive action. The result was that the three days which David had allowed, and more, had passed with nothing happening.

But David was impatient. His had always been the way of quick and definite action. Delays such as this simply were not to his liking. And yet, he had just so recently appointed Amasa to his position. It would hardly reflect well to discharge him immediately. The result was that he decided to bypass him. He turned to a man whom he knew he could trust to lay out a prompt and powerful attack against an enemy, Abishai, Joab's brother. To him he said, "Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom: Take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us."

In his choice of Abishai David had been quite correct as far as expecting decisive action. What he forgot was the closeness of that family and the opportunity that this provided for Joab.

As it was, David should have known better than to think that a man of Joab's strength could be merely shunted aside after all of the years in which he had ruled David's army. In fact, David himself was really not capable of getting along without him. Although at times David disliked Joab's self-assured and determined manner, and at times he suffered under his presumptuousness, as in the death of Absalom, he needed this strength of a strong captain to maintain the power of his kingdom. This was evident in the fact that so soon

again he turned back from Amasa to Abishai.

But the matter even went much deeper than that. This rebuff had hit Joab where it hurt as nothing else could. All of his life had been spent in David's service, and it had been a service of complete loyalty and dedicated throughout. Even the killing of Absalom had been more out of a consideration of David's own well-being than anything else. His sudden rejection by David, thus in favor of Amasa, had hit him in the one tender spot which he had, his loyalty to his king and master. It was a blow from which he never fully recovered again so that he could never give himself as completely to the king's service as he had before.

Nevertheless, even at this he remained the strong character and determined fighter he had always been. Thus when Abishai his brother was called upon to lead the army for his campaign he saw his opportunity. He simply joined himself to Abishai's party. Moreover, hardly had the army left Jerusalem when he singled out and approached Amasa. Just as he came close to him he caused, as though accidentally, that his sword should fall out at Amasa's feet. With his left hand he stooped to pick this up, and when he rose up he extended his right hand to Amasa's face as though to grasp him in an embrace; and with a kiss, according to the usual custom of intimate greeting, he politely asked, "Art thou in health, my brother?" But his intentions were quite different. With the left hand, he took the sword which he held and thrust it into Amasa's heart so that he fell dead to the ground. It was Joab's way of doing a thing, not greatly different from his slaying of Abner or even of Absalom, cold-blooded, perhaps, but quick, definite and final.

Neither was Joab ashamed of what he had done. Although he himself went on, he left one of his men standing by the body of Amasa to meet everyone who came along with the challenge, "He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab." As it was, however, the whole thing was too repulsive. Rather than hastening to join Joab in his regained strength, they stood in stony and shocked amazement unable to move. Realizing this, the servant of Joab soon shoved the body off into the ditch, covered it with a cloth, and merely urged the people to go on

after Joab, which most of them freely did.

It was not long under the restored leadership of Joab that the pursuit of Sheba was turned into a rout. From city to city he fled with an ever dwindling army. He never had been much of a leader and with Joab pursuing him few were willing to help. At last he took refuge in a walled city named Abel of Bethmaachah. Immediately Joab set a siege about the city and erected fortifications about it.

It was while this was taking place that a woman of the city called down. "Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come, near hither, that I may speak with thee."

Quickly the message was brought to Joab and he approached as close as he safely could to hear what she had to say. Once the woman had ascertained that it was indeed Joab to whom she spoke, "Hear the words of thine handmaid. They were wont to speak in old time, saying, they shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter. I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?" Evidently so small had Sheba's force become that his presence in the city was hardly recognized as the cause for the attack of Joab. Actually, the people did not even know for sure why they were being besieged.

But Joab was quick with an answer. He said, "Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. The matter is not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city."

To this the woman answered Joab, "Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall." And so it was that the revolt of Sheba was ended.

As for Joab, with yet another victory to his credit, he could not easily be dispensed with again. Neither did David want to try it once more. As much as Joab's harsh and often cruel ways were opposed to his own nature, through the years he had developed a reliance upon him which could hardly be broken. With little more ado, he merely allowed Joab to return to his old position.

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Contending for the Faith

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

THE THIRD PERIOD — 730-1517 A.D.

PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF SIN

ACCORDING TO CALVIN

Rev. H. Veldman

Indeed, Calvin teaches emphatically that the deepest reason why the gospel is a savor of death unto death is that the Lord does not attempt to save them. How numerous are the passages in Calvin's Calvinism in which the reformer emphasizes the sovereignly particular character of the mercy of the Lord as bestowed upon the elect and withheld from the reprobate. It is true that these passages appear in that part of Calvin's Calvinism which stresses Divine predestination, and to quote these passages at length would lead us too far upstream, inasmuch as we are treating the doctrine of sin. Even so, however, to call attention to the teaching of Common Grace in the writings of Calvin and to the teaching of Common Grace as set forth in the Three Points of 1924 and surely repudiated by Calvin can be of interest to our readers. Permit us, then, to quote one more passage from Calvin's Calvinism. We could call attention to what Calvin has to say in his interpretation of Ezekiel 33:11, Matt. 23:37 and I Tim. 2:4. But let this quotation suffice (incidentally, Calvin also treats at length a passage such as Romans 9), page 81:

Now let us listen to the Evangelist John. He will be no ambiguous interpreter of this same passage of the prophet Isaiah. "But though (says John) Jesus had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him, that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart," etc. Now, most certainly John does not here give us to understand that the Jews were prevented from believing by their sinfulness. For though this be quite true in one sense, yet *the cause* of their not believing must be traced to a far higher source. The secret and eternal purpose and counsel of God must be viewed as the original cause of their blindness and unbelief. It perplexed, in no small degree, the ignorant and the weak, when they heard that there was no place for Christ among the people of God (for the Jews were such). John explains the reason by showing that none believes save those to whom it is given, and that there are few to whom God reveals His arm. This other prophecy concerning "the arm of the Lord," the Evangelist weaves into his argument to prove the same great truth. And his words have a momentous weight. He says, "Therefore, they could not believe."

Wherefore, let men torture themselves as long as they will with reasoning, the cause of the difference made — why God does not reveal His arm equally to *all* — lies hidden in His own eternal decree. The whole of the Evangelist's argument amounts evidently to this: that faith is a special gift, and that the wisdom of Christ is too high and too deep to come within the compass of man's understanding. The unbelief of the world, therefore, ought not to astonish us, if even the wisest and most acute of men fail to believe. Hence, unless we would elude the plain and confessed meaning of the Evangelist, that few receive the Gospel, we must fully conclude that the *cause* is *the will of God*; and that the outward sound of that Gospel strikes the ear in vain until God is pleased to touch by it the heart within.

In this connection, we may note that Calvin does speak of a revealed and hidden will of God, and that this revealed will wills the salvation of all who come under the preaching of the gospel. Yet, we must try to understand Calvin here. It is striking that Calvin here is opposing a certain Pighius, a defender of the free will, exactly because Pighius teaches that God would save all though the preaching of the gospel. We read on page 65 of Calvin's Calvinism:

Now Pighius explains the solemn case thus: that salvation is not due to any endeavour of ours, nor to any works of ours, for *this* reason, *because* God freely *calls* us to that salvation. He amuses himself with his opinions quite securely, imagining that he can by one word of his easily do away with the whole doctrine of the apostle at once. Whereas Paul's conclusion is derived thus: because God elects those whom He saves by His own absolute good pleasure, and not from any difference of works in *their* lives from the works and lives of others; *therefore*, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy;" thus making the whole turn on the mercy of God alone. But Pighius thinks that he has made a clean escape when he talks about grace being extended to all, whereas it is due to no one.

Moreover, on page 153 of this same book Calvin writes that Pighius teaches the following:

After this, Pighius, like a wild beast escaped from his cage, rushes forth, bounding over all fences in his way, uttering such sentiments as these: "The mercy of God is extended to every one, for God wishes all men to be saved; and for that end He stands and

knocks at the door of our heart, desiring to enter. Therefore, those were elected before the foundation of the world, by whom He foreknew He should be received. But God hardens no one, excepting by His forbearance, in the same manner as too fond parents ruin their children by excessive indulgence.

We do well, to understand what Calvin writes about the revealed will of God, to bear in mind that he is opposing this teaching of Pighius. That God, in His revealed will, wills the salvation of all, must always be understood in connection with the external calling, and this external calling always rests upon a condition. Repeatedly Calvin declares that the hidden will of God is the unchangeable origin of all things, and that God did not merely permit the destruction of the ungodly but that He willed it. And then Calvin means the universal calling, when he treats God's revealed will; that this universal calling invites all men, without exception, to salvation; that this will of God must never be explained as in any sense in conflict with God's hidden will, but that he invites all men upon a certain condition, namely faith; and that the Lord witnesses to all men that he who believes shall be saved. In other words, the Lord, when inviting all men to salvation through the preaching of the gospel, calling all men unto salvation, declares, sets forth the truth that He saves only those who believe. This is plain from Calvin's explanation of Ezek. 33:11, according to III, 24,15:

But as objections are frequently raised from some passages of Scripture, in which God seems to deny that the destruction of the wicked is caused by His decree, but that, in opposition to His remonstrances, they voluntarily bring ruin upon themselves, — let us show by a brief explication that they are not at all inconsistent with the foregoing doctrine. A passage is produced from Ezekiel, where God says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." If this is to be extended to all mankind, why does he not urge many to repentance, whose minds are more flexible to obedience than those of others, who grow more and more callous to his daily invitations? Among the inhabitants of Ninevah and Sodom, Christ Himself declares that His evangelical preaching and miracles would have brought forth more fruit than in Judea. How is it, then, if God will have all men to be saved, that He opens not the gate of repentance to those miserable men who would be more ready to receive the favour? Hence we perceive it to be a violent perversion of the passage, if the will of God, mentioned by the prophet, be set in opposition to His eternal counsel, by which He has distinguished the elect from the reprobate. Now, if we inquire the genuine sense of the prophet, his only meaning is to inspire the penitent with hopes of pardon. And this is the sum, that it is beyond a doubt that God is ready to pardon sinners immediately on their conversion. Therefore He wills not their death, inasmuch as He wills their repentance. But experience teaches, that

He does not will the repentance of those whom He externally calls, in such a manner as to affect all their hearts. Nor should He on this account be charged with acting deceitfully; for, though His external call only renders those who hear without obeying it inexcusable, yet it is justly esteemed the testimony of God's grace, by which He reconciles men to Himself. Let us observe, therefore, the design of the prophet in saying that God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner; it is to assure the pious of God's readiness to pardon them immediately on their repentance, and to show the impious the aggravation of their sin in rejecting such great compassion and kindness of God. Repentance, therefore, will always be met by Divine mercy; but on whom repentance is bestowed, we are clearly taught by Ezekiel himself, as well as by all the prophets and apostles.

Note, please, in the above quotation, how carefully Calvin maintains the unchangeable counsel of God, also in his explanation of Ezekiel 33:11, and that he emphasizes the particular character of the call of God as it is directed to men through the preaching of the gospel. If the Lord would have all men to be saved, why, asks Calvin, does the Lord not provide all men with the opportunity of repentance by having His gospel preached to all men. And the reformer declares the same thought in his explanation of I Tim. 2:4. Indeed, in this explanation of Ezek. 33:11 Calvin identifies God's revealed will with the external calling; that this calling must be explained out of God's hidden will, and that, in this external calling, which comes to all who hear the gospel without distinction, God does not will the salvation of all, but merely proclaims what is pleasing to Him, namely that the repentant does not perish but is saved. Calvin teaches that it is God's purpose to assure the pious of their salvation, and never does Calvin teach that a certain favour of God goes out to the wicked in the preaching of the gospel.

Common Grace, as expressed in the Second Point, speaks of a restraint of sin by the Holy Spirit, within the life of the individual sinner. In contrast, Calvin teaches in his Institutes that there is such a restraint of God only in connection with his outward deeds, although we may add that the reformer speaks only very seldom of God's restraining power in relation to the sinner.

Point Three teaches that God, without renewing the heart, works in man by His Holy Spirit, enabling him to do good before God; the natural man does not always perform that which is evil in the sight of the Lord. This conception is in violent conflict with all the writings of Calvin. It would require too much space and time to quote all the passages of Calvin relative this matter. We will have opportunity to call attention to a few of these passages in our following article, but we may certainly declare at this time that the noted reformer was surely not in sympathy with the view which sets forth the "good that sinners do."

From Holy Writ

The Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE NECESSITY THAT THE HEAVENLY THINGS THEMSELVES BE PURIFIED – continued (Hebrews 9:23, 24)

The reason why the heavenly things themselves need to be sanctified, and that, too, with better things than mere sacrifices of goats and bullocks is clearly stated in the text. The Old Testament tabernacle and its sacrifices were mere “copies” of the real and heavenly. They were mere means to show by representation what the corresponding reality is!

These copies were sanctified by sacrifices of goats and bullocks on the annual day of atonement.

However, the heavenly things themselves also needed to be purified. Truly, it is not easy to conceive of this rather mystical presentation of this heavenly reality. We think of heaven as being pure and holy *per se*. Yes, the earth is in our conception the place where sin reigned. And thus, in our thinking, we make it difficult to conceive of this matter. It ought to be rather obvious, however, that the writer to the Hebrews is thinking of heaven from the point of view of it being the place where a sinful people is to meet a holy God, and stand before His face. Heaven is God’s throne and the earth is His footstool. And heaven is here looked at from the view-point that it is where the throne of grace is. It is the place which was portrayed by the ark of the covenant, whereupon, on the great day of atonement, the blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat. Here justice and mercy kissed each other. And, where this blood is sprinkled, sin is removed, and there is a new and living way to God. From the view-point of the people to whom the Mediator represents before the throne in heaven, heaven, and the very center of the heaven, as the place where the saints meet God, must be purified as a place where God would have his rest with His people forever!

These heavenly things, and heaven itself, the dwelling-place of redeemed men and angels, must be cleansed with better sacrifices than these mere typical sacrifices! It must be done by the one sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, now in the end of the ages!

And what is the confirmation and evidence, that there was a better sacrifice necessary than those of the Old Testament dispensation? The convincing evidence is in the *fact* that Christ, the anointed high priest after the order of Melchizedek, has entered into the very heavens itself. The fact of Christ’s ascension from Mount Olivet is the proof. He has passed through the very heavens. He has entered into the holy place

through (*dia*) his own blood. No, he did not enter into the holy place *with* his blood, but by *means* of His blood. Because of the suffering of death he is crowned with glory and honor! (Hebrews 2:9; 9:11, 12; Philipians 2:8, 9 ff.) It is not so, that Christ’s priestly work began after his ascension, as was taught by Socinius. The atonement was accomplished on the Cross once and for all; the intercession is such that now he ever lives in the sanctuary to pray for us. (Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28). Although, therefore, Christ’s high priestly task did not begin after his ascension, yet it has a very strong seal of God in it that his sacrifice was the sacrifice which had the power to purify the heavenly temple itself. It is the real purification of the true, the real temple of God. Were this not the case Christ would not have been admitted into the most holy place of heaven!

This ought to sink deep into our souls! It must have required a better sacrifice than that of bullocks and goats. No earthly high priest ever entered into heaven itself to represent us. Who among mortals ever ascended where the angels cover their faces, and where the *trishagion* resounds day and night, and where the very cherubims cover their faces because of the glory! But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor. It was for the suffering of death, tasting raw death at Golgotha! His sacrifice was the ticket to enter the heavenly portals!

Now may all the saints sing: Hallelujah. He went to prepare a place for us in heaven itself; it will be our dwelling-place forever. And his very presence in heaven is the evidence that He is the better sacrifice, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world! What was a necessity of the justice of God has now become a reality. Justice and mercy have kissed each other. The justice of God is satisfied in the better sacrifice!

Only thus, when God’s justice is satisfied, can the Christ appear before God for us.

CHRIST’S PRESENT MANIFESTATION BEFORE GOD FOR US. (Hebrews 9:24b)

The truth taught here in Hebrews 9:24 b, is a tremendous argument. It is also a great consolation for the sinner as he seeks the throne of grace. It is the truth which Paul denominates with the “yea, rather.” Yes, Christ died, “yea rather, who is even at the right hand of God, who intercedes for us.” (Rom. 8:34) It is a further and greater benefit of the sufferings of Christ, and a sure indication that “God is for (*hyper*) us.” He is

for us in Christ! NOTHING shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus! There is condemnation in respect to *nothing* in all the world . . . for us!

Now, right now, in distinction from the time before Christ's suffering on the Cross, Christ is shown in his official capacity before the face of God. He is shown in his official ministry. Here we see Christ in his official place to which he was exalted — greater than any priest of Aaron's house. He is in heaven in our behalf!

Not all have conceived of this appearance of Christ before the face of God in our behalf in the same way. We do have here the general notion of the advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. (I John 2:1 ff.)

Modern theologians, who do not take the death of Christ seriously (Socinians, c.s.) consider it enough to teach that Christ's intercession is nothing more than his continued intervention or *agency* in the salvation of his people. The Lutherans, at least many of them, insist that the intercession is *vocalis* (vocally) *verbalis* (verbally) and *localis* (locally). However, the Reformed theologians consider it enough to say: (1) Christ's appearing before God in our behalf, as the sacrifice for our sins as our high priest, is done on the ground of his work; it is for this that we receive the remission of sins, the Holy Ghost and all the needed good things of salvation. (2) Due to Christ's appearance before God for us we receive a defense against the sentence of the law, and the cruel charges of Satan, who is our great adversary. (3) Before the face of God Christ offers himself as our surety, not only that the demands of justice are met, but also that his people shall be obedient and faithful. (4) Christ presents the persons of those who are redeemed, sanctifying our prayers and all our services, rendering us acceptable to God, through the savor of his merits. (Compare: Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 592; Hoeksema's *Reformed Dogmatics*, page 374. ff.; "Death Of The Son Of God," page 114).

Let it not be forgotten that Christ went to heaven with this expressed purpose, according to the text. He must save us to the uttermost. All that he merited for us in his death on the Cross must be applied to his exaltation at God's right hand, by means of his intercession for us before the face of God!

This proves that his is the greater sacrifice than that brought by Aaron's priesthood on the typical day of atonement. (Compare: Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 26, 28; 10:10, 12, 14; 13:12)

THE "ONCE" OF THE SUFFERING OF CHRIST (Hebrews 9:25, 26)

Christ suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust, only one time. It never will be repeated. God does not ask payment twice. Justice satisfied cannot be undone! And Christ died at his own time for the ungodly. It was at the end of the ages!

The writer to the Hebrews draws a sharp contrast here. He contrasts the difference between the one sacrifice brought once (*hapax*) and the sacrifices in the Old Testament which were many. (*pollakis*) He is not merely stating a fact; rather he is arguing a certain point here. The point which he is making so very ably is that all the former sacrifices were a rather endless repetition; an annual event of a rite and service which was self-perpetuating in that it never was able to cleanse from the guilt and power of sin! The O.T. high priest came with the blood of one who was wholly other than the priest (*alliotrioo*). That priest did not and could not come with his own blood. Christ sacrificed Himself! Through the eternal Spirit he offers up himself to God. But, and this is the point of argument, Jesus did not come to offer up himself often! Had he had to offer himself only once more, then it would prove that he would be in the same class with the offerings of the Old Testament. We would need to see the Cross erected many times from the foundation of the world. He would also need to have *died often*. There is no offering without death and the shedding of blood. Had God required Christ to die once more — then God would have said: the Lamb must be delivered once more for the sins of the people! But in this case, Christ would have had to suffer often!

But no! The suffering of the Son of God was in these last days. Four thousand years had gone by. Many transgressions were committed under the first covenant; yea, from the time of the fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise. But all waited, waited! It must await this, the consummation of the ages, the fulness of times. Then the Son is born from a woman, and made under the law! And then he comes. He is now manifested in his true worth and value. He stands manifest up to the present moment as the complete and only sacrifice for our sins. The verb in the Greek is perfect passive: *pephanerootai*. God has set him forth a propitiation for our sins!

It is only "once" that Christ suffers!

The conclusion is that there is absolutely not any reason left for Christ dying twice!

Christ came to abolish sin. (*eis atheteesin tees hamartias*). He did exactly that! He entirely set aside sin, did away with *sin*! He abolished sin which had its inception in the heart of the Devil, the Father of the lie. He abolished, nullified sin altogether as it had come into the world through the sin of man, Adam! Sin is gone! It is no more. There is no more guilt of sin, and the power of sin is broken. He came and destroyed the works of the devil at Calvary! The Cross need, nay, may never more be erected. Standing in the end of the ages its towers over sin and death. What Christ died, he died once; what he lives, he lives unto God.

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The Strength of Youth

The Error of Situation Ethics

Rev. J. Kortering

Proper criticism of another's position includes two things: an exposing of their error on the basis of the Word of God, and a positing of the truth which is demanded of us according to the Scriptures. These two aspects of criticism are inseparably related, they form the two poles that attract attention. If we as covenant youth are going to be completely polarized by the Word of God, we must not only see how the world is wrong, we must also know what it is to be right.

Our purpose in this article is to consider the negative pole: we aim to consider how those who advocate and practice situation ethics are wrong on the basis of the Scriptures. The Lord willing, we shall consider the positive aspect in our next article.

Having set forth the criteria of criticism, we at once realize the difficulty we face in exposing the error of situation ethics. The difficulty is this, that we have no common basis upon which we can stand with them.

It is true that we could criticize this view from a purely social point of view. This is done today by some leading anthropologists, sociologists, and even politicians. They do not claim any allegiance whatever to the Word of God, although most of them want to be known as Christians. Their criticism is not on a Scriptural basis; rather they have problems from a social point of view. They openly admire the situational approach to morals, yet they have problems with it. The main problem deals with the practical application of this view of morals. They ask how will this affect society and man in his social environment. If it is true that *any* act is justifiable and good, provided it be performed lovingly, how can there be order in society? They wrestle, and correctly so, with the problem of community behavior, law enforcement, and controls upon the citizen. If murder, adultery, stealing are lawful acts if done in love, who will judge this and who will control the citizen who has no love? Will this not lead to chaos in society?

This criticism is, of course, correct. If anything is right because it is done in love and does not harm the neighbor, but helps him, and another thing is wrong because it is done in hatred and hurts the neighbor, then the door is open for personal subjective ideas of love and good, hate and hurt. This is the autonomy of the individual in the extreme, and a destruction of any social order.

Our critical approach however, is not social, but Scriptural. Here we find it difficult to present to the situationist any convincing criticism. The reason is that

the only foundation upon which a Christian can stand is the Word of God. The adherents to situation ethics pay lip service to the Bible, but in reality deny it. If we cannot stand with them on the Bible, we have no common ground whatsoever. Here then, we must realize that our purpose is not to convince *them*, for then we would have to digress and first consider the more fundamental question of the authority of the Scriptures. We aim rather, to see for ourselves as covenant young people, that situation ethics is incompatible with the faith of one who truly believes the Word of God.

We stated before that one who denies the authority of Scripture tries to construct a "theology" on the foundation of Humanism and will inevitably end with a "morality" of the same nature. The structure of their world-and-life-view is built upon the crumbling foundation of Man.

The basic criticism of situation ethics is that the advocates have a wrong view of God. This is not to say that they differ on some "minor points", if that is conceivable when speaking of God; rather they *deny* the God of Revelation! Bishop Robinson makes this plain in his book, *Honest to God*. Having ridiculed the Biblical view of a Personal God, and having reduced God to some abstract notion of "ground of being", he accuses those who teach that God is Personal and that all His dealings with Israel were in fact real historical events through which He revealed Himself to them, as believing in an idol. Robinson accuses *us* of idolatry. "But I have a great deal of sympathy also with those who call themselves atheists. For the God they are tilting against, the God they honestly feel they cannot believe in, is so often an image of God instead of God, a way of conceiving him which has become an idol," page 126.

Their rejection of the God revealed in the Scriptures is the fruit of their acceptance of Humanism, which basically maintains that God exists for man and not man for God. The only reason the situationists even want to talk about a god and hold to any idea of a god, is that they recognize that the presence of some divine being lends a new dimension to man's life. Without holding to some idea of a god, man is no different than a beast. To make this possible they deny God's sovereignty and make Him lower than man. This is a terrible sin. We do well to remind ourselves that God is upon the throne and never is dependent upon man for His existence; rather is man dependent upon God. The

words of Rom. 11:33-36 express this beautifully, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? Or who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him and through him and to him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Quite naturally, this wrong view of God leads to a wrong conception of the law of God. According to the situationists, the law of God is reduced to a simple slogan, "Love, only love." They reject all ideas of God giving to man certain warnings concerning specific sins and certain demands concerning things that must be done. According to them, nothing is wrong in itself, and nothing is right in itself; it all depends upon the situation. If one is motivated by love, if one has a purpose that is compatible with love, if one uses loving means, and if one produces consequences that are loving, then any deed, no matter what it may be, is

right not only, but also good. This may include stealing, murder, adultery, or whatever.

Here too, it is obvious that their conception of law is based upon man, not God. This idea of law begins and ends in the judgment of man and not in the judgment of God. God says only one thing, *love*; and man has to determine for himself how he will carry out this requirement.

This contradicts the Scriptural idea of law. God is our covenant Father, and as such He determines for Himself on what basis He will conclude this covenant life. The prelude to the pronouncement of the Ten Commandments makes this plain, "I am the Lord thy God." Then God spells out in complete detail (10 words) what He requires as the only basis upon which He will be our God and we will be His people. God's law is the sphere within which He is a God of divine love and fellowship and outside of which He is a God of wrath and punishment.

(To be continued)

BOOK REVIEWS

Prof. Herman Hanko

LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH GROWTH, by W.R. Read, V.M. Monterroso and H.A. Johnson; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969; 421 pp., \$8.95.

This book is necessary reading for all who are interested in or contemplating missionary work in South or Central America. It contains a complete and exhaustive survey of evangelical (Protestant) missions in that continent. It discusses the many problems, gains, and difficulties of the work there against the background of excellent discussions of the social, political, economic and ecclesiastical problems of the area. The value of the book is greatly enhanced by many graphs covering all aspects of the work. The book is the result of several years of study.

The book does not cover missionary work in the Caribbean Islands and will be of little help in our present work in Jamiaca. The weakness of the book is a discouraging and unBiblical preoccupation with numerical growth.

H.H.

THE EARLY CHURCH, by Henry Chadwick; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968; 304 pp., \$6.95.

This first volume of "The Pelican History of the Church" covering the period from the apostles to John of Damascus is a very readable and interesting description of this most important period in church history. Recommended for schools and homes.

H.H.

LIFE IN ONE'S STRIDE, by Kenneth Hamilton; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969; 91 pp., \$1.45 (paper).

A fairly well-balanced introduction to the life and thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian who died at the hands of the Nazis just before the end of World War II. Many writings on Bonhoeffer (and they have multiplied almost beyond number) seem to read too much into him; and many developments since Bonhoeffer which are supposed to be rooted in Bonhoeffer's thought are outrageous impositions. The book tries to set the whole matter in balance and succeeds on the whole.

H.H.

REPAID A HUNDREDFOLD, by Charles A. Leonard, Sr.; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969; 363 pp., \$4.95.

Charles Leonard, for many years a missionary to mainland China before the Communist takeover, to Northern Manchuria, and Hawaii, tells of his experiences in this autobiography. Though extremely disconnected and skimpy on material which would help towards a study of missions, the book makes interesting reading.

H.H.

News From Our Churches

Nov. 15, 1969

Rev. R. Harbach, pastor of our Kalamazoo Church, travelled to Hudsonville on Nov. 7 to speak at the League Meeting of the Grand Rapids area Prot. Ref. Churches. Under the theme "True Worship Defended," he spoke particularly about those who claim to be "reforming" the liturgy by making it more relevant to the needs of today's church-goers. They rebel against the sacraments (at least, the way we celebrate them), and against the pulpit (they want equal involvement), and even against the pews (they want to sit on the floor). But, as the speaker pointed out, their fundamental error is that they want nothing of *the* mark of the true church — the pure preaching of the Word.

* * *

The annual convention of the teachers of Adams, Hope, Covenant, and South Holland Prot. Ref. schools was held on Nov. 6 and 7 at our new high school. They attended a seminar concerning John Calvin's ideas about education, listened to a captivating speech dealing with the teaching of literature, and participated in an art workshop in which they had an opportunity to demonstrate their ineptitude at sculpturing with clay. In view of the fact that our teachers hold a *separate* convention, the speech by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema on "The Christian and Culture" certainly must have been something of a highlight. He pointed out that the world and all that it contains is of significance only in so far as it can serve the child of God as a *pilgrim* in this earth. May God give our teachers the wisdom necessary to impart *that* kind of knowledge.

* * *

On Nov. 2 there was a farewell program at Hope Church for Rev. G. Lubbers. According to area bulletins, Southwest Church "has graciously consented to release their Pastor" for several months, for work in Jamaica. As pointed out by Rev. Schipper in the introductory remarks at the program, this is no *small* thing, since no congregation desires to see its minister gone for that length of time — especially during the busy time of the year. But, in his words "When God places us on the spot, we don't ask how . . ." The parting words of Rev. Lubbers took the form of a request that our prayers, for which they feel such a deep need, might accompany them. Rev. J. Heys, in the closing remarks, added a little to that. Speaking as a man who knows from experience, he impressed on the minds of the audience how much *letters* are appreciated. That's understandable isn't it? Let's all, then, take that request *seriously*, since, by their own testimony, it serves to lighten the load. The address —

Rev. and Mrs. G. Lubbers

General Delivery

Montego Bay, Jamaica, W. I.

Air mail, at 15c a half ounce, takes 3 or 4 days.
Surface mail, three weeks!

* * *

Speaking of sharing burdens, we find from Hudsonville's bulletin that Rev. H. Veldman will "lead the evening classes of our Southwest Church on Wednesday" during the absence of their pastor. And, from Southeast Church, we learn that on Nov. 16, in the absence of Rev. M. Schipper, who has a classical appointment at Southwest, the "pulpit is scheduled to be supplied in the morning by Seminarian Wayne Bakkering, and in the evening by Seminarian Marvin Kamps".

* * *

According to an October bulletin of Isabel's Hope Church, "it is that very pleasant time of the year when our office-bearers meet with the congregation on family visitation." What a beginning!

* * *

How about this from Lynden's bulletin? That church received a request for "Studies in Biblical Doctrine" by one who had heard from "Dr. G.H. Girod of Grand Rapids . . . that you send your printed material free to those who ask for it." The address of the writer — Queensland, Australia! From Grand Rapids, to Australia, to Lynden! Small world?

* * *

One last item. The public lecture held in Holland, Mich. on Nov. 13 featured Rev. J. Heys, who spoke on "The Measured Steps of the Coming Antichrist". The building in which this lecture was held was none too large, despite the fact that those who attended had to brave the first real area snowfall. Rev. Heys traced the progress of the Antichrist, beginning with his origin in hell, continuing with the development of the man of sin throughout the history of the world, till it reaches its climax in "Satan's masterpiece," the Antichrist as pictured in Revelation 13. At that time, the deadly wound inflicted at the Tower of Babel will be healed, and the whole world will be united under the Antichrist and against the Church of God. But — his number is 666. Therein lies the comfort for God's people — the steps of the Antichrist are *measured*. In God's counsel, each step is determined — as to time and extent. And, as the speaker pointed out, what's even more blessed is that He who measures the steps of the Antichrist, has also measured *ours* — each one, till we reach that kingdom where we will see "God's masterpiece", face to face.

D.R.D.