

**The
Standard
Bearer**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

**In Thankfulness To Our Covenant God
We
Commemorate In This Issue
The
Four Hundred Fifty-Third Anniversary
of the
Great Reformation**



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Meditation**Reformation, and More Reformations!**

Rev. M. Schipper

"And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant . . . And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."
I Kings 18:36-40

"Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time. And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Beersheba . . ."

I Kings 19:1-8

Carmel, and Reformation Day!

And, O, what a wonderful day that was!

Envision the white-haired prophet, wearing his prophet's mantle, and appearing in the midst of the milling multitude he had summoned to the top of the mountain, that it might be made clear, once and for all, Who is God in Israel, Who is the God of the Scriptures. Hear him, that prophet of the Lord, as before all Israel including the king, he calls upon the Name of his God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that his God may show plainly to all that He, and He alone, is God.

Elijah!

Whose name means: Jehovah is my God!

Whose name also expresses the program of his prophetic service. For when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him Who moved him to leave his occupation in Tishbe of the land of Gilead, and he began to walk through the land of apostate Israel, fighting the apostasy, and instituting the work of reformation with the Word of the Lord, thus becoming the officebearer in the service of the God of Israel it was this truth that became the very backbone of his reformatory work: My God is Jehovah!

Jehovah, not Baal, is my God!

Such was the theme of the Reformation on Carmel!

Reformation in the midst of apostate Israel!

Under the influence of wicked king Ahab, and particularly his heathen wife Jezebel, Israel had been introduced to and now was almost wholly given over to the service of the gods of the Phoenicians. An apostasy predicted already at the beginning of Israel's history as a nation by the mouth of God's servant Moses. And an apostasy which began to take on impetus under Jeroboam the first, who introduced the worship of the calves, which apostasy reached its zenith during the reign of godless Ahab when his heathen wife brought with her Baal and Astarte. Gods they were supposed to be that represented the powers of nature, the gods of natural fruitfulness, and material prosperity. Under this influence for evil Israel forsook Jehovah their rightful Lord, and went awhoring after Baal. An idolatrous practice which was rather firmly established throughout the land, as is indicated in the fact that a complete order of worship had been set up, including Baal temples, and Baal priests.

In the midst of this apostatizing people stands the reformer, Elijah, pronouncing in unequivocal tones: "Not Baal, but Jehovah is my God!" A reformation which reaches its peak at the top of Carmel, when all Israel, it appeared, was converted, and all of them said, while lying flat on their faces, "Jehovah, He is the God; Jehovah, He is the God!"

Indeed, what a wonderful day that was!

When Baal is confounded, and his service apparently disrupted, and the blood of his priests mingling with the waters of the Kishon. When the king is completely demoralized, and the people apparently turning once

more to Jehovah and His truth, and the prophet exalting in the power of his God . . .

But, alas, the victory shouts had hardly ended, and the prophet had hardly relaxed in his struggle against Baalism, when the enemy of the truth, under the tutelage of that agent of Satan, wicked queen Jezebel, the very next day announces her threat to destroy the reformer, and with him the banner of the truth he had so nobly unfurled before the eyes of apostate Israel.

"So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."

Such was the message which the slayer of the Baal priests had received by those sent by Ahab's wife. Ahab, so it appeared, had capitulated, though he had not repented, but Jezebel did not.

A significant threat!

First of all, it implied, despite the apparent victorious notes of yesterday, that the ideology of Baal was not dead, but very much alive. Secondly, it showed that, though there was clearly a reformation based on the fundamental truth that Jehovah is God, and while it appeared that the proponents of the lie had been completely vanquished, there was nevertheless not a complete victory. And in the third place, it became apparent also to Elijah that, in spite of all his preaching, so long as the cause of the thesis endures in the world the cause of the antithesis will also continue beside it. In one word, so long as the church subsists in the world reformations will continually be necessary. Not one of them completely brings to nought the onslaughts of the lie. The question: Who is God? continues a perennial question. The crisis in the ministry of Elijah is the crisis that has been with the church throughout the ages, and it is still with us today.

Jehovah or Baal!

Christ or Mammon!

The ideology of Elijah or that of Jezebel!

In her threat Jezebel really said to Elijah: "You think that yesterday it became clear that Baal is dead and that his service has been eradicated? Well, let me make it plain to you that in spite of all that happened on Carmel yesterday Baal is not dead, and his doctrine will continue until it has brought the cause of Jehovah your God to nought. Though you may have succeeded in slaying the prophets of Baal yesterday, your life will be as the life of one of them tomorrow. Nothing has really changed, in spite of all that happened on Carmel."

When Elijah heard and interpreted Jezebel's message, he took flight to the nether regions of Horeb. Though we may not agree with him, we can nevertheless understand him, and the thoughts that weighted his soul.

Thoroughly disillusioned was the prophet, and subject to unbelief! How could it be possible after such a clear demonstration on Carmel, that anyone, least of

all Jezebel, would dare to raise his head in opposition? Had not the power of Satan and the lie been completely broken? But how then can this agent of Satan still insist that the doctrine of Baal is not dead but alive?

Elijah concludes that it is useless any longer to preach, to oppose the forces of evil, to carry on his reformatory work. Not would he die at the hands of Jezebel, but he would flee to the land of his dreams and die there at the hand of the Lord. Pining under the juniper tree, he requested that the Lord terminate his ministerial status as well as his life.

At Horeb he would die! In that place where once the Lord appeared unto Moses in thunder and lightning where God declared Himself in the giving of the law: I am God, and there is none beside Me. No strange gods shall ye serve. If only he could be privileged to abide for a moment in that place and in reverie contemplate that God Who speaks in the fire, then he would have seen enough to satisfy his soul before he die.

O, indeed, we can understand him. Does not James tell us that Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are? (James 5:17). Which can only mean that he was human, and subject to those passions which move every human soul. And this means that he could be, as we often are, down in the dumps, ready to give up, when we do not see the fruit of our labors, or all our preaching and service appears to be vain. We too, have seen reformations. We have studied the historical facts surrounding all the reformations of the past. And we have seen reformations in our own life time and experience. And we, too, ask repeatedly the question: What has it all accomplished? Where are now the children of the reformation? How is it that after the reformatory process the church so soon returns to her worldly mindedness, and indulges in seeking the vain things below? How is it to be explained that the lie so soon again infiltrates the church, causing her to apostatize from the truth? And like Elijah we are often inclined to exclaim: What is the use of all this preaching, and all this struggle for the truth? Indeed, we dare not condemn Elijah, though he cannot comfort us. Jezebel does appear unmoveable. The cause of the lie appears often to be victorious.

And what did Elijah find in his flight?

First of all, he discovered that he was not to die, but live. All was not over for him, though he was ready to give up. Horeb is not an ideal unreal. The God on Horeb is not a God Who appears for a moment in dazzling array never to appear again. Though He may not always speak in the thunder and lightning, and may choose also to speak in the still small voice, He is still the living God Who does all His good pleasure, and Who wills also to destroy all the wicked and the power of the lie, but only after it has served His purpose. O, indeed, He gives His church now and then to taste the victory and He allows His servants for a time to bask in the light of His reformatory work. But until the end of time, and so long as His church is in the world, she will have to fight over against the lie; and none of her reformations will completely still the enemies of the truth. In fact He has forewarned that the apostasies will grow steadily worse until those who hold to the truth shall be very small in number.

Moreover, and even more importantly, Elijah discovered that the Word of God does not die. His ministers, through disillusionment and unbelief, may desire to capitulate. But His Word stands eternally. Though men, inspired by Satan, may insist that Baal also is god, and in the process may kill all of God's prophets all the day long, yet they cannot slay the Word of God. It shall forever endure, because it is the everlasting Word of the everlasting God.

And last, but not least, Elijah and we must discover that one reformation does not bring an end to the power of the lie. So long as the church continues in the world, there will be reformations and more reformations. In one word, the church in the world must always be the reformatory church. Maintaining the truth over against the lie, walking in sanctification in distinction from her attempt always to apostatize. And let not those who are especially entrusted to proclaim the truth grow weary, as Elijah did, nor ever come to doubt that the Word of God shall ever return unto Him void.

Presently we shall see the end of all the struggles for the truth, and the fruit of all the reformatory work, when we shall behold the church that is gathered out of all ages receiving the crown of life that fadeth not away.

"The Reformation returned to Paul and Augustine and found strength to oppose Pelagianism in the Romish Church in the confession of God's sovereign election. All the reformers were of the same mind in this matter. In the beginning Luther defended predestination as strongly as Zwingli and Calvin."

Herman Bavinck

Editorials

The Heart-Beat of the Reformation

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

Reformation Day, 1970 marks the 453rd anniversary of the Great Reformation. It also marks the 352nd anniversary of the Great Synod of Dordrecht. To the discerning Reformed Christian, the Synod of Dordrecht, noted, of course, chiefly for the Canons of Dordrecht, was not only involved in the never-ending process of reformation when it did battle against the Arminians and purged the church of their grave errors. But historically, the Synod of Dordrecht represents the climax of *the* Reformation. Frequently we fail to see the two as historically, as well as doctrinally, related. It was only about 100 years after that first act of reformation in 1517, and much less than 100 years after John Calvin began his reformatory work, that the truth of the Reformation came to its clearest and most beautiful expression in the Canons drawn up by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in 1618-'19. Dordrecht is the climax of Wittenberg and Geneva! At Dordrecht the central truth of the Reformation finally comes to its own!

Yet when one considers this fact and then looks at the church today, he is inclined to stand aghast. Dordrecht was not only a national Synod; and yet, while it was not really an ecumenical synod, or even an international synod, Dordrecht nevertheless represents the consensus of the Reformed churches in all of Europe at that time, all of whom had at least an advisory capacity at the Great Synod. This means that it was possible at that stage in history for the churches of the Reformed faith from all over the continent and from Great Britain to come together and to agree: to agree, moreover, on the truth! Dordt was Reformed, uncompromisingly Reformed! At Dordt you have the concrete manifestation and expression of the true reformational church: the church reformed and always reforming!

When one considers this fact by way of comparison with the situation in Reformed churches today — let alone in the church at large — one is filled with dismay at what he sees. The church today in comparison with the church at the time of Dordrecht presents, as far as the Reformed faith is concerned, a sorry spectacle! Men and churches are interested today in coming together. They are interested in what is called ecumenism. But they are interested in coming together not on the basis of the truth of our Reformed heritage, not in the interest of the truth, but at the expense of it!

One might well be inclined to ask: what is there to celebrate on Reformation Day?

But on the other hand, the only factor which can possibly make one take heart, which can possibly encourage and inspire one to continue to celebrate the Reformation in a real way — that is, as Reformed and ever reforming — the only thing which can motivate one truly to celebrate the Reformation in the face of such an apparently hopeless situation is the very faith to which Dordt gave expression and which is set forth most beautifully in Article 9 of the Canons of Dordrecht, Chapter II:

This purpose proceeding from everlasting love towards the elect, has from the beginning of the world to this day been powerfully accomplished, and will henceforward still continue to be accomplished, notwithstanding all the ineffectual opposition of the gates of hell, so that the elect in due time may be gathered together into one, and that there never may be wanting a church composed of believers, the foundation of which is laid in the blood of Christ, which may steadfastly love, and faithfully serve him as their Savior, who as a bridegroom for his bride, laid down his life for them upon the cross, and which may celebrate his praises here and through all eternity.

In these words is expressed the motif of genuine celebration of the Reformation, — celebration not only in the sense of thankful commemoration of the great work of our God wrought in the Reformation, but also in the sense of renewed dedication to the great principles of the Reformation and to the motto, "Reformed and Ever Reforming."

Without the confidence of the faith expressed in the words just quoted, one could indeed only stand aghast at the ecclesiastical scene of today and be filled with dismay and despair and discouragement.

The Heart And Its Beat

You will recognize that there is a figure of speech involved in the expression, "The Heart-Beat of the Reformation." We are referring in this figure of speech to that for which the Reformation as a historical movement *stood* and *stands*, that is, its principles, the body of truth, the confession of faith, for which it stood and to which the Reformation constituted a very strong return. We are trying to express by means of this figure the very essence, the core, the central feature of the Reformation from this point of view. We are trying to depict that which is central, that from which all else may be explained, that which furnishes vitality, in the entire body of Reformation-truth.

The figure is that of a person, a man, with a heart

and a heart-beat.

Hence, just as physically the heart is the center of a man's existence, is that organ which controls and directs the bloodstream and the circulation, pumping the life-blood through the entire organism of the body constantly and supplying food and energy and life to all our organs and all the cells of our body; and just as spiritually, according to Scripture in Proverbs 4, the heart is the spiritual center of a man, determining what a man is spiritually, determining whether a man is good or evil, so that "from the heart are the issues of life;" so it is also ecclesiastically. Our fathers spoke of the *cor ecclesiae*, the heart of the church, intending to emphasize that there is a certain central truth which controls and directs and energizes and vitalizes the whole life and the very bloodstream and the whole organism of the church's faith and confession, every aspect of the truth.

This same figure of speech implies the idea of the *heart-beat*. This element of the figure has reference to the action, the pumping, the pulsating, the throbbing of the heart, as it can be sensed and felt and heard — either directly, in the heart itself, or throughout all the reaches of the body in the pulse. This figure of the heart-beat may also be applied ecclesiastically, so that we may speak of the beating, the pulsating, the throbbing, of that one, central truth throughout the whole of the living confession of the church and throughout the whole of the body, the organism, of the truth and in all its parts.

Hence, when we speak of the heart-beat of the Reformation, we refer to what our fathers called the "heart of the church" as the "heart of the Reformation;" and, secondly, to the beating, the pulsating, of that heart of the Reformation in the entire confession of the Reformed faith, the entire body of Reformation-truth.

The question is: what was - and what, properly, still is — that heart whose beat can be sensed and ought to be sensed throughout the body of the faith?

Our fathers answered — and correctly so, because they caught the keynote of the Reformation — they answered: *election is the heart of the church*. By this they meant, of course, the truth of *eternal, sovereign election*, together with its inseparable corollary, *sovereign reprobation*. In one term: *sovereign predestination*.

It is not our purpose here to expound in detail and to demonstrate from Scripture and the confessions in detail this truth of sovereign predestination. Let us rather look at some of the salient aspects: 1) Election is the eternal and sovereign and gracious decree of God to lead the church as the body of Christ, with all its individual members, each in his own position in that body, to eternal salvation and glory. Let us notice a few important features here. In the first place, election is *sovereign*. That means, positively, that election pro-

ceeds from God's eternal good pleasure as its source and reason. In the second place, election involves not a mere crowd of elect individuals, not a mob, but a body, a church, and all the members of that church individually. In the third place, predestination does not merely include the goal, the end, but also the way to that end. God's election includes eternal salvation and glory and the *way* to that eternal salvation and glory in all of its aspects. In the fourth place, election is not arbitrary. It is not merely a cold and mechanical decree to save some (and to damn others); but election is *in Christ Jesus our Lord*, the Head of the elect church.

2) Sovereign predestination includes reprobation. Reprobation is the eternal and sovereign decree of God to determine some men to be vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction in the way of sin, as manifestations of His justice, and to serve the purpose of the realization of His elect church. Again, let us notice a few elements which need emphasis here. In the first place, election and reprobation are absolutely inseparable. Predestination is *double predestination*, or it is not at all. It is impossible to maintain election without maintaining reprobation. You can readily understand that this is in the very nature of the case. It makes no real difference here whether you speak the mild, infralapsarian language of a "leaving" or "passing by" in reprobation, or whether you speak of a positive rejection, election itself implies that there are those who are not included in that divine decree of election, but excluded. In the second place, — and this is important, too — reprobation is also *sovereign*, not conditional. It does not take place on the basis of foreseen sin and unbelief. It also proceeds from God's eternal good pleasure. Again, whether you speak of an active and positive rejection or merely of a passing by — and we need not quibble about that here — it is *sovereign*. It takes place *according to God's eternal good pleasure*, though the decreed damnation is historically realized in the way of man's own unbelief and sin. It is of the utmost importance that this be maintained. You cannot maintain an unconditional election and a conditional reprobation. If the one is sovereign, the other is also sovereign. If the one is conditional, the other is necessarily conditional also. In the third place, it is important to remember that historically it has always been that doctrine of reprobation especially which was first disliked and rejected and discarded; and this led inevitably to the corrupting and discarding of the truth of sovereign election. This is the case today, too. It is the doctrine of reprobation (Canons I, 15) which is under strong attack in Reformed churches; and the attempt is being made by some to modify and corrupt it.

Together these two — sovereign election and sovereign reprobation — are called sovereign predestination, or foreordination, that is, God's eternal and sovereign decree, counsel, will, with respect to the destiny of His moral creatures, men and angels.

3) In the broadest sense of the word, predestination is not limited merely to the salvation and damnation of men and angels; but it includes God's eternal and all-comprehensive counsel with respect to all things. It includes the entire universe and its destiny and the way to that destiny. The divine purpose of election and reprobation constitutes the center, the focal point, of God's eternal plan and purpose, round about which all other things in that counsel are arranged and with which they stand in connection as means to end.

Thus, briefly, we would describe the heart of the Reformation.

And the beat of that heart is the heart-beat of the Reformation.

That means, therefore, not merely that this truth of sovereign predestination is one of the important Reformation-truths, or even the most important in rank. But it means that it is the *heart!* It is that which controls and directs and energizes the entire life-stream of the organism of the truth. Properly, the beat of that heart must be felt not only in the doctrine concerning God, but in the doctrine concerning creation and the fall, and providence, and the atonement, and salvation, and in the doctrine of the church itself, and in the doctrine of the last things, and the doctrine of everlasting glory, the everlasting state — so that in all these truths you can sense, can feel, can detect clearly the pulse-beat, the lively throbbing, of that heart, the truth of sovereign predestination.

The Importance Of The Heart

Let us look at the central importance of that heart of the Reformation and its beat. Let us do that by referring to the figure of the human heart, and by way of contrast.

Ask the question: what happens if a man has heart trouble? His heart is central. The entire organism of his body is dependent upon his heart. The health, the well-being, of the whole body is dependent upon that central organ. If his heart is diseased, the body is bound to be affected throughout. And depending on the seriousness of the disease which afflicts his heart, he becomes weak, is probably forced to be inactive, and he can finally be fatally affected.

The same is true ecclesiastically with respect to this "heart of the Reformation" and its beat.

Let that heart beat weakly, or let it beat diseasedly, or let the beat of that heart cease altogether: the entire organism of the church's confession, faith, life, is in-

evitably affected. Obviously the doctrine of God is at stake: principally, if you deny the doctrine of sovereign predestination, you lose God and you enthrone man on God's throne. The truth of creation and providence and the fall is affected: these truths become disconnected from God's other works. Such diseases result as the doctrine of a universal Fatherhood of God and its corollary, the universal brotherhood of man. When that heart does not beat properly, you get such errors as the covenant of works, common grace in the Kuyperian sense of the word, the denial of total depravity. When the beat of that heart does not influence the doctrine concerning Christ, you get, as is well known, the error of universal atonement. When that beat does not energize the doctrine of salvation — the doctrines of regeneration, calling, faith, justification, sanctification, preservation — then salvation becomes a cooperative work of God and man, or it becomes a matter of a general, well-meant offer of salvation, dependent upon the will of man. The disease of free-willism results. The doctrine of the church is likewise affected: principally, when you lose that heart-beat, the whole truth of the holy catholic church is afflicted. The doctrine of the last things is affected: when that heart-beat is not healthy, principally you stand in danger of falling either into the error of pre-millennialism or the error of post-millennialism. The principle of the antithesis is affected necessarily: when that heart-beat does not make itself felt, that principle is watered down and finally lost. You lose the other aspect of the seal upon God's foundation (II Tim. 2:19). You lose this: "let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." And you lose it because you have lost what precedes it: "The Lord knoweth them that are his." And the blessedness of the assurance and certainty of salvation is lost, too. When that heart does not beat rightly, you finally lose the solidness of the solid comfort, of our only comfort in life and death.

And thus it is with the whole of the Christian faith. There are even effects of this heart-beat with respect to the doctrine of Holy Scripture and the whole idea of revelation which is much discussed today. You cannot properly maintain the truth of organic inspiration, for example, without the truth of sovereign predestination.

The heart and its beat, therefore, are of central importance.

(to be continued)

"The excellent, infallible and sole preparation for grace is the eternal election and predestination of God."

Martin Luther

Proposal C—Michigan's Antiparochiaid Amendment

Of practical interest to our Michigan readers, but of general interest to us all because of our concern for covenantal education, is Proposal C, which will be voted on in the November election in Michigan. This is a proposed amendment to the Michigan Constitution which will make parochiaid impossible. The legislature in Michigan finally passed a proposal to provide \$22 million in state aid to private schools in the current fiscal year. This provision has also been upheld by the Michigan Supreme Court. Meanwhile, public school forces succeeded by petition and referendum to get the matter on the ballot by way of this proposed amendment.

As it will appear on the ballot, the proposed amendment would "prohibit use of public funds to aid any non-public elementary or secondary school; prohibit use of public funds, except for transportation, to support the attendance of any students or the employment of any person at non-public schools or at any location or institution where instruction in whole or in part is offered to non-public school students; prohibit any payment, credit, tax benefit, exemption, or deductions, of public monies or property, directly or indirectly, for the above purposes."

Reading the above language, one cannot escape the conclusion that this is indeed an amendment that would put a complete stop to any kind of state aid to private schools.

From this point of view, one would conclude that here is an amendment for which we can and should vote — not because of our agreement with the principles and motives of the public school forces (for we are as opposite as black and white), but because of our Christian and Reformed opposition to the entire idea of parochiaid.

Nevertheless, this proposed amendment puts us between a rock and a hard place.

The problem is that the proposed amendment is so vague in its provisions that it could conceivably result in another form of government control of our schools which would be fully as evil, namely, control by taxation.

The parochiaid forces have used many scare tactics in opposing this amendment, and they have raised much hullabaloo about all the other benefits which Christian schools would lose under this amendment. It is said that driver's education, remedial education, typing instruction, and all so-called auxiliary services (including participation in interscholastic athletics; wouldn't that be a relief!) would be lost. This writer does not care a proverbial snap of the fingers about those auxiliary services. If we want to have Christian schools, then let the world go its way, and let us have 100% Christian education right down the line.

But there is one item which is very important and

which could conceivably be involved in this amendment. That item is the property tax exemption which our schools (and churches) now enjoy. My concern is not first of all the amount of money which our schools would be compelled to pay out if they lose this exemption. It is rather the principle that this would involve government control of another kind. The power to tax is the power to control. For example, this power to tax could be used to tax us right out of existence. Hence, though different, the loss of tax exemption would be just another form of state control. And we are opposed to state control in *any form*.

The problem is that this issue is up in the air; and it is a problem which cannot be resolved before the election. There have been many avowals from supporters of this amendment that the tax exemption is not involved here at all, and that, in fact, there are other provisions in the constitution which cover this matter and protect our tax exemption. The attorney general has also given this as his opinion. Yet there are many legal experts who think differently. And there has been no official decision on the matter. The attempt was made to keep the proposal off the ballot on the ground of its vagueness, but this also failed.

Hence, the rock is parochiaid and its government control, which we do not want.

The hard place is the possible loss of tax exemption and its implied government control, which we also do not want.

And the Christian antiparochiaid voter is caught between the two.

My personal conclusion — unless further clarification comes before election day — is that I cannot vote *Yes* and I cannot vote *No*.

If the present amendment fails, it is to be hoped that a more clearly worded amendment will be presented in the future. And judging from the antiparochiaid fury of the public school forces in Michigan — and I predicted that the ire of the public school men, who, after all, hate Christian education, would be aroused — they will not rest until they have made parochiaid impossible. Christian school friends may well hope and pray that in accomplishing this goal those same forces will not ultimately try to destroy separate education altogether!

Meanwhile, perhaps the best course would be that the whole matter of parochiaid goes to the U.S. Supreme Court and is there ruled to be contrary to the First Amendment. This is a distinct possibility, since lower Federal Courts have already ruled both ways on the question and appeals are being carried to the Supreme Court, both for and against. If the highest court would throw it out, then we might be permanently rid of parochiaid. That would solve many problems.

Come Ye Apart... And Rest A While

Reformation Day 1970

Rev. C. Hanko

Our thoughts travel back through the pages of history; back to the sixteenth century as we hum the familiar words,

Faith of our fathers, living still. . . .

We think of the harlot, bedecked with jewels, in her scarlet and purple robes (Revelation 17), the Roman Catholic Church firmly holding her grip on the princes and rulers of her night life. We see her carmine sword still dripping with the blood of martyrs. Our minds revert to Luther nailing his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenburg on the eve of All-Saints' Day, November 31, 1517. We take a look at Calvin diligently writing his *Institutes* in defence of the truth of the Scriptures over against the errors of the Roman Church. We shudder at the thought of the fifty thousand who in The Netherlands alone were burned, hanged, or drowned for the faith once delivered to them from the fathers. We pause a moment to reflect on a man like Guido de Bres, the "heretic preacher" who had to hide under the pseudonym "Jerome". We watch him as he throws his "Confession Of Faith" (Our Netherlands or Belgic Confession) over the wall of the king's castle at Doornik on the night of November 1, 1561, to prove that he was not a heretical anti-nomian, but stood for the Word of God over against the departures of the mother church. And we turn our faces away as he climbs the ladder in the market place at Valenciennes, makes his last defence of his faith, and then hangs lifeless from the noose — only one of the many who counted their faith more precious to them than their lives.

Faith of our fathers, living still,

In spite of dungeon, fire and sword.

Pensively we pick up our Psalters and turn to our heritage that is stowed away there, The Three Forms Of Unity, the faith once delivered unto the saints. (Jude 3). Professor Zacharias Ursinus and Reverend Casper Olevianus had toiled many an hour over what is now our treasured Heidelberg Catechism. We marvel at their deep insight into the truth of the Scriptures and the concise expression of it both in their questions and in their answers. It thrills our souls just to think how accurately they express our own personal experiences in the faith, even as we wrestle, struggle, toil in our pilgrimage from day to day. "What is thy comfort, thy only comfort, thy physical comfort, thy spiritual comfort, now, at death's door, and evermore?" "That I am not my own, but belong as purchased possession and slave to that One and Only Savior, Our Lord Jesus

Christ!" "What three things are necessary for thee to know that thou mayest rejoice in the experience of that comfort whether brimming over with life or bowed beneath the dark shades of death?"

First that I know my sins and my miseries — how very great they are!

God says: Love me with thy whole being always.

I was created good, in God's image, in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness to love and serve my God as His friend-servant.

Look what I am now through my original fall, guilt and depravity, which I only increase with my own sins day by day. For the whole inclination of my being is to hate God and to pour out the venom of that hatred toward any one that comes in contact with me.

The law is good, just and holy. But I am sold under sin. There is for me, in myself, no escape from the justice of God's demand and the pouring out of His wrath upon me now and everlastingly. O wretched man that I am!

Second, that I know that I am delivered from my sins and my miseries. No, more, that I know *how* I am delivered from death and hell.

You ask me how I know? I believe. God tells me that through His Word and by His Spirit in my heart. With the church of all ages I confess: I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Maker. . . . What a comfort that confession is as we make it together in our public worship and at the table of communion!

Thirdly, that I know and experience gratitude to God in my heart for that deliverance. I even know *how* to give expression to that gratitude to my God. No, I wouldn't know. But God gives me His law in my heart. "It is joy to do Thy will." And He has established a constant inter-communication between Himself and me through that wonderful gift of prayer! Faith of our fathers living still. . . .

O how our hearts beat high with joy

Whene'er we hear that glorious word!

I find myself at page 25 of the Psalter, and there before me unfolds the "Confession Of Faith", the witness of Guido de Bres, written in consultation with other believers, "revised in the National Synod held at Dordrecht, in the years 1618 and 1619," and thus delivered to the churches. Merely scanning these pages I see:

The Doctrine of God. Articles 1 to 11.

The Doctrine of Man. Articles 12-17.

The Doctrine of Christ. Articles 18-21.

The Doctrine of Salvation. Articles 22-26.

The Doctrine of the Church. Articles 27-36.

The Doctrine of The Last Things. Article 37.

Lest I tarry too long over these valuable pages, I hasten on to the Canons, composed through much study and toil at that famous Synod of Dordrecht. How thoroughly they perused the writings of the Arminians to detect the errors that already were undermining the foundations of truth. Plainly they saw the dearth of the doctrine of man's free will, depriving the hungry and thirsty of that one and only comfort in life and in death. What comfort do I have if salvation depends in any way on me, or if I could lose it at any time, even at death's door? What a bulwark of strength of faith lies in that conviction: I believe:

In the Absolutely Sovereign Predestination of God

In the Total Depravity and Inability of Man to do any good.

In the Particular Atonement of Christ whereby my debt is paid.

In the Efficient Power of the Holy Spirit whereby I am delivered from sin and guilt

and enriched with the grace of Christ Jesus.

In the confidence that absolutely nothing can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus, my Lord.

The five points of Calvinism, pure and simple!

Faith of our fathers. Living still?

How deceptively wrong are they who would put a date and a postmark on our Confessions. Blind are they who talk about the Catechism as being all right for Heidelberg in the sixteenth century, but as having lost its relevance today. Cunning deceivers are they who refer to the Canons as proper for Dordrecht in the early seventeenth century, but as having no practical value for the twentieth century church in a modern world. Blind leaders of the blind are they who clamor for freedom to compose new confessions that will suit a given church in a given place. Derelicts on the stormy sea of life are they who have lost the Anchor of faith in Christ. Foolish builders they who do not build on the one sure foundation of the infallible, authoritative Word of God in the Scriptures.

Faith of our fathers, holy faith,

We will be true to thee till death!

Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. (Rev. 3:11)

Feature

The Concern of the Reformation for Christian Education (2)

Rev. David Engelsma

The Reformation's early and urgent concern for the christian education of the children was due in part to the threats that endangered this education. One threat was the existing schools. During the Middle Ages, the Church established and controlled the schools. The teachers were priests and monks. As a result, the increasing corruption of the Church infected the schools. The teaching and life in the schools made attendance by children of the newly reformed Church impossible. Luther flatly denounced sending children to these schools:

It is perfectly true that if universities and monasteries were to continue as they have been in the past, and there were no other place available where youth could study and live, then I could wish that no boy would ever study at all, but just remain dumb. For it is my earnest purpose, prayer, and desire that these asses' stalls and devil's training

centers should either sink into the abyss or be converted into Christian schools. (To the Councilmen of Germany)

Where the Holy Scriptures do not rule, there I advise no one to send his son. (An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility)

The response to this warning by some of the princes and people became another threat to the cause of christian education, against which Luther had also to fight. Some of the princes that nominally sided with the Reformation gladly seized the existing schools and shut them down, but only in order to enrich themselves with the property and funds of these schools. Many of the people likewise used Luther's warnings against the existing schools as a pretext not to educate their children at all. The result was that instead of bad education there was no education. Some of the people who refused to support the schools and who withheld their children did so out of mercenary motives. They

simply did not want to pay what it might cost, or they put their children to work for financial gain. Against this greedy materialism, Luther loosed his heaviest artillery. He spoke of "shameful, despicable, damnable parents who are no parents at all but despicable hogs and venomous beasts, devouring their own young" ("Luther's Works," Fortress Press, Philadelphia, Vol. 46, p. 211). In *A Sermon on Keeping Children in School*, he wrote:

The common people appear to be quite indifferent to the matter of maintaining the schools. I see them withdrawing their children from instruction and turning them to the making of a living and to caring for their bellies. Besides, they either will not or cannot think what a horrible and un-Christian business this is and what great and murderous harm they are doing everywhere in so serving the devil.

Still another threat was the attitude of others among Luther's followers of disparaging learning altogether. It was a popular proverb in those days that "the educated are crazy" (*Gelehrte sind verkehrte*). Some could see no reason why they, as Christians, should educate their children. What does knowledge of history, knowledge of languages, and ability to read and write have to do with a believer, they asked. Did not the Reformation itself teach that all that mattered was that one was justified by faith? Such thinking was encouraged by certain fanatical preachers who for a short time allied themselves with the Reformation, e.g., Karlstadt and Munzer. These radicals spread among the people the notion that all learning was foolish, if not sinful. Luther refers to this threat to christian education in his work, *To the Councilmen of Germany*:

"All right," you say again, "suppose we do have to have schools; what is the use of teaching Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and the other liberal arts? We could just as well use German for teaching the Bible and God's word, which is enough for our salvation." I reply: Alas! I am only too well aware that we Germans must always be and remain brutes and stupid beasts, as the neighboring nations call us, epithets which we richly deserve.

Luther and the entire Reformation repudiated the

disparagement of education. Just as much as corrupt education, the lack of education was viewed by the Reformation as a threat to the God-given calling to rear the children of believers. It made no difference what form the attack on education took, whether that of greedy princes seizing school-funds, or that of covetous parents interested only in their own and their children's bellies, or that of the inability to see the relationship between salvation and christian education in arts, sciences and languages, or that of fanatical preachers proclaiming a false spiritualism — every attack on education as such found in the Reformation, both as represented by Luther and by Calvin, an implacable foe. So serious a danger was the prevailing sentiment against all education in Luther's judgment that he ascribed it to the Devil and analyzed it as just another assault of Satan on the Church and the true faith.

you see with your own eyes how that wretch of a Satan is now attacking us on all sides with force and guile . . . Among his wiles, one of the very greatest, if not the greatest of all, is this — he deludes and deceives the common people so that they are not willing to keep their children in school or expose them to instruction . . . This seems to me to be a real masterpiece of the devil's art . . . Before our very eyes he is preparing them (the children — DE) so that they will learn nothing and know nothing. Then when we are dead, he will have before him a naked, bare, defenseless people with whom he can do as he pleases. For if the Scriptures and learning disappear, what will remain in the German lands but a disorderly and wild crowd of Tartars or Turks, indeed, a pigsty and mob of wild beasts?

It is not only a characteristic of the Reformation to demand an educated ministry, but also to demand an educated laity, men and women. Only, that education must be thoroughly Christian, based on and centered about the Word of God. The reasons for this demand for an educated laity, and the reasons why the Reformation so strongly resisted every attempt to abolish education, can best be learned from a study of the purposes of education, as the Reformation set them forth.

(to be continued)

Your pre-publication order-form for
The Triple Knowledge
was enclosed with the October 15 issue.

All Around Us

Are Genesis 1-3 Prophecy?

Prof. H. Hanko

Recently a couple of issues of *Trowel and Sword* came into my hands. This paper, edited by Prof. Klaas Runia, is of the Reformed Churches in Australia. In an issue which I did not see, Prof. K. Runia discussed the question of the "historicity" of the early chapters of Genesis. In this article the author apparently denied that these chapters recorded actual historical events. At least, if he did not deny that they contained history, he cast many doubts upon this position. The result was that several objected to his writings on this matter; and, in fact, two Sessions (Consistories) of the Reformed Churches of Australia wrote to *Trowel and Sword* asking for further clarification of the matter.

There were several objections which these Sessions made to the articles by Prof. Runia; but the chief objections concerned Runia's contention that these chapters were prophecy. Runia's argument was, apparently, that the author or authors of Genesis must have received the knowledge of what they wrote by direct revelation. The fact that this knowledge was received by direct revelation means, in Runia's opinion, that the material is prophetic in character. Thus they must be interpreted according to the rules of prophecy and not as straightforward history. One of the Sessions writes:

You wrote: "Whence did the authors get their information? I believe that in both cases it was a matter of revelation, that is, Prophecy."

And at the end of point 4: "In my opinion there is only one answer: this story was made known to the author by direct revelation from the Lord. But this means that these chapters are prophetic in nature, and must be explained according to the rules of prophecy rather than those of straightforward history."

We are of the humble opinion that your answer is liable *not* to be understood at all by many of the readers *or* to be misunderstood. Many will not be able to see and understand that revelation is prophecy, without any further clarification and definition.

Even less will they be able to understand why these chapters must be explained according to the rules of prophecy rather than those of straightforward history.

Could you then also explain at the same time what bearing this prophetic interpretation would have, for instance, on the three items which you mentioned earlier under point 4, i.e., paradise, the tree of life, the serpent in the Genesis chapters.

In the light of these remarks by Runia, one of the Sessions wondered whether the modern positions of science were not influencing the exegesis of these chapters which Runia made.

The answer of Runia is very interesting. Among other things he writes:

The influence of science. — As I stated before, science may never lord it over Scripture. I am fully aware of the fact that every one dealing with these questions runs the risk of taking science (that is, the interpretation of nature) too seriously and let his exegesis (that is, the interpretation of Scripture) be determined by it. This may never happen. But we may not go to the other extreme either and ignore what scientists, in particular Christian Scientists, who study the book of nature, 'a most elegant book' (Belgic Confession., art. II), God's own handiwork (Ps. 19:1; see also Ps. 8:3) tell us. We must also ask ourselves whether our own interpretation is not based on the science of yesterday, to which we are used and which we take for granted. . . .

He was asked whether he agreed with the views of Prof. Kuitert in the Netherlands; and he answers that he cannot give a yes-or-no response to this. But then he comes down to the main issue.

The main point is the question what I mean when I say that this is 'revelation' and therefore 'prophecy'. Both letters touch upon this. In the first letter I read: "Moses wrote history under the inspiration of God". In this sentence we have the whole problem before us. What does the term 'history' mean here? I agree that the author of Genesis wrote about historical reality. He wrote about the beginnings of our world and our first forefather. But — is it simple, straightforward history that is recorded here? Is this part of Genesis of the same nature as the report of a news reporter for our papers? Prof. B. J. Oosterhoff, prof. of OT in the Seminary of the Chr. Ref. Church in Apeldoorn has written in connection with the decision of Lunteren: "The Synod speaks of the 'specific nature' of the narrative in Gen. 2-3. This I think we cannot deny. Here we have a unique form of historiography as nowhere else in the Bible. Everywhere else we read history described or narrated by people who have been subject to it themselves. . . . Can we assume that Adam for himself has written down what his experiences were in Paradise? We have not a single shred of evidence for it. Is what happened here handed on from parents to children? Could Moses or any other Bible writer have drawn from this tradition? It is highly improbable. Have we here to do with a direct announcement from God? How did it come to men? As a direct dictation? Or in the way God spoke through the prophets? Do these chapters carry a prophetic nature? Only with the difference that usually revelation of God through the prophets was related to the future and in these chapters to the

past? But this happens more often that by God's revelation to the prophets the past is proclaimed and enlightened. Indeed, do these chapters have a prophetic nature? In any case, they possess their distinct nature."

It is my personal opinion too that 'oral tradition' is no solution. It is quite obvious that Gen. 1 and parts of Gen. 2 describe things and situations which happened before Adam was there. But if it was not a matter of 'oral tradition', then there is only one possibility left: it was 'direct revelation'. Now in Scripture direct revelation is always a matter of prophecy. You should note that I use the adjective 'direct'. I do not say that all revelation is in the nature of prophecy. Revelation as such is a wide concept and includes: history, law, wisdom, literature, psalms, letters, prophecy and apocalypse, to mention no more. But as far as I can see 'direct' revelation is always in the form of prophecy. Now prophecy has its own rules of interpretation. Every kind of literature has its own rules of interpretation. No one would interpret a law and a psalm in the same way.

One of the characteristics of prophecy is always the mixing of the literal and the symbolical. . . .

To what extent the language used in these chapters is literal and to what extent it is symbolical will be hard to decide (as is also true of much in the prophetic books). . . . It is obvious that there are definitely symbolical overtones (in these chapters). The 'garden' . . . emphasizes the state of innocence, the tree of life tells us that real life, eternal life, is only possible as a gift of God, the serpent is definitely more than just an ordinary serpent: it represents the satanic power that tempted man.

And so we have more along these same lines.

The sad part of it is that Prof. Runia is accepted both in this country and in the Netherlands as a spokesman for the conservative cause; and his help is sought in the battle against liberal attacks against the Scriptures — also within the Reformed Churches.

But the conservatives who look to Runia for leadership ought to be able to see (as those in Australia apparently do see) that Runia is basically and principally in the camp of the liberals although his views may not as yet be developed that far.

It ought to be plain that to interpret Genesis 1-3 as prophecy, and, in this way, to deny their historical character is an open and destructive attack against the Scriptures.

There are several points which ought to be made in this connection.

In the first place, Runia makes altogether too little of oral tradition. It cannot be so easily shrugged aside as Runia claims. It is true, of course, that Adam was not present at the creation of the world. But this does not alter the fact that Adam stood as a sinless man in the midst of a sinless creation in which all things spoke clearly of the handiwork of God. He was able, in a way which we cannot imagine, to discern the works of God in the things which were made. Nor is this all. In the

state of righteousness Adam lived as covenant friend of God who spoke to God as friends speak together in the intimacy of love. God revealed to Adam, as His friend, all the secrets of His heart and the glories of His own being — also as revealed in the creation. Is there any reason to suppose that God did not speak to Adam of the wonder of creation?

Furthermore, Adam, though fallen, had the promise of the seed of the woman. This promise was given to Adam in such a way that he knew it objectively not only; but God gave Adam a regenerated heart and the gift of faith so that he could, by faith, cling to that promise. It was because of this that the tradition of Paradise, the Fall, and all that is recorded for us in the early chapters of Genesis was most carefully preserved in the generations that followed — which, by the way, were not so very many. If we consider the fact that Methuselah knew both Adam and Shem; and that Shem knew Abraham, there was very little possibility for this tradition to be corrupted by inadvertent mistakes.

But this is not all by any means. Suppose it were true that in some measure this tradition was inadvertently distorted over the years so that it came to Moses with some mistakes; or suppose that it were true that it was, for some reason not complete (something we are not at all prepared to say, and something that Runia has no proof for), even then it is not only possible, but entirely the truth that this was corrected when the Scriptures, through Moses, were inspired by God. Inspiration was infallible. And it is this which Runia fails to take into account.

The question will probably be asked: Does this not after all, imply what Runia calls "direct revelation"? That is, does not this imply that God revealed directly to Moses things which he could not have known in any other way except that God spoke them to him and told him of them? Indeed it does. And what is so impossible about this is difficult for me to see. Runia claims that this is true too; but claims that this very fact makes of Genesis 1-3 prophecy. Runia makes the statement: "Now in Scripture direct revelation is always a matter of prophecy." This is simply not true. At least it is not true in the sense in which Runia speaks of it: prophecy as a mixture of the literal and the symbolical.

God spoke directly to Cain and Abel. God revealed directly to Noah the purpose which He had to destroy the world with a flood. God gave direct plans to Noah for the building of the ark. God spoke directly to Abraham in many instances. One such instance which comes to mind is God's speech to Abraham concerning the destruction of Sodom. There was nothing prophetic about these direct revelations. There was nothing symbolical about them at all. It was God speaking directly.

If Runia objects that all these speeches of God were

not to those whom God used to write the Scriptures, then we need only point to the fact that Moses himself received many direct revelations from God. In fact, Scripture tells us that Moses spoke with God face to face.

In fact, although history itself was revelation to the people of God, the interpretation of this history was often given by God in the way of "direct revelation". In fact there are even instances in Scripture where God revealed directly to His people past events which they could not know in any other way than by direct revelation. Joseph was told by God that the king's butler was guilty of the charges which had been brought against him and for which he was imprisoned while the baker was innocent. God revealed to the wisemen who came to worship Christ that Herod plotted to kill Christ and that the wisemen must therefore, return another way. Is it impossible for the Lord to reveal to one something which transpired in the past of which they have no knowledge other than through "direct revelation"?

But all of this finally comes down to the question of the character of the Genesis narratives itself. Prophecy in Scripture has its own characteristics; so does historical narrative. Genesis 1-3 is so obviously sober and factual history and so obviously not prophecy (in the sense in which Runia speaks of it) that if Runia cannot tell the difference, the answer has got to be that Runia does not know prophecy when he reads it and cannot tell history when it is before him black on white. Of

course, it is not the kind of history which a reporter draws up for the newspapers. No one said it was. It is sacred history; history which reveals God. And its record is included in the Scriptures by infallible inspiration.

It all comes down to the question of the perspicuity of Scripture. A child who has just learned to read, reads Genesis 1-3 and reads them, without prompting and instruction, as history. It is clear — even to a child. If it is not history as appears on the very surface, if instead it has symbolical meaning which is ascertainable to a select few and which gives to them an esoteric knowledge not available to the believer who has no theological training, then Scripture is no more perspicuous. Then the believer cannot understand the Word of God. He must go to the professors and theologians to have them interpret Scripture for him.

But such is a denial, not only of a very precious truth of the Reformation, but of the character of Scripture itself. It is a brazen attempt to take the Scriptures from the people of God. And it is all prompted by the fact that science must dictate to the believer how he is to interpret Scripture.

This is serious business. Runia may claim not to agree with Kuitert. And, in certain details this may be true; but essentially they are one. And they are one in a theory of God's Word which finally destroys the Scriptures altogether, and robs the people of God of the truth of God's Word.

In His Fear

Saintly, But Faintly

Rev. John A. Heys

When last did you see a saint?

The question is not, Did you ever see a saint?

You certainly did see a saint or two, yea, undoubtedly, a host of them in your life time. There are, you know, seven thousand of them that have not bowed the knee to the antichrist. And, if you are one of them yourself, you will not have difficulty recognizing them now and then.

We ought to be more accustomed to the word "saint" than we are. And we ought to be more conscious of the fact that there are saints upon the earth today. There are legions of them in heaven, but there are likewise, even in this end of the ages, a host of them upon the earth. Paul could write to the church at Ephesus and begin his epistle, "To the saints which are at Ephesus," and he could close his letter with the words, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." Indeed, "of Caesar's house-

hold." And these were then here on this earth at that time. They are here also in the churches today.

Coming from the Latin and French as it does the word saint does not speak too clearly to us. But realizing that it means "holy one," we are quite ready to shy away from it even more fully than before. Yet, let us look at the matter with the instruction that Holy Writ gives us and become acquainted with the word so that we dare to use it and use it right. A saint is one who is cut off from sin, separated from it and from the desire to commit it. (God's holiness is more than that. He certainly is cut off from all sin as the Light in Whom is no darkness at all. But His holiness is first of all that He is cut off from all the creatures as the Transcendent One, the One Who alone can say, "I am God.") Holiness for men and angels, we say, is to be cut off from sin and in that way to be a peculiar people, a distinct and different people in the world of

sinners.

Now, you think, do you, that it is going to be even harder to find one today? You may have a point. For to be saintly means to live the life of a saint, manifesting it in thought, word and deed. And what we so often see is that some are saintly, but only faintly. Before we go into this matter, however, let us notice what the Word of God has to say on the subject. There is such a powerful text in I John 3:9 that we must begin with it and will perhaps find it sufficient. This beautiful text declares, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin because he is born of God." And the plain meaning is that when we are born again with the life of God out of heaven, we have a life in us that cannot sin anymore than God can sin. Then we are saints. Yes, we still sin according to the old nature. The old man is still there, and he will be with us till death. He can do nothing but sin. When we sin it is that old man of sin using all of our faculties and members in the way of our flesh. It is not the new man who does that evil. He cannot sin. He is the saint. The old man is the sinner. That is why Paul cries out of his wretchedness upon finding these two within him, so that he does what he would not and fails to do what he wants to do. Romans 7:14-25.

We see a saint when we see the reborn, believing child of God living according to that principle of the new life. We see him in what he does and in what he refuses to do, in what he says and refrains from saying, in where he goes and in where he will not be found, in what he seeks and from what he flees, in what he allows and in what he disallows. It is so beautifully stated in Acts 4:13, "And they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." A saint is one who manifests the life of Christ, is obedient as He was obedient, serves and glorifies God as He served and glorified God, walks in love to God as He walked in love to God.

And, as we said, to be saintly is to live the life of a saint. It means to have that life of Christ manifested in our walk of life. It is for that reason that we write of being saintly, but only faintly. In the hustle and bustle of our highly competitive life, in the midst of all the pressures and temptations of our life of affluence, in the midst of all the undeniable development of sin in the world (to which our flesh belongs and of which it is a part) the saintly glow becomes so faint that one begins to wonder how soon a little band will echo the words of Elijah, "We only are left, and they seek to kill us."

While more and more is being labelled Christian, less and less actually reflects Him in thought, word and deed. While church buildings become more beautiful and comfortable, the sermons become shorter and more antichristian. While the world draws farther and farther away from the church, many in the church

clamor for stronger and stronger measures to get into the world. A saintly walk is presented as requiring the sinner's talk; and the Word of God has to be said (and sung) in the sinner's language. And a saintly example is described as stepping down to the sinner's level.

And, though we have a calling to let our light shine, though we are by virtue of the new birth strangers in a strange land, though because of sovereign, eternal, unchangeable election from before the foundation of world our citizenship is in heaven, that saintly glow is so faint, and we resemble the world in so many unnecessary and sinful ways. Many, like righteous (saintly) Lot, vex their righteous souls, and stay right there where the sinners and their evil practices are harboured without as much as rebuke. We drift. We waver. We conform. We excuse. And we look the other way.

Did you ever sit in a train or plane and look about you and wonder which of these fellow passengers were children of God? Some plainly are not. At least as far as outward behaviour is concerned there is nothing at all to indicate that they have a spark of spiritual life in them. Of them you would not even say, "Saintly, but only faintly." You would say, Wordly, and plainly wordly. But often the saints themselves do not stand out today as a peculiar people. Why? Has the world become better, and is that world striving to be more like the church? Or has the saint sought to imitate the sinner?

Take one quick look at youth today and answer the question sincerely and soberly. No, of course, salvation is not in the length of hair or of skirts and the amount of material in dresses and bathing suits. Neither is sainthood to be found in these. But did you not read the words of a saint *who was led by the very Spirit of God* to make proper judgment upon the behaviour and actions of the church, when he wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:1,2.

No, it is not long hair and a beard that distinguishes the saint from the sinner. But what is this *unkempt*, dirty, disheveled, uncombed and wild hair among covenant seed? In the world — to which they *must not* be conformed — it is the symbol of the revolt and rebellion against almost everything that has been order and law in ages gone by. Should the children of saints, and those who themselves even profess to be saints, speak by their hair the words of defiance against law and order that is to be found among the sinners that populate this world? Should not in the church, the sphere of the saints, attempts be made to get as *far away* from anything like that as they possibly can?

Surely we are extremely charitable to speak of being saintly, but *only faintly* when *that* outward appearance is mixed with the works of the saints in Sabbath worship, prayer and the singing of God's praises. Understand that we are not judging by length or amount of hair. Scripture does not exhort us to seek sainthood in that way. We want nothing of salvation by works, either. But when we go *out of our way* to look exactly like the world, are we really striving to manifest ourselves as children of God? Who started this whole business? And whom then are we imitating? Let the young men who want to look like young women go all the way then and wash and comb their hair as faithfully as they, if that is what they are trying to conform to and see as such a worthwhile example to follow. If the grand and great grandfathers of centuries ago are the heroes after whom they would pattern their lives, then take note of the neatness and trimness of the beard and the well-pressed clothing and neatness of apparel that went with it. We have something *entirely* different today; and make no mistake about it. For with this unkempt hair among many young men (and sometimes young women) even in the church sphere goes likewise so often this rebellion against neat and clean clothing and open defiance and deeds of rebellion. After whom are you really fashioning your life and what do you say by your appearance?

The same is true, of course, about the length of skirts, the accenting and exposing of that which the world has accented and exposed for suggestive and enticing purposes, to further its rebellion against all virtue and chasteness, and to be in harmony with their free love and sexual promiscuity. But should the *saints* conform and say to the world? "We are one with you. You have a good thing going, and we thank you for having started it." Should we sing their vile and suggestive songs, speak their godless language, read their immoral books, subscribe to their lascivious magazines?

Should we as parents introduce these things into our homes and churches? Should we by feasting and

drinking, by worldly ambitions and ever-increasing efforts to conquer this world for our flesh, teach our children that *this* life is it? Should we by a "worship" of God that is nothing much more than one or two one-hour church attendance sessions (interspersed with several minutes of sleep during the sermons) send them to the world to find an example after which to pattern their lives? Let our homes be saintly, and not only faintly but brightly so. And let us not defend our children when they violate the Word of God that tells them not to be conformed to the world but to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. The *last* place where the hippy, yippy look belongs is in the church.

What then? Are we advocating uniforms and the wearing of black? Not at all! God has given His church all the colors of the rainbow, even as He has given us all the notes in the musical scale, and the major as well as the minor mode. Once again, sainthood does not consist in color and uniform. He also gave us beards and hair and well-proportioned bodies. But do not forget that He also gave us razors and scissors and cloth in sufficient lengths to discourage enticements. And He gave us His Word which always points out a people that are strangers, a spiritually distinct people that manifests sainthood by walk and word, by dress and demeanor that reveals that they have been with Jesus and are His disciples. Here you have it, in the original of Ephesians 5:1, "Be ye imitators of God as dear Children." And be sure that Christ would have gotten as far away as possible from any symbol of lawlessness and disorder, of contempt for rule and submission to the ordained authorities. A heart that loves God is not going to shout by its hair, delight in revolt against God, and in those who advocate it. And a saint, who was one plainly and not faintly, wrote to the church in I Thessalonians 5:21, 22, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all *appearance* of evil." In His fear let all know your abhorrence of all those who militate and that which militates against the holy God Whose you are.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

SECOND PERIOD 254-730 A.D.

Rev. H. Veldman

Before calling attention to the development of the doctrine of the atonement in the second period of the church (this period is not characterized by too much

development of this doctrine), it might be well to summarize what we covered until now. First, we have a clear presentation of this in the History of the Chris-

tian Church by Philip Schaff, Vol. II, 583 f.f.; and we quote:

The work of the Triune God, in His Self-revelation, is the salvation, or redemption and reconciliation of the world: negatively, the emancipation of humanity from the guilt and power of sin and death; positively, the communication of the righteousness and life of fellowship with God. First, the discord between the Creator and the creature must be adjusted; and then man can be carried onward to his destined perfection. Reconciliation with God is the ultimate aim of every religion. In heathenism it was only darkly guessed and felt after, or anticipated in perverted, fleshly forms (of course, the Scriptures do not teach that there was any real and earnest seeking after the living God among the heathen — H.V.). In Judaism it was Divinely promised, typically foreshadowed, and historically prepared. In Christianity it is revealed in objective reality, according to the eternal counsel of the love and wisdom of God, through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and is being continually applied subjectively to individuals in the church by the Holy Spirit, through the means of grace, on condition of repentance and faith (we understand, of course, that the words, “on condition of repentance and faith,” are the sentiments of Philip Schaff — H.V.). Christ is, exclusively and absolutely, the Saviour of the world, and the Mediator between God and man.

The apostolic scriptures, in the fulness of their inspiration, everywhere bear witness of this salvation wrought through Christ, as a living fact of experience. But it required time for the profound ideas of a Paul and a John to come up clearly to the view of the church; indeed, to this day they remain unfathomed. Here again experience anticipated theology. The church lived from the first on the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The cross ruled all Christian thought and conduct, and fed the spirit of martyrdom. But the primitive church teachers lived more in the thankful enjoyment of redemption than in logical reflection upon it. We perceive in their exhibitions of this blessed mystery the language rather of enthusiastic feeling than of careful definition and acute analysis. Moreover, this doctrine was never, like Christology and the doctrine of the Trinity, a subject of special controversy within the ancient church (it is well that we bear this in mind; doctrines are always developed when attacked by the enemies of the truth — H.V.). The ecumenical symbols touch it only in general terms. The Apostles’ Creed presents it in the article on the forgiveness of sins on the ground of the divine-human life, death, and resurrection of Christ. The Nicene Creed says, a little more definitely, that Christ became man for our salvation, and died for us, and rose again.

Nevertheless, all the essential elements of the later church doctrine of redemption may be found, either expressed or implied, before the close of the second century. The negative part of the doctrine, the subjection of the devil, the prince of the kingdom of sin and death, was naturally most dwelt on in the patristic

period, on account of the existing conflict of Christianity with heathenism, which was regarded as wholly ruled by Satan and demons. Even in the New Testament, particularly in Col. 2:15, Heb. 2:14, and I John 3:8, the victory over the devil is made an integral part of the work of Christ. But this view was carried out in the early church in a very peculiar and, to some extent, mythical way; and in this form continued current, until the satisfaction theory of Anselm gave a new turn to the development of the dogma. Satan is supposed to have acquired, by the disobedience of our first parents, a legal claim (whether just or unjust) upon mankind, and held them bound in the chains of sin and death (compare Hebrews 2:14, 15). Christ came to our release. The victory over Satan was conceived now as a legal ransom by the payment of a stipulated price, to wit, the death of Christ; now as a cheat upon him, either intentional and deserved, or due to his own infatuation.

The theological development of doctrine of the work of Christ began with the struggle against Jewish and heathen influences, and at the same time with the development of the doctrine of the person of Christ, which is inseparable from that of His work, and indeed fundamental to it. Ebionism, with its deistic and legal spirit, could not raise its view above the prophetic office of Christ to the priestly and the kingly, but saw in him only a new teacher and legislator. Gnosticism, from the naturalistic and pantheistic position of heathendom, looked upon redemption as a physical and intellectual process, liberating the spirit from the bonds of matter, the supposed principle of evil; reduced the human life and passion of Christ to a vain show; and could ascribe at best only a symbolical virtue to his death. For this reason even Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Tertullian in their opposition to docetism, insist most earnestly on the reality of the humanity and death of Jesus, as the source of our reconciliation with God.

In JUSTIN MARTYR appear traces of the doctrine of satisfaction, though in very indefinite terms. He often refers to the Messianic fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

And then, on page 588 of Vol. II Philip Schaff has this short paragraph:

Athanasius, in his early youth, at the beginning of the next period, wrote the first systematic treatise on redemption and answer to the question “Cur Deus homo?”, the necessity of God’s becoming man. But it was left for the Latin church, after the epoch-making treatise of Anselm, to develop this important doctrine in its various aspects.

Anselm was born in 1033 and he died in 1109. This would certainly seem to indicate that there was little development of the doctrine of the atonement in the period of the church to which we are now calling attention, the period of 254 to 730 A.D.

The late Dr. H. Bavinck, an authority on the history of dogma, also calls attention to this history of the development of the doctrine of the atonement in his Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. III, 322, and it is surely of

interest to listen to him, (we translate):

The history of the doctrine of the work of Christ reveals another character than that of the dogma of the trinity and of the person of Christ. No definite battle was waged which led to a sharp and clear formulation. The Scriptures, in the description of that work, were also so many-sided; and in the history of theology various presentations of the work of Christ arose which contained a kernel of truth. The apostolic fathers adapted themselves to the parlance of Holy Writ, and they say only that Christ out of love for us suffered for us and offered Himself. Soon, however, they tried to give a somewhat greater account of the work of Christ. And then immediately different presentations appeared; from the beginning Christ was viewed not only as prophet, but also as king and as priest. At times these three offices were expressly named as next to each other. This does not take away the fact that the one or other presentation sometimes appeared onesidedly upon the foreground. The emphasis, then, was laid that Christ is the Logos, who appeared upon earth to reveal to men the full truth and to give them an example of virtue. Or, sin was felt more as a power than as guilt, and in harmony therewith the work of Christ was interpreted more as redemption than as reconciliation or atonement; God became man in order that He should redeem people from sensuality, mortality and the dominion of demons and make them like unto God, and make them partakers of eternal life and immortality. Another presentation, well-known and in spite of the contradiction of Gregory of Nazianzum, and hailed by many, was that Christ in His death gave Himself to Satan as a ransom, bait or as a trap or snare, Job 40:19, thus conquered the devil by craftiness and delivered people out of his dominion. And finally the thought appears already at the beginning that Christ in His suffering and dying offered Himself in our stead unto God, in order to realize the atonement, the forgiveness, the sanctification and the entire salvation. Very beautifully this thought appears already in the letter to Diognetus (we will quote this later, the Lord willing — H.V.). According to Justin Martyr

Christ did not only become man in order to make us partaker of His suffering and to bring healing, to make an end of all disobedience which had come into the world, in order to conquer the power of Satan and also death; but His death is also a sacrifice for all sinners, who will to repent, the passover slain for all, the cause of the forgiveness of sins. Much more clearly Irenaeus declares that Christ, Who through His incarnation stands in fellowship with us and has entered into our entire condition, has reconciled us with God by His suffering and death, restored us into the favour of God against Whom we had sinned, has reconciled the Father for us (incidentally, the Scriptures do not declare that the Father was reconciled — H.V.), has rectified our disobedience by His obedience, and has bestowed upon us the forgiveness of sins in faith. And a similar presentation of the suffering of Christ also appears in the writings of Origen, Athanasius, and others. This presentation was also adopted and further developed in the West. Tertullian saw in religion a legal relationship, in which man is subject to the law of God and must satisfy before God through penitence for transgressions committed. Even as in the Trinity, so Tertullian used many terms, which, although not by himself, yet were applied by others to Christ and His sacrifice. Augustine enumerated many fruits of Christ's sacrifice, which all came down to this that they, on the one hand, delivered us from guilt, pollution, death and the devil, and, on the other hand, have given us enlightenment, life and salvation. Besides the ethical, mystical and the ransom theory, the juridical and satisfaction theory also are advocated by him. Christ is mediator, reconciler, redeemer, saviour, healer, pastor, etc. He is priest and sacrifice together; He is the true and only sacrifice for sins; Himself without guilt, He took upon Himself our punishment, in order to pay our guilt and to make an end to our punishment.

The Lord willing, we will continue with the history of this doctrine of the atonement in the period, 254 to 730, in our following article, quoting also the letter addressed to Diognetus, mentioned by Dr. Bavinck in the quotation above.

Missions

Mission News From Jamaica

Rev. G. Lubbers

"Therefore was the name of it called Galeed and Mizpah: for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another"

Genesis 31:38, 39

BEGINNING IN JAMAICA

In this life we all have our beginnings and our end-

ings. This has been brought so very sharply to our attention these past few months. We began our labors

in Southwest Church some six years ago, and we had certain labors to perform. God had an agenda for us! When this work was concluded our task and labors there were ended. And although we had been Missionary in the States for almost ten years in the past, this does not take away the reality that now we must make a fresh beginning. Perhaps we are a bit wiser, a bit more conscious of own weakness and strength, and of need of sole and utter dependence upon the LORD, our God! But a new beginning we must make here. We have a certain race to run, many prayers to pray, sermons to preach, school sessions to conduct, and many miles to go. But we stand now on the threshold of this all. And the eyes of Mrs. Lubbers and of myself are upon the Lord, who does not slumber or sleep.

I know you would like to hear a few particulars concerning this beginning here. But that must wait just a bit. We will try to give that in a later writing, God willing. I would now like to call attention to the fact that I have an office, a work from the LORD assigned to me which I must fulfill as did Paul write to the Colossian church, "And say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the LORD, that thou fulfil it." (Col. 4:17) This office is not always understood properly. We will therefore give here a brief outline of what the Scriptures and the Reformed fathers considered this office to be.

When Jesus was about to die and was denied three times by his disciple Peter, he spoke to him and said, "... All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee." (Mark 14:27, 28) And after the resurrection Jesus gathers the disciples as a Shepherd of the sheep, who was dead but now lives forever more. He brings them to the mountain designated, and will realize what we read in Isaiah 2:2, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it." This prophecy of Isaiah Jesus is bringing to pass: he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one which believeth, first the Jew and also the Greek.

And Christ's witnesses of His death and resurrection are to go forth into all the world, beginning at Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. And they are to go forth (keep on going forth) into all the world, among all the nations, teaching all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And He added this promise: Lo I am with you alway, even unto the consummation of the ages, the day of the great Harvest!

Definitely our task is: discipling, teaching the words of the Covenant: forgiveness of sins in Christ's blood

for everyone who believes. The full counsel of God must be preached on this score: eternal election, limited atonement, total depravity, efficacious grace and the preservation of the saints. That salvation is a work of the Triune God, out of the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Ghost must be taught. The twelve Articles of Faith must be expounded in all their length and breadth, height and depth.

But also the things which must be kept in the church, observed as Christ has commanded. All the ordinances and precepts of Christ: pure preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments and the exercise of Christian discipline.

Such is our task according to the Scriptures! Thus we read in the "FORM OF ORDINATION OF MISSIONARIES," and we quote "... Although ministers of the Word have in common, that to them is committed the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the Sacraments, the government of the Church, and the maintenance of the christian discipline, yea, all that belongs, according to the Word of God, to the office of pastor and teacher: and although from the difference of the field of labor no difference is resulting concerning office, authority or dignity, since all possess the same mission, the same office and the same authority, yet notwithstanding this, it is necessary that some labor in the congregations already established, while others are called and sent to preach the Gospel to those without, in order to bring them to Christ..."

And the "Form Of Ordination" prescribes the following duties:

1. To bring to attention of the hearers by all fit and lawful means the glad tidings that Jesus has come into the world to save sinners.
2. To administer the Sacraments where a church is gathered by Christ.
3. To ordain elders and deacons in the church wherever possible and necessary.
4. To maintain christian discipline in the midst of the congregation and to faithfully exercise the keys of the kingdom of heaven.
5. To be a faithful servant of Jesus Christ and a careful shepherd of the flock.

This is a very sober and Biblical statement of the office of a missionary, and it is vastly different from the modern idea of Mission Word as propagated by and engaged in by those who would climb the Ecumenical bandwagon. Yes, this is entirely different from what is done in the "Crusades for Christ" of a Billy Graham! Well may we cherish this "FORM," and not frown upon it, or speak of it in a disparaging and belittling way as being "antiquated!" It is fresh and up-to-date as the morning light!

Of this task we are making a beginning here in Jamaica. Yes, we had been here as an emissary. But now the mantle of the Missionary is placed on our shoulders. And this ministry we are to fulfil!

THE GUARDIAN PRESENCE OF THE LORD

On Sunday evening, September 6, 1970 a large gathering met to bid us "goodby" and wish us the blessing of the Lord. It was a good evening and one which we will long remember and cherish. Rev. Clinton J. Elliott spoke very eloquently that evening of his impressions, expressed his gratitude to God for the brotherly and kind reception which he received everywhere in our churches, and admonished us to keep the Reformed faith, which is the only truth of the Bible. Arnold Dykstra sang two fitting numbers to an audience of over four hundred people. The undersigned spoke a few words in response to the welcoming words of the minister of First Church, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren.

There was something that Rev. Van Baren said which lingers with me and which I have pondered deep in my heart. He pointed at this time of parting to the duty of the members to remember the missionary and his wife with letters and cards, and in their prayers. Now, that was very commendable. And the many well-wishes of those who shook our hands was like the balm of Gilead. Many nice and commendable things were said to and concerning us. It was a bit embarrassing at times. It made me feel that I should with the help of God go out and prove myself worthy of these wonderful expressions of gratitude, that we had accepted the call to be Missionary in Jamaica. Yet, withal this, there is one thing that lingers in my soul, and that is what Laban said to Jacob when he had pursued him as he attempted to escape from Padanaram to Canaan. They are the words "... The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." Genesis 31:38, 39

He pointed out that now we will not see each other; Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers will not be under the eye of the Consistory of First Church. No Consistory hears his sermon to approve of it with the right hand of fellowship. No one watches over the Missionary directly. But there is One who does. He never slumbers nor sleeps. He walks between the seven candlesticks, also in the churches of Jamaica. Here, too, it is required in stewards that they be found faithful. They must faithfully fulfil the ministry, and office above outlined. He must walk as example of the flock. The installation form

says "All thine actions, thy speaking and thy silence, yes, all thine influence is to co-operate to recommend the gospel of Christ. Let thy conversation be without covetousness; Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good, that thou mayest be able to say with the Apostle Paul, I Cor. 9:19, 22, 27 "For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more . . . I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. I buffet my body and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I preached to others, I myself should be rejected."

Yes, the Lord watch between thee and me!

Laban said it a bit loud-mouthed! He says it a bit vaunting as if it were only a covenant which bound Jacob. He stipulates the terms very exactly, and from the heights of his paternal prerogative. And he does not admit Jacob's rightful grievances, but ignores them very haughtily. He treats Jacob as one who is very much a potential cruel man to his wives, and to the children. It was the last words of Laban to Jacob, and with this Laban bows from the scene of history!

But Jacob receives it. It is so true. The Lord will watch over Jacob. He will come and wrestle with Him at the Jabbok river, will make him limp that he may walk like a man of God in faith and dependence upon the Lord. And from the Peniel experience Jacob will be led to Bethel, and to Egypt, and in his generations the Lord will watch over Jacob and bring him to the promised land in the latter days!

Yes, the Lord watch over us. It is a very small thing to be judged of man. And if Paul knows nothing amiss, yet therein is he not justified. The Lord will judge him. Let, therefore, men account him as a minister of Christ, and a steward of the mysteries of God in the church.

In sorrow and in loneliness, in disappointments and challenges, the Lord is with all His faithful servants. And it is sought in a steward that he be found faithful. He must faithfully preach the full counsel of God, and finish the work assigned him of the Lord.

The God of the Watch tower of Mispah watches over all of us. Presently He says to His faithful servants; Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.

From Holy Writ

Explanation of I John 2: 1-3 (cont.)

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS REFUTED CONCERNING THE TERM "WORLD"

Always in the history of the church in the world there have been those who pervert the Scriptures to

their own destruction. Every heretic likes to quote his selected Scripture passages without any regard to the total message of the Scriptures. Sometimes he is so bold and arrogant as to allege his own well-nigh infalli-

bility, "If I am wrong the Scriptures have deceived me!" And as it is with every heretic on every point of doctrine so it is also with these heretics who allege that the term "world" must refer to all men, to every man, head for head, whatever came out of the loins of Adam. And with a rather conceited and imaginary triumphant look they call your attention to such passages which seem to substantiate their error! Why, have we never read that the Bible says "Jesus loves the world?" (John 3:16) And who can deny that the Bible teaches that Jesus is "the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the *world*?" (John 1:29) And do we not read that "Jesus came not to destroy that *world*, but that the *world* might be saved through him?" And truly who can be so blind as to overlook that "God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto Himself, not imputing their sins unto them?" And surely in our text under discussion a simple reading of the text ought to persuade the most incredulous that "Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, but not only for ours, but for the sin of the whole world?"

It would seem that only for these few texts, those who teach that Christ died only for "his people" and who thus hold to the Reformed teaching of "limited atonement," ought to yield the field and retire in shameful silence. However, no one who has taken any pains to study what the united teaching of the Scriptures is on this score, will throw in the cudgel, but will stand his man in battle to the end, that the truth of the Gospel may stand!

The reader will, therefore, not merely bear with this writer when he treats of this question a bit more broadly and profoundly, but will deem that we had done him and all our readers a service in so doing. Without refuting the error of the proponent of "common grace" directly, we will merely quote a few passages, which none other than the late Dr. A. Kuyper Sr. chose in his book entitled "*That Grace Is Particular*" for this purpose, and demonstrate the negative proposition that the term "world" by no means simply means anywhere and everywhere "every man" head for head! One must be out of his sober and right mind to attempt to maintain this position. But heretics die hard! How one will attempt to explain Luke 16:8 of every man is hard to understand. The text reads "for the children of this *world* are in their generation wiser than the children of light." For the term "world" here is "age," the present time, the world in its development at any given moment in history under the providential direction of the Most High. This cannot mean "all men!" Again, we read in Romans 12:2 "And be not fashioned (conformed) according to this *world*." Here, too, the term "world" is the translation of the term "age." And how any one can hold to the proposition that the term "world" always refers to all men in Scripture is conclusively shown to be impossible when we read Luke 9:25, "For what doth it profit a man if

he gain the whole world (*ton kosmon holon*) and lose (suffer loss) of his own soul." Here the term refers to the entirety of the world's possession, honor, prestige, power and dominion. It by no means refers to "all men." And to silence the flippant interpreter of Scripture forever on this score we also quote from the very Chapter from which we have chosen a text to explain. We refer to I John 2:17, "And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Here the term "world" means: the physical universe, the world with all its present relationships: marriage, money, (mammon) its greed and boastful possession of things! All these are passing away; like a mighty rushing current they are carried forward to destruction! It does not mean "all men" at all.

We have now not yet stated what the term or concept "world" does indicate in the plain teaching of Scripture. This task now awaits us so that at the conclusion we may be able to give a proper interpretation of the phrase in question "... but for the sin of the whole world." (I John 2:1-3)

THE POSITIVE EXPOSITION OF THE TERM "COSMOS" (WORLD) IN SCRIPTURE (I John 2:3)

Any good Biblical Greek Lexicon will tell you that the term "kosmos" comes from the verb "kosmew" and means: regular disposition and arrangement. The late Dr. Kuyper, from whom we have learned much on this subject, says that the term "kosmos" is creation as brought forth with Divine power as a beautiful artistic framework and organism. He insists that the phrase "from the creation of the world" refers to the creative act when the world was made in the Six Day Creation week, as a beautiful organic whole, wherein the history can move forward as in a mighty framework. We must, therefore, distinguish between what God created in the primary creation which resulted in the "earth being void and without form" and the creative acts of God whereby the creation came into being as a beautiful artistic whole. God made the world and all things which are therein. (Acts 17:14; Matt. 24:21; Matt. 13:35) The world which was void and without form was not the habitable world nor was it yet divided into ages. This God definitely brought about in the six day Creation-Week. This is the world which was the rejoicing of the personified "Wisdom" in the habitable part of the earth.

When God made the earth which was void and without form into a habitable world for men and angels, then he made the "cosmos," the world. The scope of the world is given us in the first sentence of the Bible "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. 1:1)

This conception of the term "Kosmos" (world) is basic to our understanding of the truth of the Gospel that Christ is the propitiation for the sin of the whole world!

In this beautiful arrangement, this masterful edifice of the Triune God, man is to occupy the chief place among the creatures. And strictly speaking, this "man" is none other than the "Son of Man." It is true, that, speaking historically, Christ was not yet on the scene in the flesh in the first Paradise prior to the Fall of Adam. Still, it must be conceded that in the plan of God with Kosmos, all things were made by this Son of God, the eternal Logos (John 1:1-3) and all things were made unto Him. (Col. 1:16) Yea, he is before all things, so that in all things he should have the preeminence. For it pleased God that in Him all the fulness should dwell. He is the Firstborn of all creatures, he is above the angels (Hebrews 1:5-13) and He is constituted Head of His body, which is the church. All things are sustained together in Him. The one grand whole is formed and kept in one totality in Him. Without Him there is no world. For the variegated creaturehood is the product of the Father, through the Son (Logos) and in the Spirit. And whereas Christ became man the truth stands which is prophesied in Psalm 8:5-7 "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels (than God) and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beast of the field: the fowls of the air and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. . . ." Here we see a picture of the greatness of Adam only as he is the *type* of Christ. (Rom. 5:14)

This explains that there can be no sin but what it is a *world-sin*! There can be no sin, but what it is is the sin of the whole human race. No man sins but as a member of the whole human race. The Bible knows nothing of the false, nominalistic individualism of the Pelagian and the Arminian! The Bible knows the truth of organic solidarity. The truth is expressed in Romans 5:12 "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by (this one) sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all had sinned. . . ." No one, therefore, can speak of sin in his own terms, nor concerning the world in his own terms, but must explain in the light of the basic teachings of Scripture concerning both! And, therefore, we hold that sin of the world is the sin, the terrible breaking of the law as this affected the whole world, heaven and earth, in all its

creatures and relationships, each according to his kind.

Let it be then understood that when Adam fell, the "world" fell into the power and the curse of sin. All came under the grip and curse of death. And whereas sin has its origin in the "prince of darkness," Satan, the Devil, that Old Dragon, we must see the place of this fallen angel, too, in the "sin of the world." Basically it is his sin, he is the father of the lie, because he did not remain standing in the truth. The truth was not in him. He would carry and did carry his lie into this. He, Satan would be like God, and man must attempt to be like God. The head of creation must now try to be more than Servant. He must assume to be GOD! That is sin. It is disobedience and wicked pride. It is being "puffed up." And thus in a sense Satan did become the prince of this world. He tries to create his own "sinful world" in God's world. He is the great usurper of power. He says to Jesus: all these kingdoms of the earth will I give you, if you will do obeisance to me just this once! He is the prince of the earth, of the world. His is power in the sons of disobedience. His is the power of a great army of demons. He is a *world-ruler*. And when his rule is broken, his rule of the *world* is broken. Satan is cast out, cast down from heaven as that great Lucifer. Only through the fall of Adam could Satan obtain a grip in the present world, this present age. Now it is true that the whole world lies in the evil one. And this world of Satan we must not love. For all that is in this world is the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. This "sin" of the world must be removed. It must be utterly taken out. God destroyed in the flood the world of wicked men. (II Peter 2:3) He did not destroy in the flood his own beautiful architectural arrangement, but he destroyed all that Satan wrought evilly in this world through man!

But this world of God is redeemed. God sent His own son that the world, the "kosmos" might be saved. Yes, this means the propitiation for the sins of all the elect in Christ, who shall one day reign with Him in glory. And he is the only propitiation for our sins. But he is not only the propitiation for those sins which are strictly our sins, but He is the propitiation, who made peace between heaven and earth, uniting under Him all things as under one Head. And He is the propitiation for our sins. When we sin we have such a great advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous One!

Pages from the Past

Believers and Their Seed — Chapter XI (Cont.)

Rev. Herman Hoeksema

But besides, also the latter is not a valid conclusion. It is very much a question whether this

child was so young that he had not already manifested in his life that good which was found in him before the

Lord. We get the opposite impression when we read that all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him. We would much rather say, therefore, that this child had already reached the age at which he plainly revealed that by his piety he distinguished himself from the house of Jeroboam. And thus, also in this passage of Scripture there is no proof for the position that all the children of believers are elect and saved if they are taken away in their early childhood.

Hence, we are of the conviction that such a general proposition cannot be expressed. If it is expressed, then it does not mean much, for the simple reason that the question always remains up to what age children may be counted with those who die in infancy, of whom it cannot yet be expected that in their life they might reveal something either of the grace of God or of the opposite. But this position can never be maintained. It cannot be based on being in the covenant in the outward, historical sense of the word: for all who are born in the sphere of the covenant do not belong to spiritual Israel, and therefore the possibility always remains that also some of the carnal and reprobate seed die in infancy. And on the fact of children's dying in infancy one can at best base a judgment of love, but never a positive and explicit item of confession. And also from the examples which are sometimes cited from Scripture nothing can be concluded with certainty.

As far as the objective confession of the church of Christ is concerned, as that confession is founded on the Word of God, the matter must certainly be presented differently. By reason of the fact that the Lord establishes His covenant in the line of successive generations, believers will confess in gratitude before the Lord that He counts them worthy to bring forth the true seed of the covenant. This true seed of the covenant, however, does not consist of *all* children who are born of them, but only of the children of the promise. Certain it is that believers also bring forth another seed. Now, on this side of death and the grave fleshly ties may draw us, so that we say that we *wish* to see all our children saved, and do not wish that our own flesh and blood goes lost. But in the final analysis, also in this respect the righteous must live out of their faith, not from their flesh. If one lives out of faith, then he will say: "Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast counted me worthy to bring forth children for Thy eternal covenant. From Thy grace I desire to receive my children. According to Thy covenant I want to bring them up in the fear of Thy name. For the sake of Thy name and Thy covenant, it is also the desire of my heart that all my children walk in the ways of Thy covenant. But ultimately I desire to serve nothing else than Thy good

pleasure. And bowing before Thy divine majesty, I thank Thee when Thou dost save Thy children out of my children and dost receive them in glory."

With objective certainty, therefore, there is nothing more to be said of children who die in their infancy than that the Lord saves *His seed* out of our seed.

Whether, therefore, there is no room whatsoever for that which the fathers declared in Article 17 of the First Head of the Canons is an entirely different question. Notice that the fathers here express themselves very cautiously. They do not assert that all children of the covenant who die in infancy are also saved, but that *godly parents ought not to doubt* concerning the election and salvation of their children. Now this is, in the first place, subjective; and, in the second place, it is negative. The expression "godly parents" says something different than all parents who have their children baptized. Those who have sought an explanation of this article have always called attention to this distinction. Godly parents are such as live a god-fearing life with their children. They bring forth their children in the consciousness that the Lord has counted them worthy to bring forth children for His covenant. Thus they live already before their children see the light of day, in expectant prayer and supplication before the Lord. They desire to serve the Lord, also in the bringing forth of their children. For those children they pray. Those children they consecrate to the service of the Lord. In behalf of those children they also beseech the Lord for the grace of His covenant, in order that they may live to the glory of the covenant God in the midst of the world. If those children may grow up, then they instruct them in the fear of the Lord, in order that they may know the ways of His covenant and walk therein. Such are godly parents!

And if, now, from the midst of such a family children are taken away, children who certainly could not yet consciously assume any attitude toward the covenant of the Lord, then such parents ought not to stand at that death and that grave of their children doubting. They do not say, "My child is baptized, and therefore it is saved." But they say indeed, also at that grave: "Lord, in Thy name I have brought forth a child. And from Thy hand I have received it. I have consecrated it to Thee, in order that it should be a child for Thy covenant. And now Thou hast taken the child away from me. In that same faith wherein I consecrated him to Thee, I leave him with Thee, without being filled with anxious doubt concerning the salvation and election of this child, but knowing that Thou, according to Thy good pleasure, which by faith to me is always good, dost save Thy children out of my seed!"

Have you ordered ***The Triple Knowledge?***

News From Our Churches

Incoming news from the churches has been dwindling a little lately; so let's try some from the schools. You probably know that Hope Protestant Reformed School, of Grand Rapids, looks considerably different than it did a year ago at this time. A building program has resulted in another classroom, a gym, kitchen, and a very attractive office area. In fact, the whole new addition is extremely attractive. Mr. John Buiter, the school principal, writes that he has "received numerous remarks about the 'new appearance' of our school because of the new front, landscaping, parking lot, and sidewalks." He adds that, "these things do not change the Biblical foundation of our instruction, but they make the working out of our tasks more efficient and pleasant."

Part of their building program was necessitated by an expanding enrollment. Their 1st grade class this year consisted of no less than *forty* students. That exceeds the optimum size for *any* grade, but particularly for the 1st grade, with its reading instruction. So they split the grade into two separate classes, which meant, of course, that they needed another classroom. That's no doubt a "first" for our schools. We've had to double up classes plenty of times in the past; but here, for the first time, it became necessary to have two sections of the same grade!

Their new gym will make it unnecessary for the students to walk to Hope Church every time they have a chapel or an assembly. It will also make a real physical education program possible. In the same issue of the Hope "Highlights" from which we just quoted, Mr. Buiter writes, "This room is much appreciated by students and staff. The rainy days of September did not stop our physical education program, we simply moved indoors. A noon hour intramural program has already begun with a basketball free-throw tournament."

Hope's teachers were not the only ones to enjoy the new facilities. The Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute held its annual Convention at that school on Oct. 8 and 9. Perhaps we could pass on a little information about the Convention. The schools represented were Adams, Covenant, Hope, and South Holland. A convention of this sort provides for the teachers much opportunity for professional growth and development. The teachers were able to learn from a variety of sources. A forum on "The Christian and Ecology" included Prof. H. Hanko and Mr. T. Newhof, Jr. as speakers. And a symposium on "Interscholastic Athletics" again included parents — Mr. D. Meulenberg and Mr. J. Huiskens. Topics of a more academic nature were, of course, introduced by the teachers. All in all, the convention was a very enjoyable and exceedingly

profitable experience for those who attended.

There's another school about which we have some old news. In fact, it's been so long ago, that even those of you who attended Seminary Night will, likely, find that this reads almost like news. It was held in Hope Church (Grand Rapids) on Sept. 9. The fact that these convocation exercises were *held*, was not at all unusual. The Seminary professors, the students, and the members of the Theological School Committee meet at the beginning of *every* school year to "invoke God's blessing upon the school, its staff, and its student body." But in the past it was always held, according to Rev. Schipper, in his introductory remarks, "down under the earth at the corner of Fuller and Franklin." This year, however, the School Committee decided to invite all of our people to share this experience with them.

Rev. Schipper also had a few words concerning the professors. He mentioned that few people are really aware of their "Herculean task," of their 14-16 hour days. He was happy for the opportunity to give a public expression of appreciation for them, and of thankfulness that God "has provided two theological giants" to instruct our prospective ministers.

Prof. Hanko was the next speaker to address the audience. He pointed out that the students also put in 14-16 hour days. But, he added, the students must learn in the seminary to work hard, because the fact is that the study of the Word of God requires hard work. "There's no room in our parsonages for lazy men."

Mr. Ron Van Overloop, second year Seminary student, was the next speaker. He took note of the fact that he had a rather rare opportunity to, as a student, give voice to his feelings. But, he added, "Notice the care and precision with which the program was prepared. There's a professor immediately preceding and immediately following my speech, so I dare not say anything wrong." He had no intention, of course, of saying anything wrong. He remarked, for one thing, about the rewarding experience he and the other seminary students had had as practice preachers during the summer months — in spite of the fact that their sermons had to be submitted to the professors for approval, and were returned with enough red ink to necessitate some major reworking.

The professor "immediately following" was Prof. Hoeksema. His task, as Rector of the Seminary, was to "address the student body, drawing from the Word of God comfort, encouragement, and direction for the work of the coming school year."

Since this particular school merits our love and interest, it was certainly a privilege, for all present, to be able to share in its opening exercises. D.D.