

The Standard Bearer

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The Object of the Christian's Hope

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

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

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Church News Editor: Mr. John M. Faber
1123 Cooper Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

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Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
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Meditation**The Object of the Christian's Hope**

Rev. M. Schipper

"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

I Peter 1:4, 5

Not only are we begotten again into a living hope, as we called it to your attention in our last Meditation; but we are begotten again also into an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance.

The object of the Christian's hope is therefore an inheritance which is incorruptible, and undefiled, and

which fadeth not away!

Begotten again into an inheritance!

An inheritance in Scripture as well as in our text carries within it especially two ideas. First of all, it is gratuitous! This means, negatively speaking, that it cannot be merited. Generally this is true of any

inheritance. Though sometimes a testator of a will in the case of an earthly inheritance may recognize some past favor on the part of the heir, generally speaking an inheritance is freely given. In Scripture this is always the case. The heirs merit absolutely nothing. The inheritance is simply given out of mere grace, and by the sovereign free choice of the God Who prepares and gives it. In the second place, an inheritance implies (and that is certainly the case here) that it is exceedingly precious, and therefore most desirable.

Indeed, the inheritance of which the apostle speaks is most gratuitous and very precious!

It is important here to consider exactly the relation of this inheritance to the hope of which the apostle spoke in the preceding verse. And we should keep in mind that the relation is such that the inheritance is the hope — only in anticipation. We have shown before that the living hope into which we are begotten again is absolute, and very real, not only as an activity, but also as to content. However, if we have that which we hope for, hope is no longer necessary. Hope knows its object, but it does not yet attain unto it. It has therefore its object only in anticipation. But the inheritance is hope realized! We are not only begotten again into a living hope, but we are also begotten again into an inheritance. The living hope stretches into the inheritance; not simply “unto” or “towards,” so that it is a question whether it reaches. Nor, of course, “in,” because that isn’t so yet. We are still in this world. But “into,” that is, to within the inheritance does the hope stretch.

What then is that inheritance into which we are begotten again and into which the hope stretches?

In answer, we ought to notice, first of all, how the text describes it. Strikingly the apostle describes it using three negatives: not corruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The idea of these three negatives is, of course, to compare our inheritance with our present estate. All that is here in the world of our experience is corruptible, defilable, and fades away. And, though all three descriptions seem to emphasize the same thing, there is nevertheless a fine distinction to be observed between them.

Not corruptible! This looks at the inheritance as being unaffected by anything outside of it. In contrast to this, all that we may possess in this world is affected by corrupting influences and powers that will eventually destroy it. Not so the inheritance of which the text speaks. There will be no moth or rust, no germ or pestilence to destroy it. It is incorruptible!

Not defilable! This looks at the inheritance in the moral and ethical sense of the word as being beyond any moral defilement. How different this is from our present state. Every step we take is characterized by moral defilement. Our first father was created undefiled, while he was also defilable. And he became defiled by the immoral suasion of the devil. And all his

children are by nature defiled. But not so is our inheritance. It is undefilable!

Not fadeable! This is almost the same as incorruptible, but with this difference: whereas that which is incorruptible cannot be corrupted from without, that which is not fadeable cannot be corrupted from within. And what a contrast this is to that which we now possess. Not only can it be destroyed by corrupting influences from without, but it is also of such a nature that it has no enduring substance from within. It is like the beautiful rose bush laden with flowers and growing in your yard. Today you see it covered with beautiful and fragrant roses. Tomorrow it may pass under the rain storm that causes all the petals to fall. But if no rain storm attacks it from without, you have only to wait long enough and the flowers of themselves wither and die. It has not enough inner power to continue. Our inheritance, on the other hand, is of an enduring substance. It cannot fade away!

The positive implications of all these negatives is that the inheritance is everlasting. It transcends all that which is temporal. And the reason for this must be found in the fact that this inheritance has its center in the incarnated Son of God Who died and rose again. Through the resurrection of Christ, that is, through the power of that resurrection we are born again, and possess therefore immortality and eternal life. And through the power of that resurrection the eternal inheritance stands. Christ Himself is the life principle of that incorruptible, undefilable, and unfadeable inheritance. And because the whole creation together with the church will ultimately be united in Christ, and Christ with His resurrection life will pervade all things in heaven and on earth, therefore that inheritance must be everlasting.

But again we ask: What then is that inheritance?

We ought to notice that the text speaks of salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Undoubtedly, therefore, our inheritance consists in our final and perfect salvation. Now we have only the beginning of it, having been begotten again into a living hope by the power of Christ’s resurrection. But when that hope will be stretched out into its object, we shall behold the perfection of our glorious salvation. In this final and glorious salvation all creation shall take part. For there shall be a new heavens and a new earth wherein righteousness shall dwell. In the very center of this glorious and perfect creation shall be the God of our salvation as He shall appear in the face of Christ Jesus. We shall see God as He has purposed to reveal Himself in His Son, our Mediator and Saviour; and we shall abide in His presence forever. We shall abide in His glory and fellowship, and never go out. We shall be like Him when we shall see Him as He is. That undoubtedly is the inheritance which is now the object of the Christian’s hope!

That object is absolutely sure!

It is sure, first of all, because it is reserved in heaven! This means, in the first place, that it is there. It is there centrally in Christ Who is gone into heaven to prepare for us a place. And from Christ it will be revealed in the last time. It means, secondly, that it is not yet universal in the cosmological sense of the word. It must yet be revealed, and will be in the last time. That it is reserved means, in the third place, that it is safely kept. The powers of evil, corruption, and darkness cannot reach it. It is impossible for the powers of destruction to ever touch that inheritance. It is safely kept in heaven!

Moreover, that inheritance is doubly sure! Not only is it reserved, safely kept in heaven; but the apostle also informs us that we also are kept. Literally he tells us that we are garrisoned, that is, hidden safely as in a fortress. That in which we are garrisoned is the power of God. God, you understand, is omnipotent, that is, all powerful. All power is His. There can be no dualism, that is another who has power to withstand Him. Even the devil has no power, or it is given him of God. And that power of God in which we are kept and which leads us into our inheritance is operating through faith. Believers, therefore, do not ride as it were asleep on a Pullman train to their inheritance, to be awakened then by the angels when they arrive in heaven. Not so does this power of God keep us. God wants us to know and to be fully aware of our salvation and the way to that final and glorious salvation. Therefore the power of God operates in them through faith, which is the power as it is the gift of God's grace. Never is it a condition which you must fulfill; but it is that power of God that works in our hearts enabling us to cling in hope to that God of our salvation Who will never let us go. Thus God preserves not only our inheritance, but also us; and we persevere until we attain our glorious inheritance.

Which is ready to be revealed in the last time!

That it is ready to be revealed means that it is already prepared, and this makes it objectively real, and this idea is in harmony with the rest of the text which emphasizes that the inheritance is reserved in heaven.

That it is to be revealed means that at the present time it is hidden from our view. It is behind the curtain of the heavenly, as it were. This revelation may be compared to the unveiling of a statue. One moment

the statue is hidden under a veil; but when the veil is removed, the thing hidden is suddenly revealed. Revelation differs from manifestation, another term often used in the Scripture, in that the latter is the more active term. For example, the sun manifests itself when it pierces the dark clouds, and you see it in its brilliant rays shining upon the earth. Revelation, on the other hand, is the more passive term, and informs us that something is done in respect to the thing that is revealed. In the case of our text it is our inheritance, which is now hidden, but which is to be revealed, that is, unveiled.

Our inheritance, our final and glorious salvation is ready to be unveiled! And what an unveiling that will be! The thought stirs in us eager anticipation. That which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it ever entered into the heart of man to conceive, is that which God has laid away for those who love Him. In one word, no words are to be found that can begin to describe it.

In the last time!

Time here must be understood not from the point of view of its being the succession of moments, though it is undoubtedly true there is such succession at the end of which shall be the last moment of time as we know it. Yet time, according to the text, must not be viewed as we watch it develop on our time pieces. Rather, time must be conceived of here as the opportune occasion. The very last event that will occur in time.

To that last occasion in history all other occasions work!

The entire eternal counsel of God has as its central and final objective the revelation of this inheritance. And all history is but the unraveling of this plan and counsel of God. The very last event that fills up this purpose of God is the final and glorious salvation of His people, when they shall be united with Him in an inseverable bond and abide with Him in His glory.

Then time, as we know it, shall cease! Then the counsel of God shall be finished. Then with all of God's redeemed creation we shall enter into and abide in our glorious inheritance.

That will be glory for me!

So it will be glory for you, too, my born-again reader!

With me let us say — Amen, and amen!

The Christ of the social gospel is a Christ who calls men to believe in a universal Fatherhood of God and to establish the brotherhood of man in the world. We must build Christian character. We must establish the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus teaches us how good men really are, and what a potential for good men have, and how men can work themselves into the favor and love of God. All this modern trash which flatters the pride of sinful men has nothing to do with the Christ of the Scriptures.

Editorials

Our Schools and Government Subsidy (9)

PAROCHIAID AND CONTROL

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

There are two very closely related aspects of government subsidy to non-public schools (and particularly to our Christian, covenantal schools) which we must still consider. One aspect is that of any possible government control which might be involved; the other aspect, inseparably connected, is that of the principles of education on which the theory of government subsidy is based and to which it gives expression and to which it will inevitably lead those schools which accept any proffered subsidy.

While these two aspects may be distinguished, they are nevertheless very closely related. And the relationship is this, that government control will enable the government to enforce its ideas of education upon those schools to which it provides subsidy.

The theory is the well-known one: he who holds the purse-strings calls the tune.

The question is, in the first place, whether this theory is applicable to the situation at hand. That is, will government subsidy lead inevitably, or even most probably, to government's having a share and insisting upon a share in "calling the tune?" And, in the second place, if the answer to the first question is affirmative, the question then is whether such governmental "calling the tune" is wrong and not to be allowed.

Before proceeding to answer these questions, I must make a couple of additional introductory remarks. The first is this, that even if the answer to the first of the above questions should be negative, this would not, in my opinion, justify parochiaid. Not only are there other reasons for this, some of which I have already presented; but there also are other very serious questions concerning the very idea of government subsidy. For example, just how much has the modern trend toward socialism governed the thinking of the advocates of parochiaid? Just how much has "welfare-state" philosophy and the desire for a hand-out motivated the drive for parochiaid? Or to phrase the question from a spiritual, ethical point of view, just what part does simple covetousness play in this drama? What part does a lack of conviction, deep-seated conviction, conviction for which we are willing to sacrifice if necessary, with respect to covenantal education play in this clamor for subsidy? What part does *faith* play in this? How much of Christian *contentment* is there in it? How much of a Christian sense of values is there in it? I am well aware that there

are those who "see red" when questions like these are asked or even suggested. And it always strikes me that this very fact could be a give-away. But it also strikes me as very strange that in this "affluent society," even taking into account the pressures of inflation and the wage-price squeeze, and even taking into account the fact that there are those who find it really difficult to meet the costs of covenantal education, — that in such an age as this the clamor for parochiaid should arise. I could perhaps understand it if in the depths of the depression, when our parents had to scratch and scrape to get together \$2 per week for school money for an entire family, there would have been difficulty in meeting school expenses, with the result that people began to look in the direction of government for aid. But today? By and large, there is today no *financial* reason why *any* cause of the kingdom, our schools included, should have to beg and lead a hand-to-mouth existence. If only the conviction and the will is there! Hence, I say, even apart from the question asked in the preceding paragraph, we all do well to pay attention to the morals involved in seeking and accepting government subsidy.

And my second introductory remark is this, that we must examine the right or wrong of any government control not from the point of view of any particular political philosophy, but from the point of view of Christian principle. Specifically, the question is: is it right or wrong for covenant parents to allow any other person or body to control, either wholly or in part, the schooling of their God-given covenant children? If it is wrong, principally wrong, then no amount of utilitarian reasoning can justify it. Principle must rule.

And now we turn to the questions.

Does Government Subsidy Involve Government Control?

It would appear that the answer to this question for anyone who considers government subsidy in its various concrete forms, and not merely in the abstract, must be an unqualified *Yes*. Seldom, if ever, does any branch of government appropriate funds for any project whatsoever without at the same time exercising control over the manner and time and purposes for which the money is to be spent. It does not authorize the spending of funds without some kind of strings

attached. This is true of city government. It is true of public school districts. It is true of state government, also in so far as it turns any state funds over to other arms of government, whether to the cities, to the counties, or to the school districts. It is just about axiomatic with respect to the federal government, so that there are even political battles fought about preserving "states' rights" while at the same time accepting federal funds for various projects. And, indeed, this is reasonable from the government's point of view; it may be expected, and even demanded, that when a government authorizes the expenditure of its money, that same government which holds the purse-strings has the right to say something about how and for what the money is spent. It may also be expected that the granting and withholding of such funds is made dependent upon compliance or non-compliance with the restrictions imposed, so that there is a built-in enforcement device in such grants. It may also be expected that the government which grants the funds makes provision for investigation as to whether or not the restrictions are observed. And it may even be expected that the law will provide penalties in case of disobedience to the restrictions imposed. And, as I indicated, it is rather well recognized that the federal government has in all these respects become like a giant octopus, reaching into almost every phase of life in today's society.

But we are concerned especially with education.

Speaking generally, we all know that the federal government is at this very time using the granting and withholding of federal funds in an attempt to enforce desegregation of schools in various states. We all know, too, that in the various states, when financial grants are made to local or county school districts, the state exercises rather strict control upon the manner in which such money is spent, so that local public schools must live up to various state requirements in order to obtain state funds. This is true in Michigan, and I would guess that it is true in other states as well.

But speaking specifically of government subsidy to non-public schools, I have yet to see either a law or a significant proposal for government subsidy (federal or state) to a private institution of learning which does not involve some degree of government control.

As far as federal funds (grants and loans) to private colleges are concerned, there are definite restrictions, for example, in the 1963 Higher Educational Facilities Act. This bill provides for federal loans and grants to colleges for facilities such as library, science, physical education, and classroom buildings. And the law provides that such facilities (including equipment and materials) may not "be used for sectarian instruction or religious worship, or primarily in connection with any part of the program of a school or department of divinity." And there have been religious-oriented colleges which have come into conflict with this pro-

vision; some have bowed to the restrictions (and it is still a question how far these restrictions extend), and others have attempted to get out from under the restrictions by paying back the federal funds. But the fact remains that federal funds involve federal control and restrictions.

The same is true of state subsidy.

It is significant to get the thinking of public school supporters and anti-parochial forces on this score. For even though these forces might not succeed immediately to get all the restrictions which they want, you can depend on it that they will work until they succeed in getting what they want. Remember, too, that the public school forces are in the majority. Here is a sample of their thinking in my state of Michigan. State Senator Gilbert Bursley was a member of the Joint Legislative Committee on Aid to Non-Public Schools which drew up the report referred to in earlier articles. Already early this year he was reported by Associated Press to have said, "... acceptance of public funds by nonpublic schools would ultimately lead to loss of control over their schools by nonpublic authorities." Recently he was reported to have listed "three standards which now apply to public schools which he feels should be extended to private and religious units." According to the *Grand Rapids Press* of Sept. 9, 1969, these standards were:

—Require nonpublic schools to accomplish consolidation and reorganization. "It would be totally wrong," Bursley said, "to require the small inefficient public school districts to reorganize and then to subsidize small, parochial schools without requiring the same compliance with reorganization guidelines." (Can you imagine what would happen to our little Prot. Ref. schools under a restriction like this? HCH)

—Require nonpublic schools to submit full financial and budget reports to the State Department of Education and Appropriation Committees of the Legislature.

—Provide that teachers of secular subjects in nonpublic schools be employees of the intermediate school district, a public agency, and not the employees of a religious body. (In other words, the intermediate school district would control our teachers. HCH)

This is a sample of the thinking of a foe of parochialism; and there are many such foes, who, if they finally must grant parochialism, will do their utmost to write in such restrictions.

Here is a sample of a proposal for parochialism from a Dr. Leroy Augenstein, member of the State Board of Education in Michigan. The *Grand Rapids Press* reported that he proposes that each school-age child would be given a voucher for sufficient funds to insure him an adequate education, with the voucher being redeemable at schools that:

—Provide for proper certification of all teachers and curriculum.

—Select faculty on a non-discriminatory basis.

—Make religious training optional and remove all religious symbols from the classroom.

—Accept all students regardless of their race and religion.

Talk about controls! True, this is not a legislative proposal, much less a law, as yet. But it is a significant sample of the thinking of an official in an influential position.

The proposal of the Joint Legislative Committee (which was actually under consideration in the Michigan Legislature last spring) had the following controls written into it, p. 27:

6. No Intermediate Board of Education would purchase any educational services in courses of instruction in religion.

7. In order to assure that the state was receiving appropriate services for state aid, the State Board of Education should annually test pupil achievement in courses of instruction purchased *in order to determine the secular effect and whether the secular educational legislative purposes are being achieved.*

8. The State Board should require audits (similar to those required of public school districts) of the financial and child accounting records of the non-public schools as they pertained to the purchase of services.

House Bill 2424 (the parochial bill before the last

session of the state legislature) had similar language in it.

There are other proposals brought up and mentioned in the news occasionally. But every proposal of note which is considered to have any chance of serious legislative consideration has restrictions written into it. Generally, the restrictions take two forms: 1) a restriction in the very nature of the subsidy, based upon a secular-religious distinction in education. 2) various restrictions designed to enforce the restriction under "1".

And it is not difficult to see: 1) That any school would be virtually tied hand and foot by these laws. 2) That there would be great pressure on a school board and teaching staff to make its curriculum and instruction measure up to "the secular educational legislative purposes." 3) That once subsidy is accepted by a school, the fear of having to get along without subsidy would have the effect of inducing a school to accept even more restrictions and certainly would have the effect of making a school very reluctant to do anything which might entail loss of subsidy. Subsidy is like dope. Once you accept it and become addicted to it, it is extremely difficult and painful to break the habit. This is history's lesson.

But the question remains: is such control good or bad, right or wrong?

To this question we shall address ourselves next time.

Topsy-Turvy Joy from "Down Under" (3)

A FAULTY UNDERSTANDING OF DOGMATICS?

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In connection with Dr. K. Runia's thoughts on "The Joy of Systematic Theology" ("The Banner," June 20, 1969, pp. 18, 19), I cannot escape the impression that underlying all that he writes is a faulty understanding of the very nature and task of dogmatics. It is true that Dr. Runia writes only very briefly, — far too briefly, in my opinion, for such an important subject. It is also true that he betrays somewhat of a tendency to vacillate and to hesitate, even to the point of contradiction at times; and this makes it somewhat difficult to grasp his precise meaning and understanding of dogmatics. It is also true that he fails utterly to give any definition of what he calls systematic theology. But both from what he writes and from what he fails to write his ideas of the nature and task of dogmatics are rendered severely suspect. At best Runia is extremely vague and ambiguous, and at worst his suggestions hint at a denial of the true character of Reformed dogmatics.

First of all, let me call attention to Dr. Runia's reference to the alleged systematic theology of the apostle Paul. Writes he:

Perhaps the best example of this kind of systematic theology one finds in the epistles of the apostle Paul. It may be objected that Paul was not a systematic theologian but one of the organs of revelation; that in his epistles we do not have a sample of systematic theology but part of God's revelation to his church. We fully grant this. No later theologian, not even an Augustine or a Luther or a Calvin, was on a par with Paul. In Paul's epistles we have to do with the Word of God. But is it nevertheless not true that Paul, in his special apostolic way, was dealing with profound dogmatical questions, and may we not, from this angle, speak of his "theology" or even "systematic theology"?

Now it is true that Runia tries to maintain a distinction between systematic theology and revelation. It is also true that later he writes that "It is

obvious, of course, that in our systematic theology we cannot simply imitate Paul," and calls attention to the fact that "In our systematic theology we are dealing with all these matters in a scientific way, which necessarily means that the element of abstraction and objectivity enters into the discussion." However, it seems rather obvious that Runia contradicts himself at this point. For although he seems to recognize a difference between Paul's epistles and systematic theology, he nevertheless states in question form that it is proper to speak of Paul's theology and even of his systematic theology. Not only so, but while, on the one hand, he states that we cannot simply imitate Paul in our systematic theology, on the other hand, he calls Paul's alleged systematic theology "the best example of this kind of systematic theology," that is, the kind of systematic theology which Dr. Runia favors. To say the least, this is strange and contradictory reasoning. Paul was not a systematic theologian and did not write systematic theology, but it is nevertheless proper to speak of his systematic theology? Paul's alleged systematic theology is perhaps the best example of this kind of systematic theology, and yet we must not simply imitate that alleged best example? This, to me, is double talk, sheer nonsense. I repeat: it cannot but lead to a topsy-turvy joy.

The simple fact is that the Bible (whether in Paul's epistles or any other part) is not a systematic theology, is not a book of doctrine, is not a compilation of doctrines in systematic form and expressed in dogmatic terms. It is the record of the historical revelation of God to His people. It is revelation woven into the texture of the earthly and historical development of God's church in the world. And it is precisely the task of dogmatics and the dogmatician not simply to repeat and imitate Scripture, nor to look for a systematics in Scripture, but to present the truth as it is in the Scripture systematically, to compare the system of dogma critically with Scripture, demonstrate its harmony with the Word of God, and by means of a study of Scripture to enrich and bring the dogma of the church to a fuller development.

In the second place, I call attention to the total lack of all mention of the confessions of the church and the total lack of all reference to the dogmas of the church catholic and the dogmas of Runia's own denomination, i.e., the dogmas of the Reformed churches. I cannot help thinking that this is no accidental omission. Whether it is connected with the fact that Runia speaks of systematic theology rather than of dogmatics, I know not. But I am tremendously suspicious when in connection with the joy of systematic theology and a discussion of the proper method and purpose of theology there is absolutely no reference to *dogmas* and to the *confessions*. For not only would Runia have been guarded against his attack on so-called "ontological" theology if he had referred only casually

to the confessions, which are replete with "ontology." But he also renders himself suspect of being a devotee of the method of so-called Biblical theology. He completely ignores the fact that the dogmatician does not labor individualistically, does not ignore the work of the Spirit in the church of the past, but labors both as organically connected with the church throughout the ages and as a member of a particular church in the present, and that therefore the dogmatician in the nature of the case works with *dogma*, with the dogmas of the church catholic as well as with the dogmas of his own denomination.

In the third place, I am not impressed favorably by Runia's reference to theology being "existential," especially not when he attempts to draw a contrast between this and "abstract" analysis. This contrast he draws repeatedly in his attempted demonstration of Paul's alleged systematic theology in the epistle to the Romans. And my unfavorable impression is fortified when I read the following about Romans 9-11: "When in the next three chapters the apostle deals with the mystery of election, he again avoids all abstract reasoning about an eternal decree and the ontological problem of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, but he discusses it as a reality in the *history* of Israel and in the life of God's people." Does Runia want merely a historical election (and reprobation, which he does not mention)? What is that "mystery of election" which Paul allegedly discusses as a reality in the history of Israel? Is it eternal? Is it a degree of God? Is it sovereign? Must, or must not, systematic theology give answers to these questions? This is the more important with respect to Dr. Runia's understanding of dogmatics because of the clear sympathy which he evinces elsewhere for the arguments of those Reformed theologians in the Netherlands who attack the Canons of Dordrecht and especially the doctrine of reprobation.

On the other hand, if all that Runia means to emphasize is that dogmatics is related to *faith*, that the dogmatician can properly labor only in faith, that in his theologizing he deals with those dogmas in which he finds the purest expression of his own faith, and that dogmatics seeks to give objective expression and enrichment to the content of the Christian faith (that which it is necessary for a Christian to believe), then he could have said this in a much more explicit and unambiguous manner. And then I would agree. But I would also emphasize that the believers' minds can only appropriate the truth of Scripture in the way of logical contemplation, and that if theology (of the dogmatician and of the church) does not present the truth of the Scriptures in objective and systematic form, the individual believer and the church stand to lose their moorings completely and to drift into the dangerous waters of a contentless faith.

I am indeed sorry that Dr. Runia does not make

positively clear what he understands to be the meaning and the task of dogmatics. Does he lean in the direction of the biblical-theological method? Has he been influenced by Dr. Berkouwer's kerugma-faith correlativity? Is there a tinge of Barthian existentialism and dialecticism in his ideas? Who can tell?

But, in conclusion, I would like to see Dr. Runia begin at the beginning if he wants to criticize the *Reformed Dogmatics* of Herman Hoeksema. Let him

criticize this definition for a starter: "Dogmatics is that theological discipline in which the dogmatician, in organic connection with the church in the past as well as in the present, purposes to elicit from the Scriptures the true knowledge of God, to set forth the same in systematic form, and, after comparison of the existing dogmas with Scripture, to bring the knowledge of God to a higher state of development." Personally, I find joy, — the joy of faith, — in that kind of dogmatics.

All Around Us

Underground Churches A Blow To Religious Broadcasting Noah's Ark Found?

Prof. H. Hanko

UNDERGROUND CHURCHES

In the *Grand Rapids Press* of Saturday, August 16, an article appeared on the church page written by Carl Strikwerda which reported on the establishment of "underground churches" in the area. The article reads as follows:

The underground church movement is alive in Grand Rapids.

In the last decade, the idea of small groups meeting to worship God in their own way, outside the traditional church structure, has been a growing force.

The unstructured religious gatherings in Grand Rapids are few in number, and, as in other cities, avoid publicity. But there are two active underground groups in Grand Rapids which welcome openness.

Both groups were founded primarily by Calvin College students who were dissatisfied with the Knollcrest campus worship services. The students felt the services were too formal and impersonal to be meaningful.

One group began organizing their own services during the school year, emphasizing informality and participation by all the worshippers. Meetings were held in various places until two months ago when members got permission to use facilities at the Grand Rapids Youth Ministry, 129 E. Fulton St.

Regular services are held there each Sunday at 3 p.m., with additional meetings sometimes held during the week.

The second underground church movement got underway about the same time, first meeting at a local Christian Reformed Church and now at members' homes. At the Youth Ministry, liturgies of the services are written by the young people themselves. Often they use the order of worship of the formal church

but substitute their own forms which they feel are more natural for various parts of the service.

Portions of the Bible other than Exodus or Deuteronomy are read for the commandments and the folk song "Kum-ba-yah" is sung as the prayer of illumination.

Communal prayers, open discussion of the sermon and the "passing of the peace" between members are other new attempts to give meaning to worship.

Most services are in the form of a dialogue between "the people" and the "leader". The leader can be any member, group of members or the speaker for that service. Seminary students, ministers and college professors have given the message.

Key to the services is informality with members' attire running from sandals and levi's to other casual wear. All sit on the floor during the programs.

"What we're trying to do," said a 21-year-old college student, "is to make worship part of our everyday life. If worship is divorced from reality, people can go back into life without having been affected."

Twice the services have included "love feasts" where members eat and drink together to emphasize the unity they share in Christ. Nothing formal about food either, with cookies and coffee one example.

A college professor who has led the group explained that the love feast is not designed to take the place of communion, but to co-exist with the sacrament.

The other underground church movement is even less formal in the sense of religious service. Members meet together to sing, talk over parts of the Bible and pray.

Sometimes they break up into small groups to discuss individual problems. The emphasis is on

making real what the young people have found in the Bible.

"I feel that any praise or work of God is worship. To me, this meeting is just as meaningful as the regular service I attend," a 19-year-old female member said.

The songs that are sung are varied, ranging from hymns used in traditional services to religious folk songs. Accompaniment is with a guitar and tamborine.

One high school boy who attends the services says he likes the freedom it offers.

"If we want to include poetry or use a different version of something in the service, we can. And we don't have to put on special clothes or attitudes to worship."

Originally, both underground groups were mostly Christian Reformed college students, but gradually persons of other denominations have joined. Today, members include students from all area colleges and local high schools. But the groups welcome anybody — including older persons.

Surprisingly, many of the underground church members are not drop-outs from their original churches. As one Calvin coed said, "I still get something meaningful from the regular services."

All members, however, regardless of their present affiliations, would like to see changes in the traditional church.

The changes they seek are not in doctrine or form but in relevancy. The young people want the church to have meaning in everyday life.

They are not just criticizing the formal church, either. They are trying to initiate change in a mature manner.

Some of the members have begun meeting on week nights with local ministers. They discuss their type of services and ask the ministers to consider changes in the church.

Thus, in some ways, these young people are not yet "underground". They have not, for the most part, given up on the church. As one high school girl said, "We won't turn off to the church, even if it turns us off."

If these groups of young people were meeting together to discuss the Word of God and pray, this would be a commendable thing. But this is not the purpose. These young people are disillusioned with the Church and are using their meetings as substitutes for the regular worship services in their congregations.

There may be reason for their disillusionment. There are plenty of churches even in Reformed communions where the Word of God is rarely preached in purity and where the preaching has degenerated so badly that the Word of God is replaced by the words of men. But this does not seem to be the chief motivation behind the formation of these underground groups. They are not apparently seeking the pure preaching of the Word. They are rebelling against "traditional forms of worship."

When the church of Christ gathers to worship God,

it is commanded to worship God as He has commanded in His Word. This requires a certain amount of spiritual discipline. It requires the discipline of grace. It requires the discipline of humility. The people of God are required to come with fear into God's presence and submit in humility to God's holy Word. The "informality" of these underground services gives evidence of a refusal to submit to such discipline. The young people are influenced by the general rebellious spirit which characterizes our age and particularly many youth in this generation. But their rebellion is against God and against His Word. It can come to no good.

One wonders what happens to the church institute in such worship services. Where is the ambassador of Christ commissioned to preach in the name of Christ, sent by Christ to bring an authoritative Word of the gospel? Where are elders who are called to rule in reflection of Christ's kingly office? There cannot possibly be any exercise of the keys of the kingdom in such meetings. Nor apparently are there intended to be when everyone is welcome. Christ's high priestly office is forsaken and there is no display of the mercies of Christ which He shows to His people. The whole church institute is destroyed and informal gatherings are substituted.

But the church institute is the mother of believers. Without such an institute the believers cannot exist in the world. They are born from this holy mother, nourished at her breasts, brought up under her discipline, cared for by her tender regard for their spiritual well-being and prepared by her earnest instruction for the difficulties of a life of faithfulness.

The fault lies not in the church — although if the church to which these people belong is not faithful to her God-given calling, the church must answer to God for the disillusionment of the youth of the covenant. The fault lies with rebellious young people who will not submit to the discipline of Christ. His yoke they refuse to take upon them. His burden is intolerable, even though Christ assures His people that His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

A BLOW TO RELIGIOUS BROADCASTING

Some time back the Federal Communications Commission wrote what it called its "Fairness Doctrine." This doctrine, among other things, requires all broadcasters to give free time to any person or group which has been attacked on the air. The purpose of this free time is to give those who are attacked opportunity to answer.

Especially right-wing conservatives were alarmed over this doctrine. It seemed (and may have been) to be especially directed against such programs as Carl McIntire's "Twentieth Century Reformation Hour," Billy Hargis's "Christian Crusade," and H. L. Hunt's "Life Line." They believed not only that the ruling of the FCC was a direct attack on the part of liberals to

silence their programs, but that eventually this ruling would mean the end of all religious broadcasting.

The matter was carried to the United States Supreme Court. The court, in an unanimous decision, upheld the Fairness Doctrine. It argued that indeed the doctrine might create some problems for some stations, but that it did more to encourage free speech than hinder it.

The fact of the matter is however, that many stations are refusing to carry religious broadcasting and especially broadcasting of the extreme right wing because they are afraid to carry controversial broadcasts which will require rebuttals from those attacked. The time, the cost, the threat of lawsuits is not worth it all in the eyes of many stations.

NOAH'S ARK FOUND?

Several years ago there were reports that a Russian aviator had located the well-preserved remains of Noah's ark on the shore of some lake in the mountains of Ararat. The news made quite a sensation at the time and expeditions were formed to investigate. The report proved false and the excitement soon died down.

Now there are new reports that the ark has been

found. This time however, the ark is supposed to be lying beneath a glacier at the bottom of a lake on Mount Ararat. Some wood has supposedly been found which came from the ark. Once again an expedition is being formed to investigate the report. The expedition plans to leave next summer.

We do not know whether God has preserved the ark all these years or whether it has, by this time, been destroyed. We are inclined to think the latter. There are almost no "relics" from Bible history available — in spite of so many claims of the Roman Catholic Church. It is a very striking thing that God saw fit to destroy them all. In fact there is not even any certainty among students of Scripture and of the geography of the Holy Land where many ancient sites are actually located. No one knows with certainty where the "cattle stall" of Bethlehem is located, where Calvary is to be fixed and where many other places mentioned in Scripture are to be found.

One thing is certain. The ark will make no difference for faith. Those who believe in Scripture do not need the ark to verify or strengthen their faith. Those who do not believe in Scripture — in the whole story of the flood — are not going to change their minds even if the ark is found.

From Holy Writ

The Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. A. Lubbers

CHRIST ENTERED ONCE INTO THE HOLY PLACE BY HIS OWN BLOOD (Hebrews 9:11-12)

Yes, the time of reformation has come. In the fulness of times God sent His son into the world, made of a woman and made under the law. (Gal. 4:4) Christ came near. He visited His people to save them from their sins. And he came as a great high priest. He is not a mere high priest under the shadows and types, but he is the high priest of "good things to come." Such is his unique distinction from all the high priests which came before him. Ever the promises mercies toward which the types and shadows pointed had been in the offing; however, now these "good things to come" will be made a reality!

All the high priests of the Old Testament shadows came and performed their work by means of a tabernacle. It was a tabernacle of this creation. And the performance of the instituted worship could only be a parabolic performance. But not so Christ! He comes in a different tabernacle. He comes in the real and true tabernacle, which is heavenly. This is one

which is pitched by the Lord. Thus we might notice in earlier essays in this series. There is nothing in this tabernacle which has in it what might be called "made by hand." It did not belong to our present heaven and earth. It was above and beyond the world of our taste, touch and handling. It reached down on earth as did the pillar of cloud in the desert, came into this world, tabernacled in our midst, yet in such a way that it was really not part of this earthly. It was the tabernacle of God with man — Immanuel, God-with-us!

If the heaven of heavens could not contain God, how much less would a mere earthly temple do so. Yet, he who dwells in the light which is such that no one can approach unto it, came and dwelt in our midst in the flesh. He came into our midst, assumed our flesh and blood, and this became a living temple and sacrifice in our midst. This flesh of Christ is evidently the "better tabernacle." How we must conceive of this better tabernacle in a local sense is difficult to say. The book of Hebrews does not give us any such temple here. It only describes for us the Mosaic tabernacle as a "pattern" of the heavenly, but this description does

not warrant us to try to conceive of the heavenly counterpart in a local sense. The "shadows" needed such a building made with hands; however, the heavenly, which is called the "body," is the real tabernacle which is centrally for us in Christ's blood. Thus Christ is for us the way and the truth and the light. No man can come unto the Father except through Him. (John 14:6) He is the great "I Am," Jesus, Jehovah-God, as he dwells with his people by His Word and Spirit in their hearts. And thus it becomes "I in them and thou in Me, that we may be perfect in one." The hour cometh, says Jesus, when the true worshippers shall worship God in spirit and in truth, and then it shall not be on any particular earthly mountain, nor in any particular earthly temple. It seems to me that this is the only way we can represent the temple "not of this creation."

Let us not overlook the fact that when the "blood of the covenant" was sprinkled by Moses as the law-giver, he did not sprinkle it in any temple made by hands, a temple of this creation. The entire scene is like unto all the Theophonies of God, such as are spoken of by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Revelation. (Isaiah 6:1-4; Ezekiel 1:4 f.f.; Revelation 4:1 f.f.) For notice that according to Exodus 24:9-11 the tabernacle of God was with man through the blood of the Mediator and sacrifice in such a way that Israel "saw God." Here was a tabernacle not made with hands in visionary form. Do we not read "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness. . ." Here we have the revelation of God in a form which is not made with hands. Here we see that the way unto God is the covenant of blood. Only because of the blood of the covenant can we have the glorious reality of grace and mercy which is put in the following words "And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God and did eat and drink." (Exodus 24:11) Forsooth this was more of a picture of the real and heavenly than any house made with hands.

Perhaps in the light of the foregoing we can see clearly that Christ, who is God in the flesh, did not come through any earthly temple, nor with the blood of goats and bullocks. He is the Lord of glory Himself. Does he not say: he that hath seen me hath seen the Father? (John 14:9) He is God manifested in the flesh. And this flesh is the "better tabernacle." It is a better tabernacle because in this tabernacle God truly comes to dwell with His people. It is "more perfect," since it is the far better vehicle for the realization of God's dwelling with man, by the removal of sin. Here God can so dwell with Israel, His church, that he does not "lay his hand" upon them to destroy them! The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth became a

glorious reality through Jesus Christ. (John 1:17) And in this tabernacle the waters of the wells of salvation flow from its sides into the four corners of the earth; here the waters flow from the throne of God and of the Lamb. (Ezekiel 47: 1-8; Rev. 22: 1-3)

In this greater and more perfect tabernacle Christ came with blood. It was *shed* blood! A victim died for the sins of the people. However, this time we have a better day of atonement which is not conducted officially by Aaron's unprofitable priesthood, but it is one in which we have a great high priest, Jesus, the Son of God, Who shed His own blood. He gave himself for us! The great sacrifice of atonement was shed on the Cross of Calvary. And this Cross was "outside of the gate" of the city. Where that Cross stood no tabernacle of this creation was seen. What was there was that the God of Israel extended a cup to His Son in the flesh, and said "drink it." God laid his hand upon this sacrificial Lamb. It was the Lamb which God had prepared for Himself. Here we see truly "Jehovah-Jired," in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen. Thus all the former ages had waited for this redemption. Now their eyes were made to see the salvation of the Lord. For Christ, the anointed of the Father, came near through the greater and better tabernacle through His own blood!

THE GREATER CLEANSING EFFICACY OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST (Hebrews 9:13, 14)

There was a certain ceremonial, cleansing power in the blood of goats and bullocks on the great day of atonement. It was an instituted ordinance of Jehovah God, who dwelt between the cherubim. However, it had only power of a fleshly cleansing. It consisted in washings, meats and drinks, in carnal ordinances. (Hebrews 9:10) The entire *system* of the Old Testament sacrifices was faulty. It perfected nothing. Wherefore the writer speaks not only of the imperfection of the blood of the day of atonement, the blood of goats and bullocks, but he also speaks of the blood of the red heifer, whose ashes represented the power which would remove the greatest of impurities. The water in which the ashes of the red heifer were mixed was called the "water of expiation." Even the very best of the sacrifices and ceremonies fell short of their mark!! The only cleansing was that of the flesh, of the outward man!

Now the writer does not merely make a comparison between the Old Testament cleansings and the New Testament cleansing by the blood of Christ. He shows the "much more" of the latter. If the former was indeed a cleansing of the flesh, the latter was *much more* a cleansing of the *conscience*! What is this conscience which must be cleansed? Our conscience is our knowing together with God on His divine tribunal as he judges our deeds, whether they be good or evil. Unless a man's conscience is cleansed he has a defiled

conscience — defiled by the guilt of sin, so that we cannot stand before God, not draw nigh to him with boldness. Rather a defiled conscience would try to hide from God, and says: Hills fall upon us, and mountains cover us from the eye of Him that sitteth upon the throne! A man can give nothing to ransom his own soul, nor to quiet his guilty conscience. It has no power to cleanse from “dead works.” Unless the conscience is cleansed one can never go beyond dead works. One can go to the temple, bring alms, return what one has stolen, but he cannot, in real and living service, serve the Lord. He is dead, and his works are and remain “dead works.” They are the flesh which profits nothing. It is the “spirit” which giveth life. Man must be cleansed to stand before the living God before whom all things are naked and opened! And, unless one has his conscience cleansed, it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

It was the living God who came to Moses, Nadab, Aaron and Abihu on the ascent of Sinai. To see the “God of Israel” and live, that is the end of a cleansed conscience. And that takes place by the blood of Christ far more surely and efficaciously than does the mere cleansing of the flesh by the blood of goats and bullocks. The latter was merely parabolic in nature, while the former means that the kingdom of God has come upon us.

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

If the sins and transgressions under the Old Covenant were not removed as pertaining to the conscience, but only as pertaining to a fleshly cleansing, then the sins in the first covenant were never removed. All the sins of all the people in the Old Testament dispensation needed to be removed. And this all waited for the better blood, Christ’s own blood which he shed at Golgotha. They must all be paid for. Redemption from all these sins must take place. This all awaited the coming of Christ through the greater and more perfect tabernacle.

AS LONG AS THESE SINS ARE AN UNPAID ACCOUNT, they constitute a handwriting against Israel. This handwriting must be nailed to the accursed tree. Only when this takes place can Israel, the church, receive the eternal inheritance. But this eternal inheritance is not for all. It is only for those who are “the called.” There is even the remnant according to election of grace, who are powerfully called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light. These are a class in distinction from others. They were called up to the present moment. Once called always called. The calling of God is without repentance. And for such called there must be a receiving in their hearts through the actual forgiveness of sins — the eternal inheritance.

Studies in Depth

A Missionary Movement

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

WORLD VISION International is an interdenominational missionary service agency organized to help meet emergency needs in crisis areas through existing evangelical agencies. Its deepest concern is for the great masses of people who have never heard the Gospel. Along the way of its many Red-Cross-style activities it sponsors evangelistic crusades, Bible study, Bible memory courses and distribution of Scripture portions. Doctrinally, *World Vision’s* statement of faith includes belief in the infallible inspiration of Scripture, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the virgin birth of the Lord, His sinlessness, miracles, vicarious atonement, resurrection, ascension, session and return; regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of men, either to a resurrection of life or a resurrection of damnation, and the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is all well and good, as far as it goes, which certainly is not as far as the great Reformation truth drawn from Scripture. But the feeble cry of this

statement often seems drowned out in the din, clash and clatter of “some battle.”

The organization maintains a film library revealing missionary labors in the Orient and conditions in China (before the bamboo curtain), Japan, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia (Java) and Korea. These films might be reviewed and evaluated by anyone desiring to make a study of contemporary missionary work. It is, admittedly, greatly necessary that we have an up-to-date picture of the foreign mission field.

There is also what is called a “Viet kit” ministry. Church groups and individuals make up school kits, hygiene kits and sewing kits for refugees fled from the terrors of war with absolutely nothing but the rags clinging to their bodies. The dire necessity for such an item as a hygiene kit, for example, is evident in the fact that soap, towel, comb and other personal cleanliness articles cost a full days wages, which, of course, thousands of destitute refugees do not have

and cannot earn. Hundreds of thousands of these kits are distributed each with a Gospel of John in Vietnamese. To anywhere meet the need, a million more must be distributed. Information on how to provide, assemble and where to send these kits is furnished on request.

There are *World Vision* orphanages and children's homes with 24,000 orphans and destitute children in 19 countries. These children are educated, trained in the Bible, in nursing and in sanitation to prevent epidemics. There is the sponsorship of medical clinics, hospitals, leper asylums, and the sending of tons of medicine, vitamins, dental and hospital equipment. In connection with the mention of vitamins, it is pointed out that there is a desperate need for huge supplies of them because of hundreds of thousands of children, who, where any food is available, are on a largely starch diet, lacking proteins and vitamins, so that there is much of the widespread baby disease, *kwashiorkor*, which causes intense listlessness due to huge vitamin deficiencies. These philanthropic efforts are used as a means of putting the Scripture into the hands of Orientals.

The organization also has a data processing and communication center the nerve center of which is an IBM 360 computer, model 30 (four tapes, 16k memory). By this means data will be on file recording the work of the church around the entire world. Gathered from the denominations, missions, individuals and in-depth studies by *World Vision's* Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center (MARC) there will be kept a complete record of people, who they are, what they are attempting to do and the methods they are using in missionary endeavor; a record of organizations, who they are, their purpose, how they execute it and results obtained; a record as to peoples, anthropological, sociological, ecological and religious data as it bears on the task of the church - a program "covering the world people by people will be undertaken." This computerized research will also provide analysis of methods of evangelism and church nurture which are effective, ineffective and contra-evangelistic. Information is supplied on request relative to analysis of missions research and on the use of the computer systems approach for missions. For sale is a directory of North American Protestant ministries overseas. It lists denominational sending boards, non-denominational missionary sending societies, boards and committees of missionary educational and college associations, fund-raising and fund-transmitting agencies, missionary associations agencies and members thereof, and theological seminaries reporting professors of missions. Over 400 mission agencies are compiled. These agencies are described by name, address, officers, publications, income and expenditures, number of missionary personnel overseas, number of nationals

supported, institutions and countries in which they operate. Each agency is cross-referenced to Goddard's *Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Mission* and the *World Christian Handbook*. The directory is advertised as "a must for anyone seeking a factual and authoritative service of information about and for missions"—an important reference for professors of missions, students of missions and seminary libraries.

Publications include *World Vision Scope*, a 16-page magazine free on request, and *World Vision Magazine*, a 48-page magazine with a subscription price of \$4.00 per year. This magazine reports on a great deal of social welfare activity interspersed with modern, activist sociological jargon. Interesting is a remark to the effect that "pietistic and puritanical" Christianity (whatever that may mean! — Fundamentalism, perhaps?) is rejected and is said to be especially repugnant to young people. (*W. V. Mag.*, Apr. '69, p. 5) Another statement suggests need for "in-depth, prolonged interaction with the Bible, theology and the principles of sociology and culture" (*ibid.*). With no further elucidation offered, such words sound like a facade for some proud superficiality. Then you read of dialog in the field of comparative religion, agrarian reform, ecumenism and church union, foreign aid, friendship in foreign relations and the recognition of "planned parenthood" (the current euphemism for "birth control") as a necessary indicator of logic and conscience. Suggested means for obtaining overseas slots for Christian witnessing are such organizations as the U.S. State Department, Radio Free Europe, CARE, Inc., and the Ford Foundation. Under this haystack of the "Great Society" could there be somewhere the needle of the pure Gospel? This issue of the magazine closes with the call "for eagles, not ostriches" in the poetic exhortation:

Are you sheltered, curled up by the world's warm fire?
Then your soul is in danger.
Out to the mire, out to the mire!
Your ease is the ease of the cattle.
Out to some field, out to some battle!

But, strange as it may seem, the greatest battle, *the* battle, and not merely "some battle" has always been "at home" preserving the purity of the doctrine of the Gospel and the purity of the true church. The battle for purity of doctrine and purity of the church has not been fought for nor maintained mainly on the mission field but where lie the church centers and their institutions. When the church and the seminary become weak and compromising with respect to stand on the doctrine of the Gospel, semi-Pelagian and liberal missionaries appear on the field.

World vision characterized the early New Testament church as is evident in its divine mandate, "Therefore go ye, disciple all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to keep all things whatsoever I

commanded you," and "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." That infant church, as with our own churches, had no Christian college with paradisaical campus, no modern-equipped radio station, no teletype machines, no batteries of tape recorders, no full-color, completely outfitted TV studio, no acres and acres of publication houses and printing plants with giant four-color, web-fed presses and binding machines, no Bible correspondence course staff, no electronic computer data processing center, with terminal controls systems department. Yet it spread the good seed of the Word of God throughout almost all of the Roman Empire, and soon after Pentecost came to be about five thousand men in number (to say nothing of women and children). This in no wise discourages the tiny, unnoticed denomination of nineteen churches, with four vacancies and but little over three thousand members. For throughout all its history it has been busy declaring and publishing the promise of the Gospel "to all nations and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the Gospel." Smallness does not prevent sowing the good seed of the kingdom to the other side of the globe. Nor does it prevent, in days of apostasy, the faithful

standing for, maintenance of and steadfast continuance in that whole body of truth which the Spirit of God through the ages has given the churches in the Three Forms of Unity, the Reformed Confessions. Nor does it hinder the proclamation of what "is the perspicuous, simple and ingenuous declaration of the orthodox doctrine" as "regulated by the Scripture, according to the analogy of faith" and as setting forth "the genuine sense of the holy Scriptures" (Canons of Dort). Size and access to modern implementation have no monopoly on world vision. Be inspired and encouraged to the action of the sowing of the seed and the leaving of the results to God by one tiny, insignificant Protestant Reformed congregation nestled in Uncle Sam's hip pocket (Lynden, Washington) from whence is spread the Word of God all over the land, around the world and in the islands of the seas. And so far, it has no IBM system 360 model 50. We agree with a great man who said, "When a bush is nothing but a bush, it is soon consumed when it is set on fire; but when it is a bush that burns on and is not consumed, we may know that God is there. So it is with a church that is flaming with holy zeal." As churches we are predestinated to seed the world!

The Lord Gave The Word

Early Missions in America

Rev. C. Hanko

It is far from my intention to write an extensive account of all the mission endeavors performed throughout the world, particularly in the past few centuries. Volumes have been written on only phases of this work, and therefore it would be useless to attempt to summarize it. Moreover, our chief concern is mission endeavor as it served as a background in our own lives, chiefly to see what God has accomplished, often in spite of the errors and weaknesses of sinful men.

As has already become evident to us, a radical change had come about both in Europe and in England through the rapid spread of the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church no longer had control of religious and political affairs in the world, but had to reckon with the protestant churches. These protestant churches have often been accused of failing to fulfill their calling in going out into all the world to preach the Gospel to all nations. The Roman Catholics, as might be expected, continued to spread their error far and wide, especially reaching out to newly discovered areas to make a first claim upon the natives there. And

they were not hesitant to brand the protestant churches as apostate, finding new evidence that they were the false church in the very fact that they did not carry out Christ's Great Commission. The Roman controversialist Robert Bellarmine wrote as follows:

C. 12. The effectiveness of its teaching. Heretics are never said to have converted either pagans or Jews to the faith, but only to have perverted Christians. But in this one century the Catholics have converted many thousands of heathens in the new world. Every year a certain number of Jews are converted and baptized at Rome by Catholics who adhere in loyalty to the Bishop of Rome; and there are also some Turks who are converted by the Catholics both at Rome and elsewhere. The Lutherans compare themselves to the apostles and the evangelists; yet though they have among them a very large number of Jews, and in Poland and Hungary have the Turks as their near neighbors, they have hardly converted even as much as a handful. (R. Bellarmine, *Controversia*, Book IV, quoted in "A History of Christian Missions," by Stephen Neill, page 221.)

Yet it is hardly true that the protestants were entirely lax in fulfilling the great commission of Christ. Anyone who knows a little about the history of the reformatory churches realizes the bitter struggle they had to become firmly established, and that over against bitter opposition. They not only had to contend with the violent hatred of the Roman Catholics, which branded them as heretics worthy only of death, but they also had the foe within the gate. As might be expected, the devil was doing his utmost to destroy this new and undaunted witness of the truth of the Scriptures. Besides, there was a carnal element also in the protestant churches, as is always the case, and these began to undermine the very foundations of truth. There were the Arminians, the Pietists, and the Anabaptists, all of various sorts contending vehemently against the faith once delivered to the saints.

But in spite of all this, it certainly cannot be said that the protestant churches failed entirely to witness of the truth and to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. In previous articles we have already made reference to the efforts of the Netherlands and England in spreading the Gospel throughout their colonies. In this article I shall limit myself to the spread of the Gospel to America soon after its discovery. As imperfect as these efforts were, God did bring the Gospel into this continent through them.

The charter that was granted to Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583 spoke of the compassion of God "for poor infidels, it seeming probably that God hath reserved these Gentiles to be introduced into Christian civility by the English nation." One already recognizes in this statement the common error of confusing "civilization" with "christianity" as if the two were synonymous.

The charter of the Virginia Company (1606) provided that the Gospel should be preached in the colonies, but also among the savages. The intent was to establish the Church of England in this new world. The clergy were instructed to use the Book of Common Prayer, penalties were placed upon the failure to attend church, the parishioners were obligated to pay the clergyman 1,500 pounds of tobacco and sixteen barrels of corn.

Also Charles I in granting a charter to the colony of Massachusetts included the statement that the colony must "win and invite the natives of the country to the true knowledge of the only true God and Savior of mankind and the Christian faith."

Evidently the colonists accomplished very little in attempting to do mission work among the Indians. Yet a serious attempt was made by the Presbyterian John Eliot (1604-90). He is commonly referred to as the "apostle to the Indians," and was evidently the first missionary on the American continent. He was born in Widford, Hertfordshire, England. He was educated at Cambridge. He went to Boston in 1631. A year later he

became "teacher" or pastor of Roxbury in Massachusetts. Immediately he proceeded to learn the language of the Pequot tribe of the Iroquois, so that he could preach to the Indians in Newton, Massachusetts without the aid of an interpreter. Realizing that it was virtually impossible for the converted Indian to live a Christian life in his own community, Eliot began "Praying Towns," or communities where these converts could live together. It is said that by 1671 he had gathered about 3,600 Christian Indians into sixteen settlements, and had begun to ordain Indian preachers, which reached a total of twenty four by the time that he died. The most outstanding work of John Eliot was the translation of the Bible into the Mohican language. The New Testament was published in 1661, and the Old Testament in 1663. He also published some other writings.

Eliot did gain support for his work from a group in England called the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Indians," organized in 1649. This society sent out three hundred and fifty missionaries to America and the West Indies. This may have been the beginning of mission labors in Jamaica. The society adopted the following resolutions:

1. That the design of propagating the Gospel in foreign parts does chiefly and principally relate to the conversion of heathen and infidels, and therefore that branch of it ought to be prosecuted preferably to all others.
2. That, in consequence thereof, immediate care be taken to send itinerant missionaries to preach the Gospel among the six nations of the Indians according to the primary intentions of the late King William of glorious memory.

I refer to this primarily to show that there is a shift toward mission endeavor carried out by a "society" instead of by the instituted church. This is a serious error, entirely contrary to the principle laid down in Acts 13, yet this error has grown in tremendous proportions throughout the years.

One thing that impresses us is the fact that this work among the American Indians has seemingly had no lasting fruit. One reason for this is evidently the great difference between the red race and the white race, which likely has always been a barrier between them. A more serious reason was the strong antipathy that grew between the Indian and the invading white man, even to the extent that the Indians were all but exterminated by the wars between them. But the question also arises whether it is not possible that God has something to say to us in this respect. God did undoubtedly save individuals, possibly families in the red race and does so today, according to His promise that He would gather His church out of every nation, tribe and people upon the face of the earth. But it also appears that God had no intention of gathering His people in the line of continued generations among the

red race in America. At least there is very little evidence of a continued line of generations of the covenant among them.

One can hardly speak of the religious life of the early American without referring to the pilgrim fathers, Puritans and Quakers. There were those who came to America not merely for adventure, nor for "political freedom," nor for economic advancement, but mainly to gain religious freedom. In England arose a group that opposed the dead formalism and the laxity of the Anglican Church. Ever since 1546 they were referred to as Puritans because of their precise, strict and severe way of life. They suffered persecution, except during the reign of Cromwell, 1653-58, for more than a century. Some of them to escape persecution fled to Holland. When emigration to the new world was started these Puritans sought refuge from persecution by going to America. It is said that of the 149 on board the Mayflower there were 35 separatists from the Leyden congregation of the Netherlands. From various reports we glean that from time to time other battle weary Puritans sought refuge here, until the number had grown to some 20,000. Roger Williams, the founder of the State of Rhode Island, studied Indian dialects and is said to have labored among the Indians, even baptizing some of them. For a time he was a Baptist, insisting on the baptism of adults; referred to commonly as the founder of the Baptist Church in America. Later he withdrew from the Baptist sect and maintained his own position, particularly over against the Quakers.

David Brainerd (1718-47) is also mentioned as an American missionary among the Indians. He was born in Haddam, Connecticut, and labored among the natives in Massachusetts. He died in the home of Jonathan Edwards.

That brings up the name of a well-known figure who

had considerable influence among the early colonies. He was born in East Windsor, Connecticut, of English Puritan ancestry. He was the only son in a family of eleven children. In his early years he was chiefly instructed at home, beginning the study of Latin at the age of six, and having a good knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew before he entered Yale College at the age of thirteen. He was ordained to the ministry in 1727 as a colleague of his grandfather, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, in the pastorate of the Congregational Church at Northampton, Massachusetts. After the death of his father two years later, he continued alone in the pastorate of the church. He is often referred to as a staunch Calvinist and at times branded as a "fire and brimstone preacher," particularly because of his well-known sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Later he became president of Yale College. He wrote a book, published in 1847, entitled: "A Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union Among God's People, in Extraordinary Prayer for Revival of Religion, and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, Pursuant to Scripture Promises, and Prophecies concerning the Last Time." If nothing else this title expresses a very common view of that day, which also motivated many preachers, namely, that the end of the ages was not far away.

The early colonies did give evidence of the church among them. But that certainly does not mean that all the founders of our country were men of deep religious conviction and strong, pious fervor. Quite the opposite is true, since there were also atheists and agnostics among them. The spirit of the French revolution was as evident as religious conviction. Yet God did bring His church into this new world, as will be evident also from the discussion we hope to carry on in the next issue.

In His Fear

But By Every Word

(Concluded)

Rev. John A. Heys

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Matthew 4:4.

In the last two contributions to this department we used this answer of Jesus to the devil to expose the evil of membership in a worldly labour organization. Such membership, we saw, demands of us that we go

contrary to the words of the law which proceeded from the mouth of God. And going contrary to God's law is opposing Him. Those who do this can only expect the awful opposition of the living God. And

who can survive, when He comes up against us in His holy wrath?

It is worthy of our attention at this time to note that in His answer to the devil Jesus speaks of "every" word that comes forth from the mouth of God. And thanks be unto God, there is another word from His mouth besides the word of His law. There is the word of grace as well as the word of the law. There is the gospel as it is in Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh. There is the word of life in the midst of all of our death.

If, therefore, we have fallen into sin, unequally yoked ourselves with unbelievers, vowed to go contrary to God's law with them, and have been convicted by the word of the law of our evil, there is forgiveness and life for us. Whether our guilt now is that of belonging to the camp of God's enemies as they are found in the worldly labour unions, or whether we have in some other way opposed God in the word of His law, there is a word of peace and comfort for the penitent sinner who turns from his evil way.

The law still stands. Words that have proceeded from God's mouth are never revoked. We are not under the condemnation of the law but under grace. Nevertheless we are still under the obligation of the law inescapably and everlastingly. Consider that Jesus, Who taught us that we shall live by *every* word that proceedeth from the mouth of God, also taught us that the whole law is summed up in one word, namely, that we love God and the neighbour for His sake. If that is the inner principle of the law — and it is — then every word of that law still stands for us today, because the word that proceeded from God's mouth in the writings of the apostles still continues to admonish us to love God and to love one another. God's word is never destroyed, recalled or nullified. Jesus can say "every" word in the sense of every word that ever came from Him from the moment of creation. The Perfect Legislator makes laws that the Righteous Judge will recognize to the letter and punish according to every infraction of that law. The Medes and the Persians boasted of laws that were not altered. And yet Daniel came out of the lion's den and the rule was changed. But God's laws are never foolish, never outdated, never lacking in relevancy but are as new every day as God is "new." For He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

How marvellous, then, that He saw fit to speak a word of grace also to the fallen human race. And not one, you understand, that somehow now does recall that law, ignore it or take words away from it, but one that presents to us the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sin of the world. A word it is that shows a people chosen eternally in Christ, and a Christ Who suffers all their endless agony and brings to God a full measure of those works of love demanded by the word of the law, so that now we do live by those words that proceed

from God's mouth. For in Christ we have kept every single one of those words, and kept them fully. We live by the obedience of Christ. What a sweet word from God's mouth whereby we may taste and see that God is good! What good news this is that shows us that our sinful attempts to live by bread alone are all forgiven and blotted out of God's book. Now we can understand the words of the psalmist, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." Psalm 19:9, 10.

It is well to remember, however, that this word of grace, this gospel as it is in Jesus Christ contains words that say unequivocally, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not He will whet His sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready." Psalm 7:11, 12. It also says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13. That word of grace is not for every man. God does not speak a general, universal, broad word of grace to all those who have violated the word of His law. John the baptist who prepared the way before Christ did not in God's name speak words of cheer and comfort to all the sinners even in Israel. To that which was considered to be the elite in Israel he thundered, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits of repentance." Matthew 3:7, 8. The word of the gospel declares that the sins of those who hate them and flee from them have been blotted out by the blood of the cross.

Let us not be so foolish, while we continue to walk in our sins, to point to Lot who had unequally yoked himself and become one with the Sodomites. It is perfectly true that the angel took hold of him and brought him to safety when he lingered. Read Genesis 19:16 carefully. Take note of the fact that the angel also took hold of the hand of Lot's wife and upon the hands of the two daughters. Lot had his flesh wherewith to contend, but we have the word of God for it that he vexed his righteous soul. His wife had no righteous soul and did not vex such a soul. She was heart, soul and mind in with all that vile generation in these wicked cities. There was no repentance, no grief about all the evil around her or in her. The angel not only let go her hand after bringing her out of the city for Lot's sake, but he also let her trail behind and be consumed, for He had never taken hold of her heart. Had He done so, she would have had a righteous soul and would have vexed it, as Lot did.

Not all who walk in sin will be snatched out of that sin. Walking in sin we can have no assurance of escaping the awful wrath of God. You simply cannot find a single verse in the Bible, nor even a part of a text, that gives assurance to the man who continues in

his sin that all is well, and that he has nothing about which to worry. You may be walking in sin today and in the day of your death enter into the blessedness of the kingdom of Christ. You may be an enemy of the cause of Christ and be yoked with other enemies of Christ, as was the apostle Paul, and still enjoy all the love of God in the new Jerusalem. However, then God some time in your life is going to turn you away from that evil way, as He did with the apostle Paul. But the point we make is that as long as you are unequally yoked in an agreement to walk in sin with the unbelievers, you have absolutely nothing to point to that will assure you that you are going to escape the wrath of God which He will surely heap upon those with whom you are yoked!

You may, instead, recall the example of Elimelech. His plans, you will remember, were to come back to Israel. It was to be only a temporary joining with the unbelievers (and this was in a land of which God said that the Moabites might never enter into the congregation, according to Deuteronomy 23:3) to be terminated after obtaining the bread by which he sought to live. But he never got back into the promised land. And his sons make even closer affiliation with the unbelievers by marrying their daughters. Even though God was pleased to give a rebirth to Ruth, there is nothing in the whole incident to give assurance or promise to us that he will do the same thing in our case. Instead we have that testimony of God's word, "If he turn not, He will whet His sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready." Let us not try to hide behind transparent glass. We cannot hide from God even in the depth of the earth with tons of rock over us. How shall we hide behind such a transparent substance as a distorted presentation of the Word of God?

The word of the gospel is for those who love the word of the law. Does not the psalmist in Psalm 119:18 exactly pray, "Open thou my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Here you have a man who in verse 63 declares, "I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts." He has no room in his life for being unequally yoked with those that do not fear God and that go on record to break His precepts in order to get a little bread, and who refuse to live by every word

that proceedeth from the mouth of God. And He is also the man who later in verse 136 cries, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law." For such is the word of the gospel. Such can and do find comfort concerning their own sins. And the reason is very plain.

By nature we are part of this wicked world. Our only concern is for bread for this life. God's word in any form we loathe and despise with our whole being. But when, lo and behold!, we suddenly or gradually find that we begin to have the experiences of the psalmist, we know that God has done something wonderful within us. We become aware of a new life. And that makes us confident that Christ, on the basis of His cross, has already blessed us with the essence of salvation. We know then that all the benefits of salvation are ours and that our sins, which we hate, are certainly forgiven us. By the gift of that different outlook upon our sins we know that God loves us. And knowing that God loves us, we know that the entire word of the gospel has been written and spoken for us. We know that all the good news in that word of grace will be fulfilled in us.

By every word that proceeds from God's mouth we shall be blessed. Men may, and men will, deny us bread so that we cannot live anymore in the physical sense. But the word of the gospel still contains for us promises of endless blessings in a realm where no men can ever take any joy away from us. It is all in that word of the gospel. Recall again the other verse which we used as a basis for these lines, II Corinthians 6:14-18. Paul gives us that word of the gospel in connection with the words of the law, when, having admonished us not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers, he adds God's promise, "And I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye **shall** be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord God."

If He receives us, what difference does it make if the world rejects us? If He receives us, how can it harm us, if the world takes all away from us? If He receives us, we really live, while the bread-eaters who killed us, starved us to death or made life hard and miserable for us, are in the everlasting death of hell. If He receives us, we are received into the everlasting blessedness of that word of the gospel.

The call of the gospel is to believe in the Christ of the Scriptures, Who leaves us nothing but the utterly humiliating confession that we are sinners, damnable and corrupt in ourselves, sinners who must be and only can be saved by pure and sovereign grace.

Contending for the Faith

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

THE THIRD PERIOD-730-1517 A.D.
PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF SIN
ACCORDING TO CALVIN

Rev. H. Veldman

Calling attention to the doctrine of a common grace as set forth in the writings of John Calvin, we concluded our previous article by noting that Calvin does not only speak of a common grace which is shown to the entire creation, without any distinction, but he also speaks of a common grace of God to mankind in distinction from the creation, and also this grace must be viewed only as relating to the realm of nature. In this connection, according to Calvin, we must view all things, which serve unto the sustaining of our present life, as signs of God's goodness to mankind, as Divine blessings which are gifts of God's grace. In I, 16, 5 we read: "In the law and in the prophets he frequently declares, that whenever he moistens the earth with dew or with rain, he affords a testimony of his favour." Several times the thought is expressed that God, in His favour, preserves and feeds all mankind, as is evident from III, 10, 3, where we read that God's beneficence is the source of whatever we may enjoy in the earthly sphere, such as clothing, etc.

Calvin, however, does not merely speak of God's goodness to all of natural life that is viewed as proof of a common grace; but to this must be added that all the excellent virtues of men are ascribed to the goodness and mercy of God. This is evident from II, 2, 17. Calvin had written that the mind was a peculiar property of our nature. However, there are those who become insane. He ascribes it to the goodness and mercy of God that we do not become insane or foolish. Moreover, that others are gifted with eminent gifts of the mind is a proof of God's goodness and beneficence, and this in connection with His mercy.

God's common grace, or mercy and favour (the last two words are used by Calvin), consists in this that God imparts to them gifts in this natural life (in fact, life itself must be viewed as proof of God's favour), such gifts of the mind which men receive from God in distinction from the mute creature. Now it cannot be denied that, when Calvin writes about these matters, he very often does not mean anything else than the gifts which come from God and are bestowed, unmerited, upon men. However, it cannot be denied, in the light of the fact that life itself must be viewed as proof of God's love and mercy for all, also these gifts

must be regarded as gifts bestowed upon the entire human race in God's general favour and love.

Calvin's common grace, as bestowed upon mankind, falls into two parts. First, he speaks of a common grace in distinction from a special grace. In II, 2, 17 he speaks of a special goodness of God, which exists in distinction from the general goodness of God. And this also applies to God's favour and mercy, in relation to mankind in the sphere of the natural. And we add that it is striking that, when Calvin speaks of a common grace among the heathens, or among mankind in general, he does not describe this grace in distinction from the grace which God's people receive, but in distinction from the special grace which is shown to mankind. When the doctrine of a common grace is set forth today, then the special grace, in distinction from common grace, is the grace of God as limited to the people of God. According to Calvin, however, all mankind receives God's special grace. The common grace which the Lord bestows upon all mankind consists in this, that the Lord, in general, imparts rich gifts to men. Whereas, according to II, 2, 17, God's special grace consists in this that the Lord imparts to some richer gifts than to others. This is clearly set forth in this quotation, and we quote: "Let us conclude, therefore, that it is evident in all mankind, that reason is a peculiar property of our nature, which distinguishes us from the brute animals, as sense constitutes the difference between them and things inanimate. For whereas some are born fools and idiots, that defect obscures not the general goodness of God. Such a spectacle should rather teach us that what we retain ought justly to be ascribed to his indulgence; because, had it not been for his mercy to us, our defection would have been followed by the total destruction of our nature. But whereas some excel in penetration, others possess superior judgment, and others have a greater aptitude to learn this or that art, in this variety God displays his goodness to us, that no one may arrogate to himself as his own what proceeds merely from the Divine liberality. For whence is it that one is more excellent than another, unless it be to exalt in our common nature the special goodness of God, which in the preterition of many, proclaims that it is under an obligation to none?"

Calvin, however, does not speak only of a common grace in relation to creation in the sphere of the natural, but he also speaks of a certain common grace in the spiritual sphere. First of all, however, in connection with this, we wish to observe the following. We have been unable to detect in Calvin's Institutes and in Calvin's Calvinism any trace of a common grace which proceeds upon wicked men, enabling them to do any good before Him; this grace is strange to the reformer. And neither have we been unable to detect, especially in the light of Calvin's Calvinism, the teaching that the preaching of the gospel is a general grace of God to the wicked world; he declares the opposite but too sharply and plainly.

The first item that draws our attention in Calvin's doctrine of Common Grace in the sphere of the spiritual is in relation to the regard for external virtue. We read in II, 3, 3: "For in all ages there have been some persons, who, from the mere dictates of nature, have devoted their whole lives to the pursuit of virtue . . . These examples, then, seem to teach us that we should not consider human nature to be totally corrupted; since, from its instinctive bias, some men have not only been eminent for noble actions, but have uniformly conducted themselves in a most virtuous manner through the whole course of their lives. But here we ought to remember, that amidst this corruption of nature there is room for Divine grace, not to purify it, but internally to restrain its operations. . . . In His elect, the Lord heals these maladies by a method which we shall hereafter describe. In others, he restrains them, only to prevent their ebullitions so far as he sees to be necessary for the preservation of the universe. Hence some by shame, and some by fear of the laws, are prevented from running into many kinds of pollutions, though they cannot in any great degree dissemble their impurity; others, because they think that a virtuous course of life is advantageous, entertain some languid desires after it, others go further, and display more than common excellence, that by their majesty they may confine the vulgar to their duty. Thus God by his providence restrains the perverseness of our nature from breaking out into external acts, but does not purify it within." It appears from these quotations that there is a certain operation of God's grace, not to the people of the Lord but to others. We have here the doctrine of grace in connection with the restraint by God of the outward deeds of the wicked. In this same paragraph from which these quotations are taken, the reformer very vividly describes the terrible wickedness of the sinner. And in other writings of the reformer the same thoughts are expressed.

Another item which attracts our attention is a sort of covenantal grace, which they receive who, although estranged from the work of Christ, nevertheless belong to the covenant externally, as it manifests itself in the

midst of the world. Calvin appears to teach, first, that the election of Israel, as people, in its entirety, was a manifestation of God's grace to all, secondly that this grace was bestowed upon Israel, not from the viewpoint of the election unto salvation, but as the historical people of God, and, finally, that this grace for them consisted in this, that they, because of the gracious love of God, received gifts of God, inasmuch as they were received into that external covenant.

In connection with this we can also understand the following in Calvin's writings: (1) First, the apostolic office was a manifestation of God's favour, but that it nevertheless did not contain the hope of eternal salvation — III, 22, 7. (2) Secondly, Calvin speaks of a general and special faith, and he undoubtedly refers to hope and other gifts, which they possess in the external covenant in the general sense of the word. — III, 11, 12. (3) Finally, external faith, which the reprobates possess, because they are in that external covenant, is a manifestation of God's favour and mercy. This faith is common, not because it has essentially anything in common with true faith, but because it, in the light of the outward emotions, is so similar to it externally.

Concluding our first point, which deals with the broad content of Calvin's doctrine of a common grace, we would note the following. We have attempted to present Calvin's doctrine of a common grace as briefly as possible. Of course, one could conceivably read a certain common grace in so many expressions of Calvin. This method, however, would not be just, inasmuch as the writer at times speaks of gifts of graces, not meaning anything else than that these gifts are bestowed upon us as unmerited. But, we have called attention to the following. First, God, the Creator of heaven and earth, shows a certain mercy to the entire creature, including the animal. However, this common grace, also conceded by the advocates of Common Grace today, is nothing else than a merciful providence, and the beast, as well as man, shares in this common grace. Secondly, there is a common grace which is bestowed upon mankind, which consists of many gifts in the sphere of nature, and this grace is divided into two kinds, a common and a special grace. And, in the third place, there is also a sort of covenant grace which the wicked receive in the sphere of the covenant. Besides, in this sphere of the covenant, there is a common and a special faith, hope, etc. Now it is striking that Calvin, with respect to all spheres of life, identifies the grace of God with outward gifts, in both spheres of life, the natural and the spiritual. In this must be sought the explanation of this doctrine of the reformer. Calvin identifies the grace of God with the things; or, he views God's grace in the things. Life, bread, temporary faith are to him in themselves good and must therefore be identified with a certain mercy of God. And whereas all these things, according to

Calvin, are of God, and man receives them as unmerited, he views this participation in all kinds of gifts a participation by all men in God's favour, mercy, goodness, grace, etc. And this common grace, identified by Calvin with the things, (therefore Calvin says that God shows a temporal mercy), reaches out to the entire universe, to mankind in the sphere of the natural, and to all those who, being externally in the covenant, taste the gifts of that covenant by the Spirit. These things are certainly of interest also to us in our present day. The doctrine of a common grace is and

should always be of interest. It is very vitally related to the present position and defections in the Christian Reformed Church today. And it should be of interest to know the position of the great Genevan Reformer, also in connection with his doctrine of sin. In our following article, the Lord willing, we will call attention to this doctrine of a common grace, as set forth by Calvin, as it is very limited in its scope, and we purpose to compare it with the doctrine of Common Grace and of the Three Points of the present day.

BOOK REVIEWS

Prof. H. Hanko

HOLY BOOK AND HOLY TRADITION, edited by F. F. Bruce and E. G. Rupp; W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968; 244 pp., \$5.95.

This book contains a series of papers delivered at the International Colloquium held in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Manchester.

The purpose of the conference is described on p. 21:

This conference aims among other things at clarifying the relation of scripture and tradition in the non-Christian religions. There are good reasons for entering upon this research. Most religions possess holy books. In some religions these books function as a canon. On the other hand, tradition plays an important part in many religions. There are even religions, primarily those of illiterate peoples, which are totally based on tradition. Therefore an inquiry into the function and relation of scripture and tradition in the non-Christian religions is quite relevant.

A listing of the chapter headings will give the best idea of the contents of the book: "The Holy Book, the Holy Tradition and the Holy Icon", "Religious Tradition and Sacred Books in Ancient Egypt", "Holy Book and Holy Tradition in Iran: The Problem of the Sassanid Avesta", "Oral Torah and Written Records", "Scripture and Tradition in the New Testament", "The Ancient Church and Rabbinical Tradition", "Scripture, Tradition and Sacrament in the Middle Ages and in Luther", "Scripture and Tradition in Modern British Church Relations", "Present-day Frontiers in the Discussion about Tradition", "Scripture and Tradition in Catholic Thought".

Since the book is a scholarly discussion of the relation between tradition and various holy writings, it is difficult reading. Of interest to me were the chapters which deal specifically with the whole question of the relation between the Bible and tradition — an issue which is receiving renewed study in our day. These

chapters especially were interesting and instructive although little in the way of solutions to the problem appears.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE TO A CHANGING WORLD, *International Reformed Bulletin*, 1968; 113 pp., \$1.00 (paper).

This is the October, 1968 issue of the *International Reformed Bulletin*, the official organ of the International Association for Reformed Faith and Action. The book contains the conference papers of the RES Baarn Missions Conference held in 1968. The authors of these papers are John Galbraith from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Shigero Yoshioka from the Reformed Seminary in Japan, P.E.S. Smith from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, D. C. Mulder from the Free University in Amsterdam, J. W. Deenick from the Reformed Church in Australia, John M. L. Young from Covenant College in Tennessee, Robert Recker from Calvin Seminary, Hugo Du Plessis from South Africa and Paul Schrottenboer who is General Secretary of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

The conference papers were intended to deal with the problems which are faced by the Church in her calling in the 20th Century to fulfill the mandate of Christ to preach the gospel in all nations. As is quite naturally the case with a variety of authors, the quality of the papers differs considerably. Yet, on the whole, the papers were interesting and well-done. Many of the practical problems faced in the sending churches and on the mission field were discussed. The threats of false religions and false ecumenicity were faced and solutions to these problems were discussed.

A major disappointment to this reviewer was the fact that no attempt was made to put the whole mission calling of the church in *Reformed* perspective. The conference was intended of course to face

practical problems. This is evident from the title. But a distinctively *Reformed* emphasis and a Reformed approach to missions should have been evident. It seldom was.

The book is required reading however for all those who in any way engage in the mission calling of the church.

THE PROPHETS OF ISRAEL, by H. L. Ellison; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969; 176 pp., \$4.50.

The author of this book is the son of a Hebrew Christian missionary and was himself missionary to the Jews in Poland and Rumania. His profound acquaintance with the Jewish people and with the Hebrew language is evident in this volume.

The book treats the prophets who were sent by God to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It begins with the nameless prophet who was sent to curse the altar in Bethel and ends with the treatment of the prophecy of Hosea. Special emphasis is placed upon the prophecies of Amos and Hosea; almost a complete translation of these books appears in the text.

The author engages in a great deal of textual criticism which makes the book somewhat difficult reading for those not acquainted with the Hebrew language. But the author gives much valuable background material to the prophets and their work and emphasizes especially the spiritual and moral decline of the Northern kingdom which finally brought the judgments of God upon the nation.

The commentary on the text is not intended to be exhaustive and the book will hardly serve as a commentary. But as an aid to understanding the prophets it is very helpful. The author has many fresh insights and new ideas which he propounds. These ideas have to be weighed carefully. The reader will not be inclined to accept them all. Recommended to those who are making a study of the prophets.

BLACK SELF-DETERMINATION, by Arthur M. Brazier, edited by Roberta G. and Robert F. De Haan; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969; 148 pp., \$4.95.

The author of this book is the negro pastor of the Apostolic Church in Chicago and served as president of The Woodlawn Organization, an organization the story of which is told in this book.

The Woodlawn Organization was formed in one of the negro ghettos of Chicago with the express purpose of organizing black power. The book is a militant book. Its thesis is that only through organization of black power will the blacks achieve any kind of equality in a country where the white power structure

is determined to deny the blacks their rights.

While such organizational power is passed off in the book as being Christian, there is no attempt whatsoever to put the entire racial problem in the perspective of Scripture and reach solutions on Scriptural ground.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Inasmuch as our parents

REV. AND MRS. C. HANKO

celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary on September 19, we their family, desire to acknowledge before God our deep gratitude for the many blessings we have received through them throughout the years. That our God has blessed us with covenant parents who have shown us "the fear of the Lord" continues to be reason for thanksgiving. May our Father keep them beneath the shadow of His everlasting wings in the remainder of their earthly sojourn.

Prof. and Mrs. Herman Hanko
Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hanko
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bos
Alyce
and 17 grandchildren

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 20, 1969, MR. AND MRS. JOHN ZANDSTRA celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We thank God for them and our Christian home and training, and it is our prayer that they, with us, may continually be blest.

Children and grandchildren

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Pella Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to Deacon Jacob S. De Vries and family in the passing of his Mother. May the rich promises of Spiritual blessedness found in the Word of God give Christian hope and comfort.

C. Vander Molen, Pres.
C. C. Van Soelen, Clerk

To all who love the Reformed Truth, notice is hereby given of a lecture to be held on Friday Oct. 24, at 8:00 p.m. at 1st. Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. Prof. H.-C. Hoeksema will speak on: The Word of God and The Reformation. Please *Circle* this date, Oct. 24, on your calendar. Let us not be too busy to hear the Word of God.

Prot. Ref. Lecture Comm.
Otto Kamminga, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

September 14, 1969

From a trio which included Revs. R. Decker, D. Engelsma, and R. Harbach, our South Holland, Illinois congregation has extended a call to Rev. R. Decker to become their pastor.

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In answer to the call of Southwest Church Diaconate for used clothing for the Jamaican needy, Rev. Moore's people utilized the opportunity to send a very large carton of clothing to the Grand Rapids church by a Michigan visitor at Classis West.

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In an Aug. 10 bulletin of Southwest Church we found an excerpt from a letter from Rev. Frame, of Jamaica. It was an account of an "accident" which befell him as he was riding with Deacon Elliott on his Honda. A tire blew out and they were thrown from the motorcycle and suffered bruised hands and knees and torn trousers. Rev. Frame was on the way to Shrewbury to preach there so he had to finish the trip by rented car (cost-\$12.50). These gallant ministers in the Prot. Ref. Churches of Jamaica are working under severe handicaps, most of which cost pounds-and-pence which are wanting. But their faith in "the Lord Who will do which is good for His people" never wavers.

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Hope's Consistory has scheduled this year's catechism classes for Saturday morning and Thursday evening. The explanation: "The Consistory made these changes in meeting time to eliminate conflict with school activities by setting one evening for this instruction; and the change from Monday afternoon to Saturday morning will allow the students to be in better condition than at the conclusion of a school day." This change also necessitated a shift of consistory meetings to Wednesday evenings.

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Hudsonville's Young People Society has been named to host the 1970 Y.P. Convention. From Disneyland to Celeryland; but for pure natural beauty the latter will not suffer in comparison to the former. No mountains, no ocean, but a study in contrast — rows of bright green in fields of jet-black!

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Adams St. School opened its doors with a new Principal, and according to him, "with a staff that is genuinely interested in instructing children not only in the various *subjects* of the curriculum, but also, and especially, in the *way* that they should go." This is undoubtedly true of all our Prot. Ref. Chr. School teachers; one wonders if we, the members of our various school societies, are awarely thankful for the devoted teachers of our children.

The "Newsletter" from the Northwest Iowa School in Doon came to our desk and featured a cover page adorned with the artistry of Mr. John Kalsbeek, the new Principal, showing chicory and black-eyed susans. Concerning these, Mr. Kalsbeek wrote. "As the chicory and black-eyed susans and others display their vivid colors and beauty to our eyes they reveal the glory of God. So also our children are called upon to use and develop their talents given them by their Creator, God. For this reason they go to school; school then becomes to them an actual, real, living experience in which the wonders of God are studied, discussed and enjoyed." Besides Mr. Kalsbeek, who teaches grades 5 through 8, Mrs. Walter Fair will teach grades 1 through 4. Mrs. Fair came from South Dakota where she taught for eleven years, and Mr. Kalsbeek's last assignment was a four-year position in South Holland.

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In one of the summer bulletins of Lynden there appeared an excerpt from a letter from a lady in Oxnard, Calif., "We look forward to your tapes each week. We are a little disappointed in not getting your study class lessons during the summer, but we now have the book, "Behold He Cometh", so I know there will be plenty of reading and listening available during the summer." So you see that not everyone takes a vacation from Bible study in the summer!

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Apropos of the above: a July 20 bulletin of Doon evidenced that their young people's Society was in session!

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May we share with you a paragraph from First Church's bulletin under the heading, Family Visitation: "Once more that season of the year has come when we conduct our annual family visitation. The purpose of these visits is that families of the congregation may be spiritually encouraged and strengthened. To that end, give yourselves readily to the inspection of the elders. Be instructed and comforted by them. Thus we may, as a congregation, be knit together in bonds of love and fellowship. . . ."

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Now that the summer is past, catechism classes have been called and society meetings are scheduled regularly, we can again partake of the inexhaustible resources of the Word of God. But shall we? Have we resolved to miss no catechism class, and to faithfully attend each society meeting, health permitting? Shall we, *en masse*, join Joshua in his public resolution, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord"?

. . . .see you in church

J.M.F.