

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Meditation

The Word of the Cross A Power

Rev. M. Schipper

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

I Corinthians 1: 18.

The power and wisdom of God in the Word of the cross!

This is the theme which the apostle develops not only in the text quoted above, but also in the entire context. He does this by showing, first of all, that the Word of the cross cannot be preached by means of the wisdom of human word. Further, he shows that the power and wisdom of the world God puts to shame by

the foolishness of preaching the Word of the cross. And he finishes off the argument by showing that God exactly chooses to reveal His wisdom, power, and glory through those things which the world counts foolishness. He chooses such a humble thing as the cross to make a crown; and the rejected, despised, crushed, and forsaken Jesus to be Saviour of the world.

In our text the apostle presents the cross of Christ as

God's powerful Word unto salvation! Negatively, it is His power of destruction to those in the process of perishing. Positively, it is His power of salvation to those being saved.

Indeed, the Word of the cross is a power! The word of the cross!

Not the preaching of the cross, as the above translation suggests. The apostle here does not have in mind, at least not in the first place, the medium through which the Word of the cross comes to men. Though it is true that the Word of the cross must also be preached, and God is pleased to have it preached. The text most emphatically does not refer to a word that mere man speaks about the cross.

But literally it is the Word of the cross!

Quite naturally the cross here refers to the cross of Christ! Principally there is only one cross, though there is much which the world, and even the Christian calls cross. One is said to have a cross to bear when things do not go right, when calamities fall upon one. Yet there is only one cross that is of importance to the child of God, and to his faith — and that is the cross of Christ. All other crosses, unless they are related to His, have no real significance. Moreover, we should understand that the apostle uses a figure of speech here. The reference is not so much to the literal cross upon which Jesus was crucified, but to Christ Himself crucified. When Scripture speaks of the cross, therefore, it refers to the historic event, that experience of Christ in time when He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried and descended into hell.

That cross, in that sense of the word, is a Word of God!

In general all things may be said to be words of God. The Word of God is the essence, the meaning of all things He made. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth." By the word of His power He holds and upholds all things in heaven and earth. There is a word of God in the lily of the field. There is a word of God in the cedars of Lebanon. There is a word of God in the sun, moon, and stars; in the lightning which flashes through the sky and the thunder which rolls; it is in the lamb and the lion, in the babbling brook and the tempestuous sea. It is exactly for this reason that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. In all the works of His hands God speaks concerning Himself; though we can no longer understand their language because of sin. It is for this reason, too, that Jesus, the Logos, the Word, could speak as He did in parables, because He could read the Word of God in the creation about Him and interpret its heavenly speech.

Such a Word is also the cross!

It is an eternal thought, a word which God eternally

speaks. And when in time He spoke it, that cross with all its significance came into the sphere of created things. As at the very beginning God said: Let there be light, and there was light; so also He declares: Let there be the cross, and the cross makes its appearance in the very center of history. The way of the cross was ordained by Him. The Christ of the cross was prepared by Him. The Word of God in the cross is its idea, its real meaning. And only as the Word of God is it a power.

But what does the Word of the cross say? What is its contents?

First of all, it is that Word which speaks to us of the necessity of the cross. The highest necessity, of course, is really the necessity of all things; namely, the glory of God. The mediate necessity is the fact of sin. There is no cross or a Word of the cross conceivable unless there is sin. Hence, the fact of sin makes the Word of the cross necessary.

Secondly, the Word of the cross is a revelation of atonement and reconciliation. The fact remains that sin and guilt bring with them the necessity of atonement. And in the Word of the cross there is the revelation of the fact that atonement has been made. God sent His Son into the world to make this atonement. And the Word of the cross is therefore the good news of salvation, life and grace.

Thirdly, the Word of the cross speaks also of the effects of that cross in those atoned for. On the one hand, it speaks of the operation of the graces of salvation in those for whom Christ died, which He merited for them, and which He also by His Spirit gives unto them. And on the other hand, it speaks of the gratitude expressed by the recipients of these benefits. The Word of the cross therefore also speaks of their walking in all good works to God's glory, but also of the effects of that Word in them causing them to do these works. Such, indeed, is the word of the cross as to its contents.

That Word is a power of God!

Never is the Word of the cross a power of impotent man!

Vainly he conceives the thought that it is in his power to discern the meaning of it, and to speak it. He imagines that the Word in itself is a dead letter. It lives, so he thinks, and it has effect only when it is forcibly presented by human power, the power of oratory and persuasion. But this is precisely what the apostle here militates against. He is aware that the Divine logic of the cross is hidden from the eyes of mere man. The apostle is afraid of his own word, of man's wisdom. Such a word of man must of necessity negate, rather attempt to negate the Word of the cross and oppose it. "Not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." Mere natural man, standing at the cross, while gazing upon it may be able to discern a relative difference between

that central cross and that of the malefactors on either side. He may even come to the conclusion that Christ was a good Man Who died for His principles. If he is very religious, he may even condemn those responsible for nailing Christ to the cross. But that there is special significance, he cannot discern. It lies therefore in the nature of the case that the Word of the cross is not ours to speak, not is it our power to save.

Strictly the Word of the cross is God's Word and God's power!

The term "power" is the same word from which our word "dynamic" is derived. It signifies that energy that is capable of bringing something to pass, of accomplishing a certain end. As a dynamo has the ability to generate electricity, so this power of our text produces something. It is God's power wherewith He works. Just as the Word of the cross is a Divine Word, so also as a power it is God's power whereby He accomplishes something according to His good pleasure.

A power of God unto salvation!

Speaking powerfully to us of the righteousness and justice of God over against our sin and guilt; and informing us how terribly displeased He is with that depraved state and condition. Making us, as the publican in the temple, to cry out: O, God be merciful to me the sinner. Speaking to us, too, most powerfully of the God of our salvation, Whose love was so great that He gave His only begotten Son unto the death of the cross, and ordaining that all the vials of His holy wrath should be poured out upon His head, as obediently He bore that wrath until all the vials of it were emptied and none remained over us.

That powerful Word of the cross He speaks not only in the cross itself, but He lays it also in the heart of the apostles and prophets, so that as they received it by infallible inspiration they could write it and speak it. And he operates by the power of that Word through the apostles in the hearts of men.

Hence when we are brought to stand at the foot of the cross at Calvary, we must be silent and hear what God will say to us. Just as at Calvary God insisted on silence when for three hours He caused darkness to descend upon the earth and every mouth was closed in deathly silence, while only He did speak; so standing there in the silence of faith we will hear the Word of the cross speaking. Speaking of His righteousness and wrath over against our sin. No longer will you hear the judgment of the rulers and the mockery of the people, but the thunder and the lightning of His wrath against our sin. You will then be able to hear as each drop of precious blood falls to the ground, and you will tremble in the consciousness that it was not Christ's but our sin that warranted that awful judgment on the hill of the skull. But flee not away in your fright! There is more to hear if you remain silent. You will hear of God as the God of your salvation. Of His eternal, unchangable, boundless love to His people.

This Sufferer on the cross is none other than Jehova, Salvation, Who must save His people from their sins. He is none other than the offended God come down to us in our nature to bear away forever all our offences.

Mystery of mysteries!

God in the flesh, being forsaken of God!

This is, indeed, the very heart of the Word of the cross!

But that Word does more than speak—it saves! By the power of that Word the burden of our sin rolls away. By its power death loses its sting. And by its power righteousness, peace, joy, life, and glory are bestowed upon us. As the God of our salvation He saves us unto the uttermost.

O, indeed, not to all is the Word of the cross a power unto salvation!

Also here, as the Scriptures repeatedly assert, the natural man discerns not the things of the Spirit and of the Word of God.

Verily, the Word of the cross is foolishness to him. Through such a weak and foolish and base thing as a cross, he will not be saved. That there is something wrong with him and with the world, he will admit. That something must be done to save the world, he writes about in all the newspapers and periodicals of our time. But his hope looks for power and wisdom, the philosophy of man to save; rather than the wisdom and power of God. The power of science, the power or armies, peace treaties, social justice—of these he dreams as the only remedy for the mess his world is in. But he will not humble himself before God as a sinner. He continues to boast of his inherent goodness. The cross is foolishness to him. And it is foolishness because he belongs to them that are perishing. And he perishes because he loves his own folly, despising the wisdom and power of God revealed in the cross. And because the Word of the Cross is God's power of death unto death, God accomplishes His purpose in them that perish through the way of their foolishness.

But unto us which are saved and are being saved, the Word of the cross is wisdom and power of God!

According to verse 24, they are the called, both of the Jews and Greeks. To them Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

To them the Word of the cross is the Word of God Who saves them. It makes them to be burdened with the knowledge of their sin and guilt. It makes them to be weary and heavy laden. It makes them to flee to Jesus, the Rest-giver, where at the foot of His cross they are plunged in the fountain of His blood, and all their guilty stains are washed away. They know they are righteous before God — and in the judgment shall be justified before all, men, angels, devils.

And day by day they are being saved. They go from strength to strength until everyone appears in Zion. In the midst of the battle of faith the Word of the cross sustains them. In the shadows of death it is their rod

and staff. And in the morning of the resurrection they shall hear it once more calling them out of the corruption of the flesh to stand in newness of life in

the assembly of the elect in life that is eternal.
Thanks be unto God for that Word!

Editorials

EDITOR'S NOTES

Elsewhere in this issue the annual reports of the Board of our Reformed Free Publishing Association appear. Your editor delivered a brief speech at the rather poorly attended annual meeting, and was asked to place this speech in the *Standard Bearer*. This will appear in a later issue, D.V.

* * * *

Work is proceeding as rapidly as possible on "Therefore Have I Spoken." This is the title of the forthcoming biography of the Rev. Herman Hoeksema written by Gertrude Hoeksema. By the time the next issue comes out, we hope to have definite information

as to publication date and advance orders.

* * * *

Those interested in the work in Jamaica should take special note of Rev. Hey's articles on "Sowing The Seed," beginning in this issue.

* * * *

Your attention is called to the Book Review department in this issue. Prof. Hanko's review of the booklet dealing with Bible-reading is especially significant because it treats a subject which is vital to a correct understanding of the so-called "new theology" of today.

What Next?

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From time to time the *Standard Bearer* has reported and commented on the situation in the Netherlands, particularly in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. This is done for more than one reason. Partly, the reason is a general interest in and concern about trends and developments in the Reformed community at large. Partly, the reason lies in the fact that the Netherlands is historically the cradle of the Reformed faith for Calvinists of Dutch ancestry; and specifically, the *Gereformeerde Kerken* are for many of us, — over the span of a few generations, — the mother church. Partly, too, the reason lies in the strong influence which the *Gereformeerde Kerken* have always exercised upon ecclesiastical and theological trends in Reformed churches in this country; whether for good or for bad, that there has long been, and still is, such an influence cannot be denied. And, therefore, partly the reason lies in the fact that in connection with developments in "the old country" there are lessons to be learned and warnings to be sounded (and heeded!) for Reformed Christians in this country and in Canada.

One of the most informative (and, in my opinion, dependable) papers from the Netherlands is *Waarheid en Eenheid* (*Truth and Unity*), a paper which popularly

has come to be known as the "voice of the Verontrusten (Alarmed Ones)" in the Dutch churches, though officially it disdains this name and prefers to be called "Organ for Reformed Life." This paper reports on and usually furnishes rather sound comment on almost every move and expression of the large segment of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* which is devoted to the so-called "new theology." The latter is the theological trend which is probably associated most readily in the minds of our readers with the name of Dr. H. M. Kuitert, professor in the school of theology at the Free University of Amsterdam, and also, by the way, one of the advisors at this year's General Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. But Dr. Kuitert is by no means the only liberal, it must be remembered. The dreadful fact is that the liberals dominate the scene, both in the schools (Amsterdam and Kampen) and in the churches, so that 90% in the Dutch churches are in favor of this liberal theology (according to Dr. van Swigchem, the Dutch churches' fraternal delegate to the last Christian Reformed Synod).

But I am running ahead of my story. One of the most outspoken critics of the advocates of the new theology is Dr. M. J. Arntzen, who, though not listed

among the staff of the above-named paper, frequently contributes to its columns. Dr. Arntzen has been critical from the beginning of this trend; he was probably one of the first to criticize it in the Netherlands. Lately, however, it seems to me that he has become more outspoken and militant in his criticism, — and rightly so. However that may be, he recently wrote a brief article in the July 22nd issue of “Waarheid en Eeenheid” in which he paints a very dark picture of the situation in the Netherlands. There are several items in that article on which I would like to comment. For the present, however, I will comment on the main item in the article, the one which led to Dr. Arntzen’s title, “Bewildering Language” and to the question in the title above this editorial, “What Next?”

Dr. Arntzen in this article reports on an interview with Professors Kuitert and D.C. Mulder (both of the Free University) which was carried in *De Spiegel*, another Dutch paper. He writes as follows (I translate):

“To Profs. Kuitert and Mulder the question was put whether they *still* (this little word *still* is indeed characteristic) believe in a heaven. The answer was deeply disappointing.

“After having once more set forth his noteworthy view of Scripture, Kuitert teaches: ‘Now that we are increasingly in a position on earth to bring christianity into practice, there is less and less of the idea that salvation lies somewhere beyond the horizon. . . or that damnation, hell (lies beyond the horizon). Both lie on this side of the horizon.’ Kuitert also says that in connection with the hereafter we can think of nothing concrete. And if you can think of nothing concrete, is it then indeed still reality?”

Dr. Arntzen goes on to write that according to the same interview Kuitert is in favor of the revolution and violence of today and makes propaganda in favor of civil disorder.

Do you wonder that when I read of this, I said to myself, “What next?”

Imagine! One who occupies the chairs of dogmatics and ethics in the school of Abraham Kuyper, one who teaches the future ministers and theologians of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, one who presumes to ask in one of his popularly written booklets (written for the common people of the churches) “Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?”, one who sits as advisor at the General Synod, one who has signed and presumably subscribes to the Three Forms of Unity, — imagine that such an one denies in a public magazine the idea of a heaven and hell hereafter! Imagine that such an one puts himself on the side of the revolution and violence of today!

It seems almost like yesterday that questions were raised about the nature and authority of Holy Scripture, that questionable and deviating opinions were expressed on this score, that spokesmen of the Dutch churches began to talk about evolution and began to

overthrow the historically Reformed position of the churches about creation and the fall.

And today?

Heaven and hell are openly denied! The completely modernistic and humanistic idea of a heaven and hell in this present time and on this side of the horizon is brazenly promulgated. Revolution and lawlessness are preached, something that stands foursquare over against the Biblical injunction to be in submission to the powers that be, who are ordained of God.

What next?

And yet, when one calmly thinks into the situation, this is not so amazing. When this writer thinks back to Dr. Kuitert’s first speech to the Christian Reformed Ministers conference, less than two years ago, and recalls the fact that Kuitert in that speech flouted all that was ever Reformed, so that there was not the semblance of a sympathetically Reformed note in that speech, — then it is not so amazing, nor bewildering, that Kuitert should now express himself as he does.

Still more. When one considers that when these theologians attack the Scriptures, they destroy the very foundations of the truth, attack and deny the very source of all knowledge of the truth, then it is quite understandable that sooner or later they are *bound* to deny not only the reality of heaven and hell, but ALL of the precious truths of revelation.

The amazing and bewildering thing about this is the tremendously rapid speed with which all these evil developments come. Time was when it would take many years for this evil leaven to work through. Today it happens overnight! A sign of the times! We are rushing, literally rushing, toward the end!

Another amazing and bewildering aspect of this development is the fact that the churches not only stand virtually paralysed over against this trend, but put their blessing on it. The vast majority agree with it, we are told. There is an almost complete lack of doctrinal discipline. There are but a few minority voices raised against it. The question will not be downed: “When the Son of Man cometh, will he find faith on the earth? A sign of the times!”

And still another bewildering aspect to me is that on this side of the ocean there seem to be so few, so pitifully few, who are even sufficiently interested and concerned to take warning and to be stirred to reformatory action. For make no mistake! There are friends and adherents of Kuitert and his fellows on this side of the Atlantic too. Recently someone claimed that there were many of them (50%), for example, in the Christian Reformed denomination. I do not believe this; I believe there are many more. Perhaps they are not open friends. But they are not open and avowed enemies. They are “at ease in Zion.” And he who is not an enemy of these church-destroyers is, even though passively, their friend and protector.

It is later than you think!

All Around Us

Divisions in the RCA The Irish Religious Struggle McIntire's Manifesto Bad News From The Netherlands

Prof. H. Hanko

DIVISIONS IN THE RCA

It was reported earlier in this column that at the last General Synod of the Reformed Church of America the delegates decided to face squarely the differences within the denomination—differences which were brought forcibly to the foreground by the defeat of the merger proposals that had been studied for many years to unite the RCA with the Presbyterian Church US (Southern). The decision itself called for a committee to attempt to reconcile the differences between the “conservative” and “liberal” wings of the Church if this were possible; and, if this failed, to consider the possibility of appointing a committee to study the dissolution of the denomination.

In an issue of the *Presbyterian Journal* an article appeared written by Russell E. Horton in which the background of this decision is sketched.

The article explains that at a meeting of the General Synod Executive Committee held on April 7-8, 1969 a motion was passed which read:

That the GESC request the chairman to name an Ad Hoc Committee composed of two persons from each Particular Synod to meet at Chicago-O'Hare for two days to confer together concerning the problems which have merged out of the defeat of the Plan of Union, and further that the members of the Ad Hoc Committee represent the leadership and reflect the thinking of the points of view implicit in the pro and con of the Plan of Union.

This article is a report of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee. It is not necessary to describe in detail the meeting. What is of interest is the fact that towards the end of the meeting the chairman asked each “side” to state their case and explain what they wanted from the other “side” if reconciliation was to be achieved in the Church. A Western delegate summed up the differences in five points and stated what he believed the salvation of the Reformed Church required. These were:

- 1) No more involvement in COCU. 2) Withdrawal from the NCC. 3) The right of the West to control the policies and programs of the RCA for a while. 4) Western control of the theological education at least in Western Seminary. 5) Sincerity in the signing of

the doctrinal formulary by all ministers licensed and ordained in the RCA.

In the discussion of these points the differences appeared very sharply. The East insisted that there was perhaps some room for negotiation on some of the points. But Eastern delegates flatly refused to consider the first two: withdrawal from COCU and the NCC. And a great deal of discussion was aroused by the fifth, with the Eastern delegates insisting that the creeds should not be binding upon the ministers and office-bearers, but that freedom of thought and theological expression be permitted. It was here that the deep doctrinal divisions became especially apparent.

After lengthy discussion, a delegate from the East suggested that perhaps the delegates ought to consider the possibility of the two segments in the Church going their separate ways. A lot of discussion followed concerning the advisability of this as well as the implementation of such a plan should the General Synod decide to do this. It was finally decided that the Ad Hoc Committee would simply recommend to the General Synod Executive Committee that they make a study of the possibility of a split in the Church.

The author seems to favor the idea of a split, but he is insistent also upon the fact that since the West successfully defeated the merger plan, they should be permitted to maintain the Church while those who disagree with them should simply step outside the denomination.

This was the background to Synod's decisions. It shows how deeply the differences have cut in the RCA. That the Church has the courage and honesty to face the fact is commendable.

THE IRISH RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

It is only because the recent rioting in Northern Ireland has such profound religious implications that we comment on the matter in these columns.

It is, at bottom, a religious struggle indeed. The Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland, arrayed on one side of the barricades, claim that the issues are political and economic. They claim that they are an oppressed

minority, denied due representation in political decisions and discriminated against in housing, jobs, etc.

The Protestants, on the other hand, claim that the issue is really an attempt on the part of the Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland, allied with the Catholic majority in Southern Ireland to take over Northern Ireland and suppress Protestantism. The religious issues go back to the Reformation.

Bernadette Devlin, a 22-year old member of the British House of Commons and a supporter of the Roman Catholic cause, has recently toured this country to raise money to help her oppressed countrymen. She was accused however, of being a Communist and of wanting to make Ireland a Socialist State. She was opposed in this country by Dr. Carl McIntire who claims credit for her sudden and unexpected return to Ireland before her purpose was accomplished.

More recently Dr. Ian Paisley has toured the country with Dr. McIntire in an effort to contradict the propaganda of Miss Devlin. Dr. Paisley is the leader of the Protestants in North Ireland and has led many protest marches. He has, in fact, spent some time in jail for leading these marches or demonstrations in the past and is, in some measure, responsible for the rioting that has torn the country apart.

It is not our intention to judge the issues and to take sides in the struggle. But it is our intention to express sorrow at the fact that the cause of Christ has become associated in Ireland with political struggles, religious rioting and destroyed cities. Paisley claims to be a conservative Protestant who is intent on maintaining the principles of the Reformation against the encroaching power of Roman Catholicism and false ecumenism. No doubt he is; he and his denomination are members of the ICCC of which the president is Dr. McIntire. But all the more shame to him. He has taken recourse to physical power, to the coercion of demonstrations and parades and protest marches to defend the truth. He has, in the words of Scripture, trusted in chariots and horses when he ought to be trusting in God. He cannot shake off responsibility for the riots which have resulted in murder, arson, hatred and bloodshed. By doing so he has brought the scorn of the world upon the Church. He has given occasion for the ungodly to blaspheme — as anyone who has read the secular Press will know. He has given conservative Protestantism (whatever the justice of his cause) a bad name by identifying the cause of the gospel with power struggles. And Dr. McIntire, one who has consistently supported Ian Paisley, has done the same. This is sad. They must assume responsibility for the reproach that has been heaped on the Church.

MCINTIRE'S MANIFESTO

We reported in this column that James Forman, a leader of black militants, has been presenting his "Black Manifesto" in various Church assemblies over the

course of the summer and fall. He has insisted that the Churches owe him and his blacks \$500,000,000 (a figure which has grown to \$2 billion) in reparations for all the evil the Churches have inflicted on the blacks over the years. Some Church groups are considering his demands. Others have already paid money.

But now McIntire has made his own "Manifesto". In it he claims an equal amount of money from liberal churches for the harm they have done to him and to the cause of the gospel over the years. Because Forman first read his "Manifesto" in Riverside Church in New York, it was to that Church that McIntire made his way to present his own private demands. Appearing at a Sunday service, McIntire proceeded down the aisle shortly before the service was to begin, mounted the pulpit and made preparations to read his document to the assembled people. The minister came to the pulpit and insisted that he not do this. McIntire protested that, since they had permitted Forman to read his document, they should also permit McIntire to read his. But the minister refused. With a parting remark that he would never disrupt a service or break the law, McIntire departed from the sanctuary to read his document to a crowd assembled on the steps outside and to nail the paper above the door of the Church.

McIntire has insisted that it was wrong of Forman to write such a Manifesto. He has argued not only that the Manifesto is wrong because it is a "blueprint for revolution"; not only because Forman disrupts church meetings; but because Forman has no right to make monetary claims on the Churches. Now McIntire does it himself. It all seems like a bad joke. But McIntire appears to be in earnest in his demands. At any rate, this surely is not the way to preach the gospel and promote the cause of Jesus Christ. Such action too brings reproach on the Church. Must McIntire adopt the methods of the ungodly? Must he use the instruments of force and coercion to gain the ends of the kingdom?

Why don't the McIntires and the Paisleys mind the business of the Church and be busy in preaching the gospel instead of using the tactics of wicked men to try to help the cause of the gospel? They do the cause of the gospel irreparable harm with their strange antics.

BAD NEWS FROM THE NETHERLANDS

At the last Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, Dr. Douwe Van Swigchem addressed the Synod in his capacity of fraternal delegate from the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. In his speech he spoke quite frankly about the many new changes which have come about in the Gereformeerde Kerken and confirmed that these Churches have drifted far down the liberal road. His speech was quoted in *The Banner*. We can only give a brief summary of his remarks.

He spoke first of some "minor changes" in the

Psalmbook and in the liturgy, and mentioned the fact that there were many experimental services being conducted in the Churches back home in which new liturgical forms were being tried.

He also spoke of the fact that women officebearers were now taking places in the Church.

But thirdly he spoke of doctrinal changes, especially with respect to the decision of 1967 which revoked the resolutions of Assen in 1926.

We quote a few excerpts.

...The Word of God should not be identified with *our* explanations, traditions, doctrines, and even confessions.

One's opinions of the *meaning* of some chapters or books of the Bible may change, and it is always a doubtful and dangerous way when the church declares *one* exegesis obligatory.

Why then be alarmed when we are aware that we have to look for the meaning of the first chapters of Genesis in another direction than our fathers did? If I believe—as I do—that God gave us a marvelous picture in Genesis 1 of his almighty deeds in the creation of the world, am I really to believe that He intended to instruct us that the sun was created after the creation of the earth or three days after the creation of light itself? No. . .

Many of us are convinced, and are convinced by

the evidence of Scripture itself, even by the inspired words used, that we have to look upon chapters 2 and 3, in the same way.

... Nobody in our churches however is obliged to think the same way as here expressed. But the vast majority in our church is convinced that it would be *wrong* to insist that the literal exegesis of all the details of Genesis 3 ought to be declared the only true faith.

This is the opinion not only of one or two professors, but of all faculty members both in Amsterdam, *and* in Kampen.

The speaker then went on to discuss the reasons why the Netherlands was so far advanced in these respects over the American Churches. He estimates that only about 10% of the members of his Church are "concerned" while 50% of the Christian Reformed Church do not favor such interpretations. He finds two reasons. One was the war. The other was the fact that finally the Church has begun to come of its shell and confront the world. And in confrontation with the world, in an effort to bring the gospel to the world, the Church has had to adjust its position to make itself relevant.

He urged upon the Christian Reformed Church to hasten to turn the corner that the Gereformeerde Kerken have already turned.

In His Fear

SOWING THE SEED

Rev. John A. Heys

It was suggested at Synod in June that the report which the emissaries of 1968 filed with the Mission Committee, and which was read at the 1969 Synod, be published so that our people could "get the feel" of the work being accomplished on the Island of Jamaica.

Although this is not strictly a matter for the rubric *In His Fear*, we present it here for your information. And we suggest that the 1969 emissaries follow it up with a report of their experiences. An uninformed people cannot be an interested people. Besides, our people, who gave so freely for the poor in Jamaica and continue to collect for the building of and improving of the churches of these brethren and sisters in the Lord, have a right to know what is being done there, and to know something of the problems in that field.

Our plan is to present this lengthy report in three or four issues of the *Standard Bearer*. Even then it

will be an edited and condensed form of what was read of Synod. Herewith then is that report:

Esteemed Brethren,

In addition to the preliminary report and evaluation and recommendation report which we already gave to you, we herewith give you a final and complete report of all of our activities during the eight-week period of our labours in Jamaica.

Our labors began on June 26 after a safe journey the 25th. Rev. and Mrs. Heys arrived from O'Hare field in Chicago about five hours before the Feenstras arrived from the Los Angeles International Airport at 9:44 P.M. The car for which we had arranged before we left home was ready for us, and we obtained temporary lodging for the night at Sunset Arms Apartment in Montego Bay.

On Wednesday, the 26th, we travelled to Lucea (pronounced Lucy) and made arrangements to stay that night at Tamarind Lodge. We then investigated

a new motel in Lucea, along the sea coast, where we could do our own cooking and washing. We planned to visit Rev. Elliott on the eastern end of the island first for a week or two; and then we would need lodging for a month around or near Lucea. Having spoken for this place we went to visit Rev. and Mrs. Frame at First Hill. That night Rev. Heys preached for the Lucea congregation at their Wednesday evening Prayer Meeting. His text was chosen to be Isaiah 40:1, 2, and the theme of the sermon was, "Comfort for the Heart of Jerusalem." The sermon was well received, and the service was a unique experience for the Feenstras. The audience was very attentive and seemed to have little difficulty following the sermon. Their repeated, "Amen," and "Praise the Lord," gave evidence to this.

On Thursday we opened a checking account at Barclays Bank D.C.O. in Lucea, planning as we said to stay there for a month. The account was taken out in both our names, so that, if one of us became ill or incapable of using the account, the other could write the checks. We deposited \$1,500 of our expense account in the bank and \$1,500 of the Poor Fund collections from our churches in the States, which Hudsonville's diaconate had given along with us. Having this account we could receive checks from the States for deposit without difficulty; and we did not need to carry large sums of money along with us. We then travelled back to Montego Bay to investigate lodging there for the last two weeks of our stay, figuring that the shipment of clothing would come in about this time. And it would be better to be in Montego Bay for customs collection. Then, too, we did not know at that time whether the clothing would come in at the Montego Bay or Kingston harbour. At least we could be contacted more quickly and readily at Montego Bay than at Lucea.

On Friday we travelled to Islington (on the eastern end of the island) to meet Rev. Elliott and to be there in that area for two Sundays. With some 15 pieces of luggage in the small trunk of our Ford Cortina compact, and on the car-top carrier (and this included a large accordion in its case — for we had dropped one off already at Lucea) we travelled some 100 miles in semi-tropical heat and humidity. Rev. Elliott had written us that he had a place for us to lodge at a very reasonable price. We went to look at it with him. We found it reasonable but inadequate for us and went back to Port Maria where we found an apartment where we could cook and do our own washing. We rented it for a week and one day, although our plans were to stay for a week and four days.

Sunday was a memorable day for all of us. We left Port Maria at 8:30 A.M. to pick Rev. Elliott up in Islington and then drove to Buff Bay. Here we left

the highway and pavement to climb up the Blue Mountains. The whole distance from Port Maria to Mahoe was only a matter of some 40 miles, but we arrived around 11 A.M. It was a steep, long and rough climb with the car. But the view of the valleys when once we got up to where we had to park the car was spectacular, beauty few tourists ever get to see! We still had to walk at least half a mile up and down hills before we descended into a depression where the bamboo church stood. It was a hot, close, sticky, stuffy position and was crude and roughly constructed. We enjoyed the Sunday there however. The morning service was very well received and apparently enjoyed by all. We then returned to our car over that same trail and ate our sandwiches which we had prepared and taken along. Then they requested us to accompany them to a new "spot" along another trail where they intended to build a church out in the open, and where they could get a breeze. It would also be more accessible. They are now meeting there and have constructed a temporary meeting place. Then we trudged back to the old church building after visiting an 88 year old widow who was selling them that piece of land for a song, about \$40. At church we played the tape of greetings from the Mission Committee and one from the Hope Heralds to teach them Psalter numbers. We also enjoyed very much, and so did they, our innovation of a group discussion of Psalm 23. It is our firm conviction that they can be instructed in this way more readily than by preaching.. You can gauge their reception of the truth better and hold their attention. The evening service was held a little early to give us time to get down the worst part of the mountain while it was light.

That the truth was received and that they were thankful for the messages is evident in that through Rev. Elliott they pleaded for us to come back again for a service the next night. We regretted that we were not able due to the distance and terrain. Travel on these mountain roads, which that high up are one-way trails, is treacherous in the dark when one meets another car or truck and has to back down around curves and along steep ravines and on extremely rough roads. As it was a very severe storm swept through this section Monday afternoon and would have added to our perils and also prevented the people from meeting. But all in all we were happy that first Sunday evening and felt that we had accomplished something, even though we did not return home and to our evening meal till around 10 P.M. Monday was spent in the necessary matters of shopping for our staple goods in what are called supermarkets, and the heavy afternoon and evening rains prevented any activity that afternoon or night.

At a meeting with Mrs. Eula Stephen and Rev. Elliott in Islington, a Rev. Hezekiah Moore of Buff

Bay appeared. His people in Buff Bay had seen us pass through Sunday on the way to Mahoe. He had done some of the written work of the correspondence course that Rev. Heys conducted, receiving his copies from Rev. Elliott. He was interested in having his two churches, the one in Buff Bay and the other in Manchioneal affiliated with us. We took him "home" with us for our noon meal, and then, because he missed his bus, we took him home to Buff Bay and looked at his church. We also promised to preach for him and his congregation Thursday evening, since we got a good impression of him, of his sincerity and interest in being one with us.

On Wednesday we looked up the Port Maria church and made arrangements for the meeting that night. We planned with Rev. Elliott on Saturday to show pictures of the group taken three years ago and of some tulip pictures taken in Holland, Michigan to stress the Five Points of Calvinism to them again. After the pictures Rev. Heys preached on Ephesians 2:10 to a responsive audience, at times too enthusiastic so that they interrupted the speaking with their "Amen" and, "Praise the Lord."

The service at Buff Bay in Rev. Moore's church was, we believe, rather typical of those on the island in our churches there. They listened with attention and replied in the affirmative to Rev. Moore's question as to whether they enjoyed the sermon on Ephesians 2:10.

On Friday we conferred with Rev. Elliott in regard to the poor in his congregations and the repairs of the buildings explaining our stand about not doing anything at all till the properties were legally secure. That night we showed the Islington congregation our pictures in a Baptist church that had electricity. It was open to the public and several Baptist people said that they enjoyed the "message." They must have meant the explanation of the Five Points of Calvinism namely, Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints, in connection with the pictures of the tulips.

On Saturday we went back to Montego Bay to be in a strategic place for travelling on Sunday to the Reading (pronounced Redding) and Northhampton Mt. Having spoken for a place for Monday evening we had some difficulty getting one for Saturday and Sunday, the week-end usually seeing an influx of

tourists from Miami. We had to settle for one place on Saturday and then before going to church Sunday morning to bring everything to another place, since we would not be home till after 10 P.M. and could not take all that luggage along over the mountains.

We left Sunday morning at 8:15 for Reading. There the Sunday School children, even as they did last year, greeted us with a welcome song as we entered the building. Rev. Heys preached on Isaiah 49:16 and they told Rev. Elliott that they were "satisfied." They did listen attentively; and this, no doubt is one of Rev. Elliott's better congregations, a very promising group with many children in attendance of the services. In the afternoon we played the tape of Mission Committee greetings and the Hope Heralds tape. We also discussed together Psalm 23 which they and we enjoyed. During the noon hour we had gone to Santa Cruz and shown the Feenstras the church and visited with some of the people of the congregation. We also met at the morning service a Rev. Drummond who, Rev. Elliott said, lost his congregation through no fault of his own. The Northhampton congregation is very small and the church high up in the mountains. A station wagon full of people from Reading went along and with them Rev. Drummond. This did help to fill out the auditorium. Otherwise there was only a handful. The sermon that night was the parable of the Lost Son. After the sermon Rev. Elliott told the congregation that he was giving them over to Rev. Drummond and that he would be their minister from now on. That is the way they work, and there is much room for instruction also in church government and proper procedure. The people accepted this and usually are glad to be able to get someone to serve them. In some instances the congregation requests a minister to come over and be their minister. Thus this Reading church asked Rev. Frame to come over instead of Rev. Elliott. And Santa Cruz asked Rev. Ruddock to serve them in place of Rev. Elliott, who does have too many churches to be able to serve any one of them with any regularity and very often. Our second Sunday in Jamaica for us was as pleasant as the first, and we returned home about 10:30, had still to get our evening meal, but were happy as well as tired.

When Christ speaks by His Spirit and Word, the resistance of the sinner is melted and transformed into glad obedience.

Examining Ecumenicalism

"The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church"

Rev. G. Van Baren

The World Council of Churches, meeting at Uppsala, Sweden in 1968, had as its general theme, "Behold, I make all things new." The gathering produced and adopted six reports related to that theme. The first of these six reports I consider in this article. The report treats "The Holy Spirit and the Catholicity of the Church."

The report gives to me a feeling of revulsion. How any child of God could go along with such a report, even for a time, is beyond my understanding. It must be stated that there are indeed parts in it which seem very orthodox and Scriptural. But again, other parts reflect the liberalism within the W.C.C. and other churches which is so prevalent today. And this gives rise to that sense of revulsion. One senses an attempt to mix poison and medicine; light and darkness; the truth and the lie. Not only this, but also the wording of the document is so cleverly phrased that virtually all men could subscribe to the statements—liberal and conservative alike. One of the delegates also pointed this out. He stated, "It is a mixture in such a way that everyone reads and understands it in his own way." (p. 9, *Uppsala Report*)

But allow me to point out several parts of this report which show what is suggested above. There is, first of all, the question: what did the W.C.C. mean when it speaks of "catholicity"? In several parts of the report one finds suggestions of that which it has in mind. The following paragraph, however, somewhat summarized its thoughts:

Since Christ lived, died and rose again for all mankind, catholicity is the opposite of all kinds of egoism and particularism. It is the quality by which the Church expresses the fullness, the integrity and the totality of life in Christ. The Church is catholic, and should be catholic, in all her elements and in all aspects of her life, and especially in her worship. Members of the Church should reflect the integrity and wholeness which is the essential character of the Church. One measure of her internal unity is that it is said of believers that they have but one heart and one soul (Acts 4:32; Phil. 2:1-11). There are then two factors in it: the unifying grace of the Spirit and the humble efforts of believers, who do not seek their own, but are united in faith, in adoration, and in love and service of Christ for the sake of the world. Catholicity is a gift of the Spirit, but it is also a task, a call and an engagement.

Here one has an example of the sort of statement which can be interpreted by anyone as he would desire.

There is the statement that Christ died and rose again—though his *bodily* resurrection is not mentioned. A person can understand the statement in several ways. It could satisfy both the modernist who denies bodily resurrection and the Reformed person. And what does it mean that Christ died and arose again "for all mankind?" Is this meant in the sense of the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 15? Or does the report mean it in the arminian sense? Or does it suggest a universal salvation of all men? Or does it refer to the idea of modernism that Christ serves as a good example to all who followed after Him? You can take your pick of these.

Again, catholicity is said to be a union "in love and service of Christ *for the sake of the world*." I suppose I could accept the statement if the word "world" is to be taken in the sense of John 3:16. Yet the liberal who denies the atonement but emphasizes rather the duty of the church to find answers to the earthly problems of this age—could also accept the statement. And the concluding statement no one could deny—because one can not possibly know how that must be interpreted. Catholicity as described in this paragraph can mean anything to any reader—hence, in reality it means nothing.

And what does the Holy Spirit work in the church? Several suggestions are presented concerning His work. Some are:

We give thanks to God the Holy Spirit that at this very time he is leading us into a fresh and exhilarating understanding of the Body of Christ, to the glory of God the Father. He is transforming the relationships between separated Christian communities, so that we now speak to each other with greater mutual trust and with more hope of reconciliation than ever before. (p. 11)

In giving this life the Holy Spirit brings sinful men through repentance and Baptism into the universal fellowship of the forgiven; bears witness through the Church to the truth of the Gospel, and makes it credible to men; builds up the church in each place through the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist; stirs the conscience of the Church by the voice of prophets to keep her in the mercy and judgment of God; maintains the Church in communion and continuity with the people of God in all ages and places; equips the Church to accept and make use of the great variety of God's gifts bestowed upon its members for the enrichment of human life; empowers the Church in

her unity to be a ferment in society, for the renewal and unity of mankind; sends men into the world equipped to prepare the way for God's rule on earth by proclaiming freedom to the captives and sight to the blind; awakens Christians to watch for the Lord's coming, when he will judge the living and the dead, and open the gates of his city to all his people (p. 13). The Holy Spirit has not only preserved the Church in continuity with her past; He is also continuously present in the Church, effecting her inward renewal and re-creation. The Church in heaven is indeed one with the Church on earth, yet the Church on earth does not stand outside the historical process. As the pilgrim people of God she finds herself at every point of time implicated in the varying hopes, problems and fears of men and women, and in the changing patterns of human history. The Church is faced by the twin demands, of continuity in the one Holy Spirit, and of renewal in response to the call of the Spirit amid the changes of human history. (p. 16).

The above is another instance of clever use of words so that everyone can agree. The modernist might have a bit of a problem with the reference to "heaven" and "the Lord's coming when he will judge the living and the dead," otherwise he can find these statements perfectly compatible with his own belief. And the modernist would wholeheartedly subscribe to statements such as: (the Spirit) "sends men into the world equipped to prepare the way for God's rule on earth. . ." and "empowers the Church in her unity to be a ferment in society, for the renewal and unity of mankind;" etc. The very vagueness of the above quotations might make them acceptable to a Christian of Reformed persuasion — yet the philosophy of modernism oozes out of almost every statement. How can any be satisfied with this mixture of light and darkness?

The aim and purpose of the W.C.C. shows itself at several points in the document. It can not be completely hid—not even behind the vagueness of the language used. The ideas of the following statements are clear. The W.C.C. would have a united church over the whole earth, united finally with all men on the earth, to from a tremendous force for "good." And

when one turns to Rev. 13, he must admit that here we have the beginnings of the manifestation of the two beasts. This is what Upsala said:

. . . In the agonishing arena of contemporary history—and very often among the members of the Churches—we see the work of demonic forces that battle against the rights and liberties of man, but we also see the activity of the life-giving Spirit of God. We have come to view this world of men as the place where God is already at work to make all things new, and where he summons us to work with him.

The ecumenical movement helps to enlarge this experience of universality, and its regional councils and its World Council may be regarded as a transitional opportunity for eventually actualizing a truly universal, ecumenical, conciliar form of common life and witness. The members of the World Council of Churches, committed to each other, should work for the time when a genuinely universal council may once more speak for all Christians, and lead the way into the future.

Catholicity is also a constant possession and pursuit of the mystery of faith, the sacramental experience of that incorporation into Christ and involvement with mankind of which the Church is the form and the Eucharist the substantial focus. . . The Church's mission to the world will bring an enrichment from the world into the Church. Only in the fulness of redeemed humanity shall we experience the fulness of the Spirit's gifts.

The conclusion of the document is very appropriate. Said Uppsala, "With a single voice all members of the Assembly pray 'Come, creator Spirit,' knowing that any answer to this prayer should open our eyes to God's future, which is already breaking in upon us." I consider that an appropriate ending to a very sick document. It concludes not with the Scriptural, "Even so, come Lord Jesus quickly," but with the sorry imitation, "Come, creator Spirit." And the concluding sentence reminds of "God's future, which is already breaking in upon us." The conclusion presents the spirit of the document: a vagueness which allows the orthodox to concur and the modernist to join hands with him. Can a faithful child of God approve of such union of light and darkness?

A Cloud of Witnesses

David's Return and its Complexities

B. Woudenberg

So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.
II Samuel 19:15

Once David had been aroused to give up his mourning for Absalom and to return to his faithful and

victorious army, his next move bore a masterful touch. It might have been expected that he would have gathered his army behind him and returned with a SPECTACULAR SWEEP INTO Jerusalem. But he didn't. Rather he waited in Mahanaim until the people themselves would summon him back. He had no intention or desire to be king over Israel by force. Unless the people themselves were willing to receive him as the rightful king of the land, he would remain where he was. And this is exactly what happened. Before long the people throughout the land began to say to each other, "The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land of Absalom. And Absalom, whom we anointed over us is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" Soon the cry for David's return began to be heard from every part of the land — except, that is, from the tribe of Judah.

This was David's own tribe, the first to have received him as king in his youth; and it hurt him not to hear from them. And yet he also understood. This was the tribe also that had backed and established Absalom in his rebellion. They were afraid of what would happen to them if David would return to full strength. But David knew also how to handle this.

In the first place, David sent a message to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests and most influential men in Judah saying, "Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house. Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?" David recognized that the presentation of his case by these men would be much more effective than anything directly that he could do.

But David's message also went much further than this. He understood the fear of the people of Judah, and he knew also how to appease it while at the same time accomplishing another purpose too. Although David had listened to Joab, he was not at all satisfied with the fact that he had been the one who very purposefully had slain his son. Neither was he about to let Joab get by without a proper reprimand. Thus he added in his message to Zadok and Abiathar, "And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab." Now, Amasa was a nephew of David, just as was Joab, but more than that, he was also the one who had served as captain of Absalom's forces in his rebellion against David.

Here was a blow that Joab could not have but felt very deeply. In fact, it may well have been that his loyalty and devotion to the king was never again what it had been before. Here was the man who had given his all to overthrow the king in rebellion and from

whom David had been saved only through the victory of Joab, and he was being given Joab's place as captain of the king's army.

But at the same time, David's move accomplished its purpose. Immediately it became apparent to all of the tribe of Judah that, if their captain in rebellion was to be treated in this fashion, there was not one of them who had anything to fear. Once they had heard this, they were only too happy to return to David's rule, for he was their greatest claim to ascendancy among the tribes of Israel. Enthusiastically they sent the message, "Return thou, and all thy servants."

Now at last all was ready, and a great procession was formed to bring the king back to his royal citadel. It was a great and glorious procession, and it reached its climax when it came to the Jordan river. There the whole of the tribe of Judah was waiting to carry their king back into their own tribal boundaries, and they were determined to make the most of it. There was nothing to fear, that had become evident. They did not even have to appear repentant. They could greet their king merely as though he were a returning conqueror and as though they had always been his faithful subjects. And so they did.

Neither were the men of Judah the only ones who had gotten the message and were standing there at the Jordan to be reconciled to their king. There at the very forefront of the multitudes stood Shimei the son of Gera of the tribe of Benjamin. A relative of Saul's, he was the one who had stood overagainst David when he was fleeing from Jerusalem in disgrace, cursing, casting stones and crying out, "Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial; the LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man."

It had been a horrible display which David had met with remarkable restraint. But now, here was the man just as bold as he had ever been, only this time in feigned repentance rather than his cursing. With him were no fewer than a thousand Benjaminites to impress David with his importance in his tribe and nation. Before David was as much as able to step unto the ferry boat that was to carry him over the river, Shimei had pushed himself to the fore and thrown himself at David's feet, crying, "Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart. For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

It was a wretched display, almost as much so as his original cursing, bold in manner, shallow in meaning,

and so evidently fawning that it cried out with hypocrisy. Abishai standing there was so utterly aghast he cried out, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?" With raised sword he was ready to bring the matter to a quick and proper conclusion.

But David was determined to proceed in his path of clemency. It even rather angered him that Abishai should suggest so soon that he should turn from it, so that he answered, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel." David was determined to present himself as a king of forgiving kindness to Israel. Turning to Shimei he demonstrated this intent with an oath as he said, "Thou shalt not die."

As good as was David's intent, however, the time had come when he was carrying it much too far. While returning good to his enemies, he was neglecting his duty of honest judgment while hurting and antagonizing his friends. This became even more apparent when Mephibosheth came hobbling down to the waterfront to meet him as he came off the ferry.

The man was a sad sight to look upon. Beside his natural disfigurement, the man had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the time that David had left Jerusalem. Befriended by David as he had been for the sake of his father Jonathan, he had wept and mourned because of the misfortune of the king. Thus, no sooner had he heard of David's return than he had come with joy and gratitude to meet him.

For all of this, David, however, had no eyes. He remembered only the words of Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, who had brought him asses, fruit and wine when he left Jerusalem, and who said of his master, "Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, Today shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father." That had hurt David far more than the open cursing of Shimei. Thus, no sooner did he see Mephibosheth than he snapped at him the question, "Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?"

It was an unfair question, for David had asked of no one else to go with him away from Jerusalem; but Ziba had aroused him to suspicion.

Mephibosheth, however, had no hesitancy in his answer. Quickly he replied, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame. And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes. For all of my father's house

were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?"

Suddenly David found himself in a most uncomfortable situation. Already he had rendered judgment on this case. He had given all of the possessions of Mephibosheth to Ziba; and now it was apparent how hasty this judgment had been. There was no reason to question but that what Mephibosheth was now saying was true. Justice demanded that what was rightfully Mephibosheth's should be returned to him; but that would require an acknowledgment of his own haste and might be interpreted by some as inconsistent with his policy of clemency. Impatiently and uncertain, David curtly cut off Mephibosheth with the words, "Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land."

Mephibosheth was shocked. Surely he did not want the king to think that he was there out of material concern. Plaintively he answered, "Yes, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." But the troubled king had less time and concern for him than he did for the deceitful Shimei.

More pleasant to the old king was his next visitor, Barzilai, a man of Gilead who had provided him and his army with vast amounts of food while they were encamped at Mahanaim. A rich man, he had had a great deal to lose if Absalom in his rebellion had been successful. But his loyalty to the king had remained unwavering. Here was a man that David could understand and appreciate. Eagerly he invited him, "Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem."

But Barzilai was an old man, and meekly he answered, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee."

Thus it was that David finally crossed over Jordan and made his way to Jerusalem. With him was Chimham, the son of Barzilai, to remain in the court of the king, a reward for what his father had done.

From Holy Writ

The Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT continued (Hebrews 9:15, 16)

Wherefore a "death must take place. It must have become history. A real sacrifice must have been brought. Nothing less can serve but the death of the Son of God in the flesh. When this death took place we will see later in this chapter. Here we see this death taking place (*thanatou genomenou*) at the place of a skull, Golgotha. Christ is the Mediator whose blood speaketh better things than Abel. He is the Mediator who stands between God the sinner. He is not the fiction of the philosophy which would make him a kind of Medium between the eternal and the temporal, the one and the many, but He is the one who stands as the minister of the better covenant in the better temple bringing the sacrifice for our sins. Here we see the New Testament in His blood!!

All those who are called according to the purpose of election will receive the promise of the eternal inheritance in His blood.

We ought to pause just a minute and notice once more that the term promise in the Greek language is derived from a verb which appears in the middle voice. The term is "*epaggelomai*" and indicates that the terms of the announcement set forth in the promise can only find their realization in Him who made the promise. God is faithful who has promised. The fulfilment is dependent solely upon the Lord. And the truth of the matter is that the Mediator is the LORD in the flesh, Immanuel, God-with-us! It is really the blood of the Son of God. All God's promises are "yea" in Christ, and in Him "Amen" to the glory of God the Father. He is the fulfilment of all the promissory notes of the sacrifices of the Old Testament. And when his "death hath taken place" all is finished. It is a once for all transaction, which cannot ever be repeated. This is expressed in the tense form of the participle "*genomenou*." It is not a death which can be continually repeated, or which passes through a process of a development, but it is: what he died, he died once! It is finished!!

Thus the promise of the Gospel is made sure unto all the heirs — unto all the called. For as many as are Christ's are Abraham's seed, and are heirs according to the promise! A Mediator is not one of one, namely, only of the natural children of Abraham.

The Mediator is of both the Old Testament and the New Testament children, for God is one God who is above all, through all and in all. The many children which are brought to glory through Christ's suffering are from both dispensations. For it is for all "the called," and these are called first the Jew and also the Greek. (Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 1:16, 17)

THE NECESSITY OF THE DEATH OF THE TESTATOR (Hebrews 9:16, 17)

Here the writer introduces an example from life. It is a very telling illustration and a very fitting analogy. The text reads here as follows:

"For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator."

A better and more exact translation of the Greek is offered by Westcott in his "Epistle To The Hebrews" which reads as follows "For where there is a testament (covenant) the death of him that made it must needs be presented." The verb in the Greek which is translated by the KJV "be the death" is "Pheresthai." The point is not that he must die, but, that the evidence that he has died, must be *brought forward!* The death must be brought upon the scene, the evidence that the testator has died must be presented. There must be a statement and proof that the one who made the testament has deceased. Such is the case in any human testator. This is brought forth as an example and illustration to prove one central point. The writer is not interested to show that this example holds in every detail. God is the Testator in the covenant in which is promised the eternal inheritance of heaven's glories. God does not die! Still a death takes place! The Son of God is the one set forth in the counsel of peace as the person of God who dies in our human nature. He partook of the flesh and blood of the children. (Hebrews 2:14) And as is a *must* in every testament among men so it is in the matter of the covenant of God. "For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." Had Christ not come into this world to give His life a ransom for many, then the promise of the covenant would have been of no power. It could not possibly have saved us from our sins. It would have been simply a promise which was powerless to effectually bring about salvation. Just as the testator in the earthly testament and promise

cannot possibly change the terms of the testament *after he has died*, so also God Himself has laid all the salvation sure, made the promise effectually, yea and Amen, in Christ to the glory of God. For the Father is glorified, glorifies Himself in the Son.

THE DEDICATION OF THE FIRST COVENANT BY BLOOD. (Hebrews 9:18-22)

There is no realization of forgiveness without shedding of blood. The forgiveness of sin is a tremendous matter touching the justice of God. The justice of God must be fulfilled, shall one sin be forgiven. Forgiveness is, therefore, something which is to come to pass. But it does not come to pass (*ou ginetai*) where there is no shedding of blood. But where forgiveness is a reality, it *became such a reality historically!*

It is a fact that there would never, never, be any forgiveness of sins realized objectively nor subjectively except where there was a shedding of blood. To say it reverently: God Himself could not bring about forgiveness without the shedding of blood. Proof? "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Hebrews 2:10

This fact of the necessity of blood to be shed was indelibly imprinted in the minds of the children of God when Moses is about ready to ascend the holy mount of God, that mount in Arabia (Galatians 4:25) God had spoken his ten words from that awful mount; all the people had exceedingly feared and trembled. Fact is, that they beseech Moses that the LORD no longer, nor again speak thus to them from the mount in the midst of the thick darkness of the awful presence of the LORD! "For they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart." (Hebrews 12:20; Exodus 19:10-13)

There was only one answer to this. It is the answer that God be made propitious to us through the expiation of our sin and guilt through the shedding of blood. Wherefore also that first covenant was not dedicated without blood. The term in the Greek for "dedicate" is "*egkekainistai*". The term does not refer only to the point in history at Sinai when this blood was shed by Moses, but it refers to what was the abiding result of this dedication *up to the present moment*. Perhaps the translation by A.T. Robertson in his "Word Pictures" excels when he translates here "stands dedicated." There is something about the Old Covenant too which says: it is not of works, it is not of the pure keeping of the law; it is all of sovereign grace! Thus the Old Covenant stands dedicated not as a covenant of works, nor of merit on the part of the heirs, but it is a

gospel of Jehovah God, and proclamation of His glorious name "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, *forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. . .*" (Exodus 34:6, 7)

Here is the answer!

The Old Covenant stands dedicated not without blood.

That is a very strong way of stating the positive fact that the Old Covenant was dedicated historically, yet not without blood!

The historical occasion is very clear. God tells Moses to come up into the mount for forty days to receive the lively oracles, and to listen to what God has to tell him concerning the Words of the Covenant. With him must come seventy of the elders, and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu. They might not come near to the very mount of God. They must worship afar off! Moses tells all the people the words of the book of the Covenant. This "book" comprised what is written in Exodus 20:1 through 23:33! And this is really the Magna Charta of the kingdom of God, the principles of the life of perfection in heaven as its must be the working out of our salvation in the land of Canaan with fear and trembling. Moses reads all these words to the people. And the people respond "All the words which the LORD hath said will we do."

Did the people of Israel think that they could of themselves and from the principle of law keep all these words? Remember that the "key-word" we have is "I am the LORD thy God, who hath delivered you from Egypt, from the house of bondage! And now walk before me and be thou perfect. The ten commandment are commandments which we keep from the principle of a thankfulness of having been redeemed and ingrafted into Christ by a true faith. God's people are a redeemed people. They had come out of Egypt under blood. God had said "And when I shall see the blood, I will pass over." (Exodus 12:13) Thus it was when Israel passed over out of Egypt by God's mighty hand. It was the mighty power of God's grace and truth!

And so here the entire Old Testament typical apparatus, which will be shown Moses in connection with the temple and its worship, must come to stand out in bold relief. It must be a covenant which is dedicated, *stands dedicated* not without blood! No one who enters the temple gates from then on must come as does the Pharisee in the parable; he can only come as did the Publican: O, God, may the blood of the mercy-seat be upon me, the sinner! That is the very genius of the Old Covenant itself. When a petrified priesthood in the days of Jesus no longer understands the very foundations and ordinances of the temple and its "blood" that priest-

hood is without excuse!

This the writer to the Hebrews here reminds the readers of. They must not think of Moses as the law-giver apart from the blood of the Mediator who brings about forgiveness of sins through shedding of blood. And with this shedding of blood there is a special ceremony which we ought to notice carefully. It is that which is recorded in Exodus 24, and

to which record the writer to the Hebrews refers in Verse 19. There we read "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you."

Pages from the Past

Believers and Their Seed

Rev. Herman Hoeksema

Chapter V (Continued)

The Meaning of the Covenant

But matters surely do not stand thus. Adam in Paradise stands in God's covenant. He also possesses life. Moreover, only in the way of obedience will he be able to keep the life which he possesses. But *eternal life* is neither in him nor of him. That is life such as the elect can receive only from Christ, Immanuel, God with us. As far as Christ stands above Adam, so far stands the life which we receive from Christ above the life which Adam possessed or ever could possess. And what Christ merits for us Adam could never obtain.

However this may be, Adam stands in God's covenant. He was created as covenant friend-servant, adapted to God and to fellowship with Him. For God created the first man after His image and likeness. He is indeed of the earth, earthy: for God formed him out of the dust of the ground. But although by virtue of his creation he stands related to the earth, especially to the animal world, and is himself earthy, he is nevertheless at once distinct from that world and is formed as a creature who also stands related to God. For, in the first place, God did not only call him forth out of the earth, as He had done with the animals, but He *formed* him with His own hand. And, in the second place, while God thus fashioned him as respects his earthly nature and form, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and thus Adam became a living soul. Through this creative, formative, and life-inbreathing act of God, Adam becomes the creature who bears the image of God in his very nature. There is in Adam a creaturely likeness of God. He is adapted to God. In distinction from every creature round about him, he is the creature who can know God and speak with Him, who can love God and live in His communion, who consciously and willingly can consecrate himself with

all his powers and with all that he has to the God of his life. And not only is he a creature who is *adapted* to God's covenant life and who *can* live that covenant life; but he is also at once placed in that living fellowship of God's covenant. For he is by God gifted with true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness. Adam is not neutral, but he stands with his face toward God and is God's friend. Accordingly, God also speaks with him in Paradise and demands of him that he shall consecrate all things to Him. And as friend-servant of God Adam is also king, and he receives dominion of the beasts of the earth and over the fish of the sea and over all earthly things. God established His covenant with Adam, and in the first Paradise man stands in that covenant of friendship as prophet, priest, and king. God dwells with Adam in Paradise, and in God's fellowship Adam can and may eat of the tree of life in the midst of the garden.

Besides, God also immediately reveals His covenant in the first Paradise antithetically, and Adam becomes of God's party. For the Lord God places in the garden the tree of life, but also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Presently the word of the devil comes in connection with that tree, putting itself over against the Word of the living God. And Adam stands before the calling, as the friend of God, to reject all that is not of God, but against God, before the calling to fight against and overcome the Evil One and to maintain himself as friend-servant of the living God. And this Adam was able to do: for he was good and created after the image of God. Only by an act of his own will could he turn away from the living, to become the friend of God's enemy. Spiritually and ethically Adam possessed all that was necessary in order to stand and

to do battle for God's covenant and God's name in the first Paradise. For God had indeed conceived of something better for His people, and presently Adam falls according to the counsel of His will, and the fall of Adam, the devil, and sin immediately serve that counsel; but that does not change the fact that God had bestowed upon Adam excellent gifts, and that sin remains an act of his own will. Servant of the Lord, friend of God, of the party of the living God over against the devil, — such was Adam's covenant relation to his God in the first Paradise.

Now to this we must immediately add that this so-called covenant of works is not the ultimate form of the revelation of the covenant as God had conceived of it from before the foundation of the world. We repeat: Adam did not possess the *highest* life of the covenant of God, nor could he ever have merited it or obtained it for himself and his descendants. The first man is of the earth, earthy; only the second man is the Lord from heaven. The first Paradise is therefore also only an image of the heavenly, even as also Adam was a figure of Him Who was to come. And the tree of life is an image of *the* tree of life that is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Adam was also made a little lower than the angels, and heaven and earth were not united in his name. He was indeed king, but not over all things. He was king of an earthly realm. In all this there lay an image of better things. For God had in mind something better for us. The first man, who was of the earth, earthy, the first Paradise, and all that stood in connection with that beginning of the revelation of God's covenant must therefore also be removed, in order to make place for those better things. For it was the secret purpose of God to perfect all things and to establish His covenant forever, not in the first Adam but in the second, not in the earthly man but in the Lord from heaven, in Immanuel, God with us. And the realization of this purpose, according to the counsel of God, lay along the deep way of sin and grace.

Chapter VI

The Historical Realization of the Covenant

Essentially God's covenant is not a promise, although all the promises of God for His covenant people in Christ are Yea and Amen. Neither is the covenant merely a way unto salvation, although God out of free grace bestows the blessing of eternal life upon His covenant people, a blessing which is enjoyed exactly only in the fellowship of that covenant of God. But essentially God's covenant is the relation of friendship between God and His people according to which God is the Friend-Sovereign of His people, and they are the friend-servants of the Lord.

Thus God's covenant is presented always and everywhere.

Thus Adam stood also as God's covenant friend-servant in Paradise. Unto that purpose he was created

after God's image, so that he possessed that creaturely likeness of God which was necessary to enable him to live in that covenant relation with his God. From the outset, then, he also possessed true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness. He was not merely a creature who was adapted to God and who might along a certain way enter into God's covenant; but he had received from his God all that was necessary in order to stand and to live in that covenant. It is not true, therefore, that in that covenant of God Adam had to earn anything, no more than that should ever be possible. It is not possible to speak of merit on the part of man in his relation to God. Fact is, also Adam stood in Paradise as a creature of God; and as such he possessed nothing which he had not received and which did not belong to his God. His body and his soul, his mind and his will and all his powers, his gifts and his talents, — everything belonged to the Lord his God, in order that he should know Him, and love Him, and serve Him with all his strength. With those gifts and powers and talents Adam lived and acted in the midst of God's works in Paradise the First. Round about him there was nothing which was not the Lord's property. How, then, seeing that he himself, with all his powers, was the Lord's possession, and seeing that everything round about him equally belonged to the Lord, — how, then, would he ever be able to bring anything to the Lord or to merit anything with Him? No, out of free grace the Lord had created him and supplied him with the excellent gifts which he possessed; and out of free grace the Lord had created him exactly thus, that he might be able to dwell with his God in the covenant relation. Out of free grace he was also actually placed in that covenant relation to his God. And in that relation he also possessed life, and could eat of the tree of life which was in the midst of the garden. He could indeed forfeit that life and lose it, but of a meriting of life there was no question. He would, indeed, in the way of obedience keep that life which he possessed and would not die. But although he was in every respect adapted to live with his God in everlasting bliss, that he could also become a partaker of the higher life and the heavenly glory and bliss which Holy Scripture calls *eternal life*, of this we read absolutely nothing in God's Word. Not only could Adam never merit this eternal life, but it is also a life which could never flow to us from him, but which could be our portion only from Immanuel. For the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. And the earthly Adam is indeed a figure of Him Who was to come; but the former can never be compared with the latter in glory. And as highly exalted as the Second Adam is in splendor and glory, in grace and majesty and life, so much more glorious is also the life of God's covenant as we become partakers of it through that Second Adam.

(to be continued)

BOOK REVIEW

Prof. H. Hanko

UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES, by A. De Graaff and C. Seerveld; *The Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship*; 1969; 92 pp., \$1.65 Canadian funds (paper).

The sub-title of this book is "How to Read and not to Read the Bible." It is part of the Christian Perspective Series of 1969 and contains lectures given by the authors at the study conferences of AACS in the summer of 1968.

The lectures by De Graaff introduce the subject and discuss particularly the nature of Holy Scripture. The lectures of Seerveld are a practical application of these principles. In one lecture Seerveld offers his own translation of Numbers 22-24, the story of Balak and Balaam. In another lecture he points out ways in which these chapters (and, by implication, the whole of Scripture) are not to be read. Rejected are what Seerveld calls the lesson-learning way in which Scripture is reduced to Sunday School lessons; the liberal way which treats Scripture as a piece of literature to be analyzed with the tools of higher criticism; the Bible-compendium way in which one attempts to find additions to systematic compendium of biblical truth in each portion. He then gives a critique of these various erroneous ways of reading Scripture and proceeds to tell us how really the Scriptures ought to be read, the "Biblically Reformational way."

There are some good aspects to this book. There is a good critique of the fundamentalist approach which seeks only moral lessons in God's Word. There is an emphatic rejection of liberal higher criticism, although strangely the author does not fault critical methods for their denial of infallibility. There is a very insistent point made throughout the book that Scripture is the record of the revelation of God's faithfulness to His people.

There are some bad aspects to this book. But it is not always easy to pin down the precise views of the author.

The author writes of a relativizing of the commandments of God in the following words:

The great commandment relativizes every other commandment the Scriptures contain. That is a hard lesson to learn for us moralists. It is much easier to hide behind a formal system of 'absolute' laws, because autonomous little rules for every situation do not have to be worked out. . . .

Even the ten words (not commandments) are specifications of this central religious Directive. All the other ordinances are nothing more than concrete outworkings, positivizations of this Directive within a particular culture in a particular period of history. None of them can be literally followed or applied today, for we live in a different period of history in a different culture. (p. 35)

This sounds suspiciously like some kind of situation ethics. The author emphatically insists it is not; but he fails to show why it is not.

The authors claim to believe firmly in the truth of the infallibility of Scripture. Yet De Graaff can write on pp. 10, 11:

These "history lessons" in the psalms and all the other so-called historical accounts in the Bible are not incorporated for their own sake, as so many scientifically established, verifiable historical facts, able to satisfy the curiosity of the 20th century positivistic historian. Rather, they are recorded to confront us with the living God of heaven and earth, the God of gods. To ask, therefore, whether or not these stories actually happened in every detail and in the order in which they are presented is to ask the wrong question. The Bible is not a source book for the historian, that is not its purpose. Its purpose is to proclaim, to preach, in this instance by telling us the true stories of God's mighty acts.

I fail to understand how this qualification to infallible inspiration does not actually destroy Scripture's infallibility.

But there is a more fundamental fault in this book. It is the fault that was pointed out in a recent review by the undersigned in the *Standard Bearer* of Hendrik Hart's book on the christian perspective of life. It is the fault which has recently appeared in the *Banner* in an article written by Klaas Runia on which the editor commented. This fault is a denial of the objective revelation of God in Scripture. The authors maintain that Scripture is the revelation of God's faithfulness to His people. They speak of the Bible as kerygma. But they insist that Scripture gives us no knowledge of God as He is in Himself. A few quotes will demonstrate this. De Graaff writes:

Just as the Bible does not answer our abstract questions about the existence of the idols, so the Scriptures fail to satisfy our intellectual curiosity about the nature of God. The Bible authors are not interested in an Unmoved Mover or a Pure Spiritual Substance, nor do they care to prove God's existence

logically by making Him a part of a syllogism and comparing Him to other minds. The Scriptures know nothing about God's essence or about his incommunicable and communicable attributes. (p. 9).

Summarizing our findings thus far we can say that it is not the purpose of the Bible to inform us about the nature of God's being or his attributes. To treat the Scriptures as if it did contain such general, theological statements and propositional truths, therefore, would be to distort the very nature and purpose of the Word of God. The Bible wants to proclaim, not to explain! It is only in his actions that God's being and his attributes are revealed to us.

God's mighty acts, and the revelation that accompanies these acts — God's words and works are one — they tell us what God is like. That is why the Bible contains so many stories. . . . Through "these stories," therefore, we are inescapably confronted by the living God, who demands our personal response. (pp. 9, 10).

What a terrible distortion to *reduce* this living Word of God to a collection of propositional truths and moral lessons and the knowledge of this Word to an intellectual understanding of doctrines. It is like taking away the key of knowledge (Luke 11:52). Yet, this is what happens every Sunday in many of the most orthodox churches. (p. 18).

The Bible is not to be read as a collection of propositional statements about God and man that we can memorize and master. Neither does it contain general truths that we could possibly consider apart from their meaning for our own lives. . . . (p. 21).

Quoting from some kind of Compendium of Reformed Doctrine, the author writes:

In this manner 11-year-old boys and girls are made to learn all God's attributes, his independence, immutability, infinity, knowledge, wisdom, veracity, goodness, love, holiness, righteousness, and his sovereign will and power. Confessions of faith made on the basis of this kind of instruction can be little more than an intellectual assent to theological statements, in this case those of Louis Berkhof. (p. 22).

Seerveld does the same thing. He rejects what he calls a Scholastic reading of Scripture which has to do with propositional revelation and which finds only objective truths in Scripture.

The Scholastic reading of Numbers 22-24 found evidence for the Unchangeable Being of God, the eternal Election of his people, Old Testament Messianic prophecies, and support for the doctrine of miracles. Scholastic reading of the Scriptures is always after truth that can be theoretically formulated and held to be universally valid, consistent Bible teaching against all attack.

The mistake in the method is that it removes the reader half a step from the convicting comfort and humbling facing God's love and anger brings, removes the reader half a step away from existential confrontation with the living Word of God and asks him to comprehend these realities for codified, proposi-

tional dogmas. (pp. 74, 75).

We do not deny that Scripture is surely the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ as the God Who saves His people from their sins. But this is not yet the point. The question is: Does Scripture give us any revelation of God as He is in Himself? The answer to this question has got to be affirmative. This has always been the position of the Church. All the creeds of the Church are such statements of the truth as it is in God and as He reveals it. What these authors want to do with the creeds they never explain. It would appear that they are not very interested in them, that in fact they consider the creeds to be serious distortions of Scripture.

Their fundamental characterization of Scripture is incorrect. The whole point of Scripture is theocentric. God Himself stands at the beginning and at the end. "For of him and through him and to him are all things; to him be glory forever." Rom. 11:36. This is the central emphasis of Holy Writ. God is pleased to reveal Himself in such a way that He tells Who He is. He is pleased to make known the infinite riches of His own divine being. Revelation is the making known of that which is hidden in God. This revelation is concentrated in and is always by means of Christ. And Christ is God's plan of redemption — of the redemption of those whom He has chosen from all eternity. But redemption is the highest and most perfect revelation of God's infinite perfections. All Scripture is exactly to tell us the truth as it is in God. When redemption is accomplished and the elect receive eternal life, then the knowledge of God as He is in Himself is perfect. Jesus prays of this in John 17:3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

It is this fundamental theocentric emphasis of Scripture which the authors of this book apparently deny. But this is a grave fault. If they would answer the question: How must the Scriptures be read? they would do well to answer that the Scriptures must be read exactly as the revelation of God as He is in Himself. The emphasis which these men find in Scripture is chiefly an emphasis on man — man's confrontation with the divine kerygma, man's salvation, man's appropriation of the blessedness of the cross. And while surely Scripture teaches that God is faithful to His covenant promises made through Christ to His people, to deny that the emphasis is always on God's glory is to fall into a Humanism after all — a Humanism which the authors are at such great pains to condemn.

This increasing emphasis within Reformed circles on the fact that Scripture does not reveal to us the truth of God as He is in Himself is a very dangerous emphasis. It is finally destructive of all theology and will result in departures from the truth just as evil as the liberalism now plaguing the church.

Annual Reports of the R.F.P.A.

ANNUAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

It is with thanksgiving to our faithful God, Who through His Spirit and grace has enabled us to continue the publication of the *Standard Bearer*, that we make this report. It is our hope and prayer that this labor may continue in this day of apostasy, in harmony with the Word of God in I Peter 4:11, "If any man speak, let him speak as of the oracles of God: if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever."

Roll call of board members this past year is as follows: John Buitter, Gerald Bouwkamp, George De Vries, Dick Kooienga, Gerrit Pipe, Richard Teitsma, Thomas Reitsma, Henry Velthouse, and Henry Vander Wal, business manager.

According to the records, the board meetings were well attended and carried out in good order and in harmony. Effort was put forth to meet increased expenses, and to increase subscription. Working with the Mission Committee, research was made to establish the identity of those receiving the *Standard Bearer* which are paid for by our Mission Committee for church extension and mission endeavor.

In June, 1969 Mr. V. Graeser sent in his resignation for personal reasons after serving with the Board two and one-half years.

Mr. Henry Vander Wal, who willingly took over the work as business manager, has donated much of his time bringing up to date the statistics, and proper addressing of our subscription list, and also in making outside contacts. This has been a great asset to the board and is deeply appreciated.

Our editor and staff this past year have compiled over two hundred ninety articles declaring the truths of Scripture and our Reformed Confessions, opposing false doctrines, liberalism, and corruption.

Financially, as in the past, we must still depend upon charity to meet our obligations. The last request for financial aid sent to our consistories brought in a generous response.

Through the efforts of all concerned, 24,360 copies were sent out in the past year. Distribution is as follows: 1275 copies printed each issue; 985 copies sent to addresses in 39 states; 76 to those living in foreign countries; 11 to service men; 88 on special mailing list, of which 80 are paid for by our mission committee; 115 reserved for bound volumes and mailing margin. This past year we have had 86 new subscribers and 84 cancellations. Cancellations for bound volumes were 9; the present list is 74.

Before the increase in subscription price from \$5 to \$7 became effective Sept. 1, 1968, 39 gift subscriptions were placed on order.

In hope that God in His good pleasure will quicken and strengthen us to be faithful in this kingdom work,

*The Board of the R.F.P.A.
G. Pipe, Secretary*

STANDARD BEARER – ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Sept. 1, 1968 – Sept. 1, 1969

Balance on hand Sept. 1, 1968	1,896.40
<i>Receipts;</i>	
Subscriptions	5,961.61
Memberships	80.00
Gifts	5,971.06
Advertising	109.00
Bound Volumes	490.00
Receipts for the fiscal year	12,611.67
Total Receipts	14,508.07
<i>Disbursements;</i>	
Wobbema Printing Co.	11,268.08
Holland Bookbinding Co.	451.95
James Dykstra-token gift	300.00
James Dykstra-Social Security tax	13.26
Henry VanderWal-mileage (Oct.-June)	74.70
Stationary	150.45
Misc.	222.75
Total disbursements	12,481.19
Balance on hand Sept. 1, 1969	2,026.88

GIFTS

Protestant Reformed Churches	4,087.71
Doon 144.64 Hudsonville 639.34	Randolph 75.67
Edgerton 46.22 Hull 141.17	Redlands 134.06
First 1,134.62 Kalamazoo 62.15	Southeast 317.57
Isabel 22.10 Loveland 105.24	Southwest 146.06
Holland 107.30 Lynden 44.10	South Holland 395.16
Hope 554.00 Oaklawn 18.31	
Societies	463.68
Ladies Aid (First) 100.00	First's Men's Soc. 25.00
Western Ladies League 28.55	Holland Men's Soc. 25.00
Priscilla (First) 40.00	Sr. Mr. and Mrs. (First) 50.00
Men's League 50.00	Hope Herald's 77.25
Redland's Men's Soc. 25.50	R.F.P.A. (refreshments) 10.13
Redland's Men's Soc. 32.25	
Individuals	1,419.67
Total Gifts	5,971.06

G. Bowkamp, Treasurer

ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT

September 26, 1969

Annual Treasurer's Report:

Permanent Committee for Publication of
Protestant Reformed Literature;

\$ 4,219.41 Balance on deposit in bank Sept. 5, 1968

Income

\$ 147.41 Interest from money in bank
1,616.35 From sale of "Dogmatics"
5,936.77 From sale of "Behold He Cometh"
7,700.53

7,700.53

11,919.94

Disbursements

6,918.94 Cost of publishing
"Behold He Cometh"
24.00 Post Office rental
6,942.94

6,942.94

\$ 4,977.00

Balance in bank

There are 254 copies of "Dogmatics" in stock
476 copies of "Behold He Cometh"
1,500 copies of "Behold He Cometh"
printed and will be bound when needed.

Tom Newhof
Treasurer

THE LADIES SOCIETY of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland expresses its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Allen Elzinga and her family in the passing of their infant son and brother Timothy Scott Elzinga "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints". Psalm 116:15

The Ladies Society

ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT

The Lord willing, on October 15, 1969, our dear parents

MR. and MRS. PETER DE VRIES
will commemorate their 55th Wedding Anniversary.
Our prayer is that our Heavenly Father may continue to bless and sustain them in their declining years.

Mr. and Mrs. John F. De Vries
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Zandstra
and grandchildren

ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT

On October 30, the Lord willing, our dear parents,

MR. and MRS. ADRIAN VAN MEETEREN,
will commemorate their 40th wedding anniversary. We, their grateful children, thank and praise our Covenant God for them and for using them to instruct us to walk in the fear of His Name. Our prayer is that they may continue to experience the Lord's blessing on their earthly pilgrimage. Psalm 128:5 "The Lord shall bless thee out of Zion, and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life."

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Van Meeteren
Mr. and Mrs. John Feenstra
7 grandchildren

EASTERN LADIES' LEAGUE MEETING

The Fall meeting of the Eastern Ladies' League will be held, the Lord willing, Thursday, October 23, 1969, at 8:00 PM at the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. Prof. Herman Hanko will be our speaker. Plan to spend an evening of Christian fellowship.

Tillie Sietstra, Vice Sec'y.

NOTICE !!!

TO ALL WHO LOVE THE REFORMED TRUTH !

Notice is hereby given of the ANNUAL REFORMATION DAY RALLY. On October 24, next week Friday evening, at 8 P.M., in The First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Professor H. C. Hoeksema will speak on the timely subject "THE WORD OF GOD AND THE REFORMATION" Please circle this date, October 24, on your calendar. Let us not be too busy to hear the Word of God.

Protestant Reformed Lecture Committee
Otto Kamminga, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

September 15, 1969
Loveland, Colorado

Report of Classis West, convened in Randolph, Wisconsin on September 3, 1969

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches met in Randolph, Wisconsin on September 3, 1969. Rev. Dale H. Kuiper presided over this meeting of Classis.

The twelve churches in Classis West were represented by eight ministers and thirteen elders.

Classis adopted an overture from Randolph's consistory regarding the opening devotions at each meeting of Classis. The overture proposed that the minister who presides at the beginning of each Classis (the president of the previous Classis) not only read a passage of Scripture, as is customary, but also give a brief interpretation of an appropriate Scripture passage. One of Randolph's grounds for this overture was: "If a portion of Scripture is explained and applied briefly, a spiritual attitude will be established, the light of the Word of God will be before our minds, and brotherhood will be fostered. This is not to say that these spiritual elements have been absent in our gatherings, but in our opinion they will be enhanced greatly if the above overture is adopted." In order to provide time for these devotions, Classis changed the time of the beginning of each day's sessions from 9:00 A.M. to 8:30 A.M.

A consistory appealed to Classis West a decision of another consistory. Classis considered this appeal, and gave advice.

Another consistory asked Classis' advice on the erasure of a member by baptism. Classis decided to ask the consistory to delay action on the erasure, so that the Classis could make a study of one of the grounds for the erasure. Classis appointed a committee which is to report at the next Classis.

Classis adopted the following classical appointment schedule, which includes 22 Sundays requested as assistance from Classis East.

Hull: Sept 21 - Decker; Sept 28 - Kuiper; Oct 12, 19, 26 - Classis East; Nov. 16, 23 - Hanko; Nov. 30 - Lanting; Dec. 21, 28, Jan. 4 - Classis East; Jan. 11 - Lanting; Jan. 25, Feb. 1, 8 - Vanden Berg; March 1, 8 - Moore.

Pella: Sept. 21, 28 - Lanting; Oct. 12, 19, 26 - Vanden Berg; Nov. 9, 16, 23 - Decker; Nov. 30, Dec. 7, 14 - Classis East; Dec. 28, Jan. 4, 11 - Kuiper; Jan. 25, Feb. 1, 8 - Classis East; March 1, 8 - Hanko.

Forbes: Sept. - Decker (one Sunday); Oct. 5 - Moore; Oct. 19 - Moore; Nov. 2, 9 - Lanting; Nov. 30, Dec. 7 - Kuiper; Jan. 4 - Decker; Jan. 25, Feb. 1 - Moore; March 1, 8 - Engelsma.

South Holland: Sept. 21, 28 - Engelsma; Oct. - Classis East (two Sundays); Nov. - Classis East (two Sundays); Dec. - Classis East (two Sundays); Jan. - Classis East (two Sundays); Feb. - Classis East (two Sundays); March 1, 8 - Woudenberg.

The Lord willing, Classis West will meet in South Holland, Illinois in March, 1970.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk
Classis West

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Did you notice in the above Classis Report the decision taken to adopt a fine idea with which to open each Classical gathering?

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The Sunday Schools are again in full swing. The superintendent of First's Sunday School addressed a newsletter to the parents introducing the teachers, and asking the cooperation of the parents in helping their children with their lessons. Hope's first week of Sunday School provided a 15 minute program for awarding the scholars of last season for their memory work. Loveland's Sunday School has a new class for 4 to 7 year-olds who are being taught by Mrs. Frank Van Baren, who will use the Book of Matthew for the lessons.

* * * *

Redland's congregation held a three-fold celebration Sept. 19 when they commemorated, with their pastor and his wife, his 40th anniversary in the ministry, their 40th wedding anniversary and their five-year stay in Redlands. A short program was given, which was followed by a social hour.

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The Annual R.F.P.A. was held in Southeast Church Sept. 26. The speech by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema as well as the reports from the secretary and the treasurer will be found on the pages of our magazine. The speech was heard by about thirty men, so if you are not of that number, be sure and read it!

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When the sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated in Lynden's church a nursery is offered in the basement for the little children too young to attend the service.

...see you in church, J.M.F.