

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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All Around Us:

“Of Many Versions”

Protests in the Gereformeerde Kerken

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Meditation

The Gathering of the Israel of God

Rev. M. Schipper

“Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even everyone that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

Isaiah 43:5-7.

Fear not!

How often this expression in Scripture is addressed to the people of God! At least sixty-six times it appears on the pages of Holy Writ, and eleven times in

the prophecy of Isaiah alone. Addressed to the people of God who find themselves in fearful circumstances, while in the providence of God they are required to taste His chastening rod. Or, as is so often the case,

while they grope in the darkness, doubts come over their souls that their God will not be able to realize His covenant promises to them, or somehow their seed shall perish in the way.

To such is this comforting word addressed in the text!

The fearful are envisioned as captives in Babylon. They despair of their Redeemer's redemptive love, and they are unable to believe that He will realize His covenant promise to be their God and the God of their seed after them — a seed which is now scattered over the face of the earth.

Fear not: for I am with thee!

I am with thee, Jacob-Israel!

Be not afraid! Be not afraid of thyself, for I am with thee. Be not afraid concerning thy seed, for I will bring them. There shall, indeed, be one people, and I shall forever be their God!

That it is Jacob-Israel that is so addressed is plain from the context. "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name: thou art mine."

A peculiar people!

Named after their natural and spiritual forbearer — Jacob; one of the fathers with Abraham and Isaac, with whom God had established His covenant.

Jacob — that God-fearing child of Isaac, who, in distinction from his brother Esau, was to be heir of the patriarchal blessing, but who was weak and sinful, not willing to wait until God would give it to him. Who sought the blessing in his own strength, and therefore deceived his father, and stole from his brother, incurring his wrath. And who therefore was led through hard and devious ways until he met the Lord at the Jabbok.

Israel — that name that was given to him after he had wrestled with God and had overcome. With weeping and supplication he had wrestled all night, and with a new name he was rewarded, for he had power with God and had overcome. That was the significance of his name, Israel.

And the people that is now fearful, and should not fear, is named after their natural and spiritual forbear, because like him they partake of the same natural and spiritual traits.

God's chosen people!

So the Lord had designated them in the context. "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend." And again, "Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou Jesurun, whom I have chosen."

Because of this election, the Lord had reprobated Egypt and gave Egypt to destruction, in order that He might deliver with a mighty hand His beloved. Because

of this sovereign choice, Ethiopia and the Sabeans are destroyed by the mighty forces of Sennacherib instead of Jerusalem. "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life."

A redeemed people!

"For I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine."

Redeemed, of course, in and through our Lord Jesus Christ! The Son of God in the flesh atones for their sin on the cross. In the blood of that cross they are cleansed from all their guilty stains. And by the power of His substitutionary sacrifice they are justified and sanctified, and delivered from sin and death. Adopted as His sons and daughters into the family of God, and heirs of eternal life.

O, make no mistake! They are not the Jews only, as many would maintain. Though, to be sure, for a while the covenant line ran through the Jewish nation. The Jews, as such, were never the people of God. But of both Jew and Gentile, of all nations, tribes, and tongues is this people constituted. By nature no different than all the peoples of the world. Laden with sin and guilt. Dead in trespasses and sins. Totally depraved. With no intrinsic value in themselves. Yet chosen of God; redeemed out of the world. Given to Christ to be redeemed by Him. Over whom God is pleased to call His Name. His precious Jacob-Israel!

A people realized historically in the generations of the believers. Note how marvelously the Lord identifies the seed with Jacob-Israel. "I will bring *thy* seed from the east, and gather *thee* from the west." And at the same time the Lord lays claim to that seed as His own. "I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring *my* sons from far, and *my* daughters from the ends of the earth."

The realization of the Israel of God is not, therefore, a haphazard thing, which it must be if God desired to save all men, but only succeeds in saving a few; which it must be, if the salvation of this people depended on the fickle will of man.

Nay, the realization of this people is a well-planned and definite formation of a chosen people, as they are found in the generations of believers, as they reside in all nations of the world, and from the beginning of time to the end thereof. This is why the Lord Jesus, in His mission mandate did say: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." And again, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

Indeed, the Israel of God that is to be gathered is the sum-total of all the elect, no one else. They are given in eternity to Christ to be redeemed by Him. And they are found historically, from the beginning to the end of time, in the generations of the believers and are their seed. And they are to be found not in one nation, but are scattered over all the earth. In one

word, they are the Holy Catholic Church, as we express it in the articles of our Christian faith.

Gathered by God Himself!

Contrary to the modern conception, the Israel of God is not gathered by man! You are aware, are you not, of the philosophy of the modern church with its social gospel, which conceives of the church as a society to which members may be added by the moral suasion of her ministry or its members? You have heard, have you not, of so-called fundamentalistic churches which operate under the Arminianistic doctrine that men go out to save souls for Christ? You are aware, aren't you, that there have arisen so-called Evangelistic Associations which are bent on winning the world for Christ? And you must certainly be aware that even in so-called Reformed circles churches have added to their confessions the doctrine of common grace with its offer of the gospel and salvation for all men. And how these churches, out of an overabundance of mission zeal, now maintain that unless you can say to every man, "God loves you," they cannot do mission work.

All of these conceptions stem from the corrupt view that the gathering of the Israel of God is dependent on man, or at least on man in cooperation with God. Such a conception militates both against Scripture and the Reformed Confessions. Space will not allow us to quote these Confessions and Scriptures upon which the Confessions are based. But pay attention to what the Lord says in our text!

I will bring thy seed from the east!

I will gather thee from the west!

I will say to the north: Give up! And to the south: Keep not back! Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: even everyone that is called by my Name!

Indeed, the gathering of the Israel of God is a wonder-work of grace, which God alone accomplishes through His Son, and by His Spirit and Word! The divine calling whereby the Israel of God is gathered out of the world always takes place through Jesus Christ our Lord. Always God speaks through the Son. That is, the Son of God in the flesh. Who reveals the Father. Who died for our sins. Who was raised from the dead for our justification. Who was exalted at God's right-hand. Through Whose Word and Spirit God gathers His church out of the corrupt human race. The Son of God in the flesh is the mighty Word of salvation whereby the church is called out of darkness into God's marvelous light, out of the fellowship of the sinful human race into the communion of saints.

To be sure, the Son of God accomplishes this through the preaching of the Gospel! But do not conclude from this that man after all is responsible for the gathering of the Israel of God. Never are the preachers of the Gospel co-laborers with God or with Christ. The Gospel is not of man, but of Christ. He reveals it. He

speaks it. Without His Spirit and Word the preacher of the Gospel is powerless. The preacher is not a co-laborer *with* God, but *of* God, nothing more.

Christ, indeed, is pleased to speak His Word through human media. It is He Who calls and prepares men to preach His Word. It is He Who sends them whithersoever He pleases. It is He Who speaks through their preaching by His Spirit to gather His church. It is Christ Who must be heard in the preaching or there is no preaching at all. Not the preacher wins souls for Christ, but Christ saves His own souls. Not the preacher calls God's sons and daughters from far, but God does it through Christ Who calls the weary and heavy laden to rest through the Gospel that is preached. All that the preacher must be concerned about is that he preaches the Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel. God, through the Son, through the preaching of the Gospel calls out: Give up! and, Keep not back! It is He, through Christ, and through the preaching of the gospel that gathers together all who were ordained by Him unto eternal life into the sheep-fold of Christ. It is He Who gathers the stones which He is pleased to polish and set into His temple in which He is pleased to dwell everlastingly.

For His own glory!

Such is the divine intention, according to the text. "For I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."

Not for the glory of man, nor even in the first place for his salvation! O, to be sure, the Israel of God that is gathered shall in the process of gathering be saved and glorified. There can be no question about that. When the salvation of the church shall be complete, she shall appear in glory. This is the fruit of God's saving grace in her. The crown of glory shall be given to everyone who is saved by grace, as He promised. It is also true that those who are called of God to preach His Word shall receive the reward of the crown of righteousness. Such was also the aspiration and expectation of the great Apostle Paul. But important as the salvation and glory of the church may be; and as desirable as the crown of righteousness may be to the preacher; this is not the first purpose of the gathering of the Israel of God.

That God may be glorified, — that is the first and the final purpose of it all!

"This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise!"

Upon that people God attaches His Name! And that Name is the revelation of the God of their salvation. Not their own name, but the Name of their God is stamped upon them. And God, Who is jealous for His own glory, forms that people in such a way that only His virtues, His praises, shall be revealed in them. Yea, He creates them for His own glory.

And because God will certainly attain unto His purpose, namely, the gathering in of Jacob-Israel that shall

glorify Him; let not the people fear!

What a day that shall be when they shall all be assembled before Him! When the preaching of the gospel shall have attained its end, when God through the preaching shall call all His sons and daughters who then shall surround Him as He shall be manifested in

the Son in His beauty. And everyone shall express His glory!

(Note: This Meditation is based on a sermon preached on the occasion of Rev. G. C. Lubber's installation as Missionary to Jamaica.)

Editorial

As To That "New Eye Opener Tract"

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In connection with our discussion of Bible translations, several of our readers called my attention to a little tract published by a certain Missionary J. J. Ray, Junction City, Oregon. This tract is a defense of the King James Version over against all other translations and versions solely on the basis of the claim that the King James Bible is founded on the Greek Textus Receptus (Received Text), which, in turn, is claimed to be the only authentic Greek text of the New Testament. It contains a list of "200 KEY REFERENCES" which "show how all modern Bibles differ from the King James Version, and the Greek Textus Receptus from which it was translated." And in connection with these 200 references it furnishes statistics showing how various other versions differ from the King James Version by omitting, bracketing, or italicizing as non-authentic many of these 200 expressions which are found in the King James Version and in the Greek Textus Receptus. We will not enter into all of the claims made in this tract in detail. Rather do we call your attention to the fundamental argument of the author under the heading, "Here's The Acid Test." This "acid test" is stated as follows: "Any version of the Bible, that does not agree with the *Greek Textus Receptus*, from which the King James Bible was translated in 1611, is certainly to be founded upon corrupted manuscripts."

On the basis of this so-called "acid test" many severe warnings are sounded to adhere to the King James Version and condemnatory statements are made concerning all departures from the Greek Textus Receptus, (which, by the way, concerns only the New Testament!).

To the unwary reader this tract might seem to be a strong defense of the King James Version; and seemingly some of my readers have sent me this tract for that very reason.

However, at the risk of being in the uncomfortable position of opposing someone who defends the King James Version, I must disagree with the position taken in this tract; and I must warn that a defense of the

King James Version cannot be made on this radical basis. Those who attempt it are likely to receive a jolt some day, should they encounter someone who is opposed to the KJV and who is able to expose the very obvious error of the radical position taken in this pamphlet.

You see, a radical over-simplification of the issue is not a strong position, but a weak one. Should any opponent of the KJV be able to show that this one, apparently simple, argument based on the Textus Receptus is false, the entire position of this tract is destroyed. And the friend of the KJV is then left with the proverbial "mouth full of teeth." This tract leaves the impression that anyone with a smattering of knowledge that there is such a thing as a Greek Textus Receptus and even without any knowledge of New Testament Greek and of the entire science known as "textual criticism" is able to apply the acid test and to defend the KJV as the only authentic text. This is a case of "A little learning is a dangerous thing."

As is well-known to our readers, I am a defender of the King James Version and an opponent of the introduction of all kinds of new versions for general Bible-reading usage. But I certainly do not want to be bound hand and foot to the King James Version. And I am by no means ready to call for a book-burning party at which all the other versions will constitute the fuel for a gigantic bonfire. And in my studies and exegetical work I will not allow anyone to bind me to the Greek Textus Receptus. Nor will I defend the KJV on the basis that it alone is correct when it comes to the textual variations involved in these "200 key references." Nor, in fact, would I care to defend the KJV *solely* on textual grounds. One almost gets the impression from this tract that the *Textus Receptus* is an exact copy of the autographs, the New Testament as it came from the pens of the sacred writers, or that it dropped out of heaven, rather than coming from the Amsterdam and Leyden printing presses of the Elzevir Brothers.

No, this tract, while it leaves the impression of

taking a very strong position, actually takes a position of weakness.

We must not try to defend the KJV on an *absolute* basis. Nor must we try to defend it on the ground that it is in every key instance *textually* correct. It is much better to defend the KJV on a *comparative* basis — not as the *only*, but as the *best* English version. And it is correct to do so not merely on *textual* grounds, but on the basis of *all* the considerations which enter into the picture, such as accuracy of the text, inclusiveness of text, accuracy and smoothness of translation, beauty and majesty of language, familiarity of the language and long-standing usage, etc. On this basis I will defend the proposition that it is far better for our people, our families, our schools, and our churches to stick to the use of one English version, the King James.

Without going into all the intricate details of the science known as “textual criticism,” let me try to explain a few matters which will make plain the fallacy of this tract’s argument.

First of all, we should keep this entire matter of manuscripts and textual variations in the proper perspective. As is commonly known, we do not have the original writings (often called “autographa”) of the Scriptures. If we had these, this whole problem would not exist. Those autographa were perfect; and when we speak of infallible inspiration, the ultimate reference is to these perfect original books. We have only *copies* of these books, however. And there are well over 4000 of such manuscript-copies of the New Testament. There is among them only one major manuscript which contains all of the New Testament intact. Several others contain a large part of the New Testament. But many are only one book, or a part of a book; and there are also hundreds of fragments, some of which contain only a small piece of one of the N.T. books. These copies, mind you, are not nicely printed copies such as we can buy today at a bookstore. No, they were all hand copied. Some of the earliest fragments were copied by hand on papyrus rolls. Later, in the fourth century, they began to make copies of parts or all of the Scriptures in book form, on parchment. Also these were laboriously hand-printed by scribes, or companies of scribes, and in a manner which makes it a tremendously laborious task to decipher them today. For example, there is a whole group of important manuscripts called uncials. These were written in all capital letters, much like what children call printing letters. In a picture of a part of such a manuscript which I have before me as I write this, there is no punctuation, no separation between words, — simply a continuous string of block-style letters. It would be much as though I would print, say, Mark 1:1 and 2 as follows (but not even in such neatly printed letters): “THE-BEGINNINGOFTHEGOSPELOFJESUSCHRISTTHE-SONOFGODASITISWRITTENINTHEPROPHETS-BEHOLDISENDMYMESSENGERBEFORETHYFACE-

WHICHSHALLPREPARETHYWAYBEFORETHEE.” You can imagine a little how easy it would be to make mistakes in the process of copying such a manuscript!

Thus it comes about that there are thousands of such manuscripts, and that among these manuscripts there are many thousands of variations in the text. Some of these variations may involve only a letter or a single word. Some were unintentional mistakes, such as the repetition of a line already printed. Some were well-intentioned changes, the scribe thinking he was correcting a mistake made in the copy which he was copying. And undoubtedly there were also some intentional changes made by those who were attempting to use the text to support their peculiar doctrinal views.

It is about these variations in the thousands of manuscripts that the science of textual criticism is concerned. Properly, it is the task of this science to arrive as nearly as possible at the original text of Scripture.

It is in this connection that I said we should keep the proper perspective. In the first place, lest anyone imagine that this makes all of the New Testament highly doubtful, it should be emphasized, on the contrary, that the New Testament is extremely well preserved. A.T. Robertson, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* Broadman Press, 1925, writes, pp. 69, 70:

But the wealth of manuscript evidence is a great blessing and helps us to restore the original text. There is but a single manuscript that preserves most of the Annals of Tacitus. Only one manuscript gives the Greek Anthology. The poems of Catullus come to us in three manuscripts later than the fourteenth century A.D. The best attested texts like those of Sophocles, Euripedes, Vergil, and Cicero can only count the manuscripts that give them by the hundreds. And these are from 500 to 1600 years after the autographs were written. The manuscripts of Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Sophocles, and Thucydides are 1400 years after the death of the authors. Those of Catullus and Euripides are 1600. Those for Plato are 1300 and those for Demosthenes are 1200. Only Vergil has one manuscript in the fourth century and two in the fifth (cf. Kenyon, op. cit. p. 5).

But this is not all. There are some 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and at least 1,000 for the other early versions. Add over 4,000 Greek manuscripts and we have 13,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament. Besides all this, much of the New Testament can be reproduced from the quotations of early Christian writers. It was obviously impossible for the New Testament to perish from the earth unless the world itself were to be destroyed. Even then much of it will go to heaven in the minds and hearts of the saints.

But, secondly, of how much importance are the textual variations? One scholar, Nestle, sets the number of textual variations at about 150,000. He tells us that only one-twentieth of these has any significant authority to support it. But, mind you, of this one-

twentieth there is again only one-twentieth which is of any significance for the meaning of Holy Scripture. This already reduces that 150,000 to about 375 significant variations in the whole of the New Testament! Add to this the fact that there is no single article of faith which depends on these variant readings! And add to this the fact that even of these 375, many are of very small importance! Another scholar, Hort, tells us that "the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation . . . can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text." There is, therefore, only a very, very small fraction of the entire New Testament about which there is any textual question. I do not write this to belittle the science of textual criticism; the latter is important and valuable. But no one should be left with the impression that we have a doubtful Bible, an undependable Bible, — especially in view of the fact that our King James Version was translated before many of the manuscripts had been discovered and before the science of textual criticism had developed. The Lord our God has in His providence and grace taken care that His church has a dependable Bible even in the English language!

But what about this thing called the *Textus Receptus*?

The simple fact is that the *Textus Receptus* is a printed edition of the Greek New Testament, published by the Elzevir brothers of Leyden and Amsterdam in the year 1633. It is *not* a manuscript. It is a printed edition based on other printed editions, and, for the most part only indirectly, on some manuscripts of late date. It was produced long before the great majority of the more than 4000 manuscripts mentioned earlier had even been discovered. And it was produced before the science of textual criticism had been developed. The marvel is that the *Textus Receptus* is as good as it is! And let me hasten to add: it is indeed a basically sound text! But it is not what is called a critical edition, that is, not the product of textual-critical study.

To understand the rise of this *Textus Receptus* a little review of history is necessary.

The first printed copy of the Greek New Testament was the Complutensian, prepared by the Spanish Cardinal Ximenes, printed in 1514, was not actually published until 1522, due to a delay in approval by Pope Leo X. Authorities differ somewhat as to the basis of this edition. But they agree that whatever manuscripts were used, they were late ones, probably from at least the eleventh century to the fifteenth. Some even claim that the passage of I John 5:7, which appears in only a couple of late Greek manuscripts, was inserted by way of translation back into the Greek from the Latin Vulgate.

Erasmus, the prince of humanists and the pride (?) of Rotterdam, was responsible for the first edition which was published. At the suggestion of a Basel

printer, Froben, and in a race to beat the publication of the Complutensian, Erasmus hurriedly prepared his first edition for publication in 1516. It was based on manuscripts from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries; and again, parts were filled in from the Latin Vulgate. In 1522 Erasmus published his third edition, which became the foundation of the *Textus Receptus* for Britain since it was followed by Robert Stephen. Peculiar about this third edition is the fact that because of a rash promise made to the editor of the Complutensian, Erasmus inserted I John 5:7 although he rightly inferred that it had been translated from the Latin, according to A.T. Robertson. This is interesting because it explains how this passage found its way into the *Textus Receptus*.

Next followed the work of Robert Stephen, a printer at Paris. It was Stephen's third edition which became known as the *Textus Receptus* for Britain, 1550. It was mainly the text of Erasmus's fourth and fifth editions, but it contained marginal readings from the Complutensian and from fifteen manuscripts, among which were D (from the sixth century) and L (from the eighth century). This work is recognized as the first collection of various readings of any importance, and is said to have been of real value to students, in spite of its many defects.

Theodore Beza, the friend and successor of John Calvin at Geneva, is responsible for ten editions of the Greek Testament from 1565 to 1611. However, it is said that he was not diligent in collecting fresh material for the correction of the text, though he had access to two important major manuscripts for the Gospels and Acts and for the Pauline Epistles. His textual basis was mostly Stephen's fourth edition, with partial substitution of new readings by himself and partial use of Erasmus and the Complutensian. Beza's Latin Translation and Commentary, however, were a guide for the Genevan Bible, which was a forerunner of the King James Version and exercised a marked influence on the latter.

This brings us to what is commonly known as the *Textus Receptus*. The brothers Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir established a press at Leyden and later at Amsterdam, The Netherlands, from which they issued seven successive editions of the Greek Testament (1624 to 1678). Their second edition, 1633, which was actually printed in London and which contained notes by Robert Stephen among others, is the one which became known as the *Textus Receptus*. It is based on that of Stephen and Beza and the last edition of Erasmus. But here is the interesting fact. Where did this expression *Textus Receptus* (Received Text) come from? The 1633 edition of the Elzevir Brothers contained the announcement in Latin to the effect that here was the "text received by all," (*Textum ergo habes nunc AB OMNIBUS RECEPTUM*). As Vincent puts it, "The term '*Textus Receptus*' is, in itself, un-

truthful. It was put forth simply as a clever advertisement of an enterprising publisher. The edition which bore this pretentious announcement varied somewhat from that of 1624 in the correction of some of the worst misprints, though it retained others equally bad, and added a few of its own."

And thus it is that they speak of a Textus Receptus for Britain (Stephen's edition) and a Textus Receptus for the Continent (Elzevirs' edition of 1633). And the King James Version is based primarily upon the Stephanus-Beza-Elzevir text. There was some use made of other manuscripts; but many manuscripts were not then discovered and accordingly could not be used.

Now, as was said, the Textus Receptus, which lies at the basis of the King James Version, is basically a sound edition. Many scholars will agree to this. And as we pointed out, the number of significant variations in the text which have been brought to light through the

discovery of many manuscripts is very small indeed. To this, too, many New Testament scholars must agree.

But if you know this history, and understand something of the story of the manuscripts and of textual criticism, then it is abundantly plain that it is a grave mistake to set up the so-called Textus Receptus as THE standard by which the value of any English version is to be judged. Providentially, the KJV was based on a substantially correct text, indeed; but to claim that the KJV is based on the only authentic text is a weak argument, not a strong one.

In conclusion, therefore, I repeat: while the purpose of this "Eye Opener Tract" to defend the King James Version is a good one, and while I am heartily in favor of the retention of the King James Version, I cannot go along with the argument of this tract, and, in fact, would warn against being fooled by this weak argument.

All Around Us

"Of Many Versions" Merger News Protests in the Gereformeerde Kerken A Footnote to Heart Transplants

Prof. H. Hanko

"OF MANY VERSIONS"

In a recent issue of "The Banner of Truth" appeared a reprint from "Missionary Monthly" written by Johr. R. De Witt in which he makes some interesting comments on the proliferation of Bible translations. Some of these comments are worth sharing with our readers.

After making it clear that he is not opposed to Bible translations in themselves, he writes:

I do however, have some critical reflections on the subject of translations and their use which probably are not popular and which certainly are very little considered . . . It seems to me that one of the chief considerations in the study of the Word of God is the need *not only* abstractly and objectively to penetrate into its meaning, within a certain historical framework and the context of the place each part of Scripture occupies in the history of God's dealings with his people — such things are of course enormously significant, and one only does men a disservice when he depreciates them, *but also* to absorb, to assimilate that meaning into the very substance of one's own life.

After quoting several pertinent texts, the author

goes on:

The purpose of Scripture is to reveal God to us in His fulness and grace thereby to do His work to build Christ's church, to change lives, to incorporate us into the new creation of God. It is practical, direct, effective, sharp and quick and powerful, more so than a two-edged sword. . . .

The ancients understood this. It was not only because a few men could read, and fewer still could possess for themselves a copy of the sacred writings, that so great an accent fell upon the memorization of the Scriptures. Others have understood it, too. It is not for nothing that on the title page of the Authorized (King James) Version the words appear: 'appointed to be read in churches.' To be sure, the words mean that the translation had a very high, authoritative status. One notices, however, that the familiar version reads much better out loud than any of the other, more recent, and sometimes more accurate translations of the Bible. Why? Because attention clearly was paid to this very matter. The translators were concerned with the oral effect of their work, with the ease with which it could be used in public and private worship, and — still more — with

the facility with which men could commit verses and whole passages to memory, thus helping them to hide it in their hearts. Everyone knows and has been struck by the grandeur and beauty of the cadences in the common version; not everyone has realized what an enormous aid these are to the getting of the Scriptures by heart, the memorizing of them.

From this the author draws some conclusions. He freely admits that there are advantages to newer translations. But he goes on to say:

It does seem to me incontrovertible, however, that there are great advantages in the use of a single, great translation of the Word of God — not to the exclusion of others, which indeed may be consulted occasionally. I refer to the devotional reading of Scripture, its memorization, its use in worship: in a word, to the reading of the Scripture in every other instance than the specific study of certain portions of it.

When and while one reads, he ought to be getting the Word by heart, allowing his whole being to be saturated with what he reads, permitting it to affect him intellectually, emotionally, spiritually. And if he changes his versions by the day or week or even year, though some advantage may be gained in terms of the understanding of an occasional thought or word, yet the end result will be that he knows no version thoroughly, that his mind is quite confused as to the wording of the Scriptures, that, in short, he memorizes and gets by heart nothing at all.

My own view is that people ought to choose a great, churchly, version of the Scriptures — not one produced privately, or by a group of men working on their own — and stick to it, getting it by heart, learning it, mulling over it, loving it, letting it penetrate them altogether, so that its language becomes their own. Leave the litter of modern translations or paraphrases to one side, except for the purposes of occasional consultation and study. Which version? That is, of course, not easy to say. My view continues to be that whatever its drawbacks in terms of the text upon which it was based and the increase of our acquaintance with the biblical background since it was produced, the King James Version remains unequalled in the splendour of its language, its devoutness, its dignity, and its sheer memorizableness. To be sure, some difficulties have to be overcome. Some words need to be checked in a good dictionary. But what of that?

Have it always with you, read it, and get it by heart!

The author has made, in our opinion, some very excellent comments on this subject and we find ourselves in wholehearted agreement with them.

MERGER NEWS

From the *RES Newsletter* we quote the following:

A merger between two small Presbyterian groups is a step nearer in the wake of the yearly meeting of leaders of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, held in Portland.

The General Assembly authorized a negotiating committee to work out a possible plan of merger with the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical

Synod. Talks have been under way for two years.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church has 131 affiliated churches and 14,000 members. The Reformed Presbyterian Church — Evangelical Synod has 115 affiliated congregations and 11,000 members. The latter is distinct from the Reformed Presbyterian Church, sometimes called the “Covenanters” in reference to early Presbyterians in Scotland. Orthodox Presbyterian leaders, meanwhile, reported an increase of 1.1 percent in membership.

A survey of attitudes about the proposed union indicates that most ministers on the Reformed Presbyterian side expect and want that union to occur. An extensive but informal mail survey was conducted by Rev. George P. Hutchinson. The survey revealed that “Christian Liberty” is easily the most significant consideration in most RPs’ minds as an obstacle to union, receiving four times more recognition than any other issue.

The practical advantages of union are regarded as the primary incentive for union, although a sense of scriptural authority and a desire for a more Reformed church were mentioned with less frequency. Of the 94 replies, 59 state that they are leaning toward union.

While the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is also talking merger with the Christian Reformed Church, much of the desire for such a union is gone among Orthodox Presbyterians. These continue to be alarmed at the strong tendencies towards liberalism among Christian Reformed Churches.

PROTESTS IN THE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN

Again quoting from the *RES Newsletter*, we call attention to the large number of protests against the liberalism in the Gereformeerde Kerken with which their Synod must deal.

In an interview in Trouw, Dr. P. G. Kunst, president of the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, stated that he has received at least 200 letters of protest concerning the new theological views of Prof. H. M. Kuitert and others. The protests come from individual persons, consistories, classes and two provincial synods. In many letters, Dr. Kunst stated, the same train of thought was obvious and he attributed this to an “organized concern.” In the majority of letters, however, he detected a tone of up-right concern. The letters have been forwarded to a committee which will present the Synod with advice. While most of the letters deal with the views of Professor Kuitert, many of them, especially those which do not display the same pattern, deal with the binding force of the church confessions.

In answer to the question whether in his view there is room within the Reformed churches for the views of Kuitert, Dr. Kunst replied, “There must be room within the frame of the confessions for diverse views. This is not just my personal view, the Synod has said it. That became clear in our discussions concerning the relation to the Liberated churches. Whether this is the same leeway as Kuitert expects, is a question which the committee and the Synod will

have to decide. I am personally of the opinion that Professor Kuitert by his way of writing and his openheartedness — I would say his disarming openheartedness — has aroused justified criticism.” In the view of Dr. Kunst a compromise is not possible. “A division in the church should not be charmed away at all costs. I stand for Reformed churches which know what they confess.”

The General Synod will meet during the last week of October to deal with the letters of protest.

It would be a surprising though welcome development if these letters of protest resulted in a strong and uncompromising condemnation of the heretical views of Dr. Kuitert. But this is unlikely. It is unlikely in the light of past decisions which the Synod has made — decisions which have already severely compromised the doctrinal stand of the Gereformeerde Kerken; it is unlikely in the light of the fact that the views which are being taught by Kuitert and many others involve these men in a violation of the Formula of Subscription — a matter that has never been treated and, if it had been treated, would long ago have resulted in their deposition; it is unlikely in view of the fact that those who oppose Kuitert do not do so with any kind of severity — a severity which the situation demands if the Reformed faith is to be preserved in these churches. For the most part, the ones who protest are mild and equivocal. There is a spirit of tolerance abroad in the churches. And this tolerance extends to the most vicious heresies. It is a tolerance which permits the church to sit by while the devil captures her confession and destroys it.

A FOOTNOTE TO HEART TRANSPLANTS

In several newspapers an interesting news item was carried concerning an interview with the daughter of Dr. Philip Blaiberg who was the world's first heart transplant patient and who died a little over a year ago after his body rejected the new heart and after he had lived with the new heart 19 months and 15 days. The news item was carried by UPI and datelined Capetown, South Africa.

In this interview, the daughter of Dr. Blaiberg says that the 19 months during which her father lived with his new heart were “hell”. She claimed that her father was, after the transplant, a different man, that he underwent a complete personality change and that the change was for the worse. She speaks of the terrible physical suffering which he endured and of the all but impossible task of living even a semblance of a normal life. It was her opinion that the heart transplant was not worthwhile.

She admittedly does not know whether the personality change which came over her father was due to the transplant or to the drugs which he was forced to take; but her interview raises some very interesting questions. When this operation was first performed, we raised questions in an article in this column — questions which we thought ought to be answered in the light of the major role Scripture assigns to the heart of man. These remarks of Miss Blaiberg add urgency to these questions. It would seem that until they are answered, a heart transplant is ethically out for a Christian.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

FIRST PERIOD — 80-254 A.D.

Rev. H. Veldman

In this article we would call attention to the views of Origen with respect to the doctrine of atonement. Concerning this church father Philip Schaff, in his *History of the Christian Church*, writes in Vol. II, 786-787:

Origenes, surnamed “Adamantius” on account of his industry and purity of character, is one of the most remarkable men in history for genius and learning, for the influence he exerted on his age, and for the controversies and discussions to which his opinions gave rise. He was born of Christian parents at Alexandria, in the year 185, and probably baptized in childhood, according to Egyptian custom which he traced to apostolic origin. Under the direction of his father, Leonides, who was probably a rhetorician, and

of the celebrated Clement at the catechetical school, he received a pious and learned education. While yet a boy, he knew whole sections of the Bible by memory, and not rarely perplexed his father with questions on the deeper sense of Scripture. The father reproved his curiosity, but thanked God for such a son, and often, as he slept, reverentially kissed his breast as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Under the persecution of Septimius Severus in 202, he wrote to his father in prison, beseeching him not to deny Christ for the sake of his family, and strongly desired to give himself up to the heathen authorities, but was prevented by his mother, who hid his clothes. Leonides died a martyr, and, as his property was confiscated, he left a helpless widow, with seven children. Origen was for a time assisted by a wealthy matron, and then sup-

ported himself by giving instruction in the Greek language and literature, and by copying manuscripts.

Later, in the same chapter, on page 790, Philip Schaff writes the following appraisal of this church father:

It is impossible to deny a respectful sympathy, veneration and gratitude to this extraordinary man, who, with all his brilliant talents and a host of enthusiastic friends and admirers, was driven from his country, stripped of his sacred office, excommunicated from a part of the church, then thrown into a dungeon, loaded with chains, racked by torture, doomed to drag his aged frame and dislocated limbs in pain and poverty, and long after his death to have his memory branded, his name anathematized, and his salvation denied; but who nevertheless did more than all his enemies combined to advance the cause of sacred learning, to refute and convert heathens and heretics, and to make the church respected in the eyes of the world.

Origen writes about the atonement and sufferings of Christ in his refutation of the teachings of a certain Celsus. Celsus was a pagan philosopher and controversialist against Christianity. These quotations of Origen, in his refutation of Celsus, are taken from Vol. IV of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*. These writings are divided into eight books and each book is again subdivided into several chapters.

In the following quotation, Book I, 54, Origen recognizes the fact that the salvation of the believer is dependent upon the sufferings and death of Christ:

And since Celsus, although professing to know all about the Gospel, reproaches the Saviour because of His sufferings, saying that He received no assistance from the Father, or was unable to aid Himself; we have to state that His sufferings were the subject of prophecy, along with the cause of them; because it was for the benefit of mankind that He should die on their account, and should suffer stripes because of His condemnation. (And then, in this same paragraph, Origen quotes two passages from Isaiah 53, the verses 13-15 and the verses 1-8.)

Also in Book II, 23 Origen speaks of this benefit of Christ's sufferings for all mankind, and we quote:

Since, therefore, He voluntarily assumed a body, now wholly of a different nature from that of human flesh, so along with His body which it was not in His power to avoid enduring, it being in the power of those who inflicted them to send upon Him things distressing and painful. And in the preceding pages we have already shown, that He would not have come into the hands of men had He not so willed. But He did come, because He was willing to come, and because it was manifest beforehand that His dying upon behalf of men would be of advantage to the whole human race.

Moreover, the death of Christ is not only presented as a model for our dying on account of piety, but also effects the beginning and progress of our deliverance from the evil one, the devil, as in VII, 17:

And there is nothing absurd in a man having died, and in His death being not only an example of death endured for the sake of piety, but also the first blow in the conflict which is to overthrow the power of that evil spirit the devil, who had obtained dominion over the whole world. For we have signs and pledges of the destruction of his empire, in those who through the coming of Christ are everywhere escaping from the power of demons, and who, after their deliverance from this bondage in which they were held, consecrate themselves to God, and earnestly devote themselves day by day to advancement in a life of piety.

Seeberg, in his *History of Doctrines*, Vol. I, pages 154-155, writes the following concerning the sufferings and atonement of Christ:

The death of Christ is accordingly presented in the light of deliverance from the power of the devil and the demons; sacrifice for sin offered to God; the purification of man from sin; and the advocacy of man's cause before the Father. (Incidentally, there are references in the writings of Origen to which Seeberg refers but to which we do not have access. — H.V.) Through sin the souls of men have surrendered themselves to the devil. Jesus gave his soul (life) to death as an exchange or ransom to redeem them from the devil. But the devil was not able to retain these souls ("For he controlled us until the ransom for us, the soul of Jesus, was given to him, deceived as being able to rule over it, and not observing that he does not possess the touchstone for maintaining possession of it," in Joh. 16:8). Thus the souls of men — even those in Hades — became free from the power of the devil and his demons. An idea is thus expressed which was destined to play an important role in the History of Doctrines. (b) Sin requires a *propitiatio* before God, and this is effected by the bringing of a sacrifice. Christ is the high-priest, who offered to God in our behalf his own blood as a spotless sacrifice, in order that God might become gracious to us and forgive our sins. He bore in our stead the penalty belonging to us (in Joh. 28:14, p. 355: "And he assumed our sins and was bruised for our iniquities, and the penalty which was our due in order to our discipline and the reception of peace came upon him"). Since Christ thus, as the Head of the church, intervenes for us, God is reconciled to us and we to God. This work of reconciliation extends beyond the world of men to the realm of the angels. Origen even seems to hint at a continuation of the sufferings of Christ in heaven. Thus the sufferings of Christ constitute a sacrifice which is offered to God as an atonement for sin, while at the same time his soul was delivered to Satan as a ransom.

We may say, in regard to the history of the doctrine of the atonement during this first period, 80-254 A.D., that the Church's conception of this work of our Lord Jesus Christ was not clearly and sharply defined. The Church certainly did not emphasize that the work of Christ's atonement was limited to the elect. And the essence of this work of Christ was not sharply set

forth. This, of course, is understandable. This sharp definition of the sufferings of our Lord did not occur until also this truth came under attack by the enemies of the truth.

We would call attention, briefly, to one more phase of the truth before we call attention to the second period of the church in the New Dispensation, as expressed also in our Apostles' Creed: Christ's descension into hell. Concerning this Hagenbach writes, and we quote:

We have seen that the fathers of this period, with the exception of Origen, limited the direct efficacy of Christ's death to this world. But several writers of the second and third centuries thought that it was also retrospective in its effects, and inferred from some allusions in Scripture that Christ descended into the abode of the dead (underworld, Hades), to announce to the souls of the patriarchs, etc., there abiding, the accomplishment of the work of redemption, and to conduct them with him into the kingdom of his glory.

Origen, in his writings against Celsus, writes in Book II, 43, the following:

Celsus next addresses to us the following remark: "You will not, I suppose, say of him that, after failing to gain over those who were in this world, he went to Hades to gain over those who were there." But whether he likes it or not, we assert that not only while Jesus was in the body did He win over not a few persons merely, but so great a number, that a conspiracy was formed against Him on account of the

multitude of His followers; but also, that when He became a soul, without the covering of the body, He dwelt among those souls which were without bodily covering, converting such of them as were willing to Himself, or those whom He saw, for reasons known to Him alone, to be better adapted to such a course.

What Origen says here is plain language. When this church father writes of Jesus that He became a soul without the covering of the body, he refers, of course to the moment of His death upon the cross of Calvary. It was then, according to Origen, that Jesus dwelt among those souls without bodily covering, and this means that Jesus descended into Hades. Although it is not clear just what the authors of the Apostles' Creed understood by the expression, "descended into hell," because of the fact that it appears in the confession after Jesus' death and burial, thereby leaving the impression that it must have occurred after His burial, Hagenbach calls attention to the fact that church fathers of the early or first period spoke of a "descension into hell." He does say that the passage quoted from Ignatius is doubtful. He states that more definite language is first used by Ireneaus, and he calls attention to the quotation which we have quoted from the writings of Origen. This concludes our articles on the atonement of Christ as set forth by the Church in the early or first period of the New Testament. The Lord willing, we will next call attention to the second period, from the year 254 to the year 730.

In His Fear

A Shift of Emphasis

Rev. John A. Heys

Quite suddenly we moved from the "Atomic Age" to the "Space Age." So quickly does time fly. So quickly are we speeding toward the end of the ages.

Looking at the matter from another point of view, observing the change in family life and the social structure someone once said, "We are in the shift age. Father works the night shift. Mother works the day shift. And the children shift for themselves." And therein we do see a shift in emphasis.

What we have in mind is a shift from the spiritual to the material. We need both. As earthly creatures, created out of the dust of the ground, depending upon that which grows in the dust of the earth for our very life, we must seek the material. We need food, clothing and shelter. There can be no denying of that. And Scripture rebukes us if we are not diligent in seeking the things of this earth. Solomon tells the sluggard to

go to the ant and be wise. Paul tells the Thessalonians that "If any would not work neither should he eat." II Thessalonians 3:10. And that man who is spiritual will be zealous also as far as his physical, natural needs are concerned.

But when the emphasis is upon the material rather than upon the spiritual we are not walking in His fear, but in sin. When we seek the material as an end in itself, when we seek earthly things only because we want earthly things, we walk contrary to the fear of the Lord. Matthew 6:33 teaches us, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness; and all these things (the material that we need in order to seek the kingdom) will be added to you." Certainly when we twist this around and live from the principle, "Seek ye first the earthly; and all these things of God's kingdom will be added unto you" we not only commit great

folly, but we walk in wickedness. Does John not counsel us? "Love not the world, neither the things in the world." And then he explains what these things in the world actually are (in spite of what nice names we may give to them) when he calls them the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. I John 2:15, 16. And while father works the night shift, mother works the day shift, and the children shift for themselves, the dollar, pleasures of the flesh, and ambitions of the evil nature are worshipped; and the covenant seed is neglected, is trained to walk out of His fear, walks with mother and father in a materialistic way, and travels arm in arm with the world.

Of course, a shift of emphasis such as this is found only in the church. And that is what makes it so tragic. You cannot speak of a *shift* of emphasis, and therefore you cannot speak of a shift of *emphasis* in the world. The unbeliever seeks only the material. He never shifts from the material to the spiritual, and he never shifts back from the spiritual to the material. And this is true exactly because he is spiritually dead. He is not spiritually weak, sick, or paralyzed. He is spiritually dead. That is why Jesus says that we have to be born again. A sick man needs healing to be able to resume his work. A weak man needs a new supply of strength, and the paralyzed needs a new surge of power in his nerves and muscles in order to work again. But a dead man needs new life. It is not a case of working upon the old life to restore some of its activities. It is a case of receiving life itself.

That the natural man is spiritually dead does not mean that he cannot do any spiritual work. It means that he cannot do any work that is spiritually *good*. He is constantly doing spiritual deeds. There always is ethical, moral content to what he does. The awfulness of it is that he always does that which is spiritually evil in God's sight. All his actions are motivated by hatred of the living God. All he can do is rebel against his Creator, Who gives him his life, his food and drink, his clothing and shelter.

The apostle Paul points out this spiritual death of the natural man when he tells the Ephesians that God hath quickened them, who were dead in trespasses and sins. They were not physically dead. They were dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1. And that they are quickened, that is, made alive, underscores the fact that the natural man is incapable of doing anything that is spiritually good, though he is physically alive. Paul gives another very clear description of this spiritually dead man in Romans 3:10-18 when he quotes from the Psalms and points out what spiritual activity the natural man performs. And it is because of this awful condition that Jesus remarks that a man must be born again to *see* the kingdom. John 3:3. That he cannot even see the kingdom then is not due to blindness. If that were the case Jesus could have and would have said that man needed healing to see. Now He says de-

liberately that he must be born again, because, being spiritually dead, he needs life. Nothing short of new spiritual life will enable him even to see that there is such a kingdom.

But we are speaking of those in the church where rebirth has taken place. We are speaking of those who are able to seek and have been seeking the things of God's kingdom because they have been made spiritually alive. We are at least speaking of the sphere where such seeking has been conducted and where you expect works in the fear of God's name. Many covenant parents are shifting the emphasis from the spiritual to the material and are drifting into gross worldliness.

Indeed, the pressures of the day are here. The high cost of Christian instruction makes it almost mandatory that mother go out on the day shift and that father take a higher paying night shift to make ends meet. We are being sorely tried to give up Christian instruction for our children because of the tremendous cost of obtaining it. But we do not label such work on the part of both parents as a shift of the emphasis to the material when in all sincerity the labour is sought and performed solely in order to provide Christian education for the children, and when father and mother make full use of every moment still available to train their children, and when it is not a case of trying to raise this school tuition while still seeking to prosper materially and to get ahead with the pleasures and treasures of the world.

With the emphasis upon the spiritual the child of God is willing to sacrifice and go without luxuries and many conveniences. Paul tells the Philippians that he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Moses gave up all the treasures of Egypt to walk in God's fear and to be able to seek the spiritual. And when parents will not sacrifice a few conveniences and luxuries in order to be able to provide a Christian education for their children in His fear and find it therefore necessary to work the night shift and day shift and let the children shift for themselves in their training and Christian education, it is a shift of emphasis from the spiritual to the material, even though these children are sent to a Christian school for their formal education.

Have you not gone through that experience? Yes, you are both on the day shift, and mother is home when the children leave in the morning and back home before the children return from school. And father, though he has put in a few extra hours at overtime pay, still is home with the children at night (If indeed the baseball, softball team, the bowling team, the fishing fever, the speedboat cruise and the like do not receive the emphasis and preference for his time). But the work of the day has wearied us to the point where we are irritable and out of sorts to do any training of the children except into irritability and into shifting the emphasis from the spiritual to the material. It is

quite easy to teach the children that last things come first and first things come last, because that is exactly their own philosophy. This is a lesson they like to learn. They will be eager, attentive students in that classroom.

What is the cause of all this? First of all is the fact that after our rebirth we still have the old nature. It will not enter the new Jerusalem. There all the emphasis will always be on the spiritual, and we will fully be dedicated and consecrated to the glory of God. But now we still have the flesh to molest and trouble us. The rebirth does not do away with the first birth. At the rebirth something is added to us, but the old is not subtracted by that rebirth. Only God by the cold hand of death makes this separation and frees the soul of all that carnality.

And because we have this old nature Satan can tempt us, put pressure upon us, and draw us from the spiritual to the material, from seeking the kingdom of light and unto seeking the kingdom of darkness, from a walk in His fear to a walk void of His fear. If we did not have that old nature he could not cause us to shift from an upward look to a downward aim. He can dangle dainties before our eyes because we consider them dainties. He can appeal to our lust exactly because we still have our lust for the things of this world.

Not only has he a point of contact with us, but Satan has led the world to a tremendous climax of affluence, to a fantastic pinnacle of materialistic advancement. We have arrived at such a high fulfillment of all the wealth of Babylon as she is pictured in Revelation 18:12ff by Satan's persistent goading and guiding from paradise till the present moment that we have come to the point where we cannot possibly see how

we could live without any of these luxuries and dainties. No one wants to give up any of the conveniences and luxuries of the day. The clamor is for more and more goods, higher and higher wages, shorter and shorter working hours to be able to live, as Paul points out, as lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. What a shift of emphasis that is! But that is the point.

And a generation has arisen that starts on the top! Young couples who marry today often must have *all at once*; and then again husband and wife must both find a shift to work, preferably simultaneous shifts, to maintain that level of affluence. We have a generation that does not know what it means to work themselves up, but rather one that is worried about maintaining itself on the top while broadening out to further conquest of the world.

For spiritual exercises there is little or no time. A worldly minded generation arises that has learned to worship the dollar and ought to hang on its wall, "Seek ye first the dollar and its buying power, and you will have added to you what really counts." No value is attached to the spiritual, but great value is placed on the things of this life. And instead of trusting in a Saviour Who was called Jesus, "For He shall save His people *from their sins*" (Matthew 1:21) it becomes the rage of the day to trust in a "saviour" who will satisfy the materialistic, worldly cravings of those on the bottom of the social pile. That fits in better with the spirit of the age. With a shift of emphasis from the spiritual, the old theology of salvation from sin is left behind and is discarded.

O, that in His fear, father and mother with the children would work the spiritual shift that will be our everlasting lot in the new Jerusalem.

From Holy Writ

Exposition of John 1: 18

Rev. G. Lubbers

Salvation is of the Lord; it is from God alone. To Him be the glory, majesty, power and dominion, both now and forevermore! For He is the God of all glory and of grace. Out of Him, through Him, and unto Him are all things. This is particularly true when we receive the benefits of God's covenant in Christ Jesus.

We are given to see something of the deep background, the height and depth, the length and breadth, of this salvation, here in the context of John 1:18. This section is known as the "prologue" of John's Gospel. Here we are afforded a glimpse into the deep background of God's essence and work, of the relationship of God and man, Creator and creature.

In the beginning was the Word (Logos)! The Word was in the beginning with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made!

This explains the deep mystery of God, of His Son, of Creation. It is the exegesis of Genesis 1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." And again, "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." (Psalms 33:6)

Emphatically this makes the Logos, the Son, very God, the only Begotten Son in the bosom of the

Father. He who denies this is antichrist. He denies and opposes all that is of God, Denies God in Christ! He that has the Son has life, and he that does not have the Son does not have life.

There is in all of creation not any light, no speech of God in the creature if it were not for this Logos. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The truth of God is manifested before the eyes of every man. No, the world does not recognize this speech correctly. They did not know him.

Even in the sphere of the Old Testament Covenant, as God tabernacled amongst His people in the types and shadows, His own things, the people of Israel did not know him by and large, even in the glory of the Shekinah. He came unto His own things, and His own did not receive Him.

Thus in bold and clear strokes the apostle sketches us the history of the world, the history of the Logos before he was made flesh in history. This is called by theologians the "Logos a-sarkos", not-flesh. But then came the great central "moment" in history. It is the mystery and wonder of the Incarnation. He who did not need to deem it robbery to be equal with God came in the form of a man, a servant. (Phil. 2) God was manifested in the flesh. The Word (Logos) was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth!

And it is in this situation and background that we read "*And from His fulness have we all received, even grace for grace*" (John 1:18)

Most emphatically this "fulness" (*pleroma*) is the fulness of Him, the Word made flesh. This is important to notice. It means that all the fulness of the godhead dwells in Him bodily, that is, in the incarnated Son. (Col. 2:8, 9) God tabernacled in our midst, still tabernacles in our midst, in him; He makes his abode and resting-place in our midst.

It is important to notice this and to confess this basic fact of the incarnation lest we be carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight and cunning of men. We must not be carried away by the false teaching and philosophy of men, which are the rudiments of man void of the Spirit, and which rudiments are not according to Christ. It is the false teaching of man which ever denies that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Christ. It ever denies that it was the Father's good-pleasure that all the fulness should dwell in Christ, both those things which are in heaven and which are upon earth. We must deem it established as the rock of Gibraltar that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us!

Only thus can we seriously consider that it is "His fulness". It is the fulness of the Son, who has life in Himself even as the Father hath life in Him. He is able, even as the Father, to forgive sins on earth. When we consider the term "fulness", we should notice that in

the active sense the term refers to that which fills a given measure. It is then the last drop of water which fills the vessel. On the other hand if the term be taken passively it refers to the entire content of the vessel, every drop of water in the pail, including the last drop. We take fulness here to refer to all that is in the measure of Christ.

We must bear in mind that here is a measure which knows no limit. The apostle Paul, speaking of this fulness from the viewpoint of God's love, speaks of the length and breadth, the height and depth, that surpasses all knowledge. He speaks of a God who is exceedingly able to do far above all that we can ask or think. The fulness is immense, deeper than the sea, higher than the heavens, as far as the East is from the West! This is true of every perfection of grace in Christ. It is not only true of the love, but also true of grace, mercy and peace, of the power and might to save!

And this fulness was displayed by Christ in all His wonders, miracles, His mighty deeds. The lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were called to life. It was all the fulness of the godhead in Him bodily. Thus it was the fulness of the godhead in Him sustaining Him in his suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross at Calvary. And all the fulness and superabounding greatness, the full immensity of this power of his might was shown, in the resurrection from the dead, when he came forth triumphantly! And then he went to heaven; in the fulness of the power of His Godhead which was in Him bodily He ascended. And in that same fulness of blessing which he received from God by the promise of the Spirit, he bestows these great gifts upon us, showers of blessings! All the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

Of this "fulness" of Christ we have a picture in the broken bread and poured out wine. For this fulness which flows to us from the wells of salvation can be ours only when the foundation is opened. It was opened to us in the Word made flesh, in His suffering, death, and resurrection. At the table of the Lord we receive from this fulness by faith even as we do so in the washing of baptism, the washing of regeneration. And it is from a fulness, a well which never grows dry.

Our text argues for the reality of this "fulness". It's real, O, it's real. It is the argument from experience here! It is an appeal to the sanctified and believing heart and consciousness of all who were born not of flesh, nor of the will of men, nor of bloods, but who were born out of God! (Vs. 13) For all have not received from this fulness, nor did all drink waters from this well to quench their thirst forever!

No, the argument is from experience. And the writer appeals to a very wide audience. The Greek text emphasizes this exclusiveness of this very broad audience. "We all" have received from His fulness. "We", not all, have received. Yet, all of the living, reborn members in

the church have received from this fulness! None are excepted from this emphatic confession! The fulness is in Him. The Word was made flesh. Proof and evidence? We *all* received from His fulness!

Yes, this is a dogmatic truth. It belongs to the structural truths of the Christian religion. Here is Theology, Anthropology, Christology, Soteriology, with all the Eschatological perspectives and prospects of seeing God as He is, face to face! Yet, it is not simply a dogmatic, logical statement of the truth. It is the highest polemic of faith which will not meet the unbeliever on his own ground of unbelief, but where the believers stand in joyful confession as those who have drunk from the brook in the way, and have now lifted up their head in earnest expectation. Here is a giving account of the hope which is in us to those who demand an answer!

And here we stand in never-ending streams of mercy!

The text says that we receive from this fullness "grace for grace". Much has been said about the meaning of this phrase. The interpretation, which would make our receiving grace a work which we perform by grace, is against the plain teaching of Christ and all the Scriptures. This is basically the teaching of Roman Catholicism. Better is the interpretation which makes the sense "grace *after* grace." When the one grace has been given from the fulness and we have received from this, then God has another grace in store for us from this fulness. And, O, these graces can be so manifold in our life, more than we can count. We have a recounting of them in Psalm 103. Bless the Lord, O, my soul, and forget not all his benefits; pardon of sins, right to life, hope of the resurrection, reviving of our spirits day by

day, morning, noon and night!

Yes, grace for grace. No, we could not have received such a fulness from Moses. He is the law-giver, a faithful servant in God's house! But the Son is the Builder! Grace and truth became a reality in Him. Yes, grace became a reality in Christ. That is the fulness in Him. And from this fulness have we all received. Grace for grace! O', for a thousand tongues to speak of it! Yea, one good tongue, touched with coals from the altar of God. A people prepared by God Himself to proclaim the praises of this fulness! For this is the "truth" which was implicit in all the types and shadows of the law given by Moses. This was exemplified in all the things of the temple to which Christ came. He came and tabernacled in our midst. He fit exactly into this temple. He *ful*-filled it. He did more than fill the temple with His glory. He realized it and went to heaven, and sat down on the right hand of the majesty of God, the very effulgence of His glory, the expressed image of His being. Thus grace and truth became a reality in Him!

And now we have the pledge and assurance!

We have the proof of it. We have received from his fulness. Well did John speak of him, and he cried and still cries concerning (*peri*) him: this was the one of whom I spake! He that cometh after me is preferred before me. He was before me.

And Jesus says: Before Abraham was, I am!

And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord for he hath done excellent things . . . Cry out thou inhabitant of Zion: For Great is the holy One of Israel in His fulness in the midst of thee! (Isaiah II)

Come Ye Apart... And Rest A While

(For children and teen-agers, and especially for young people.)

Rev. C. Hanko

Catechisms are once more in full swing.

Some of you are going for the first time; some are more familiar with catechism, some are veterans. You have your memory work, the lessons in your workbook, your other assignments and your weekly meetings. Somewhere in your busy schedule you must also take time for all that.

No, you must not try to squeeze it in somewhere. Some children and also some teen-agers try to get away with as little work as possible. They quickly memorize their lessons just before catechism, so that they can recite the answers; but by the time that they get home they have forgotten already what they learned. Some do their written work so carelessly and slovenly that

you wonder why they bother to do it at all.

Your catechism is important. I can already hear you say, "But so is my school work. And so is my music lesson. And so is my practice for the team," etc. Maybe all those are important. But you cannot put catechism in the same category as those other things. Your school work is important? Well, this is more important. Your other work is also important? This is far more important.

Catechism lessons always come first.

You say, "You just think that because you are a preacher." Or maybe you counter with the argument, "My teacher says the same thing about my school work, my mom says the same thing about my music

lessons, and I think that my ball game ought to come first. So who is right?"

Yes, I agree that I do say that catechism comes first because I am a preacher. But that does not mean that your school teacher and your Mom will not agree with me if they stop to think a moment. And even you will agree with me if you think about it a bit.

I could point out to you that catechism prepares you to make confession of your faith, and thus prepares you to become an active member of the church, so that it even prepares you in a very special way for your place in the kingdom of heaven. That in itself gives catechism top priority. But instead of that I am going to stress the very important fact that is often forgotten or completely overlooked: *Catechism is official ministry of the Word*. Catechism and school are not the same. Catechism and Sunday School are not the same. Catechism is led by your minister, and if not by your minister then surely by an elder of the church.

I want to show you, first of all, that this makes all the difference, because ministers are called of God for the very special office of preaching the Word.

Will you turn with me a moment to Acts 13? There we read in verse 2: "As they (Barnabas, Saul and others) ministered to the Lord. . . ." They were laboring in the work of the Gospel in the church at Antioch. Now when they were busy with that, "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul (later called Paul) for the work whereunto I have called them."

The Holy Ghost told the church that these men were called of God for a special work of the ministry. The church is told to separate these two unto that work.

Now we read in verse 3: "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away."

This is what happens when a new minister comes to a church. The whole congregation comes together. Another minister preaches a sermon. A Form is read from our Psalter. You can find this Form on page 67. It is called "The Form For The Ordination Of The Ministers Of God's Word." In this Form the office and the duties of a minister are described. And then we read: "From these things may be learned what a glorious work the ministerial office is, since so great things are effected by it; yea, how highly necessary it is for man's salvation, which is also the reason why the Lord will have such an office always to remain."

Now I want to ask you a question. Who sent Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries? To find the answer, read verse 4 of Acts 13. Now another question: Who calls and sends a minister to a congregation? Does the church do that, or does the Holy Spirit do that? Does that make the office important?

Paul thought so. He wrote to Timothy: "According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." (I Tim. 1:11, 12). Did you

get that? A glorious Gospel. A glorious Gospel of the blessed God. This was committed to his trust, that is, as minister of the Gospel. And then he says: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry." Again here we are told that not man, but Christ puts a person in the ministry, and Christ also enables him, fits him for the work.

Now I also want to show you that this makes the work of the minister important. It makes catechism just as important as our Sunday worship.

We turn next to II Corinthians 5:10. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ."

You have heard that our government sends an ambassador to foreign countries, to England, to Russia, and the like. The ambassador speaks in that country for the president. The president tells him what to say and he says it. Two Americans may be in Russia; the one an ordinary citizen, and the other an ambassador. The American citizen may spread around that our country is making plans to help Israel in a war against Egypt and the Arabs. But no one knows whether this is true or not. It may be an American who is just trying to stir up some excitement in a foreign country. But if the ambassador goes to the Russian government with a message from our president that we are going to involve ourselves in that middle-east trouble, then you can be sure that the Russian government will sit up and take notice. The American citizen talks for himself; the ambassador speaks the official language of the government.

That is the importance of catechism. There the minister speaks as ambassador of Jesus Christ. He does not teach you what *he* thinks or *he* knows. But he teaches you: "So saith the Lord." Now your parents and your school teacher may do the same thing, but when the minister does that he speaks directly in the name and on the authority of Christ. Catechism is official ministry of the Word. Christ speaks there, just as in the preaching of the Word through the minister.

We have a name for that. We speak of *means of grace*. As you have learned or will learn in catechism, Means of Grace are those means used by the Holy Spirit to apply to our hearts the Grace which is ours in Christ Jesus. We even refer to two means of grace: The preaching of the Word and the sacraments. And of those two we say that the preaching of the Word is the more important, because it both works and strengthens our faith.

That makes catechism very important; gives it top priority.

There Christ teaches us from the Bible about God, about Himself, about us, and about the whole way of salvation. All that we must know to grow up as men and women of God, to take our places as active members of His church, is taught us in catechism.

And God uses that by His Spirit in our hearts. Everything else we learn depends on that.

We had better work hard this year in catechism. Don't you think so?

Feature

The Return of the Glorified Lord (1)

Rev. G. Van Baren

The day of October 22, 1844 was rapidly approaching. Expectation had been rising within the hearts of many. There was anticipation; a longing that this day of October 22 would quickly come. Some had sold their possessions and their homes. Some farmers had neglected their fields. Some who bought and sold, neglected to restock their shelves. These were convinced that on October 22, 1844, Christ was coming again. Several men had so taught. The most well-known of them was a certain William Miller who had carefully studied Scripture, and particularly Daniel 8:14. On the basis of this study, he had informed many people that Scripture clearly foretold that Christ was coming again on this special day. When October 22 arrived, many gathered within churches; some met at schools or other meeting places; still others stayed within their own homes — waiting. The daylight hours quickly passed; the night arrived. People more and more eagerly awaited the certain return of our Lord Jesus Christ at any moment. Then, quickly, midnight approached. Finally the hour of twelve struck — and a new day began: October 23, 1844. But Christ had not returned.

This man, William Miller, one of the founders of Seventh Day Adventism, and many others, have made the mistake of trying to ascertain on the basis of prophecy the specific day and hour of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. They have all failed, and must necessarily fail, in determining the exact day and hour. For Christ Himself said plainly in Matthew 24:36, "The day and the hour knoweth no man, no not even the angels which are in heaven."

Nevertheless, the fact of Christ's second return stirs in the hearts of the saints great interest; and it ought to. These are concerned. Christians study Scripture which speaks of His coming again. And they do this not to satisfy idle curiosity. They realize, rather, that this coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ is the apex, the high point, and culmination of all the plan and work of our God. And it is the time of our deliverance from sin, from death, and from this sin-cursed world. It will be a time when we are brought to everlasting glory and life. Of course, we are properly concerned with the coming again of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In studying this subject, one is almost overwhelmed

with the amount of material; with the divergent views which have been introduced; with the many questions that have been asked. I can not possibly treat all the questions in this one article. I would rather impress on each of us an awareness of the nearness of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes we forget that He is coming again soon. Often we become too involved in our daily affairs. We have our hearts too set on those things which are earthly. We overlook and ignore or forget that it will not be long before our Lord shall come again. Perhaps, and I regard it as very likely, He shall come again in the lifetime of many of us living today. What are *you* looking for? How are you looking for that return?

We sing it, and we say it: "Jesus Christ is coming again." And I believe without any doubt that He is coming again when the last moment of this age draws to its close. That will be the moment that He will come on the clouds of glory with power and in great honor.

I can not enter into the various divergent views concerning the return of Christ. But I can remind you that there are the different views on the return of Christ called: pre-millennialism, post-millennialism, and a-millennialism. I would only emphasize the positive truth that Christ does not come to establish an earthly kingdom lasting a thousand years, but that Christ comes at the close of this age to usher in the new heavens and the new earth. And I would point you to a few passages of Scripture which plainly teach this truth. We often read Matthew 24. In this interesting chapter, you will notice in verse three that the disciples came to Jesus and asked Him, "Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?" Did you notice? "What is the sign of *thy* coming, *and* of the end of the world?" In the minds of the disciples, these two events were linked together. Christ, Who instructs the disciples and answers their questions, did not tell them that they were wrong; He taught them along that same line: that all things transpire in this age until that moment when He comes again. Then this world shall be destroyed by fire and He shall establish the new heavens and the new earth. You have, for instance, verses 29-31 of Matthew 24, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon shall not

give her light. And the stars shall fall from heaven and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven. And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn. And they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and with great glory." You notice, there will not be a first coming of Christ followed by a reign of Christ for a thousand years — but one coming, a coming that takes place after the tribulation. It takes place after the signs of which Christ speaks. It takes place after the sign of the Son of Man in the heavens is seen. Then He shall return. He shall send His angels with the sound of the trumpet. They shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Those two go together: the end of this age and the glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One other passage which teaches the same truth is II Peter 3:10, 12, "But the day of the Lord shall come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." And in verse 12, "Looking for and hastening unto the day of the coming of the Lord wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with a fervent heat."

But we can say more about that coming of Christ. It is something so amazing; so utterly fantastic. Human language is not adequate to describe this wonder. When Christ our Lord comes again, this represents the climax of all of the eternal work of God. He had planned from all eternity to gather unto Himself a people in Jesus Christ. He would send His Son in the fulness of time. He would pour upon Him the vials of wrath for our sin. God would cause Jesus to be buried in the tomb and on the third day to rise again and to sit on the right hand of the Almighty. But all of these events would still mean nothing to us unless this climax is realized. If Christ did not come again, then all that happened in the past was for nought. But He *is* coming again.

The Word of God says in I Corinthians 15:24, "Then cometh the end when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, when He shall put down all rule and all authority, and all power." That event eclipses every other event that had happened in the past. Every other event in the history of this world serves that final glorious return.

What will you see when He comes again? What will you hear? The sights and sounds of that day are beyond our imagination. We read in Scripture that when Christ comes again, the trumpet shall sound. That certainly suggests that God announces throughout all of His creation that now His Son is coming again. The trumpet represents a very loud sound, a sound heard, therefore, over the length and breadth of the earth. It is a sound transcending any sound that man can produce

or that man has ever heard before. It will be the sound which calls forth the dead from their graves. It will be the sound that is heard by every human being. It will be a sound which at the same time works in the hearts of the saints unspeakable comfort and assurance, but works in the hearts of the wicked immeasurable dread and fear.

And what sights we shall see! It will be light, gloriously light! We read that He shall come on the clouds in power and great glory. The light will be the manifestation of His glory.

One might try to describe what takes place by stating that all of God's universe must be focused upon Him when He comes again on the clouds of heaven. It will be as though all of the light is centered in Him; all of the sound of the universe will be centered in Him; the glory of the heavens will be focused upon Him. All of this shall cause within the hearts of the saints amazing comfort and peace, but it shall work great fear and dread within the hearts of the wicked. None will have to ask in that day, "Where is He?" All will know.

When He comes again, He comes bodily and personally. He will not return only in a spiritual sense, as some suggest. It is not true that merely the Spirit of Christ shall then fill the earth. But He comes again bodily even as the disciples saw Him taken up bodily into heaven. The angels confirm this in Acts 1:11 when they tell His disciples, "As you have seen Him taken up into heaven, in like manner shall He come again." And His coming shall be a visible one. One can not fully explain how this takes place. By the wonder and power of God, every eye shall see Him, and, so we read in Revelation 1:7, "also those that pierced Him." Whether man dwells in Australia or Africa, in China or the United States, he shall see Him return. Those who thrust the sword into His side and nailed the nails into His hands — they shall see Him. For also the resurrection from the dead, both of the righteous and the wicked, shall take place shortly before He returns.

In the third place, when Christ returns, it will be with suddenness. We read in II Peter 3:10 of this; and again in Revelation 16:13, "Behold I come as a thief." The wicked will not be expecting Him in that day. They convince themselves that the world lasts forever, or at least many years beyond their own lifetimes. But when they say, "Peace and quiet; ease and prosperity," then He shall suddenly return, casting grief, sorrow, and terror into their hearts.

He shall also come triumphantly. The second coming will be quite a contrast to that first coming of His. Then He came in a lowly manger, a babe, the Son of God incarnate. No royal knees bowed down before Him. No royal clothing was wrapped about Him. No crown of gold was placed then upon His head. And though angels sang at His first coming, they sang only into the ears of lowly shepherds in the fields where they were watching their flocks by night. But the

second coming will be entirely different. He comes as the Lord of heaven and earth, triumphantly and in great glory. Jesus said it in Luke 21:7, "Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the cloud with power and great glory." And in His second coming, He shall accomplish the good pleasure of our God. He shall raise the dead. The righteous shall be raised unto life eternal, the wicked unto eternal damnation. So He taught in John 5:28, 29. He shall come to judge. All men shall stand before Him: the righteous and the wicked. Every deed, every word shall be exposed before the righteous eyes of Him Who will judge. We read in II Corinthians 5:10, "For we must all appear before

the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil."

In His coming again, He shall renew the heavens and the earth. II Peter 3 states, "Nevertheless, we according to His promise, look for new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." And Christ Himself will send the wicked to that place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, from which there is no escape; there they must bear the eternal wrath of God. And to His own He shall say, "Come, enter into the joy of thy Lord." The saints shall dwell in the blessed presence of God forever.

Education

The Concern of the Reformation for Education (1)

Rev. David Engelsma

From the very beginning, the great Reformation of the Church in the 16th century concerned itself also with the education of the children of believers in the schools. It condemned the existing schools and their education of the children, and proposed new schools in which the education of the children would be in harmony with the truth of God's Word, as the Reformation was proclaiming that truth anew. As was the case with almost every aspect of the Reformation, it was that mighty man of God, Martin Luther, who first called the people of God to the reformation of their children's education.

Luther sprinkled many of his writings with remarks on education. But he also wrote two works that were devoted specifically to the subject of the education of children in the schools. In 1524, he wrote the work entitled, "To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools." (The original, German title was: "*An die Radhern aller Stedte deutsches lands: dass sie Christliche schulen auffrichten und halten sollen.*") In 1530, he wrote a longer work, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School." As the titles indicate, the earlier work called for the establishment and maintenance of Christian Schools, while the later work admonished (very vehemently) parents to make use of the schools that did exist by sending their children.

It is worthy of note that Luther concerned himself with Christian education so soon after the Reformation began. He wrote "To the Councilmen" in 1524, a mere seven years after the Reformation began, that is, after the posting of the 95 theses in 1517. This is evidence that Luther viewed Christian education as

something vital, as something essential in the Reformation itself. But Luther wrote about the need for a reformation of the schools even earlier than 1524. Already in 1520, less than three years after he began the Reformation by publishing the 95 theses, Luther expressed some thoughts on the education of children. He both condemned the un-Christian nature of the existing schools and set forth Christian principles to govern the Christian Schools which should be established. These thoughts were included in Luther's famous, world-shaking work of 1520, "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate." The following quotations from this "Open Letter" show the Reformation's urgent concern with education, at this early date.

The universities also need a good, thorough reformation — I must say it no matter whom it vexes — for everything which the papacy has instituted and ordered is directed only towards the increasing of sin and error. What else are the universities, if their present condition remains unchanged, than as the book of Maccabees says, 'Places for training youth in Greek glory,' in which loose living prevails, the Holy Scriptures and the Christian faith are little taught, and the blind, heathen master Aristotle rules alone, even more than Christ?"

"In truth, much depends upon it (that is, the reformation of the schools — DE); for it is here that the Christian youth and the best of our people, with whom the future of Christendom lies, are to be educated and trained. Therefore I consider that there is no work more worthy of pope or emperor than a thorough reformation of the universities, and there is

nothing worse or more worthy of the devil than unreformed universities.”

“But where the Holy Scriptures do not rule, there I advise no one to send his son. Everyone not unceasingly busy with the Word of God must become corrupt; that is why the people who are in the universities and who are trained there are the kind of people they are . . . I greatly fear that the universities are wide gates of hell, if they do not diligently teach the Holy Scriptures and impress them on the youth.

The fundamental reason why Luther and the other Reformers, including Luther’s colleague, Philip Melancthon, and John Calvin, so earnestly struggled for education that was Christian was their understanding that the children of believers belonged to God’s Church and covenant. As members of God’s Church, which membership was signified in their infant baptism, these children had to have an upbringing that was Christian. At the same time Luther realized keenly that an education which was un-Christian was one of the Devil’s most effective weapons for attack upon the covenant children. That Luther viewed God’s covenant with believers and their children as the basis of the Christian School is evident in his work of 1524, “To the Councilmen of Germany.” Luther gives reasons (“considerations”) why the councilmen should establish Christian Schools for the children:

The third consideration is by far the most important of all, namely, the command of God, who through Moses urges and enjoins parents so often to instruct their children that Psalm 78 says: How earnestly he commanded our fathers to teach their children and to instruct their children’s children (Ps. 78:5-6). This is also evident in God’s fourth (fifth – DE) commandment, in which the injunction that children shall obey their parents is so stern that he would even have rebellious children sentenced to death (Deut. 21:18-21). Indeed, for what purpose do we older folks exist, other than to care for, instruct, and bring up the young? It is utterly impossible for these foolish young people to instruct and protect themselves. This is why God has entrusted them to us who are older and know from experience what is best for them. And God will hold us strictly accountable for them. This is also why Moses commands in Deuteronomy 32 (:7), “Ask your father and he will tell you; your elders, and they will show you.”

The Christian School arises from the duty of believing parents to instruct their children, that is, from the covenant calling of believing parents. Although there are other “considerations” for having Christian Schools, this one “is by far the most important of all,” according to Luther. Because God uses Christian instruction as the means of safeguarding the children from the Devil, “none among the outward sins so heavily burdens the world and merits such severe punishment as this very sin which we commit against the children by not educating them” (“To the Councilmen of Germany”).

The Devil is the great foe of Christian Schools, Luther taught. For he knows that the Church of Christ is built up from the children of believers, who are given Christian instruction. Therefore, the Devil was responsible for the ungodly schools of the Pope before the Reformation. These schools were “the great gates of hell,” because the Devil “went to work, spread his nets, and set up such monasteries, schools, and estates that it was impossible for any lad to escape him, apart from a special miracle of God” (“To the Councilmen of Germany”). Luther was not surprised that the Devil continued to work, after the Reformation, to make some parents neglect sending their children to the Christian Schools:

It is not surprising that the wicked devil takes a position in this matter and induces carnal and worldly hearts thus to neglect the children and young people. Who can blame him for it? He is the ruler and god of this world (John 14:30); how can he possibly be pleased to see the gospel destroy his nests . . . in which he corrupts above all the young folks who mean so much, in fact everything, to him? How can we expect him to permit or promote the proper training of the young? He would indeed be a fool to allow and promote the establishment in his kingdom of the very thing by which that kingdom must be most speedily overthrown, which would happen if he were to lose that choice morsel – our dear young people . . . (“To the Councilmen of Germany”).

It would be a mistake to isolate this concern of the Reformation for Christian Schools. The Reformers were not interested in Christian Schools only, but in the total Christian upbringing of the precious children and youth. Christian Schools were part of this upbringing. Luther preached not only the Christian School, but also, and above all, the Christian home. Luther was correct when he said that no one from the apostles’ time did more for Godly marriage and home and Godly training in the home than he. In 1522, for example, Luther wrote “The Estate of Marriage,” in which he described the importance of the instruction of the children by the parents in the home:

But the greatest good in married life, that which makes all suffering and labor worth while, is that God grants offspring and commands that they be brought up to worship and serve him. In all the world this is the noblest and most precious work, because to God there can be nothing dearer than the salvation of souls. Now since we are all duty bound to suffer death, if need be, that we might bring a single soul to God, you can see how rich the estate of marriage is in good works. God has entrusted to its bosom souls begotten of its own body, on whom it can lavish all manner of Christian works. Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, and priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel. In short, there is no greater or nobler authority on earth than that of parents over their children, for this authority is both spiritual and temporal.

From this zeal for Christian instruction in the home, zeal for the same Christian instruction in the school naturally flows.

(to be continued)

Question Box

Questions About The "New Theology" (continued)

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

For the sake of clarity in our discussion, I will quote again the questions raised in our last issue by a reader from Holland, Michigan: "Today one reads much about the new theology, neo-orthodoxy, and recent scientific data which compels theologians to accept new exegetical ideas in regard to the Scriptures. What must we say about this? Our fathers gave us our Doctrinal Standards. Are they becoming obsolete? Are there really new truths which call for a new interpretation of the Scriptures? Doesn't the authority of the Scriptures depend on its infallibility?"

The last question I called a key question and chose to answer it first (cf. Sept. 15 issue).

The question may be asked: why is this a key question?

There are several aspects to be considered here. Among them, I would mention, in the first place, the fact that it is this very foundational doctrine of Holy Scripture which is under attack, which they seek to change (or ignore) today. Anyone who follows contemporary theological and ecclesiastical developments knows that one of the most discussed and most frequently attacked truths is that of the doctrine of Holy Scripture. It is safe to say that to a large extent this has become *the issue*. In the second place, I would mention the fact that this doctrine of Holy Scripture is *foundational*. Why? For the simple reason — to put it in terms of the well-known formula — that Scripture is the only infallible rule (canon, standard, measuring-rod) of faith and practice, or of doctrine and life. If, therefore, you can succeed in breaking down and modifying the authority of that rule, or if you can deny (by modifying, because no one likes to admit to denying directly) the infallibility of that rule of doctrine and life, you can open the door to all kinds of changes and modifications with respect to doctrine and life. In the third place, in this same connection, we should see plainly that in the deepest sense, therefore, all the changes and modifications presently being proposed in the faith and practice of the church (also of Reformed churches, both here and in the Netherlands) are a question of *authority*, the authority of Scripture, the authority of the Sovereign God. In the same connection, we may note that the entire notion of "recent

scientific data which compels theologians to accept new exegetical ideas in regard to Scripture" is thoroughly corrupt. I am well aware that these theologians *claim* that they do not mean that science must rule Scripture or our interpretation of Scripture. This, of course, would be too blunt. No, they claim that this so-called recent scientific data (and the twentieth century is immensely proud of its science and scientific data, you know) is only the *occasion* which should make us re-examine and modify our exegesis. But this is a ruse. And for this reason it is also a mistake to speak of new *exegetical* ideas. The new scientific data does not lead to exegesis, but to what the Dutch call "*inlegkunde*", a laying into the text of Scripture ideas which are not in the text, ideas from outside of Scripture. The most basic rule of true exegesis is that *Scripture is its own interpreter*. But this, you see, is in the deepest sense a question of the authority of Scripture. The question becomes this: who is going to interpret Scripture, science or Scripture itself? And that question is at bottom: whose word is authoritative, sovereignly authoritative — man's or God's? Study the attacks made today on the Scriptural account of creation or of the flood, and you will soon discover that this is the issue. In the fourth place, there is this aspect, that it is precisely this authority of Holy Scripture which is the basis of our confessions, our doctrinal standards. The confessions have no authority in themselves. They are of authority only as they set forth the truth revealed by the Scriptures. And it is for this reason that the court of appeal for the confessions and for objections to the confessions is Scripture. But this brings me to some of the other questions raised.

My correspondent hits upon another crucial matter when he mentions the confessions. For there is a great clamor today about the confessions being obsolete and a clamor for changing the confessions. In the Netherlands they are already busy with this. In this connection, a few comments:

1) What has given impetus to this clamor for change? The fact that the Formula of Subscription is not enforced and that doctrinal discipline is neglected is a big factor. Today there are those in the Netherlands, for example, who are demanding that the

Formula of Subscription be enforced and that men be required to adhere to the confessions. I propose that this has come too late. The method of the liberals has been to propose their deviating views in *public* (contrary to the Formula of Subscription), and then, when they have made sufficient propaganda and have gained enough adherents, to press for official decisions to modify the confessions. This is altogether wrong and wicked. But it is the tried and successful method of heretics. And frequently, while they carry out this policy, they do lipservice to the creeds.

2) The test of the confessions is Scripture. This idea of the creeds being obsolete is a thoroughly non-ecclesiastical idea. Besides, it is a ruse. But let it be stressed: the only court of appeal with respect to the confessions is Scripture. If there is something wrong with the confessions, this must be demonstrated on the basis of Scripture: otherwise the confessions stand! And this demonstration must not be by public propaganda but in the manner set forth in the Formula of Subscription. Obsolete? Is this a ruse to get the opportunity to tear down the truth expressed in our confessions? Obsolete? Because some upstart, twentieth-century theologian has the colossal brass to go against not only the entire consensus of the church of the past but also, mind you, against the guidance of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in the church? I ask: does the truth as it is in Jesus Christ — Who is the same yesterday and today and forever — become obsolete? Or do theologians and preachers and churches become so wise in their own conceits and so “up-to-date” and “relevant” in their outlook and so ecumenical and world-conforming in their entire approach to life that they cannot endure the “narrow” confides of those “old-fashioned” confessions?

3) Confessions are not made, but born. History shows that confessions do not come into existence because the church (and especially not, the theologians) sit down and decide that something is obsolete and needs replacement and revision. Confessions arise out of the bosom of the church, out of the faith of the people of God. They are spontaneous. And especially do they arise out of the crucible of controversy and conflict and persecution. In such refining fires the pure gold of the truth of the Scriptures has come to clearer light and understanding and expression in the life of the church. It is for this reason, too, that I would remark that of all times, today is not the time for a

new confession. Confessions have come into existence when the church, the true church, is living on a high spiritual plane, when the love of the truth of God's Word is strong and firm and warm. The latter is not characteristic of our age, to put it mildly.

Finally, new truths? There are no new truths. They have all been revealed in the Scriptures. To be sure, further development and refinement and enrichment of the truth as the church possesses it in the whole body of dogma is possible. But this does not mean *new* truths and *new* interpretations. This does not involve departure and beginning anew. It is development, — advancement in the same line of the old truth.

OFFICE BEARERS CONFERENCE

There will be an Office Bearers Conference October 6, 1970, at 8 P.M., in The South East Protestant Reformed Church. Professor H. C. Hoeksema will speak on the topic, “WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF ARTICLE 66 IN THE CHURCH ORDER?” What circumstances are required to call such a prayer Service?

John Dykstra, Sec'y.

OBITUARY

Our Heavenly Father called unto Himself our beloved husband, father and grandfather,

RICHARD DEPPE

into His eternal rest. Our comfort is found in the words of Jeremiah 31:3 — “Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.”

His loving wife, Alida
Mr. and Mrs. Gerard Deppe
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Deppe
Mr. and Mrs. John Wigger
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kuiper
Dr. and Mrs. Glenn Van Dommelen
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Sellers
Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Rotman
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Deppe
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Vander Scheer
Mr. and Mrs. John Deppe
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Deppe, Jr.
and his loving grandchildren

News From Our Churches

Report of Classis West of the Prot. Ref'd. Churches convened at Hull, Iowa on September 2, 1970

Rev. George Lanting, president of the previous Classis, led the Classis in its opening devotions by reading John 17 and by

addressing the Classis from this passage.

Eleven of the twelve churches in Classis West were represented at Classis. Oak Lawn sent the Classis a letter expressing regret at their inability to send delegates to this Classis.

Rev. Richard G. Moore served as president of Classis for the first time.

In grief, Classis learned from the consistory of Oak Lawn that their minister, the Rev. Gerald Vanden Berg, has requested and received a certificate of dismissal from the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church. The consistory also informed Classis that the congregation has continued to hold worship services regularly, in spite of the leaving of their minister. Rev. Robert Decker of South Holland has been preaching for them at an afternoon service. Oak Lawn asked Classis for classical appointments, and she asked that Rev. Decker be appointed her moderator. Classis granted both of these requests. Above all, Oak Lawn asked for the prayers of the Classis and our churches in her present distress.

In executive session, Classis advised a consistory on disciplinary action.

Classis adopted a schedule of classical appointments for the vacant churches in Doon and Hull, Iowa; Forbes, North Dakota; Oak Lawn, Illinois; and Randolph, Wisconsin. This schedule includes the request for help from Classis East. Rev. Decker was appointed moderator also of Randolph.

Classis West will meet next in Doon, Iowa, on March 3, 1971, the Lord willing.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated clerk
Classis West

As we mentioned last time, some of our churches are engaged in church extension work which should be of general interest. Perhaps as good a way as any of passing along information concerning that of the Loveland congregation would be to quote from several of that church's July and August bulletins.

"Copies of the latest 'Reformed Witness' pamphlet are available in the bulletin rack today. They are titled, 'The Great Apostacy,' and are written by the pastor (Rev. D. Engelsma). If you can distribute some of these pamphlets, take extra. The Church Extension Committee plans to mail over 500 of these pamphlets in our area soon."

In a later bulletin we find this concerning response to that work: "One letter, from the state of Virginia, reads, in part: 'Thank you for sending leaflet entitled The Great Apostacy - it is excellent. I am wondering if you could send 30 or more copies to make available to our people? I will be happy for you to send the pamphlets listed on page 2 of the leaflet. Please keep my name on your mailing list. Writings of this character are badly needed today in so-called evangelical churches. . . .'"

And in a following bulletin we read this response to the response: "The Church Extension Committee needs copies of several 'Reformed Witness' pamphlets. They are: 'Our Lord's Return,' 'Signs of the End of the World,' and 'Lawlessness.' If you have a copy of any of these, we ask you to give it to a member of the Com-

mittee. The Committee needs them to send to people who write in for them." And, "In cooperation with our sister churches in Iowa and Minnesota, (we are) now putting out a pamphlet a month. We have stepped up the pace for the sake of a more effective witness."

One last line, yet: "May the Lord Christ bless our testimony to His great Name!"

Hope Church, of Grand Rapids, has a newly formed Church Extension Committee, called the Reformed Witness Committee, which "has been meeting regularly and has made decided progress." In an August letter to members of the congregation, this committee notes a "feeling for a need to witness and work in our own immediate area." To that end, the intention of the committee is to engage, with the "participation of the members of the congregation," in "as much personal contact with people outside of our church as we possibly can." This will begin with "a door-to-door survey in the Allendale area," to determine whether or not "there is sufficient interest to warrant further work."

Speaking of Hope Church, we should mention that Rev. J. Kortering has accepted the call from the Hull congregation. This leaves two Grand Rapids churches without an undershepherd, since Rev. C. Hanko has declined the call extended to him from Southwest.

Three more items with which to deal. And room for only one. Did you know that our Isabel, South Dakota, congregation has a new church building - or, at least, a different one? They decided to sell and remove their old church building, which "bordered on being too small, and was in need of extensive repair." After its removal, a new basement was prepared (a basement which included, incidentally, a study-room for Rev. Moore, who was forced out of his home study-room by an enlarging family). The Roman Catholic church building of nearby Glad Valley, purchased at "a nominal cost," was then moved onto the new foundation.

That the proceedings were followed with much interest and anticipation is evident from a bulletin announcement that reads like this: "The footings are poured, the sewer is in. Next week we should see the walls of the basement arise."

Immediately following, there was this paragraph: "More important than those walls are the walls of Zion, that God presently builds in time. Even as we look forward to the completion of our church basement walls, so with more desire should we look forward to the completion of God's house." The following week (appropriately, one would almost say) Rev. Moore announced that his home was blessed with two covenant additions. Twins! Making a total of seven children in the Moore family.

D.D.