

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation:

The King on the Cross

Editorials:

Credibility Gap (and others)

All Around Us:

Request For A New Confession

Although The Mountains Quake

(see: Come Ye Apart...)

The Strength of Youth:

Obedience To Parents

CONTENTS:

Meditation –	
The King on the Cross	290
Editorials –	
About Our New Catalogue Folder	292
Credibility Gap	293
An Open Letter to the Reformed Churches of New Zealand	295
All Around Us –	
Request for a New Confession	297
Come Ye Apart . . . And Rest A While –	
Although The Mountains Quake	300
The Strength of Youth –	
Obedience to Parents	301
Contending for the Faith –	
The Doctrine of Atonement	303
In His Fear –	
Fear-Filled Sheep	305
From Holy Writ –	
Exposition of Hebrews	307
Book Reviews	309
Letters to Polly	309
The Holy Triangle	309
God in the Dock	310
An Evening Prayer	310
News Feature –	
Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland	311
Church News	311

THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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

Department Editors: Mr. Donald Doezeema, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay 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. Donald Doezeema

1904 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Editorial Policy: Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

Business Office: The Standard Bearer,

Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.

P.O. Box 6064

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$7.00 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

Advertising Policy: The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st or the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

Bound Volumes: The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

*Meditation***The King on the Cross**

Rev. M. Schipper

"And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin."

John 19:19, 20

And they took Jesus, and led Him away!
And He bearing His cross went forth into a place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha.
Where they crucified Him. . . !
And Pilate wrote a title, and had it affixed to the

cross, above the head of the central figure at the scene of the crucifixion, for with Him were two other crucified, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

A comparison of the gospels reveals that they do not agree as to the precise wording of the title. Matthew

has: This is Jesus the King of the Jews. Mark has simply: The King of the Jews. While Luke tells us the title was: This is the King of the Jews. And, as stated above, John tells us that the title was: Jesus, the Nazarene, the King of the Jews. For more than one reason we believe John's interpretation should be accepted as the correct version. He alone of the gospel narrators was present at the crucifixion and was therefore an eye witness. The others therefore must have received their information from others. Moreover we accept it on the grounds that it is the longest title and therefore the more difficult to explain.

Jesus, the Nazarene, the King of the Jews!

It was this title that the chief priests of the Jews rejected. They say: Write not, the King of the Jews; but that He said: I am the King of the Jews. In no sense did they wish to be associated with Jesus, as the title Pilate prescribed clearly indicated. More importantly, however, they objected to this title because they conceived of the disastrous effects this title might have on those of their own nation who were visiting Jerusalem during the feast days. These came from every part of the world and would be able to read the title, whether they were of Hebrew, Greek, or Latin background. Should they be converted to Christ through the reading of the sign, as evidently was the case with one of the malefactors, the cause of Christ could only be enhanced, not crushed, as the Jewish leaders had hoped. Moreover, should the title remain unchanged and be understood as it was written, it could only be interpreted to mean that the Jews were crucifying their king, and this would forever make them slaves of Rome. Though they had cried out in rage before Pilate during the trial of Jesus: We have no king but Caesar, they never meant it. They were looking for such a king, who would liberate them from the yoke of bondage.

Pilate, however, was of no mind to bow to their petition. His answer was: What I have written, I have written. This he said, not because he was unable to change the superscription. If Pilate had so desired he could easily have changed it, and for that matter, he could have ordered it taken down. Pilate, however, remained adamant. Whereas during the trial of Jesus he had given much evidence of weakness, allowing himself to be pushed around by the Jews, now that he had given sentence that Jesus should be crucified — while in his heart he was convinced that Jesus was innocent — he will take a stand, if for no other reason than to pester these hated Jews.

However, we ought to see that there was a deeper reason why he would not alter the title. God, Who had so overruled in the trial and conviction of Jesus, and according to Whose will that title should appear in the three different universal languages, also had determined that the title should be written precisely as it was. Neither Pilate nor the chief priests, yea, no one,

may change it.

The hated Nazarene is indeed the King!

O, true, He is not the earthly king of the Jewish people. Such a crown and such a people the Lord repeatedly had disclaimed during His earthly ministry. At the beginning of His ministry He had withstood the temptation of Satan to accept the kingdoms of the world for the mean pittance of bowing only one knee to the prince of darkness. And at the height of His earthly ministry, after He had performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand, He totally rejected the proposal of becoming the king of that nation which had sought Christ only for bread. Though the title might be construed by the readers as indicating that Jesus was to be identified with the nation of the Jews as their king, such was not the divine intention in the title. Just as the question of the Magi from the East must be understood as meaning: Where is He that is King born out of the nation of the Jews, and hence out of the royal line of David; so must the title be understood, according to the divine intention.

Moreover, the term Nazarene must also remain in the title. Out of Nazareth which never had a good reputation, God would present His King. Out of the land of darkness God would command His Light to shine, and that, too, with the usual two-fold effect: on the one hand, that those into whose hearts the Light has fallen may see in Him the light of their salvation, and their King come to deliver them from the power of darkness, sin, and death; on the other hand, that those who remain in darkness might only reject Him, and impose on Him all their reproaches. Indeed, the King on the cross, Who arose out of the darkness and obscurity of Nazareth, is God's eternal King. From the everlasting decree He was appointed to rise to the throne of Zion. Of the Israel of God, according to the election of grace, the Nazarene is God's appointed King. Through the awful reality of His cross would He furnish His throne and establish His dominion.

Awful fact!

The King on the cross!

Devilish mockery!

Instigated by the chief priests and elders. It appears that when Pilate refused to change the wording of the title, the leaders of the Jews were determined to destroy any possible good effect the title might have on the people, who, reading the superscription, might be converted to the cause of the Nazarene. While at first they apparently had no intention to attend the crucifixion because of the feast days, lest they should become polluted, and thus unable to serve in the religious services at Jerusalem; they now, in spite of any pollution that might fall on them, were determined to not only be in attendance at the cross, but especially with a view to mixing in among the people and arousing in them the spirit of hatred, and evoking from them the devilish mockery that followed. Hence,

Matthew informs us: "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying: Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." In this connection notably we read: "Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God."

To know that He will die on the cross does not mitigate their devilish rage.

Before He yields up the ghost, they cast at Him their cruel mockery and evil sarcasm.

Never would they own, nor would they have the people believe that He had done good when He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, and when He raised up the dead. The thought must be rooted out of the minds of all that He actually saved others. For if He was unable to save Himself, He had no power to save at all. He must be branded as an imposter.

Also the soldiers, coming to Him and offering Him vinegar, mocked Him, saying: If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself!

In word and deed they deride Him; for to them also a king on a cross was pure folly. Their only conception of kingship was envisioned in one who sat on a throne, clothed in royal array, and holding in an iron fist the symbol of absolute dominion. An apparently impotent man, with perhaps no other garments than a tattered loin cloth, and whose hands and feet were nailed to a cross, militated against every human conception of kingship. And the language they speak is reminiscent of the very speech of the devil. "If thou be the Son of God," was the repeated language of Satan in the temptation. And this is precisely the terminology the adversaries use before the King on the cross — If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

Yet the truth of the title is factual, and the King on the cross is God's anointed!

Though apparently the King is vanquished, yet paradoxically as it may seem — He is the King victorious!

Beholding Him only with the natural eye, and apart

from the Word of God concerning Him, all that you see is helplessness and defeat. Beholding Him thus, you see neither form nor glory, but a bruised and crushed, emaciated and ghastly figure of a man, hanging helplessly on a cross. None is there who will deliver Him. No armies, no power of the sword to respond to His command. Rather, He appears accursed of God and of men. Lifted up from the earth, as not worthy to stand in the company of men; but also, as it were, abandoned of God, and allowed to suffer the torments of hell. Apart from the Scriptures, that divine revelation concerning Him, and beholding Him only with the eyes of our flesh, all you can see in Him is utter defeat. There is nothing that could ever make you believe that He is the Redeemer and Deliverer of His people. Small wonder, then, that the world of the wicked mock and deride Him!

But thanks be unto God!

We know better of Him!

With the light of infallible revelation shining upon Him, and with eyes of faith, given to us of pure grace, we are able to penetrate with our vision through the veil of His flesh and behold in Him the God of our salvation, the King in His glory, battling all the powers of sin and death and overcoming them, while He pays the penalty of our guilt in our stead. In each groan and twinge of pain, He drinks more deeply of the cup of the wrath of God which is poured out over our guilt which He assumed. Unto the last drop of blood that poured from His veins, He satisfies completely the justice of God, and merits for us the sentence of righteousness.

Glorious King!

Completely victorious!

Making even His enemies to be His servants, and using their service to lay the very foundations of His kingdom, against which the very gates of hell shall never prevail.

Out of the wild and frenzied cries of the mocking rabble shall the plaintive prayer arise from the lips of one of His penitent subjects — Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. One there was who by grace was able to read that little Bible above His head, and see in Him the King eternal.

And His soul shall be satisfied that — not the host of darkness has prevailed — but He through His cross has established forever His kingdom that shall have no end.

Editorials

About Our New Catalogue Folder

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Enclosed with this issue our readers will find what we believe to be an attractive and handy catalogue-

folder containing a complete listing of Protestant Reformed literature available from various organizations

in the Grand Rapids area.

If I may say so, this catalogue is an example of what cooperation can accomplish. Several organizations — the R.F.P.A. Board, the R.F.P.A. Publications Committee, the Reformed Witness Hour Radio Committee, the Sunday School Mission Publishing Society of First Church — and several individuals working on a committee have cooperated to prepare this folder. And besides the above-named organizations, several societies and individuals have cooperated in financing its publication. The result of this cooperation is a complete listing of literature available in our circles and published in the Grand Rapids area. (In parentheses, I may note that there is other literature available in our circles, but that for purposes of efficiency in distribution we did not include or try to include literature published by organizations in some of our western churches. This was not intended as any kind of slight, but was done solely for purposes of efficiency.) But to return to my subject, this catalogue represents commendable cooperation. The result is that this vast treasure of literature is available to anyone by means of one order blank and from one central address, that of our Publications Committee. Hereafter it should not be difficult for anyone to find out what is available and how to get it.

For the benefit of our *Standard Bearer* readers we have enclosed this folder. We hope that you will feel free to make use of it. Some of the literature is of rather recent date, some of it is older. Some of it is free, some of it will cost you a small amount. But all of it, we believe, is worthwhile. And we hope that our readers will check to see whether or not they already have the literature listed here, and that they will order accordingly, whether the literature is free or not. We promise efficient service on your orders.

The committee in charge of this project is now busy with plans for distribution of the folder. Our intention is to get a wide distribution, both within and outside of our Protestant Reformed Churches. Already we have laid plans for the distribution of some two thousand copies, and efforts are under way to reach as many more addresses as possible. Naturally, there may be some overlapping in our mailings. If you should receive more than one copy, please pass any extra copies on to interested friends. We also solicit any suggestions or help which you may have to offer with respect to wider distribution. If you have addresses to which you would like a folder sent, send them in to us. Or if you wish to have a supply of folders for personal distribution, write to our box number and we will send them.

Our readers may also be interested in knowing that the printing of this catalogue is serving a double purpose. The first four pages, containing the recent books published by the R.F.P.A. Publications Committee, were also printed separately and with the imprint of two commercial book dealers in quantities of several thousand in order to advertise our books more widely.

There is, of course, no sense in publishing literature unless we also make it known and make it available. We believe that our publications are distinctively Reformed, that they are sound, and that they answer a great need. We believe, too, that they are worthy of wider distribution than they have sometimes received. One way to achieve such wider distribution is to advertise the literature and to make it easily available. It is our hope that this catalogue-folder will help to achieve our goal of wider distribution. We ask your cooperation.

Credibility Gap

Some months ago there appeared in *The Banner* an "Open Letter to the Christian Reformed Church" undersigned by the Faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary and its several members. Apparently this letter was motivated by concern about the image of Calvin Seminary among the Christian Reformed constituency. It alleges that "For some time now writings and rumors circulating in the church have called into question our united commitment to the Scriptures and our common loyalty to the confessional standards of our church." And it states, further, that "increasing concern and sadness" about "the distrust, suspicion, and anxiety these writings and rumors have created" have moved them to "speak out" in this open letter.

Positively, the Seminary Faculty in this letter attempts to reassure the Christian Reformed Church

that they "accept the inspired Scriptures as the infallible rule of faith and practice" and that they "endorse the Confessions to which we have in all honesty affixed our signatures."

Negatively, they "deny and repudiate those charges and insinuations which call into question our dedication to the Lord and our commitment to Scripture and the Confessions — charges which undermine the confidence of our people in the Seminary."

Now it is not my purpose in this editorial to call attention to the fact that this letter itself and the very fact that the Faculty apparently felt the necessity of it might be considered as face-value evidence not only of a confidence-gap and a credibility-gap, but also as evidence of reason for it. Nor do I intend to call attention to the fact that a good many items from the

rather recent past might be mentioned as reasons – and not mere rumors and insinuations – for this confidence-gap. Nor will I deal at length with the fact that this confidence-gap undoubtedly extends not only to the Seminary but to the Synod which is responsible for the Seminary. I need only mention in this connection, for example, the fact that there never was any proper doctrinal resolution with respect to Professor Harold Dekker's rank Arminianism, and that the Synod is responsible for this.

What I want to emphasize, however, is the fact that a mere open letter of this kind will not be sufficient to close the confidence-gap and the credibility-gap for the discerning observer and reader. Not only is there more than one item from the past which cries out to be set straight; but also all the loud declarations of faithfulness to Scripture and the Confessions and the solemn repudiation of "charges and insinuations which call into question our dedication to the Lord and our commitment to Scripture and the Confessions" – all these will never serve to restore confidence and credibility unless the actions and expressions of the Faculty and its several members are in harmony with these assertions of faithfulness. In other words, actions speak louder than words. And it would seem to this observer, in view of certain very real past events and in view of certain current writings and expressions, that one must be either ignorant or gullible or careless in order to have his confidence restored merely by such an open letter as the Faculty published.

Of this I was recently reminded, first of all, when in *Calvin College Chimes* I read a report of the meeting of the Board of Trustees. It was reported that at this meeting the Seminary Faculty presented a nomination for the department of Ethics, with the expectation that the Board of Trustees would approve said nomination and submit it to the coming Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, of course. It was reported, further, that the nominees of the Faculty were Dr. Theodore Minnema, of the College, and Dr. Lewis B. Smedes, formerly of the College and now of Fuller Theological Seminary. Moreover, it was reported, though not explained, that the Board of Trustees declined to present a nomination to Synod. And there was, finally, an intimation that the President of the Seminary, Dr. John Kromminga, was dismayed at this failure on the part of the Board of Trustees.

Now it is not my purpose to enter into any possible reasons for this difference of opinion between the Trustees and the Faculty, nor to speak of the comparative merits of the two nominees.

But it struck me that here is a concrete example of the reasons for the confidence- and credibility-gap which apparently troubles the Faculty. The very fact that the Faculty can place the name of Dr. Lewis Smedes in nomination for the Chair of Ethics at the Seminary is not calculated to inspire confidence, much

less to restore confidence, in the loyalties of the Faculty on the part of the discerning observer and reader. The fact that the Faculty could even nominate Dr. Smedes is no recommendation of the Faculty's loyalty to Scripture and the Confessions.

First of all, in general, there is the fact that Dr. Smedes has long been associated with *The Reformed Journal*, and is, in fact, an editor of that magazine. This in itself is sufficient to indict Smedes as a liberal, and also to indict the Faculty for nominating him. In the second place, specifically *The Standard Bearer* has in the past called attention more than once to errant views of which Dr. Smedes has given expression.

But, in the third place, not long after the above-mentioned report of the meeting of Board of Trustees appeared in *Calvin College Chimes* (and I believe the matter of this nomination was not reported elsewhere) Dr. Smedes broke out in print in *The Reformed Journal* (February, 1971) with an article entitled "A Modest Proposal To Reform The World." Now even that very title should raise grave doubts in the mind of a Reformed man. Yet one could let this pass if a bad title were followed by a good article. But the article itself certainly would cause one to wonder how a Faculty which asserts its loyalty to Scripture and the Confessions could nominate a man who can give expression to such thoroughly un-Reformed inanities as those which appear in the said article of Dr. Smedes. Not only does one look in vain for a single distinctively Reformed note in the entire article (one hardly expects this from *The Reformed Journal* any longer); but it is also a fact that the article can, charitably speaking, hardly be called evangelical.

Here is just one example – and the article is replete with such expressions:

"(2) *Preach Christ as the Reclaimer of Man's Lost Humanity.* Some people have given up on humanity in the name of Christ. Others have given up on Christ in the name of humanity. In the past, the two rejections have usually complemented each other and often the one has arisen in reaction to the other. Herein lies the ironic tragedy of our secular time. The way out must be that Christ is the *Restorer* of authentic humanity to man. Cliche? Sloganeering? Not if we take hold of it and follow it to its roots. (No, then it is modernistic jargon or gobbledygook. HCH)

"Jesus Christ came with no other purpose than to make men truly human again. He is the gospel's answer to the question that underlies every cultural crisis: how are we to find man's humanity in the midst of the dehumanizing of man by political, technological, and natural forces? The goal of redemption is the restoration of humanity; the work of the Spirit is humanization. Not a humanistic gospel, to be sure, but a humanizing gospel surely. The world does not need a message about a Savior who will do no more than turn us all into uptight, all-white, middle-class, comfortable

champions of the law, order, and proper religion. What the world needs is the gospel of One who can restore men to total and authentic humanity – no more, no less, no other.”

Notice, please, Dr. Smedes’ emphatic and exclusive characterization of the gospel: “. . . no more, no less, no other.”

I submit that there is no similarity between Smedes’ Christ and Smedes’ gospel as here set forth and the

gospel of salvation from sin and death by grace only, according to the Reformed faith.

I submit, secondly, that the Reformed allegiance of a faculty which can nominate a man from whose pen such modernistic tripe flows is – to put it mildly – suspect. Open letters cannot cover this up.

The recent question posed by Editor De Koster in *The Banner* may well be directed to the Faculty, I think: “WHAT FOR?”

An Open Letter to the Reformed Churches of New Zealand

Dear Brethren and Sisters:

It has come to my attention that Prof. Dr. K. Runia has addressed to the Sessions of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand a rather lengthy letter in which he attempts to discredit some of the criticisms which have been directed against his views by the brethren of the Reformed and Presbyterian Fellowship of Australasia and their paper, the *Reformed Guardian*. Now apart from the fact that I find this method of a secret answer to public writings about public matters highly unusual, to say the least, I am greatly perturbed about Dr. Runia’s blatant misrepresentations concerning three articles which I wrote in the *Standard Bearer* and which were reprinted (with our permission) by the *Reformed Guardian*.

First of all, let me quote what Dr. Runia has written in his letter to your Sessions:

“Added to this issue of the *Guardian* is ‘Documentary Evidence from the writings of Professor Dr. K. Runia’. It starts with the reprint of three articles from the ‘*Standard Bearer*’, the publication of the so called Hoeksema church in the U.S.A. In an article in ‘*The Banner*’ I had used the Rev. Hoeksema Sr.’s view of the decree as an example. In the three articles this is rebutted by his son, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, who in defence of his father’s and his own position accuses me of existentialism, etc. – But is this proper evidence? Hoeksema’s view on the decree and his ‘supralapsarianism’ have always been rejected by Reformed theologians. Therefore, if one disagrees with Hoeksema, this is no evidence that one is no longer Reformed. On the contrary, it is rather proof that one defends the Reformed position. Yet, by adding these articles as ‘Documentary Evidence’ the impression is created that I am a heretic indeed. Perhaps I may quote here from the lengthy review of the Rev. Hoeksema’s ‘*Reformed Dogmatics*’ by Dr. C. van Til in the *Westminster Theological Journal*: ‘In his great desire to do full justice to God’s final, controlling counsel, Hoeksema fails to do justice to the genuine significance of

history. When the present writer (Dr. van Til) called attention to this by using Calvin’s distinction between ultimate and proximate causes, Hoeksema replied that this position was tantamount to maintaining that there is a change in God. (By the way, this is the same accusation Prof. Hoeksema in the three articles levels against me, K.R.). . . . With all our great admiration for Hoeksema as a preacher and as a teacher of theology we must, none the less, maintain that however true he was to the idea of the sovereignty of the grace of God, he did not advance its proper form of expression in his works on theology’.”

Thus far the quotation from Dr. Runia’s letter to your Sessions in so far as it concerns my articles.

In reply to the above, let me call the following to your attention:

1) The articles to which Dr. Runia refers were first printed in the *Standard Bearer* in September and October of 1969. These three articles, entitled “Topsy-Turvy Joy from ‘Down Under,’ ” reflected on an article by Dr. Runia in the Christian Reformed magazine *The Banner*, entitled “The Joy of Systematic Theology.” At the time when I wrote these articles, I was not even aware of any differences of opinion in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. In fact, at that time I had never had any contact with anyone from New Zealand. I knew little about your churches and little about Geelong Theological College. In fact, I knew very little of Dr. Runia’s theological position. But it is the practice of the *Standard Bearer* to reflect on various significant theological items. And thus it came about that I also reflected on Dr. Runia’s article which appeared in *The Banner*. Now this is, I think, significant for this reason, that it means that as far as your situation in New Zealand is concerned, I had no “ax to grind.” The fact of the matter is that it was only *after* these articles were published that an American reader of the *Standard Bearer* called them to the attention of some of the brethren in New Zealand, and that thus, providentially, I began to have contact with the

brethren, who eventually asked for permission to reprint my articles because they considered them pertinent in their situation. Besides, it means that I arrived at my conclusions in those articles entirely *independently* of the controversy in your churches.

2) It is neither accurate nor kind of Dr. Runia to speak of us as the "so called Hoeksema church in the U.S.A." We are neither "so-called" nor "Hoeksema" churches. We are the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, a small (like your own denomination) and vital and faithfully Reformed denomination. Our origin dates to 1924 and the so-called common grace controversy in the Christian Reformed Church. We acknowledge the infallibly inspired Scripture as our only rule of doctrine and life; and we acknowledge the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht as our subordinate standards. Our *Standard Bearer* is not a denominational paper, but a free, society-published magazine, which has also been in existence since 1924. Our churches operate a small seminary. We have a radio ministry. We are engaged in mission work, both at home and in Jamaica. Our people are devoted to covenantal education, and we operate several of our own Christian schools. In other words, though small, we have a full-orbed denominational life.

3) In the paragraph quoted, Dr. Runia blatantly misrepresents the content of both his article in *The Banner* and my three articles. As far as my articles are concerned, any of you who have read the reprint published in New Zealand would be hard pressed, I am sure, to recognize my articles from Dr. Runia's description.

In the first place, it is not true that Dr. Runia used as an example in his article Rev. Herman Hoeksema's view of the decree. It is not even true that the subject of God's decree was discussed at great length either by Dr. Runia or by me. Dr. Runia used as an example in his article the Rev. Herman Hoeksema's description of the attribute of God's *immutability*, or unchangeableness. About this he wrote at length, and about this I wrote at length in reply. And in that connection, in my first article I accused Dr. Runia of literally teaching that God changes. I stand by that accusation.

In the second place, Dr. Runia wrote at length, and I wrote at length in reply, about his understanding of what constitutes systematic theology and about his "dynamic-relational" method over against what he chose to call our "static-ontological" method of theology. And with respect to Dr. Runia's method, I had several grave reservations and criticisms.

In the third place, it was only in my third article that I wrote one paragraph about the subject of God's decree in connection with Dr. Runia's reference to Romans 9-11. It was in this connection that Dr. Runia himself referred to theology as being "existential." It

was in this same connection that I expressed regret that "Dr. Runia does not make positively clear what he understands to be the meaning and the task of dogmatics." And it was in this same connection that I did not make an accusation, but asked the question: "Is there a tinge of Barthian existentialism and dialecticism in his ideas? Who can tell?" These are simple facts. It is certainly true that Dr. Runia's view of God's decree is erroneous and that he openly criticizes the Canons of Dordrecht in the book *Crisis in the Reformed Churches*. But about this I was not writing at that time. It is only recently that I criticized Dr. Runia's view of God's decree of predestination at length in several articles in the *Standard Bearer*. I hope that the *Reformed Guardian* will also reprint these articles: for in them I show beyond a shadow of a doubt that Dr. Runia openly contradicts the Canons of Dordrecht and agrees with those who do so in the Netherlands. I invite you to read those recent articles; they are enlightening.

4) Dr. Runia injects the matter of supralapsarianism into the discussion as follows: "Hoeksema's view of the decree and his 'supralapsarianism' have always been rejected by Reformed theologians." Let me point out, in the first place, that supra- or infralapsarianism has nothing whatsoever to do with this matter. It was not so much as discussed or mentioned in the articles referred to. Let me also add immediately that it has nothing to do with my recent criticisms of Dr. Runia's views of the decree of predestination in *Crisis in the Reformed Churches*. The fact of the matter is that in that book Dr. Runia is not even a good infralapsarian, but denies the eternal decree of reprobation and militates against the Canons. Dr. Runia is using "supralapsarianism" as a bogey-man.

In the second place, I freely admit that the Rev. Herman Hoeksema was a supralapsarian. So am I. However, it is not true that supralapsarianism has always been rejected by Reformed theologians. The fact of the matter is that it has always been officially allowed by Reformed churches. There were supralapsarians at the Synod of Dordrecht; and they also subscribed to the Canons, by the way! Reformed Churches have always allowed the supra-view under the infra-confessions.

In the third place, as far as God's decree is concerned, our churches recognize and subscribe to the infralapsarian Canons of Dordrecht. Infra- is soundly Reformed. More than once I have said to my students: "When it comes to the doctrine of God's eternal and sovereign decree, over against Arminianism, give me a good infra- any day!" I stand by that statement. But I insist that Dr. Runia is not even a good infra-. His writings contradict the Canons.

5) Dr. Runia uses this matter of supralapsarianism as evidence that we are really not Reformed and that he is Reformed. In the first place, this is not correct in the

light of what I have just written. In the second place, he tries to leave the impression that Dr. C. van Til is on his side. Let me point out that Dr. van Til does not say in that quotation that Hoeksema is not Reformed. To my knowledge, he has never said this; and, though he may speak for himself, I doubt whether he would say this, even though he has frequently disagreed with us. In the third place, no one besides Dr. Runia has ever suggested that we are not Reformed. In fact, when our original leaders were cast out of the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924, they were given the testimony that they were "fundamentally Reformed, with a tendency to one-sidedness."

But why, instead of writing in secret and instead of blatantly twisting the facts and dishonestly attempting to discredit his critics, — why does not Dr. Runia address himself to the *issues*? Why, if he is wrong, does he not admit it? And why, if he is convinced that he is right, does he not show this from Scripture and the Confessions? On my part, I hold no personal grudge against Dr. Runia. How could I? I do not even know him personally. I am interested in only one thing: Scripture and the Reformed Confessions. But this one thing is of the utmost importance to me and to the Protestant Reformed Churches. And it ought to be of the utmost importance to Dr. Runia and to the Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

In conclusion, brethren and sisters, let me address a very earnest word of warning and exhortation to you. I sincerely hope you will receive it. Through reading and through correspondence, especially during the past year, I have made it my business to become as thoroughly informed as possible about the matters which are troubling your churches. I want to tell you, in the first place, that I see these as very, very serious matters which concern your very position as a *Reformed* denomination. These matters must be settled, and that, too, without compromise. Otherwise you will

lose your Reformed distinctiveness as churches, as is happening all over the world in our times. In the second place, you must not be afraid of healthy controversy. I do not enjoy controversy for controversy's sake. Neither, I believe, do the brethren of the Fellowship and the *Guardian*. But if that controversy involves our Reformed heritage, then, before God, we may not shirk our calling. In the third place, there are certain things that I find difficult to understand. I cannot understand the bitterness against the Fellowship. I cannot understand how elders can be disciplined for having a part in the Fellowship and in the publication of the *Guardian*. What is grossly sinful about this? What is sinful about their public discussion of the doctrines which are the common possession of the churches? What is sinful about their defense of those doctrines over against the public writings of Dr. Runia? I cannot see this. It is not my intention to discuss in detail Dr. Runia's attempts in his letter to discredit the Fellowship. I only want to point out that while these brethren may have their weaknesses, and while they may have made some mistakes in their writing efforts, nevertheless they have, in my opinion, done the churches a favor by sounding the alarm in Zion and by calling attention to the dangers which threaten. As I see it, the criticisms published by the Fellowship are fundamentally correct and sound. As I see it — and I am willing to discuss these matters with anyone — the churches ought to take warning and face up to the issues. The churches in New Zealand must not go down the path followed by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

Finally, it is my hope and prayer that you may have grace to stand in defense of the heritage of the faith once delivered unto the saints.

Yours in the cause
of the truth,
Homer C. Hoeksema

All Around Us

Request for a New Confession

Prof. H. Hanko

REQUEST FOR A NEW CONFESSION

In various Church publications it has been reported that the Christian Reformed Synod, at her next session in June, will have to deal with an overture which requests the Church to draw up a new confession. One notice of this appears in the *RES NEWS EXCHANGE* from which we quote.

Classis Chatham (Ontario) decided at its January meeting to overture the annual synod of the Christian

Reformed Church to declare that "It is necessary and desirable to re-express the faith of the church in a new confession which will replace the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort as a statement of the Truth and as our standard of unity."

The classis appended 5 grounds to the overture:

1. This action is necessary because the framing of the Three Forms of Unity was historically conditioned: they cannot be understood without a knowl-

edge of the doctrines of the Roman Church, the Anabaptists and the Remonstrants of the 16th and 17th century. The confessions state the Truth in a way that was influenced by the heresies they had to oppose. Today the Creeds need the interpretation of theological and historical experts; they cannot serve as an adequate expression of the faith of the ordinary members of Christ.

2. This action is desirable because the Holy Spirit has given insights since the Synod of Dort, and the evil spirits have planted heresies since that date, which are neither expressed nor addressed in our present confessions.

3. Every church member is not only expected to agree with the Confession, but he should intelligently and enthusiastically share in it. Therefore it is desirable to have a statement of the Truth which is more obviously relevant.

4. It is desirable to re-express our faith in confessional form, because the present documents, which have served us for centuries, are in danger of veneration, due to their antiquity and our ignorance.

5. It is desirable to re-express our faith in confessional form, because a paralyzing unbelief keeps telling us that the Church of the living God cannot do today what it was called to do in the times of the Reformation.

The Wallaceburg church, which initiated the action, recommended that the Synod seek the assistance of all church denominations which subscribe to the same doctrinal standards or adhere to a similar tradition for the re-expression of faith in confessional form. The Classis did not accept this recommendation on the consideration that it would entail a committee of twenty years. It was observed however, that the rules of correspondence among churches would require contact with 'sister' churches in the formulation of a new creed.

The classis also proposed to the synod "That its position on the necessity and desirability of a re-expression of our faith in confessional form, may in no wise be construed either as an acknowledgement that the Three Forms of Unity are not in harmony with the Scriptures or as a weakening of the binding character of the Three Forms of Unity. All members and officebearers are bound to uphold the unabridged content of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort, until a new confession of this faith has been endorsed by the churches."

It was reported that the overture did not arise from a spirit of anti-confessionalism, nor from disagreement with the confessions, nor from the spirit of a new theology.

The annual synod of the Christian Reformed Church will meet in June.

The Christian Reformed Church is not the first denomination either in this country or abroad which has faced the question of whether or not to write a new confession. In fact, the United Presbyterian Church has already written such a new confession

called The Confession of 1967.

But the writing of new confessions is always dangerous business. We are not saying that it is wrong to do this; certainly it is not more wrong for the Church today to write new confessions than it was for the Church in the years immediately after the Reformation. But it is dangerous business nonetheless. For a confession belongs to the whole Church. It is a confession which must express the living and earnest faith of all the people of God for whom the confession is written. It is not the work and may never be the work of a few theologians. It is not the work exclusively of an ecclesiastical assembly — although they may be ultimately responsible for its formulation. But it is the work of the whole Church of Christ. The whole Church must be actively engaged in a very real way. But if this is true, then the Church of Christ must also possess a lively faith which is deeply and profoundly interested in the truth of the Word of God; it must be a Church which loves that truth, studies it, discusses it, and has that truth as the pulsing and vibrant principle of her whole life. It is the lack of this within today's Church which makes writing confessions so dangerous. I well recall that Rev. Hoeksema, in Seminary, was wont to make the remark: "The Church today is not spiritually strong enough to write confessions." This, I am afraid, is true. If it persists nonetheless, what it produces is something less than God's truth.

But the overture referred to above does not merely ask for a new confession. It asks for a new confession which will "replace" the present Three Forms of Unity. This is something else. And to evaluate this rather startling request, it is necessary to take a long and hard look at the grounds. For, after all, even the Presbyterian Church which adopted the Confession of 1967 did not go quite this far.

The overture makes, I think, two points in ground 1. The first point is that because the Confessions were historically conditioned, they cannot be understood apart from a knowledge of the times in which they lived. The result of this is that the Confessions need the interpretation of experts and are not any longer of any use to "ordinary members of Christ." In a limited sense this ground is true. There are parts of the Confessions which make references to existing conditions, existing heresies, existing circumstances within the Church. But this is not true of all of them by any means. And there is no truth in the assertion that this fact removes them from the understanding of the "ordinary" people of God. At least, if it is true, it ought not to be so. For, on the one hand, the truths set forth, even in opposition to existing conditions and heresies, are truths which stand in their own right and can be understood even apart from the historical circumstances under which they were written. But on the other hand, every child of God is (or, at least, ought to be) a student of the past. He need not be an expert;

but if his faith is to be a faith which binds him in communion with the saints with whom he shall dwell in glory, he ought to know that faith and know the history of the Church as she struggled to express that faith. If it is true that most members of the Church do not know the past, this is but a sign of the fact that the Church today is too spiritually weak to write confessions. It is proof against a new confession; not for it.

The second point which the ground makes is that the truth was influenced by heresies of the times. It seems as if this ground is saying that the truth set forth in the Confessions, insofar as it was influenced by heresies then existing, is not the truth of the Scriptures. This is not true. It is true, of course, that the truth was then set forth, as it always is, in opposition to attacks against it. But this is historically always the way truth develops. It does not develop by the research of some man sitting alone in some ivory tower of theological contemplation far removed from the life of the Church. The truth is developed and set forth as that truth comes under attack. It is hammered out as a weapon of warfare by saints who stand on the battlefield of faith. Or, to put it a little differently, God uses the persistent and unrelenting attacks of Satan to spur His Church on in the development of the faith. Heretical attacks against the faith force the people of God to go again and again to the Scriptures to find what God has said concerning the truth. And this truth is set forth in Confessions. This is the way it has been ever since the ancient Nicene Creed.

The second ground speaks of the fact that new heresies have risen and new truths have been developed with the passing of the years which are not incorporated into the Confessions or answered by them. This is, no doubt, true. But this is not an argument for Confessions which replace the old ones. This is an argument for the writing of an additional confession which takes cognizance of the fact that doctrine had developed.

The third ground states that a new and more relevant Confession is desirable because only this will guarantee that every church member makes the Confession of the Church a living Confession in his life. There is an assumption here which is quite dangerous. That assumption seems to be that the truth as set forth by our fathers is not relevant to our modern age. And if this is the assumption, then the additional assumption is that the truth itself is changeable. This is rather commonly asserted today even in Reformed circles. Witness, e.g., what is happening in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. But this is false. The truth of God is eternally relevant. It is just as relevant today as it was over 400 years ago. If the Church then

confessed the truth, as the Classis which dealt with the overture insists, then the Confessions which were written at that time are relevant today too. The trouble is not in the Confessions. If the Church today does not "intelligently and enthusiastically share" in the Confessions, the fault is with the Church, not with the creeds.

The fourth ground speaks of the fact that the present Confessions have become the objects of veneration. Two reasons are given for this: the antiquity of the Confessions and our ignorance of them. This is a strange ground, and several remarks could be made about it. First of all, it is an unproved assertion that the present Confessions are being worshipped. To me, quite the contrary seems to be the case. In the second place, if by veneration is meant honor, what is bad about this? These creeds are indeed from antiquity. But this is in their favor. They have stood the test of the years. They have proved to be what the Church needs for over four centuries. They have expressed the faith of the Church in ages gone by and serve to unite that Church with the Church of today. In the third place, if the creeds are being worshipped out of ignorance, the cure is not to write new confessions, but the cure is to call the people of God to know their creeds, so that these creeds may once again be the living confession of the saints.

The fifth ground speaks of the fact that "a paralyzing unbelief" charges the Church with an inability to live as the saints did in the days of the Reformation. This too is a strange ground. In the first place, I have not heard such a charge brought by unbelief. The charge most often on the lips of unbelievers is just the opposite. They say: Your confession and life is outdated, old-fashioned, belonging to a dead era, not in keeping with the temper of modern times. But apart from this point, and in the second place, I do not really care what unbelief says to me; nor should any Church which wants to be faithful to the gospel. Surely, whatever unbelief has to say to the Church ought not to be the motivation to write a new Confession. Surely, unbelief does not have the final say in this important matter of the Church. Surely, unbelief is not going to tell the Church what she must do with the truth of God. To insert this as a ground strikes me as most peculiar.

The general impression is left with me that this overture is once again an expression of dissatisfaction with the truth of the Scriptures. The Classis affirms that this is not the case. But the grounds suggest this strongly. If this is true, then it is only one more attempt to follow the way of a Church which rapidly moves down the slippery road of apostasy.

Come Ye Apart... And Rest A While

Although The Mountains Quake

Rev. C. Hanko

6 a.m. on Tuesday, February 9, 1971. The moon was setting in the west just as the sun was rising in the east. This was the day for the return of the astronauts from the moon with the proud boast of what man had once more accomplished. This was also the day for a complete moon eclipse visible in this entire area. But something quite different became the headlines in the news and occasion for concern for many.

Only a few people were stirring about at this hour. Most of southern California still lay enwrapped in quiet slumber. But their sleep was suddenly disrupted by a violent shaking and rolling of the earth. Actually the earthquake lasted only a minute, and yet in that one minute more than sixty people were killed, many hundreds injured, a hospital, homes and many other buildings were damaged or demolished, highways buckled, overpasses collapsed, bridges crumbled, water mains spouted water, gas mains spewed forth flames, and a break in a dam sent many thousands of evacuees to seek refuge wherever they could. Only a minute passed, and yet it took days to dig bodies out of the debris, and it will take an estimated three years and hundreds of millions of dollars to restore the damage. God has but to touch the earth with the very tip of His smallest finger, and puny man trembles in terror, for even now, two weeks and more than two hundred after-shocks later, every one wonders whether more destruction might still follow in its wake.

This was actually a minor quake compared to many others. The San Francisco earthquake took almost five hundred lives and destroyed nearly thirty thousand buildings. The Long Beach quake of 1932 left one hundred twenty dead, several thousand injured, and wrought forty million dollars damage. The more recent earthquake in southern Alaska took one hundred fourteen lives and caused seven million dollars damage. And then we are still only speaking of what happened within our fifty States. One in Chile in 1960 took six thousand lives. One in northern Iran in 1962 left ten thousand dead, while in 1963 in Yugoslavia slightly more than a thousand were killed.

What is significant is the fact that earthquakes are the outstanding sign of the speedy coming of the Lord. Jesus refers to this when He ties them in with famines and pestilences, and assures us that these are the beginning of sorrows. Matthew 24:7. Just take a look at that passage a moment. The word for sorrows actually means 'birthpangs.' Earthquakes are the first labor pains of a creation that looks forward in hope to the

arrival of the new creation, in which righteousness will dwell. In a very special way, these are the groanings of which Paul speaks in Romans 8. Have you never heard the rumblings of the bowels of the earth which accompany an earthquake, especially painful to the sensitive ears of dogs, so that they whine in bitter anguish? Earthquakes are the labor pains that increase in intensity as the time of our deliverance approaches. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." As you might conclude from Hebrews 11:40, we without them cannot be made perfect.

I can well remember when something like this was referred to by the world as "an act of God." If I am not mistaken, insurance policies carried a clause about calamities of this sort as an act of God. True, I do not like the expression. We can only smile a bit when people speak of special calamities as an act of God, as if sunshine and rain, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, health and sickness, and everything else were not acts of God. It is of inestimable comfort to us at all times to know that these things come not by chance, but by God's fatherly hand. Lord's Day 10. But I do want to point out that as the world develops in wisdom there seem to be less "acts of God" than ever before. Modern scientists find natural causes for everything. Although it has eluded them thus far, they are working hard to be able to predict exactly when an earthquake will come. The more man finds natural causes, and the more glibly he can speak of freaks of nature, the less he fears the hand of the Almighty that brings judgments upon the earth. He likes to banish God from all his thoughts, in order to continue defiantly in his wickedness and exalt himself as god upon the earth. It becomes increasingly true: "And they repented not!" Revelation 16:11.

It only seems natural that our thoughts should turn to the cross of Calvary, where Christ triumphed over the powers of darkness. "When Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." The apostle John places this in a slightly different context in John 13:1, but it fits here also. Jesus had triumphantly cried with a cry that reechoed through the heavens, "It is finished." Then, "when He had cried again with a loud voice, He yielded up the ghost.. And behold, the veil of

the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened." Matthew 27:50-52. Just think, at the moment when the Lord of Glory gave up the ghost the earth quaked. Rocks were rent. Graves were opened, soon to produce a sort of firstfruits of the resurrection. While children's mouths were stopped in awe and horror, the very rocks cried out that Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father, triumphant over death.

And then there is that other familiar passage in the 28th chapter of Matthew, "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, . . . there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it."

6 a.m. That was somewhere near the time when Lot had finally been led out of the city of Sodom, and "the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven, and overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and all that which grew upon the ground."

And it was also about 6 a.m. when the women went

to the grave only to find that the grave was open and an angel awaited them to bring the glad tidings: The Lord is risen! Is risen indeed! Already then the voice from heaven proclaimed: "Behold, I make all things new!"

The old must pass away to make room for the new.

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts." Haggai 2:6, 7.

To the world God says: I am God, and beside Me there is no other. But to His Church: Behold, I make all things new! To which we can respond in faith:

God is our Refuge and our Strength,
A Helper ever near us;
We will not fear tho' earth be moved,
For God is nigh to cheer us.
Although the mountains quake
And earth's foundations shake,
Tho' angry billows roar
And break against the shore,
Our mighty God will hear us.

The Strength of Youth

Obedience To Parents

Rev. Robert D. Decker

Perhaps, youthful friend, you recall that in my contributions to this column I am attempting to answer certain questions presented to me by the young people in my congregation. It so happens in the providence of God that I have just finished a sermon for the coming Lord's Day on the Fifth Commandment which is also, as you can gather from the title of this article, the subject of the question we wish to answer. The question reads: "How far does obedience to parents go? Must we allow ourselves to be so completely dominated by our parents that we are not able to think, act, or believe independently? If personal conviction interferes with parental beliefs must we give up our own beliefs in the name of 'obedience'?"

We may begin by paying attention to some basic principles involved in the Fifth Commandment of God's Law. The commandment in question literally reads: "Honor Thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." We are interested in only the first part of this commandment; Honor thy father and thy mother. To understand the meaning we must remember that this commandment stands at the beginning of the sec-

ond table of the Law of God. Jesus told us that the basic principle of the entire law is the love of God. This first and great commandment is that we love the Lord our God with our whole being; the second is like unto it and is that we love the neighbor as ourselves. (cf. Matthew 22:37-40) This does not mean that God has given two different commandments; the first requiring love to Him, and the second requiring love to the neighbor. Rather, Jesus means to say that there is one basic principle involved in the whole law, in every commandment, and that is that we love God. The second is like unto, that is, the second is rooted in and derived from the first and great commandment. This means that we are to love the neighbor with the love of God and for God's sake. Apart from the love of God in our hearts it is impossible for us to love the neighbor. Still more, our love for God is exactly revealed in our love for the neighbor. Paul says in Galatians 5:14: "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (cf. Romans 13:8-10) Because this is true, the Apostle John writes in his first letter, chapter 4, verses 20 & 21: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar . . .

and this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also." The first principle of the 5th commandment, then, is the love of God. More specifically, it is the love of God as revealed in obedience to Him through obedience to our parents.

It is the authority of God that is at stake here. We ought to be very clear on this. It was argued once in my Young People's Society that the commandment says "Honor" and does not say "obey"; hence, one must honor his parents but is not required to obey them. This, however, is not the case at all! It is true, of course, that we must honor in the sense of respecting and loving our parents, and that, too, for as long as they live. It ought to be evident at the same time that the commandment requires more than proper respect. In fact, it may be said that honoring and respecting one's parents is possible only in the way of obedience to them. That this is what God intends with this commandment is plain from His Word in Leviticus 19:3, where He says in no uncertain terms: "Ye shall *FEAR* every man his mother and his father." Under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit the Apostle Paul teaches the same in Ephesians 6:1-3, where the Word is: "Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise. . . ." Hence, if we are to love God according to the 5th commandment we must *obey* our parents.

But we said above that it is the authority of God that is at stake. That is true very simply because all authority is God's. That we can understand when we know the true nature of authority according to the Bible. Authority is not sheer power as the man of the world would have us think today. It's not "might makes right." This is how the world operates, but not the church and the child of God. Neither does authority come from the "will of the majority" or the "consent of the governed," as American democracy teaches. That may be the *MEANS* God uses to establish rulers but that is not the *SOURCE* of authority. Authority is, briefly, three things: 1) The right to declare for others what is right & good, 2) The right to demand of others conformity or obedience to that standard, 3) The right to judge and execute judgment (rewarding or punishing) others. Now that authority belongs exclusively to God, because He is the Creator and Sustainer and Ruler of all things.

That authority God has conferred upon Christ. Jesus said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth." And the Bible says in Eph. 1:19ff that God has put all things under Christ's feet. Thus before the exalted Christ every knee must bow (Phil. 2). And that same authority of God in Christ is conferred upon our parents. Parents have the right to declare for us what is right, and demand unquestioned obedience to what is right and punish us when we do the wrong, not because they are older or wiser or stronger, but only

because it pleases God to govern us by their hand! The Heidelberg Catechism (not nearly as outdated as some would have us believe!) is dead right when it says in Lord's Day 39 that the 5th Commandment requires: "That I show all honor, love, and fidelity to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and *submit* myself to their good instruction and correction, *with due obedience*; and patiently bear with their infirmities and weaknesses, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand." (emphasis mine, R.D.) Very bluntly, this means that to disobey parents is to disobey God. And, what is more, to disobey parents and thus God is to hate both parents and God!

This has terribly serious implications for our parents, implications that ought to make every God-fearing parent tremble! The Lord addresses these words to parents: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4) Provoking our children to wrath means more than just being unreasonable or unfair or tactless and thus making our children angry. It means that; but more, it means we must not put our children on the road to hell. Provoking to wrath is the opposite of bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It is failure to do that! Bringing them up in the ways of sin and the world, failing to instruct them in the fear of God; this is making our children liable to the wrath and punishment of God. Parents must not do that! They are called to train up their children in the way in which they ought to go (Prov. 22:6). Passages like Deuteronomy 6, Psalm 78, Col. 3 and others all emphasize the same truth. It is the solemn duty of parents to rear their children in the fear of the Lord, in His commandments and precepts and judgments. And that is a full time task, according to Deut. 6! That is not done by mere word of mouth but by the very example of our day-to-day living.

And when parents are faithful to that calling they have the God-given right to expect total submission from their children and youth! The Bible tells youth as well as children to obey their parents. That word obey means to follow up a call or to yield to someone. That means youth must follow up the call of God that comes to them through their covenant parents. They must yield to them totally. To use the language of the question: obedience to parents goes all the way! Yes, we must allow ourselves to be completely dominated by our parents so that we do not think or act independently. And *MOST CERTAINLY* if our personal convictions interfere with parental beliefs we *MUST* give up our own beliefs in the name of obedience. We *MUST* for God's sake and out of love for Him! Anything less is disobedience to the Lord God!

The *ONLY* exception to this is when parents are remiss in their calling and teach or require of their youth that which is plainly contrary to the teaching of

the Word of God! Then, obviously, we must obey God rather than men. But as long as parents require what God requires and as long as they are bringing us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord we must obey and yield ourselves totally to them.

Youth often forgets that. The world's rejection of the authority of God has more influence upon us than we probably care to admit. Youth tends to think of parents as the "old man" and "old lady" who belong to a bygone age and are just a bit (to say the least) out of touch. This they call in the world the "generation gap." Parents are too old-fashioned. The old ways are no good for the "NOW generation." Youth today needs a "new morality" (which is no more than the same OLD IMMORALITY called in the Bible "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" — cf. I John 2:15-17); in fact, youth wants an entirely new "life style" according to which youth does "his own thing." With all of this parents are simply "out of tune!" So youth refuses to listen and goes his own

way.

Youth of God's covenant hear and do the Word of God! Honor thy father and thy mother! They are God's friends and they bring you God's Word and they rule over you because they know you are God's heritage (Psalm 127) entrusted to them by Him to be instructed in His fear! There is no generation gap among covenant parents and their children and youth. The Bible is the eternal, never changing, always relevant TRUTH of God!

For God's sake obey them. Do not be a friend of the world. Love not the world! Refuse to be led astray with the radical youth of today's world, the hippies and yuppies. Do not join the Godless revolutionaries of today's young people. Do not be fashioned according to their drug and alcohol oriented life style.

Rather, love God by loyal and willing obedience to your God-given, covenant parents. In this way lies God's blessing for you, your parents, and your church.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

THE REFORMATION PERIOD

Rev. H. Veldman

We have made the remark in preceding articles that Calvin, in his discussion of the doctrine of the atonement in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, does not emphasize the particular character of the suffering and death of Christ. This, however, does not mean that the truth of the particular character of the grace of God and the sovereign character of God's election and reprobation were not burning issues in the day and age of the Genevan reformer. They certainly were. It is well known how Calvin, in his "Calvin's Calvinism" refutes the teachings of Pighius and also of a certain Georgius, a follower of Pighius. That Calvin certainly believed in the particular nature of the atonement must be evident from his defence of the particular and sovereign character of God's election and reprobation. It may therefore be of benefit to our readers to call attention to this. We will be brief. We will quote from Calvin's *Institutes*, although we hasten to add that the sentiments expressed in this quotation are also found in his "Calvin's Calvinism." We now quote from Book II, 194-195:

But as objections are frequently raised from some passages of Scripture, in which God seems to deny that the destruction of the wicked is caused by His decree, but that, in opposition to His remonstrances, they voluntarily bring ruin upon themselves, — let us

show by a brief explication that they are not at all inconsistent with the foregoing doctrine. A passage is produced from Ezekiel, where God says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live (Ezek. 33:11)." If this is to be extended to all mankind, why does He not urge many to repentance, whose minds are more flexible to obedience than those of others, who grow more and more callous to His daily invitations? Among the inhabitants of Nineveh and Sodom, Christ Himself declares that His evangelical preaching and miracles would have brought forth more fruit than in Judea. How is it, then, if God will have all men to be saved, that He opens not the gate of repentance to those miserable men who would be more ready to receive the favour? Hence we perceive it to be a violent perversion of the passage, if the will of God, mentioned by the prophet, be set in opposition to His eternal counsel, by which He has distinguished the elect from the reprobate.

In this quotation Calvin denies that the will of God, mentioned in Ezek. 33:11 must be understood as in conflict with God's eternal decree of election and reprobation. What the reformer says here is clear. Why is it, he asks, if God would have all men to be saved, that He did not cause His gospel to be brought to others, such as the inhabitants of Sodom and Nineveh, con-

cerning which cities Christ Himself declares that His preaching and miracles would have brought forth more fruit than in Judea?

Of interest is also the following quote, Book II, 195:

Another passage adduced is from Paul, where he states that "God will have all men to be saved"; which, though somewhat different from the passage just considered, yet is very similar to it. I reply, in the first place, that it is evident from the context, how God wills the salvation of all; for Paul connects these two things together, that He "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." If it was fixed in the eternal counsel of God, that they should receive the doctrine of salvation, what is the meaning of that question of Moses, "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them as we have?" How is it that God has deprived many nations of the light of the gospel, which others enjoyed? How is it that the pure knowledge of the doctrine of piety has never reached some, and that others have but just heard some obscure rudiments of it? Hence it will be easy to discover the design of Paul. He had enjoined Timothy to make solemn prayers in the Church for kings and princes; but as it might seem somewhat inconsistent to pray to God for a class of men almost past hope, — for they were not only strangers to the body of Christ, but striving with all their power to ruin His kingdom, — he subjoins, that "this is good and acceptable in the sight of God, Who will have all men to be saved"; which only imports, that God has not closed the way of salvation against any order of men, but has diffused His mercy in such a manner that He would have no rank to be destitute of it . . . For if they obstinately insist on its being said that God is merciful to all, I will oppose to them, what is elsewhere asserted, that "our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." This text, then, must be explained in a manner consistent with another, where God says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." He Who makes a selection of objects for the exercise of His mercy, does not impart that mercy to all.

This concludes our quotations from the writings of John Calvin. Of course, we could quote more to show that John Calvin was a strong advocate of the doctrine of sovereign predestination, election and reprobation. The Genevan reformer wrote profusely on this subject. The first part of his book, "Calvin's Calvinism," which is also the larger part, deals exclusively with God's predestination. But, in the first place, in this series of articles we are dealing with the doctrine of predestination but with that of the atonement. And, in the second place, it lies in the nature of the case that one who stresses so strongly the doctrine of sovereign predestination must surely believe in the particular character of Christ's atonement.

THE PROTESTANT CREEDS

The Second Helvetic Confession (A.D. 1566) speaks of the suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ in

Art. XI. This article bears the title: "Of Jesus Christ, being true God and Man, and the only Saviour of the World." From this article we quote the following:

Moreover, we believe and teach that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was from all eternity predestinated and foreordained of the Father to be the Saviour of the world.

Moreover, we believe that our Lord Jesus Christ did truly suffer and die for us in the flesh, as Peter says 1 Pet. 4:1). We abhor the most impious madness of the Jacobites, and all the Turks, who execrate the passion of our Lord. Yet we deny not but that "the Lord of glory," according to the saying of Paul, was crucified for us (1 Cor. 2:8); for we do reverently and religiously receive and use the communication of properties drawn from the Scripture, and used of all antiquity in expounding and reconciling places of Scripture which at first sight seem to disagree one from another.

In this article, thus far, the question in regard to the universal or particular character of Christ's atonement is not asked, although it is true that the article speaks of Christ as the Saviour of the world. But we believe that this question is answered, perhaps not as clearly as is stated in the Canons of Dordt, in the following, and we again quote from the same article:

Furthermore, by His passion or death, and by all those things which He did and suffered for our sakes from the time of His coming in the flesh, our Lord reconciled His heavenly Father unto all the faithful (Rom. 5:10); purged their sin (Heb. 1:3); spoiled death, broke in sunder condemnation and hell; and by His resurrection from the dead brought again and restored life and immortality (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:17; 2 Tim. 1:10). For He is our righteousness, life, and resurrection (John 6:44); and, to be short, He is the fullness and perfection, the salvation and most abundant sufficiency, of all the faithful. For the apostle says, "So it pleaseth the Father that all fullness should dwell in Him" (Col. 1:19), and "In Him ye are complete" (Col. 2:10).

For we teach and believe that this Jesus Christ our Lord is the only and eternal Saviour of mankind, yea, and of the whole world, in Whom all are saved before the law, under the law, and in the time of the Gospel, and so many as shall yet be saved to the end of the world. For the Lord Himself, in the Gospel, says, "He that entereth not in by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up the other way, He is a thief and a robber" (John 10:1). "I am the door of the sheep" (verse 7). And also in another place of the same Gospel He says, "Abraham saw My day, and rejoiced" (John 8:56). And the Apostle Peter says, "Neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ; for among men there is given no other name under heaven whereby they might be saved" (Acts 4:12). We believe, therefore, that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as our fathers were. For Paul says, that "All our fathers did eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of the spiritual Rock that

followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:3, 4). And therefore we read that John said, that "Christ was that Lamb which was slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8); and that John the Baptist witnesseth, that Christ is that "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Wherefore we do plainly and openly profess and preach, that Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer and Saviour of the world, the King and High Priest, the true and looked for Messiah, that holy and blessed one (I say) Whom all the shadows of the law, and the prophecies of the prophets, did prefigure and promise; and that God did supply and send Him unto us, so that now we are not to look for any other. And now there remains nothing, but that we all should give all glory to Him, believe in Him, and rest in Him only, condemning and rejecting all other aids of our Life.

We remarked that this article does not perhaps set forth the particular character of the atonement as we read it in the Canons of Dordt. But we must remember that the Arminian controversy still lay in the future when this second Helvetic Confession was composed in 1566. However, we do read in this article that our Lord Jesus Christ reconciled His heavenly Father unto *all the faithful* (incidentally, we surely prefer to say that Christ reconciled us to the Father), and I believe it is plain from this article that when the fathers here speak of Christ as the Saviour of the world they mean that He is the Saviour of all His people as out of all peoples, nations and tongues, from the beginning of time, even to the end of the world, not only as under the law but also as in the dispensation of the gospel.

In His Fear

Fear-Filled Sheep

Rev. John A. Heys

Although one of the four freedoms that have been promised to us is freedom from fear, it is a gross understatement to say that we have not yet attained to it. Larger and larger sections of our bigger cities are being marked off as territory through which one ought not travel, not even in broad daylight, for safety's sake. More and more college and university campuses are the scenes of the violence of riots. The number of students in certain colleges and universities that seek police protection while at school is on the increase. Two so-called world wars were fought to put an end to the fear of war and to make this world a safe place to live in, only to find that we are preparing in great dread for what will be a real world war. Two attempts, the League of Nations and the United Nations, have failed miserably in slowing down an armament race that will produce the most horrible devastation to man and his land that any conflict, since Cain killed Abel, has brought forth upon our globe.

The church world likewise is far from having attained to any freedom from fear. But part of that fear is encouraging, as strange as that may sound. For we live in a spiritually indifferent age, and few there are who would care to deny that, or would dare to claim that they have evidence to show that this is not true. Church membership is on the decline, and markedly so. Church attendance has fallen off to an alarming degree. Particularly where two services are held, the second one is usually very poorly attended. Even

among the numbers of those who retain membership, and remain faithful in attendance (though not necessarily in and with attention), interest in a discussion of spiritual matters is hard to find. Such discussions often prove well nigh impossible to be initiated; and when in progress are soon terminated or channeled into another direction. Church attendance is more a matter of habit than of hunger for the Word.

The words,

My heart was glad to hear the welcome sound,

The call to seek Jehovah's house of prayer,
may be sung lustily, and from a musical point of view even beautifully. All too often, however, it is without much sincerity and personal application. Many times it should in all sincerity be followed with the words,

If the sermon is not too long;

How longs my heart to hear the welcome: Amen!

But in the midst of all this there is also noticeable a certain unrest and dissatisfaction, not because the sermon is too long; nor even because it is too strong, but because it emits a sound that is wrong! Fear there is that doctrinal purity is being lost, and that faithfulness to the Confessions — even to the so-called, or what is called, The Apostolic Creed — is being threatened. Pamphlets, brochures and even books dealing with that fear are being published in abundance and are being distributed in goodly numbers. In that same fear protests and appeals are being filed with ecclesias-

tical bodies concerning these matters. At the same time other pamphlets, lectures, editorials and speeches are prepared to reassure the troubled and restless that all is well, and that there is no real room for fear. To the fearful it is pointed out that *all* change is not necessarily a departure from the narrow way. One can change his clothes while on that narrow way and then still walk in the right direction. The new appearance has nothing to do with the direction and the place where the feet are placed.

The serious-minded child of God, who is not at ease, and who definitely is disturbed, does not always understand what is going on and why he has this fear. He knows that something is wrong, but he cannot get to the heart of the matter and pinpoint the matter which brings his restlessness and fear. This is true so often, because it is not a question of what is said, but of what is not said. It is not always a case of not quoting Scripture and of not using it as proof for the stand. So often it is the failure to say *ALL* that Scripture says on the subject, and the quoting of a text out of its context and with an interpretation that is in direct conflict with what Scripture says elsewhere. It is so often — if not always — the case of Christless sermons. And we do not mean sermons in which the name of Christ is not mentioned. A Christless sermon may use His name very frequently, with some very endearing terminology, and with strong emphasis upon the love of God manifested in Him. And yet these sheep go home hungry and thirsty. They hear words, but they have not heard *The Word* become flesh. They have heard the *name* of Christ dozens of times, but they have not met *Christ* and found Him as the Bread of life and Water of life for them in that preaching.

It is important that the sheep hear *HIM* and meet *HIM* face to face in the preaching. Jesus says in John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." And Paul writes in the Greek, (not in your King James version of Romans 10:14) "How shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him Whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher?" The King James version incorrectly inserts the word "of" before the word "Whom" in the phrase, "... how shall they believe in Him Whom they have not heard?" We certainly must hear of Christ and about Christ; but we must hear this *from Him*. He must say it in our hearts even while man says it in our ears. Otherwise not only will we receive no spiritual food, but what is worse, we will never be brought to the faith or be strengthened in the faith which He has already given us.

Many sheep today do not even hear of Him, that is, they do not hear of the Christ of Scripture. They hear the philosophy of men that makes use of the name of Christ but does not speak His Word.

Jesus gives us a beautiful explanation of this very

thing that is happening today when He speaks in John 10:1-18. You do well to read this passage in connection with these lines. It is too lengthy to quote here. But take note especially of verse 9, "I am the door: through me (the correct translation) if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." Now, if we take these words in their setting, we will see that Jesus speaks of Himself as the door through which the *shepherd must go* to reach the sheep and to lead them to green pastures. Indeed, the sheep must go through Christ, the door, at night to enter the sheepcote for safety, and must go through Him again in the morning to pasture. But by all means note that He says, "... shall go in and out and *find* pasture." Now sheep never do that. They do not go out. They are led out. They do not find pasture. They are led to it by the shepherd. Besides, in the whole passage Jesus is contrasting Himself as the Good Shepherd with the thieves and robbers who climb over the wall. And the expression, "Door of the sheep," means the door unto the sheep. You see, a sheepcote sheltered various groups of sheep. In the morning a particular shepherd would come through the door and call his sheep. They would know his voice, separate themselves from the other groups and trustingly follow to pasture. Now Christ's sheep know His voice and are at ease and free from fear when they hear Him call them. Let a man come any other way than through Christ and they become restless at first, and then become filled with fright.

Now, that one comes to the sheep through Christ certainly means that he has an office to which Christ called Him. Otherwise he is climbing over the wall. But it also means that he comes with the truth, that He speaks exactly as Christ speaks. Approach His sheep with men's philosophy, and they will not recognize you as Christ's undershepherd. They know Christ, because His life is in them. And that life will respond only to Christ, Whom they hear through the man Christ has officially sent, when he speaks *HIS* Word.

Leading these sheep through Christ as the door to green pastures means that the shepherd searches the Word — for Christ is that Word become flesh — for his message to deliver to the sheep. He does not gather his material from magazines and the writings of news analysts, the social disorders in the world, and the solutions that men propose as a way out of these problems. He gets his message from *Christ* by going to Christ. He gathers His message from the Word. He does not form an opinion and then use the Word as one would use a dictionary to prove that his spelling is correct. He begins with the Word, listens to Christ speaking in that Word; and then he brings Christ to these sheep, and the sheep to Christ, in his preaching of that Word.

That means, of course, that his preaching is expository preaching. It means that he does not use a text as a springboard to jump into some subject upon which

he would like to have the sheep chew, but that he lets that text speak to the sheep by explaining it in all its parts, and by applying it to them in their circumstances and in this day wherein they live.

Christless preaching, as the very expression indicates, is preaching that leaves out Christ. This can be done boldly and bluntly by preaching not The Christ but a "christ," who is not the Son of God essentially but a mere man, who was the best man that ever lived, a marvellous social reformer, one who taught us to die for our principles, and one who lives only in the sense that he lives in his teachings and in the lives of his disciples of today. It denies a Christ born of a virgin, raised from the dead and coming again in judgment.

But consider further that in the measure that any preaching leaves Christ out of our salvation, it is Christless preaching. Any part of that salvation it leaves for us to do, it takes away from Christ, and in that sense the preaching is Christless. If faith is our gift to Him, our work of giving Him the green light to save us, the condition we fulfill, then it is not His gift to us, and we have less of Christ in our salvation than what He declares Himself in Ephesians 2:8.

And, by all means, Christless preaching leaves out His cross. Any preaching that does not center in it is Christless. If the preacher does not show you the cross in the text somewhere in his sermon, or so present the

matter that our salvation and comfort rests fully upon that cross, it is Christless preaching.

Admittedly there is so much of that Christless preaching today. And the sheep hear a new sound of a social gospel that finds no place for that cross, because it sees nothing more than sin between men and not sin before God. It looks for a solution that can be worked out by men and between men, and though it will find value in portions of passages of Jesus' words, it never leads to the cross. It militates against Jesus' own words through Matthew and the angel Gabriel, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save *His people* from *their sins*." (Underscoring ours) Instead they call Him a social reformer Who has something for ALL men, and came to right *this* world by such reform. That His cross and Spirit realize an entirely *new* kingdom and that He comes in holy wrath to destroy this world they ignore or deny.

It is well that the sheep are restless and afraid. It shows that they belong to His flock. But let that fear be rooted in the fear of the Lord, in which Solomon declares, "is strong confidence." Proverbs 14:26. Let it not be in a fear of losing property and of numbers, of losing prestige and honour, or even of losing friendships and love of father and mother, brother and sister. Let it be the fear of the Lord, and not the fear of men.

From Holy Writ

Exposition of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE ELDERS OBTAINED A GOOD TESTIMONY BY FAITH (Hebrews 11:2)

That faith is indeed the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen is proven by the testimony which the elders received from God Himself through this faith! The writer in speaking here of "elders" is not referring to elders as office-bearers in the New Testament Church, nor exclusively of the elders of the people in the Old Testament, but rather of the ancient fathers generally. It need not be necessarily true that the writer here limits these "elders" who obtained a good report to the elders whom he selects here in Hebrews 11. All the elders, the entire Old Testament church in every age of the long period from Abel to Christ, is here referred to. The witness is borne to all whose lives were "by faith." These all are the "cloud of witnesses" which surround us, and cheer us on in the battle in which we must look to Christ Who endured the Cross, despised the shame, and is set down on the right hand of God because of the joy

which was set before him! (Heb. 12:1, 2) The writer selects some outstanding and representative cases of all these who form the "cloud" of witnesses.

The writer here simply is content with the general statement that these elders "obtained witness." They were witnessed, attested to on every page of Scripture, receiving this honorable mention from the lips of God: "Well-done! thou good and faithful servant." They received this witness only in the sphere of and in the power of faith, the mysterious gift and power of God in the inner man. This is the power of the Holy Ghost, Who empowers us from on high.

From this general statement concerning faith and the participants of this faith, the writer now will turn to the particulars.

THE GIST AND OUTLINE OF THE EXAMPLES OF FAITH CITED (Hebrews 11:3-40)

Many writers have written expositions and given exegesis of the book of Hebrews in the past. We have profited from their studies, particularly from those of

Westcott. Dr. Westcott gives much food for thought in his careful analyses of sentence, words, grammar, etc. We found his outline of the contents of Hebrews 11, particularly penetrating. Writes Dr. Westcott (page 349, "The Epistle To The Hebrews"):

The development of the work of Faith appears to follow an intelligible and natural plan. The writer first marks the characteristics of Faith generally (v. 1) and its application to the elementary conceptions of religion (v. 3, compare v. 6). He then shows that the spiritual history of the world is a history of the victories of Faith. This is indicated by the fragmentary records of the old world (4-7) and more particularly by the records of the growth of the Divine Society (*Hee Ecclesia*). (the church, G.L.) This was founded on the Faith of obedience and patience of the patriarchs (8-16); and built up in the faith of sacrifice, sustained against natural judgment (17-22) and carried to victory by the faith of conquest (33-31). The later action of Faith in the work of the people is indicated up to the last national conflict under the Maccabees (v. 32-38); and is then declared that all these preliminary victories await their consummation from the Faith of the Christians. (39, 40)

The contents of the chapter may therefore be arranged thus:

- 1) vv. 1-2. Preliminary view of the characteristics and work of Faith.
- 2) vv. 3-7. Faith as seen in the prophetic records of the old world.
- 3) vv. 8-22. The Faith of the Patriarchs:
 - (a) The Faith of Obedience and Patience
 - (b) The Faith of Sacrifice.
- 4) vv. 23-31. The Faith of Conflict and Conquest.
- 5) vv. 32-38. Faith active in national life.
- 6) vv. 39-40. Conclusion.

A careful reading of this chapter will indicate that the outline here given by Dr. Westcott is most instructive and helpful to obtain a bird's-eye view of the whole, and showing the progressive pattern of Faith in the entire Old Testament History from Abel to the Maccabees! One may differ with this outline on minor details, but in the main this outline, in my judgment, is quite correct.

FAITH'S UNDERSTANDING OF CREATION'S MYSTERIES (Hebrews 11:3)

Here we have the "key" to the proper understanding of the revelation of God in Genesis 1 in regard to the origin and nature of the visible world about us. The proper understanding of our world is not simply by sight, by empirical experience. Also in the matter of the visible world, the certainty concerning the things which we see does not rest on what our senses observe and our rational interpretation of the same, but is only understood and interpreted by faith. We must first ascend to the Creator God in faith, before we can be certain concerning the origin, meaning, and purpose of all things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

"By faith we understand," says the writer. We do not understand to believe, but we believe to understand. Such has ever been the basic starting-point of all theism which holds to the revelation of God from heaven. Hence, not only in the matters of sin and grace, Christ and the world to come, do we walk by faith. We walk by faith also in relationship to what may be called the Logos in creation, as unfolded by the Lord in the Prologue of John's Gospel account. (John 1:1-18) For this Logos is the true light that enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world. For "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork; there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their speech to the end of the world." This speech of God in the things made, even his eternal power and Godhead, transcends the barriers of the languages caused by the confusion of tongues at Babel. (Psalm 19; Rom. 1:18ff.) Yes, this truth, which is manifested to the entire world of men, evil men keep down in unrighteousness — by which they become without excuse before God. It is sufficient for their final and eternal condemnation. The entire, awful reality of idolatrous image worship can only be explained by man's trying to "touch or find" God. (Acts. 17) Poets of the heathen speak of it. Yet, they do not understand. They do not see the sparks of Divine glory in every creature, whereas they will not bow before the Creator God. They do not believe in God. They do not even worship God ignorantly. Paul does not say, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him I preach unto you," but says, "what ye ignorantly worship," ("ho — touto" in the Greek text in Acts 17:23b) Surrounded by the glory of the Creator, His power and Divinity, the unbelievers do not understand. They even worship the creature, and attempt to explain the things seen out of the things seen.

Now faith in God does not do such. Let us remember that this faith by which we understand the framing of the worlds, that this faith is *saving* faith. This is faith which we have in God through Christ. Apart from Christ there is no faith in the Creator of heaven and earth. The first Article of the *Apostolicum* is Christologically dated. This is faith in our heavenly Father, who is our God and Father for Christ's sake. (Confer Question 26, Heidelberg Catechism) The writer here is not speaking of a general faith which is for all mankind in general, a faith which believers and unbelievers would have in common. Or, if you will, a certain "common grace" of God. Not at all! For faith here is a faith by which "we understand!" This we must keep ever in mind. This "we" does not receive any special emphasis in the text. It was not contradicted in the days of the writer. However, the writer had emphasized this "we" in distinction from unbelievers who slip back into perdition, in Hebrews 10:39. And this

emphasis, therefore, is understood. That only the church understands this language and revelation from God is also the clear position of the Belgic Confession which is a confession "which we believe with the heart and confess with the mouth." (Article I) And in the next Article we read:

We know him by two means: first by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely, his power and divinity, as the apostle Paul saith, in Rom. 1:20. . ."

This "we know" refers to the Christian believers, and to no one else!

Thus it is here in this text. We know the world's mysterious creation and preservation, its beginning and end — by faith! And in this faith we understand how the Lord fashioned the entire world in the Six Days of creation as given in Genesis 1. Each part was fashioned by the Builder and Creator. And when this finished product stands before our believing eyes, *with the Scriptures in our hand*, we say: I believe in God! We see God the Builder and Creator. And we see that the

things which we see were not in their finished product, (*gegonenai*) now already for 6000 years, to be explained out of the creature. The light came from the creative word of God. And when God put this light in the sun and moon and stars on the fourth day, then He fashioned this in such a way that faith sees that the light and the sun both must be explained out of the will of the Creator God.

We span the "ages," the world, in our text. And we see that there is the creation and providence of God. Moment by moment not a blade of grass grows but by the hand of the invisible God, who demonstrates His power and divinity in the flower of the field and in the blade of grass. Then we get a consideration of faith. We "consider" the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these! That is simple Christian faith which understands that flowers are not to be explained out of the power of flowers, or from some other creaturely phenomena, but that flowers are a direct product of the fashioning hand of their Maker, God. Very simple, isn't it? It is revealed to the babes, and hid from the wise and prudent.

BOOK REVIEWS

Prof. H. Hanko

LETTERS TO POLLY . . . on the gift of affliction; by Melvin Schoonover; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971; 106 pp., \$3.95.

The author of this book suffered the rare and dreaded disease of *osteogenesis imperfecta*, a disease which leaves the bones so brittle and fragile that they can be broken by the slightest jar. In time the author married. After being assured by many doctors that there was almost no chance of any children he might have being afflicted with the same disease, a daughter was born to this couple. But the daughter also was born with the same disease as her father.

In the book the father writes several letters to his daughter in which he tells her a great deal about his life, his struggle to adjust to his affliction, the spiritual turmoil the disease wrought in him and his efforts to come to peace with God. He writes about how he overcame his handicaps, graduated from college and Seminary to become a minister, travelled over much of the world and lived a comparatively normal life.

It is an interesting book and well worth reading. However, his theology is less than Biblical and the final resolution of his spiritual turmoil is not the resolution of the believer who commits his way into the hands of his heavenly Father.

THE HOLY TRIANGLE, by Joel Nederhoed; Baker Book House, 1971; 143 pp., \$1.25 (paper).

When this country is experiencing a decline in morals which touches upon every aspect of courtship, marriage, sex, child-bearing, child-rearing, etc., a book like this could be very helpful and influential. One would hope that the radio minister of the Back to God Hour would provide just such a book. Yet it is a disappointment in many respects.

It is a very practical book, with a good part of it devoted to warnings against such things as abortion, state control of education, etc.; and in this respect the book is worthwhile. But the approach of the book is wrong. In the discussion of the question of divorce and marriage, the approach is not that divorce is sin, but how best can a marriage from a practical point of view be held together. So often various actions are condemned or advocated, not because they are right or wrong according to the principles of Scripture, but because of the consequences of the act. Thus the book becomes rather like a social tract with some religion added. How, for example, is it possible to discuss marriage from a Christian point of view and never mention Ephesians 5:22-33? Yet this book manages to do exactly that.

The author forgets that sound Christian "practice" is based upon principle and doctrine. If not, it is reduced to morality. It is a book which is more than moral homilies which the Church needs in this day when the Christian home is threatened by so many evil forces.

GOD IN THE DOCK, by C. S. Lewis; Edited by Walter Hooper; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970; 346 pp., \$6.95.

Walter Hooper brings together in this newest volume of the writings of Lewis a large number of papers, articles, and letters which were culled from Lewis' writings. The papers cover a wide range of subjects and were written over a period of twenty-four years. They deal with theological, ethical, and philosophical questions and with many issues of the day to which Lewis addressed his powerful writings. Most of what appears in this book has not been published before in a form available to the general public. But one will recognize in them many themes which are developed in other writings of Lewis and which have been on the market for a long time. In fact, because of the many papers

brought together in this volume, there is a great deal of duplication also within the book itself.

The title, not particularly attractive, is taken from an essay about the difficulties of trying to present the Christian Faith to modern unbelievers. The paragraph from which the phrase comes gives a taste of what the book contains.

The ancient man approached God (or even the gods) as the accused person approaches his judge. For the modern man the roles are reversed. He is the judge: God is in the dock. He is quite a kindly judge: if God should have a reasonable defense for being the god who permits war, poverty and disease, he is ready to listen to it. The trial may even end in God's acquittal. But the important thing is that Man is on the Bench and God in the Dock.

While the book will not add measurably to an understanding of Lewis, his theology and views, it makes for good reading if one reads knowing that many of Lewis' views are not Scriptural. He is always provocative, and his skill in the English language is a pleasure in its own right.

An Evening Prayer for Covenant Youth

*JESUS, THOU ART EVERYWHERE,
LISTEN TO MY EVENING PRAYER.
THOU HAST GIVEN ME FOOD TODAY,
THOU HAST KEPT ME WHILE AT PLAY.
I DO THANK THEE FOR THY GRACE,
WHILE I CHOSE A SINNER'S PLACE.
PARDON ALL MY SINS I PRAY
THAT WERE DONE BY ME THIS DAY.
IN BAPTISM THOU DOST OWN,
I BELONG TO THEE ALONE.
GIVE ME COVENANT BLESSINGS, LORD,
WHICH THY SEAL DOTH ME ACCORD.
O, HOW GOOD THOU ART TO ME,
JESUS, LET ME WORSHIP THEE.*

*NOW THAT I MUST GO TO SLEEP
GUARD ME STILL AND BLESS AND KEEP.
IN THE DARKNESS BE THOU NEAR,
KEEP MY HEART FROM EVERY FEAR.
THOUGH I HEAR NO ANGEL'S TREAD,
BID THEM WATCH AROUND MY BED.
STILL BESTOW THY CONSTANT CARE
ANSWER THOU MY EVENING PRAYER.
AMEN.*



ANNOUNCEMENT

The faculty of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches announces with pleasure that Seminarian Mark H. Hoeksema has been licensed to speak a word of edification in the churches under faculty supervision.

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, Rector

STUDENT AID

Students needing financial aid to attend the Protestant Reformed Seminary this coming school year should contact Mr. Theodore Engelsma, 2333 Clyde Park, S.W., telephone Ch 5-4706 or Gerrit Pipe, 1463 Ardmore St., S.E., telephone Ch 5-6145, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

ATTENTION!

All Standing Synodical Committees are reminded that their reports for the Synodical Agenda must be sent to the undersigned on or before the April 15 deadline. Supplemental reports may be submitted later, but material for the Agenda must be submitted by April 15.

Rev. D. H. Kuiper
Stated Clerk of Synod
1314 Main Street
Pella, Iowa 50219

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society "Ruth" of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to one of their members, Mrs. Peter Zandstra, in the passing away of her father.

MR. PETER DE VRIES

"The Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee nor forsake thee." (Deut. 31:6).

Mr. Alvin Rau, Pres.
Mrs. J. De Vries, Sec'y.

News Feature

Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland



Recently with a loud thunder and many sad faces our "old church" building was torn down.

No doubt many STANDARD BEARER readers attended a lecture or church service in the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church. The "old church" was built in 1928, remodeled in 1933, and hit by fire in 1970.



Even though the "old church" was not used for some time, many could not help but feel sad when it was no longer there.

Editor's Note: The building is gone, but many a memory lives on! Our thanks to brother Gilbert F. Van Baren for this "news feature."

News From Our Churches

A couple of our churches which are presently without undershepherds have extended calls again in the recent past. That from Doon, Iowa, has gone to Rev. G. Van Baren, while Rev. H. Veldman has received the

call from Southwest.

Members of the Society for Protestant Reformed Secondary Education decided, at their annual meeting

on March 11, to proceed with construction of a 70' by 52' addition on the east side of the existing building. This addition will include two classrooms, each 26' by 26'. A 20' by 26' section will be used for additional storage and office space. And the remainder will be used for boys' and girls' shower rooms, each 26' by 16'. The two new classrooms will alleviate the overcrowdedness which is presently a way of life at the school. As was mentioned in "The Crier," the school's weekly news-sheet, the addition will mean that "the library will be available all day; no classes will be held in the library on a regular basis."

It seems that work on the project will begin shortly. It's expected that the completion date might be in the early fall of this year. A hopeful, howbeit somewhat skeptical, writer in "The Crier" added, "But don't count on it too much!"

About a month ago we noted that the congregation in Hull had decided to rebuild the pulpit area in the church building. According to the February 28 Sunday bulletin of that church, they're going to get some new furniture to go with the new front. The Consistory reported that it had gratefully accepted "offers from two families of the congregation to purchase a new pulpit and baptism font." With that beginning, the Consistory decided to go the rest of the way and purchase, also, a new communion table and collection plate stand.

Another building project was mentioned in Loveland's bulletin. There are plans afoot to build an addition to the parsonage. No reason was given, but there's an outside possibility that the size of the pastor's growing family had some bearing on the decision.

Another thing we reported a while back, was the formation of The Reformed Witness Committee. It's a combined church extension committee including Doon, Edgerton, and Hull. We learn from a recent Sunday bulletin from Hull that the committee has prepared another pamphlet for mailing. This one, written by Rev. D. Kuiper, is entitled "The Pre-Millennial Error." According to the bulletin announcement, these pamphlets are mailed to individuals in different neighboring communities, including Manhattan, Montana, and seven towns in Minnesota. They already have a mailing list with 2000 names, and "in the coming months new areas will be considered." They add that "the approximate cost of the monthly project is \$80.00, which is to be raised by monthly collections in

our church as well as Doon and Edgerton."

In glancing over the many Sunday bulletins received, we notice different types of after-recess activities of various societies. One of the societies in Loveland is using *The Chaos of the Cults* for after-recess study. Another society in that same church uses *A History of the Christian Church*. A society in Southwest makes use of the "Studies in Biblical Doctrine," a study sheet program authored by Rev. Woudenberg and provided by the Lynden Church. Another studies the "Canons"; another, various church doctrines; still another the "Church Order." Several, also, as we've mentioned before, deal with a variety of special subjects, such as, "Current Events," "Separation of Church and World," "What Constitutes the True Preaching of the Word," "Final Judgment," "Abortion," "The Intermediate State," "The Morality of Heart Transplants," etc.

We have a little news concerning the work of the Radio Committee. Perhaps you know that the committee has been providing spot announcements to be used by all the radio stations carrying our program. The little announcement is in the form of a question based on the radio sermon, and is designed, of course, to draw the attention of radio listeners to our program, and to generate some advance interest in the sermon.

Do you wonder what work is involved for those who are members of the Radio Committee? If you do, you're not alone. Others have also expressed interest in learning about their work, so the committee decided to produce something which would acquaint people with what transpires behind the scenes, as it were. They decided to prepare a set of slides showing the various activities which are a normal part of their work, and then to prepare, also, a tape to be used in conjunction with the slides, giving the story behind the pictures.

It sounds as if this will make a fascinating after-recess program for many of our societies. In fact, we understand that it was that very thing that motivated the committee to begin work on this production. It seems that a society investigated concerning the possibility of an after-recess program, of an informational nature, provided by the Radio Committee; and, as a result, the above plan was born. The material will not, certainly, be ready for the current society season. Mr. Don Faber is still preparing the set of slides. Next society season they'll likely do some advertising of their own, but in case you miss it or have some advance questions, Mr. Duane Gunnink, the chairman of the publicity committee has all the answers.

D.D.