

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation:

Engraved On His Hands

**Confronted By The Same Issues — Sequel
(Editorial)**

Seminary Building Drive Report

**More On Key '73
(All Around Us)**

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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Meditation

Engraved On His Hands

Rev. M. Schipper

"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands . . ."

Isaiah 49: 16a.

A word of comfort directed to Zion!

To Zion, enveloped in the darkness of captivity in Babylon!

Where the Word of God had come to the captives through the prophet, — "Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted."

But where Zion said, "The Lord hath forsaken me,

and my Lord hath forgotten me."

To which Zion the Lord responds: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hand . . .!"

To dejected, downcast, hopeless children of God, this Word of God comes!

A solid Word of comfort!

"I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands!"

And, as it was seven or eight centuries before Christ came; so it is now, twenty centuries after He came — the people of God need comfort!

In the midst of the world steeped in sin, in the world that increases in iniquity, where sin and death still abound; in the world wherein it often appears that all things are against the people of God; wherein the very generations of the believers which are called the church of God deteriorate, amalgamate and go hand in hand with the world; wherein the child of God finds it increasingly difficult to maintain his own spiritual equilibrium and distinctiveness — in that world the true people of God often succumb to gloominess and fear. In that world, too, they are required to bear the reproaches and shame of the cross of Christ they are expected to carry; but to them come also in the providence of God sufferings of this present time. They see their dear ones snatched away; they feel the gnawing pains of disease; and the night of this present time often appears to have no end. And in the throes of despondency they often cry out, as did the remnant in Babylon: "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." They need comfort!

And no more reassuring Word can be given to them than that which is spoken here to the captives, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands!"

You understand, of course, that the Lord here through the prophet speaks to His people in terms of human language not only, but in terms of human faculties. That is the only language and the only way they can comprehend what God is saying to them. We know from His Word that God is Spirit, and that they who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth; and that can only mean that God Who is essentially Spirit has no hands such as you and I have. Yet He condescends to the level of our perception to speak to us even concerning Himself in the conceptions of human life. So that the expression, "the hands of the Lord," is a figurative expression, signifying that which is very near to Him, and closely connected to His very Person. When He says, therefore, "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," He means to convey to us the truth that we are very near to Him. He has an image of us inscribed upon His Person, according to which He sees us continually before Him.

We also have images, pictures of loved ones, which we cherish; pictures of those of whom we hold fond recollections. We set them in the most prominent places in our homes, where we cannot help but see them often. Most generally does the picture appear more fonder to us when it represents the likeness of a dear one who is far distant from us, or of one who has been removed from us by the hand of death. Oh, how we cherish their images! One glance at them brings back to our memories fond relationships. Especially is

this so when the image represents a father or mother, a wife or husband, or perhaps a little infant we dandled upon the knee. Such a picture is dear to us, and we would not part with it for any price. It is a priceless treasure.

So also, only in a far more real sense, God has an image of His people upon the palms of His hands. He does not have it stashed away somewhere in a closet, nor does He put it in a place where only casually He may look at it. But He has it in a most prominent place. It is near to Him as His hands. It is fixed upon His very Person. It can never be lost out of sight. We are always consciously before Him.

Perhaps you ask the question: But is that image an exact likeness of what I really am? Does that image which God has on His hands look precisely like me?

And the answer is an unequivocal: Yes! It is the exact portrait of you and me. We look exactly as we are inscribed upon His hands.

Oh, you say, how terrible! A picture of me as I am by nature? My image as I am now, a sinner, a murderer, an adulterer, a thief, a liar? Is it a picture of me in my corruption, with all the lines of depravity marked all over my body, with death working in me, with all my filthy stains, and all my dirty garments?

Stop, O child of God!

Ask no more foolish questions!

You are thinking only in terms of that which is earthly. You are thinking of image-making only in terms of the modern camera, with its ability to take your picture precisely as you appear before its lens. When you ask the above questions, you are thinking only of what you look like after the fall of man in Paradise. You are conceiving of yourself only as you are by nature, but apart from grace.

To be sure, if that were the image God has on His hands, there would be ample occasion for fright. If that constituted the image God retains of us, then I for one could not rest day or night. Then all I could possibly expect from Him would be the dispensations of His holy wrath.

For God never changes! He remains eternally righteous, holy, and good. And He maintains Himself in all His glorious virtues. Then surely all I could ever expect would be the continual outpouring of His holy and hot displeasure. For God is angry with the wicked every day, and the curse of the Lord abides in the house of the ungodly. And if my image is that of a wicked, corrupt, ungodly sinner, then surely He will not leave me alone, but He must needs afflict me because of my sins, both my original as well as my actual sins. If the prophet had come with such a word to the despondent captives, he could in no sense ease their suffering, nor would he set them straight in their mistaken notion that the Lord had forsaken and forgotten them. He would only aggravate their distresses, and make himself an object of reproach.

And if that is the way we must explain this Word of God to you, beloved, then you would have much reason to rebel against this Word of God.

But in no sense of the word may this Word of God thus be interpreted!

God does indeed have a perfect image of His people inscribed upon the palms of His hands, but it is not the image of us as we are by nature. Rather, (thanks be to His holy Name) it is the image of us as we are in Christ. It is the perfect image as we are perfect in Him. It is our picture as we are, without sin, without corruption, as we are holy and righteous in our Redeemer. As Christ, the Only Begotten, is righteous, holy, glorious, most beautiful; so we are the perfection of beauty as we are engraven on God's hands.

That image is the original image of Zion which God has eternally known in love. From before the foundation of the world God has not only determined upon the image of Zion, but He also sees Zion according to that perfect image. Eternally He has in love chosen Zion in Christ. Fact is, He never sees us apart from Christ. In Christ He sees us as redeemed, cleansed, and holy. In Christ He beholds us redeemed through the way of sin and grace, and presented without spot or wrinkle in the assembly of the elect in life eternal. In Christ we appear before Him in the perfection of beauty. So God sees us eternally. That is the image which is engraven upon the palms of His hands.

That we are *engraven* on His hands, is also a figure of speech. It signifies that we are so permanently etched that the image can never be erased or blotted out. Our photographs, though they may last a long time when they are properly cared for, may fade and lose their original lustre and beauty. Then, too, because we are subject to change, and through age and illness and many other reasons, we find that it is necessary to take successive pictures to keep up with the exact likeness. Not so is it with the image which God has engraven upon His hands.

That word "engraven" is a beautiful word, pregnant with deep thought. It comes from a word which means literally; to decree or ordain. It points us, therefore, to God's counsel, according to which He eternally determines and ordains all things, and therefore also our image. In the counsel of His decrees He eternally wills a people perfected and made righteous and holy in Christ Jesus. And as it were by the steel point of His counsel He engraves them upon the palms of His hands. So also He loves them and they are the objects of His affection. Never could He love them as dirty, filthy, hell-bound sinners. We have a righteous God, beloved, Who loves righteousness, and militates against all evil. Shall that God love us, while we are sinners, it

must be then that He does so only as He sees us perfected in Christ. Oh, indeed, God loved us when we were sinners, and in due time Christ died for the ungodly. And even as we are in the midst of all our sin and corruption, the infinite bowels of God's mercy yearn after us. But it is because He always sees us according to the perfect image of His Son. He sees us always, too, as we shall become perfect in Christ. That we are now, in spite of all our sin and corruption, — perfect in Christ! So we shall be also in the day of Christ — we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be transformed into His perfect image. But God sees us as we always were and forever shall be — in the beauty of holiness. That image can never be destroyed. We are deeply engraven by that counsel of His decrees in the hands of His love.

What an abiding comfort!

Comfort it was also for the children of Zion caught up in the bondage of Babylon.

Surely, the children of Zion will have to retract the accusations they made while disconsolate in the throes of captivity. Then they charged that the Lord had forsaken them and had forgotten His people. Zion must know that Jehovah, their God, could never forget them whom He had sovereignly foreknown, and engraven in the palms of His hands. Believing Zion will hear the message of the prophet and be greatly comforted. Indeed, the heavens may sing, and the earth may rejoice: for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted. Even in the midst of the dark night of their captivity, Zion may be jubilant with praise; for the Lord loves His people, and will redeem them, perfecting them according to the image He has of them in His hands.

No different is it for the people of God today!

That is, for that people who are enveloped in the darkness of this present evil world, and to whom it often appears that the Lord tarries too long in the realization of His promise to return quickly. That is, for that people who often become weary in their battle against sin and darkness, and complain that their God has forsaken them. That is, for that people who pine away upon beds of affliction, or are required to bear a cross that often seems too heavy to carry.

Let them find the only true consolation that can lift them up in the words of this text.

Not much comfort is it for them to know that some time the present night of darkness will pass away. Though it may give some relief to know that the troubles will not last forever, they have no real easement of their present pain.

But nothing gives more comfort than to know that the faithful covenant Jehovah holds us in the hallow of His hands, and that He Who never sleeps, beholds us as we really are, precious in His sight!

Editorial

Editor's Notes

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Deadlines for Announcements. Our Business Manager asked me to give a gentle reminder that the deadlines for announcements are the 1st and the 15th of the month. By those dates all announcements must be in his hands (and please do not send them to the Editor) if they are to be placed in the following issue of our magazine. And while I am making reminders, may I remind my fellow staff members that vacation is over, and that all copy must be in my hands on the 1st and the 15th of each month, *one month before publication?* Your cooperation will help me to meet my deadlines!

* * *

Be Sure To Read the highly encouraging report on the Seminary Building Fund Drive which appears in this

issue. We all — Seminary professors, students, Theological School Committee, and Churches — may be greatly encouraged by this report. Forward in faith!

* * *

R.F.P.A. Annual Meeting. Elsewhere in this issue our annual meeting is announced. A special plea is going out to our younger men to attend and to join. I take this opportunity to urge that ALL our men join hands in this work. Our R.F.P.A. and *Standard Bearer* not only have a great and large work to do; but also, especially of late, the responses to our literature have been increasing and are encouraging — perhaps, *exciting* is the word. The R.F.P.A. needs and invites your active support!

Confronted By The Same Issues — Sequel

Perhaps our readers will recall that in our March 1 issue we made the point that the Reformed Churches in New Zealand, which support the Theological College in Geelong, Australia, might soon be confronted by the same issues which they faced in connection with the doctrinal errors of Dr. K. Runia. We suggested that this might be the case in connection with some views expressed in a sermon by Dr. S. Woudstra, the designated replacement for Dr. G. van Groningen at Geelong, (March 1 issue, pp. 243, ff.).

To the credit of some in New Zealand, this matter was brought to the attention of the Board of Directors of Geelong (called in the quotations below the Board of Directors of the Association for a Christian University). In the *Reformed Journal*, the official paper of the Reformed Churches of the Presbyteries of Auckland and Wellington, a report of the Board of Directors is published. This report is in the form of a letter addressed to the Sessions (consistories) of the churches in New Zealand. We quote that part of their letter which concerns the views of Dr. S. Woudstra:

1. *re Dr. S. Woudstra:* There still seems to be some misunderstanding on the part of some members concerning the appointment of Dr. Woudstra. This appointment was made by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Christian Reformed Church of America, in response to our urgent plea for assistance in the form of a replacement for Dr. G. Van Groningen in the department of Old Testament.

As previously stated in our circular letter of

15/9/71, this appointment of Dr. Woudstra differs from a normal appointment in that he comes to us as a professor on loan from the CRBFM, which undertakes to pay the costs of transport for him and his family to Australia, and to continue to support him financially for the duration of his term of service with the College.

However, the main reason why we are writing to you here about Dr. Woudstra is on account of criticisms of a recent sermon preached by him in the Borculo Christian Reformed Church, of which he is presently associate-pastor, and of which Dr. van Groningen was pastor before his departure for Australia.

We quote from a letter received from the Far-East Secretary of the CRBFM (Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Missions):

"The pastor of the Borculo Church, in response to the criticism of one member of the church, requested the elders to hear the recording of the sermon once again. The elders then met to discuss the criticism of the sermon. Their judgement was that the sermon was edifying, and that there was nothing in the sermon which they judged heretical.

"They further appointed a committee to admonish the brother who made the criticism for failure to bring his objection to the personal attention of Dr. Woudstra, for failure to discuss his objection with the consistory, and for circulating the tape as he did.

"... Dr. Woudstra is aware that these charges had been made. He informed me that the Association of Christian Reformed Laymen (which publish a

semi-secret Newsletter) had also published something critical of a few sentences from this sermon. In both these instances the presentation of the material has been judged as utterly unfair . . . If precedents are of any significance, I believe I can say that the committee will consider the consistory judgement to be adequate and final."

(We refrain from commenting on Prof. H. Hoeksema's criticism of Dr. Woudstra's sermon, as it appeared in the *Standard Bearer* of 1st May '72).

In connection with the above statement of the Board of Directors of Geelong we make the following comments:

1) While we do not know the precise form in which this matter was brought to the Board of Directors, it is evident that the Board was made aware of the criticisms of Dr. Woudstra's sermon. And undoubtedly, if they had been so minded, the Board could have had access to all the material, including the sermon-tape itself, and could — and should — have made their own judgment. After all, the Board is responsible for the instruction and the orthodoxy of the instructors at Geelong — even of instructors who are loaned by the Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Missions. In other words, it is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to decide whether or not the loan is acceptable.

2) We "refrain from commenting" on the Board's refraining from comment on the *Standard Bearer's*

criticism. The *Standard Bearer* is not interested in credit, but in *issues*.

3) It is evident that the Board does not enter into the issues whatsoever. Instead, the Board of Directors hides behind some second-hand testimony from the Borculo Church without even checking and testing the accuracy of that testimony.

4) It is evident that the Board of Directors has not at all changed its attitude since they were confronted by similar issues in the case of Dr. K. Runia. Also then — although there was detailed protest against Runia's views — the issues were glossed over. And now the Board was confronted by the same issues, only this time in the case of a professor-on-loan and even before he had arrived. To make matters worse, in this case the issues concern one who is to occupy the Chair of Old Testament studies! And the professor-designate for the Old Testament department *literally* states: 1) That he does not know precisely what the infallibility of Scripture means. 2) That he does not know the correct interpretation of Genesis 1-11. 3) That the Old Testament teaches that God is changeable. The issues could hardly be clearer. And they could hardly be more crucial. One can only conclude that the Board of Directors is not sufficiently concerned about the orthodoxy of their College and of the future ministers in Australasia even to make a thorough investigation. They would prefer to use the whitewash brush!

New Zealand, Geelong, and Orthodoxy

But there is more to this sequel.

Involved, as we have pointed out before, are the Reformed Churches of New Zealand as supporting churches of Geelong College. They were involved in the Runia matter, but they declined to exercise any doctrinal discipline in that matter. Meanwhile they officially re-affirmed the doctrine of Scriptural infallibility (as summarized in the confessions) and the historicity of the details of Genesis 1-3. This statement also included the maintenance of the doctrine of election and reprobation as taught by the Canons. Moreover, they took the stand that they "require anyone who speaks or writes, teaches, preaches, or counsels on behalf of these churches to do so in accordance with this statement."

Now, since Geelong is officially supported by the New Zealand Reformed Churches, the teaching of Dr. S. Woudstra also comes — albeit somewhat indirectly — under this pronouncement of their Synod. And therefore, in view of the statement of the Board of Directors of Geelong, the Reformed Churches of New Zealand are very actually confronted by the issue of maintaining or not maintaining their officially declared

position. Will they now allow Dr. Woudstra to teach on behalf of their churches, or will they not?

That is the issue.

Geelong, unless it does an about-face on this matter, is accepting Woudstra as their Old Testament professor in spite of his literally heretical statements. That seems to be settled.

But what will the New Zealand Churches do now? Will they enforce their decision, repudiate Woudstra's teachings or professions of ignorance, and therefore withdraw their support of Geelong? Or will they also gloss over the matter, hide behind the "explanation" of the Board of Directors of Geelong, and thus back down from their avowed adherence to the confessions?

One voice of dissatisfaction with the statement by the Board of Directors is already being heard. The Rev. G.H.W. Kroon, of Wellington, writes in the same issue of the *Reformed Journal*:

It is on the request of the Board of the Association for a Christian University in Geelong (Vic.) that we reprint its letter that was sent to the sessions of our churches on the 15th of May 1972.

From this letter it is evident that the Board has

been in correspondence with the *Far East* Secretary of the Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Mission (CRBFM) *only*. Seemingly there has been no direct contact on the matters involved with Borculo session nor with Dr. S. Woudstra himself, otherwise the Board would have informed us.

The College Board does not go into the subject matter itself in its letter to the Sessions. Seemingly it agrees with the pronouncement of Borculo Session that the sermon was edifying and not heretical. The Board however has taken into consideration the circumstances under which this sermon was preached, and has discussed the statements made in the sermon. The Board must have been disturbed seeing it took up contact with the CRBFM, but the answer from the Far East Secretary that Borculo session had cleared the sermon was seemingly enough reason for the Board to inform our sessions that no further attention to the matter is required. It should be clear by now that the clearance by a session, presbytery or a Synod for that matter does not necessarily mean that the matter has been cleared.

Take e.g. the Baarda/Hegger case. Rev. Hegger complained to Synod through the ecclesiastical channels of the church about Baarda's book, which is regarded as in conflict with Bible and confession. Yet Rev. Hegger was reprimanded by the Dutch Synod and Baarda cleared. Here a faithful minister who followed the ecclesiastical way in regard to this *public* book was reprimanded for not following Mt. 18 which by the way refers to personal matters.

As we see it, the Rev. Kroon has 20/20 vision on this issue. He himself is not prepared to accept the say-so of the Far East Secretary of the Chr. Ref. Board of Foreign Missions, nor of the Borculo Consistory. He understands clearly that the mere statement of a consistory, of a classis, or even of a synod does not necessarily settle things.

Moreover, the Rev. Kroon has understanding of the times. He seems to be well aware of the seriousness of the issues involved in the Woudstra matter, and of the fact that in these times those issues ought not to be glossed over. For he writes:

We would like to inform our readers as to the circumstances under which the sermon was preached.

The Churches of Reformed persuasion are at the moment involved in a *most serious* discussion, which deals with our basic belief, namely the extent and nature of the authority of Holy Scripture. This in itself gives already reason to be alarmed and concerned because it shows that the last remnant of the Reformation is no longer sure as to the absolute and final authority of Scripture even though everyone proclaims this to be true, yet in fact puts immediately a question mark behind it. (But, Rev. Kroon, you will have to exclude the Protestant Reformed Churches from this accusation. H.C.H.)

The Christian Reformed Church in the USA is plagued with the same issues as the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. This month there is a report coming up at its Synod (report 36) which deals

with the nature and extent of the authority of God's Word. The main thrust of this report is that the Bible has only authority in regard to the redemptive events. This report is being met by great opposition. (Opposition which, for the most part, "fizzled." H.C.H.)

The Editor of the Outlook (Torch and Trumpet) rightly put the question. "What about the other events?" For this report I also refer to the letter to the Editor of the Banner by Rev. R. J. Venema (formerly of Lunedin and Bucklands Beach) and reprinted elsewhere in this issue.

The Christian Reformed Church in the USA has also been involved in a discussion on the extent of the atonement of Christ. These things together with the family circumstances of Dr. Sierd Woudstra (which are well known to us all) are the circumstances under which the sermon was preached. These circumstances must be taken into consideration when we now look at the passages quoted from the sermon. Some have argued that the whole sermon should be considered, but this argument does not hold because the statements cannot have been taken out of context and they speak for themselves.

At this point the Rev. Kroon quotes the passages from Dr. Woudstra's sermon which were quoted in our March 1 issue. Then he goes on to say: "We would like to comment on the statements. In doing so we refrain from commenting on or taking into consideration any criticism from any other quarter, just like the Board of the College states in its letter to the sessions." Again, we will not comment on this refraining from comment on what we wrote. We are interested in *issues*. And the Rev. Kroon sees the issues. For after quoting the stand of the 1971 Synod of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand to which we already referred and which we also quoted in our March 1 editorial, he goes on to point out:

But Dr. Woudstra maintains *not* to know the correct interpretation of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Further comment would be superfluous.

In regard to the question of how great is the love of God, we must keep in mind that this has been a point of argument (limited atonement) in the Christian Reformed Church for some time. But again, Dr. Woudstra does not know the answer. (Small wonder! The Christian Reformed Synod did not know the answer either: they once knew it, but they lost it principally in 1924. Hence, all they could say was that Prof. Dekker's doctrine of universal atonement was "ambiguous and abstract." H.C.H.)

Yet, we can say and describe how great God's love is. It is infinite. It is so great that God loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him (the elect, limited atonement) should not perish but have everlasting life. So John 3:16 does adequately convey the greatness of God's love. (Sound language! H.C.H.)

As far as the infallibility of God's Word is concerned, Dr. Woudstra does state that God's Word

is infallible, yet does not know what it precisely means.

But we do, don't we? It is the Truth. It is God's own Word. It is absolutely reliable and absolutely trustworthy from beginning to end, one can trust it completely and have full confidence in it.

And also in regard to the second quotation from Dr. Woudstra's sermon, the Rev. Kroon insists that we must state that God does not change.

In all this, we say again, the Rev. Kroon has 20/20 vision. He speaks sound language.

But there are two things which we cannot understand, in view of this sound language.

The first is this: why did not the Rev. Kroon insist upon doctrinal discipline in the Runia matter in 1971, when the same issues were very clearly at stake?

The second is this: why does the Rev. Kroon conclude his otherwise good comments so weakly? For he concludes as follows:

We must come to the conclusion that the future professor of Old Testament at the College has many questions and problems, which indeed raises the question why the Board has taken no further action than to inquire from the Far East Secretary of the CRBFM.

It is of course true that the College Board is dependent on the Christian Reformed Church Synod via the CRBFM for the loan of Dr. Woudstra and the financial matters involved, but that does not take the responsibility of the Board away in regard to the acceptance of the appointment.

Neither does it take away the responsibility of the Board for going into the subject matter itself and taking up personal contact with the future professor.

In this day and age where the whole Reformed community is thrown into turmoil around the basic question: What is the extent and nature of the authority of God's Word? we desire teachers, be they professors, ministers or elders who give straight forward answers with no buts and ifs.

The Board of the College is responsible for its task. We do know that the Board desires to maintain a sound Reformed position. Well the Board ought to show it. In case the Board has worked under pressure of the financial consequences let it be known that many, if not all in our denominations, are quite willing to raise an additional amount of money to maintain a sound, straight forward Reformed chair of Old Testament at the College.

Dr. S. Woudstra will be most welcome in our midst as long as he is willing to teach in conformity with the infallible Word of God and in conformity with the summary of it as we have it in our Confessional Standards.

We expect the Board to see to it and make proper investigations in its own behalf.

This conclusion I characterized as *weak*. Why?

In the first place, because, as Rev. Kroon himself has pointed out, Dr. Woudstra has by his literal statements made it plain that he is *not* in conformity with the infallible Word of God and in conformity with the summary of it as we have it in our Confessional Standards. The Rev. Kroon may not welcome Dr. Woudstra UNLESS and UNTIL he retracts those statements and gives full satisfaction as to his conformity with the confessions.

In the second place, because the Board has already refused to make proper investigations in its own behalf, as Rev. Kroon also pointed out. So the Rev. Kroon's expectation on this score is vain. He should have demanded that the Board reconsider, and that it now do what it failed to do previously in the case of Dr. Woudstra.

In the third place, because it is now the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, not the Board of Directors, who are directly confronted by the issue of maintaining their declared position, and therefore, of refusing to accept Dr. Woudstra and to support Geelong in its acceptance of him; or of repudiating their adopted position and of accepting Woudstra and supporting Geelong. It is either . . . or! The Rev. Kroon should have concluded by calling upon the Reformed Churches of New Zealand officially to face up to this issue. And he would do well not only to do this, but to initiate action by way of his own Session and Presbytery to implement the decision of 1971 and to refuse support to Geelong or acceptance of its graduates as long as Geelong accepts Dr. Woudstra.

To postpone taking a stand and to say that Dr. Woudstra must be and will be watched from now on would be fatal. The Rev. Kroon ought to know this, in view of his apparently rather thorough acquaintance with events in the Netherlands.

Or is it, perhaps, too late already — in view of the Runia debacle?

Question Box

About Infant Baptism

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In our August issue I began to answer some questions concerning the grounds of infant baptism. The first question raised by my questioner, who was

quoting arguments raised by a Baptist Minister, I saved for this issue. Let me repeat the question to refresh our memories: "His point of argument was as follows:

during the Old Testament institution of the Passover, the young children were instructed to partake of the institution, and when they asked their fathers, 'Why do we observe this ceremony?' the fathers were to teach them about their deliverance out of the land of Egypt, Exodus 12:24-27. We believe that in the new dispensation the institution of the Lord's Supper has taken the place of the Passover, and yet only *believers* are allowed to partake of the Sacrament and not their children (as in the Passover). Because ONLY believers are to partake of the elements of the Lord's Supper, so also ONLY believers are to receive the sign of the covenant. In other words, although '... God formerly commanded them to be circumcised, which was a seal of the covenant, and of the righteousness of faith...' now, because the infants are excluded from the Lord's table, so are they to be excluded from this 'seal of the covenant.' "

This is indeed an interesting, though entirely specious, argument. Why? There are several reasons why this argument is not valid.

First of all, and most importantly, there is a false disjunction here between believers and children (infants). I alluded to this in my remarks about the relation between baptism and circumcision, (cf. August issue). But this is extremely important. The Baptist claims that we must baptize only *believers*. We reply that we *do* baptize believers when we baptize infants. We do so just as surely as he baptizes believers when he baptizes adults. He will argue that many infants who are baptized later prove to be no children of God, but are lost. On this same basis, however, the Baptist cannot baptize adults: for he cannot be sure that all professing adults are believers either; some, even many, may be hypocrites and false confessors. But above all, the Baptist has to make the same argument against infant circumcision as against infant baptism. But if he does so, he is in flagrant contradiction of Scripture, which directly commanded that the seed of Abraham be circumcized in infancy. We must remember, therefore, that it is organically true of infants of believers that "they as well as the adult are included in the covenant and church of God" and that "redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, the author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adult," and that therefore "they must by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the christian church," (Heidelberg Catechism, Qu. and A. 74).

But what about this argument from the idea of the Passover?

In the first place, it should be remembered that this discussion revolving about the relation of the Passover and the Lord's Supper involves *children*, not infants. This is an important difference, so important that it destroys the whole argument raised by this Baptist minister. For it means that he cannot argue back from

the Passover-Lord's Supper relation to the Circumcision-Baptism relation. Circumcision and Baptism both involve infants who cannot even begin to ask, "What does this ceremony mean?" The Passover included *children*, but, remember, such children as were *able to ask about and to receive instruction* in the meaning of that feast. Now we are not informed in the Old Testament how old children were, or had to be, before they participated in the Passover and would raise this question. But certainly, they had reached "the years of discretion." They were no infants; they were not even toddlers. The very question and the possibility of understanding an answer presuppose this. And we know from later history that at the time of Jesus' earthly sojourn the boys were not taken to the Passover at Jerusalem until they were twelve years old, and that this was preparatory to their being admitted to the congregation at the age of thirteen. But — whatever the age — you certainly cannot draw a parallel and thus destroy the argument in favor of infant baptism in this way, for the simple reason that there is a vast difference between infants and children.

In the second place, I do not believe that one can draw a strict parallel between the Passover and the Lord's Supper, as is presupposed in this argument. It is true that the institution of the Lord's Supper has taken the place of the Passover *as a whole*. But it is not true that the Lord's Supper is *in every respect and detail* the New Testament replacement and fulfillment of the Passover. In fact, there is not even the similarity to a sacrament in the Passover which you find, according to Scripture, in Circumcision: Scripture literally calls Circumcision a "seal of the righteousness of faith," Rom. 4:11. I point this out because this also implies that one cannot *expect* that all children should be admitted to the Lord's Supper as they were to the Passover. In the case of Baptism you may expect all infants of believers to be baptized, even as all infants of the covenant were circumcised. But in the case of the Lord's Supper you may not expect this (and then make an argument against infant baptism out of the fact that they are not), because there is not a full parallel between the Lord's Supper and the Passover.

In the third place, children *are* admitted to the Lord's Supper. However, the question of admission is not determined by the question as such whether they are children or adults. The criterion is a spiritual one. Fundamentally, we may briefly state this criterion in the question: are they able to discern the Lord's body? The church has differed in the past as to how old a child must be in order to do this; and the church has differed as to how this standard is to be applied. In our churches adolescent children are admitted when they are able to make and do make profession of their faith, at whatever age that may be. John Calvin at one time proposed that this could be at the age of ten, after thorough catechizing. Later the age was set at fourteen

in his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*. But it is surely not correct to say that children are not admitted to the Lord's Supper. In fact, I will go a step farther. Children are also admitted in a measure and as members of their families even before they actually partake of the Supper's elements: this is the reason why they ought to be and are present with their parents when the Lord's Supper is celebrated and why we do not and ought not leave them at home at that occasion.

Finally, all of the above stands in close connection with the difference between the two sacraments. Baptism is the sacrament of our incorporation into the covenant and church of God. In this incorporation we

are passive. Even infants can be and are incorporated into the covenant. Hence, infants ought also to be baptized. The Lord's Supper, however, is the sacrament of our continuance in, nourishment in, and enjoyment of the fellowship of God's covenant. In this we are conscious and active. We eat and drink. We discern the Lord's body. This presupposes a conscious and active faith on the part of those who partake,

In conclusion, therefore, I maintain that the argument raised by this Baptist minister to my questioner is not a valid argument against baptism of infants.

Seminary Building Drive Report

AUGUST 10, 1972

"Praise the Lord!" The cry we often associate with an over-exuberance in certain religious circles. But we can not help but express ourselves in this way, too, concerning the drive for funds for a new seminary building.

We frankly confess that we were of little faith as this project began. The Theological School Committee has believed for a long time that a Seminary Building was essential. Not only are present quarters inadequate and hardly attractive; not only was the Seminary and its faithful professors worthy of far better facilities than we had been giving them; but also present quarters do not meet the requirements and regulations of the state for a school building. Yet when the project of a new building was first proposed, there was expressed doubt, questions, and even serious objections. With much trepidation, and considerable doubts ourselves about its success, we initiated a drive for funds (in harmony with the decision of the Synod of 1968). Frankly, some of us would have been surprised but pleased if only *half* of the needed funds were raised. And our early fears seemed only too well-founded when funds began only to trickle in — so that after a year we had less than \$7,000.

But God put to shame our own lack of faith. After the recent concerted drive for funds, and although all of our churches have not yet reported, we can inform you that God has so moved the hearts of our people that they gave with such generosity, and obviously often sacrificially, that our goal will be almost attained. It is still difficult for us to believe — but the figures speak for themselves.

The projected cost of our Seminary building (including land and furnishings), a figure approved by our 1972 Synod, is about \$105,000. Synod also decided that when 65% of the total needed was raised

in cash and pledges, the Theological School Committee could begin building (about \$68,250). In order to raise the total sum, we asked an average contribution of \$150.00 per family — if necessary, to be paid over a period of five years (\$30.00 per year). We suggested that our unmarried working young people also help in this worthy endeavor — since they have a vital interest in the future of the ministry of the Word in our Churches. And frankly, the response so far is overwhelming. We'll give you the figures. *Half* of our churches have sent in the reports on their last drives (including reports from most of our larger churches.) To date, we have in cash and pledges: \$64,278. Of this total, \$10,412 was contributed before the most recent personal-contact drive. The last drive, therefore, has raised a total so far of \$53,866 — with eight or nine more of our churches to report. Of the nine reporting churches, the following was given:

Doon: \$3,555
 Edgerton: \$474
 Grand Rapids:
 First: \$12,640
 Hope: \$13,810
 Southeast: \$6,180
 Holland: \$4,730
 Hudsonville: \$9,192
 Isabel: \$1,450
 Kalamazoo: \$1,685

We would also note the following:

1. That many of our families in all of our churches contributed in the first letter drive we conducted. These contributions are *not* reflected in the church drives listed above. The above represents only the amount raised in the most recent drive.

2. That Pella, as we earlier reported, was the first of

our churches to meet the *original* goal in the first drive of \$100.00 per family.

3. That the above figures in at least one instance represents even *more than* a \$150.00 per family contribution.

4. When the remaining churches report, we ought to be rather close to the total amount needed — and far above the 65% Synod required before we could begin construction.

Is it any wonder that our hearts are overwhelmed — and we cry, “Praise the Lord!”? We will attempt to report later the grand totals of the fund drive — and we will try to keep you informed on the progress of the new Seminary building. The Theological School Committee has appointed a special committee of four Grand Rapids’ area businessmen and contractors to recommend a new site for the Seminary building and to give recommendations on the final plans for the building.

We would also urge those who have not yet

contributed to this cause, to help us now that our goal may be fully met. Some, we know, can not assist financially. Those who can, whose heart the Lord moves, are asked to give soon — either through their consistorial treasurer, or directly to our Seminary Building Fund treasurer: Mr. R. Teitsma; 1659 Shangrai-La Drive, S.E.; Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508. We thank God that our Seminary building shall, in harmony with His will, soon be a reality. But we do earnestly desire that each of our families has a part in making this building a reality.

One final word of appreciation and thanks to our hard-working secretary of the Theological School Committee *and* treasurer of the Seminary Building Fund: Mr. R. Teitsma. He has been doing more than his share of work for our Seminary, and we do greatly appreciate his labors.

For the Theological School Committee,
Rev. G. Van Baren, president

The Day of Shadows

The Viper's Brood Strikes

Rev. John A. Heys

Although we cannot read the heart, and are in no position to do as they did, John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7) and Jesus (Matthew 12:34) called the unbelieving Scribes and Pharisees a “generation of vipers.” And the idea, of course, is that they were the seed of the serpent, children of the devil, that old Serpent and Satan, as he is called in Revelation 20:2.

Cain, after a period of behaving outwardly as though he were also the seed of the woman manifested himself to be of the Viper's brood. That there was no love in his heart for God became evident not only in his hatred for his brother, Abel, but even before that in his worship of a god which he had raised up for himself. Abel built an altar to God and humbly sought pardon in the way of the shedding of blood. Cain sought no pardon but favour by his works, giving up some of the fruits of the ground, which he had acquired at such an expense of backbreaking toil.

As one who is of the Viper's brood he struck the death blow to the seed of the woman. He struck with swift and cruel hatred. John tells us that he slew his brother because his works were evil and his brother's were righteous. And this does not simply refer to the fact that Abel's offering was the kind that God had taught man to bring, and was therefore right in His sight, while Cain's was one of his own invention and the product of his sinful pride, but it also means that

Abel's rebuke of Cain was a righteous deed, and Cain's response was wicked. The rebuke that Abel gave was one that was given in brotherly love. He had concern for Cain's spiritual wellbeing. Cain's snarl at God, “Am I my brother's keeper?” revealed a complete lack of love for God and his brother. It revealed that, though his hand brought a sacrifice, his heart was not right with God. And it manifests so clearly that relationship between the two tables of the law. One cannot hate God without sooner or later revealing that one has no love for the neighbour as well. And one who loves God will reveal a love for the neighbour. With Abel there was no question as to whether he was his brother's spiritual keeper or not. In love he came quickly with a word whereby he sought to set Cain on the right course.

Somehow, we know not exactly how, God revealed to both of these brothers that He was pleased with Abel's offering and sorely displeased with Cain's. Men's imagination often runs wild in such Biblical accounts, and they try to make the story live for a child by introducing elements which corrupt rather than instruct. Children are deceived into thinking that the smoke of Cain's offering went down to the ground while Abel's arose majestically to the sky. It may be questioned very seriously, however, whether at this stage man even knew how to build a fire and to light a

sacrificial altar. That may have come later by the ingenuity of Tubal-Cain, the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron. Far more in harmony with Scripture itself would be the position that God sent fire down from heaven to consume Abel's offering, while leaving Cain's wholly untouched. It was, at any rate, something God did that revealed His pleasure and displeasure. But even then, though He did do this at Mt. Carmel with Elijah's offering, we have no word as to how God showed His reaction to the two offerings.

One truth that is quite evident is that both Cain and Abel knew that God was pleased with Abel's offering and displeased with Cain's. God made it plain to Cain that He had no respect at all for his offering. And Abel could read it on Cain's countenance, even if there were no other sign given by God.

It is not clear from the account whether God spoke audibly to Cain so that Abel heard it as well, or even, whether verses 6 and 7 are God's word through Abel. We do read in the next verse that Cain talked with Abel after this word of God came to him. However, literally we read that the Lord spoke to Cain; and in that day there was nothing unusual about that. After Abel was dead, God spoke directly to Cain and asked him where his brother was. Directly God spoke to Cain of his punishment as a fugitive and vagabond. So that God did speak even to this reprobate in direct speech; and verses 6 and 7 no doubt are such direct speech. God does have a message for the Viper's brood as well as for the seed of the woman.

That message is "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall his desire be, and thou shalt rule over him." And this message is no "well-meant offer of salvation" to the Viper's brood. Having by sovereign decree divided the whole human race into two seeds, God does not offer to the seed of the serpent a salvation dependent upon works. Cain is not presented with a condition which, if he will fulfill it, will bring him the blessings of God's covenant.

No, we must understand this in the light of what God Himself first reveals in Genesis 4:5, "And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Wroth with God, mind you! The sin was not Cain's, according to his thinking as one who is of the Viper's brood. No, the evil was on God's part because He had no respect for all this hard work and this "goodness" on Cain's part to give up the pleasure of his fruit in order to offer it to God. In that context God maintains His own righteousness. Over against Cain's unspoken but implied charge of God's unjust dealings with him, so that the sinner becomes wroth with God because He will not enjoy the evil of that sinner, God declares His own righteousness, pointing out to Cain that if he had done well, God in all righteousness surely would have accepted him. It is not God who is not doing well. It is Cain. And when we do well, God does not do evil.

The evil of Cain is pointed out. He is told that his calling is to fight this monster of sin that lies crouching at the door and to rule it, rather than let it rule him. There is a rebuke here. There is instruction in the way of righteousness, but there is no offer of salvation whatsoever.

Cain is told what his calling is. He must rule over sin and not let sin rule him. Sin desired to devour him, but Cain is to desire that it be driven from his door and be put in a cage where it can trouble him no more. In brief what God tells Cain is that he must fight this wickedness within him. And there is not one word or letter even of suggestion of an offer of salvation. That comes only through the cross of Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, the Lamb that Cain by his sacrifice had despised, and Whom he refused to confess. And God tells Cain, "I simply will not bless you outside of Christ. If you walk the wrong way, Cain, do not become angry with ME, but with yourself! Sin lieth at YOUR door, not mine. Do not accuse Me of being unfair when I accept your brother's offering when he is walking in the right way. Do not expect me, Cain, to walk two ways: with you in your way of evil and unbelief, and with Abel in his way of righteousness. Do not expect Me, Cain, to walk in any other way than the way of righteousness. Put your anger away by recognizing the sin that you are following. Rule over that sin by a desire to serve Me, as I instructed you through your father and mother, and as your brother, Abel, has done."

"And Cain talked with Abel."

How full of significance are those words. God has ceased speaking to him after giving him a serious warning. And the anger in Cain was becoming more furious. He would not fight that monster of sin out there at the door. He opened the door to let him in. His desire was for that sin, rather than to rule it and lock it up so that it would not leap upon him to rule him in the way of destruction. Seeing, then, this representative of the living God, Whose Word had only hardened him rather than brought him on his knees in repentance, Cain began to speak with his brother who had been accepted by God.

They had words together. Abel's were, as we suggested before, those of one deeply concerned with his brother's spiritual wellbeing. He urged Cain to listen to what God said and to turn from his evil way. He maintained the justice of God and in doing so accused Cain of unrighteousness. One cannot do otherwise. Either God is righteous, or the sinner. You cannot serve God and mammon. But you cannot say God is right and Cain is also right. You have to choose. You have to say either that God is right in refusing to have respect for the sinful deeds of men, or you have to say that the sinful deeds of men must receive God's respect; and then you say that God is unrighteous. You have to say that God has a perfect right to tell His

creature how He must be worshipped; or you have to say that the creature has that right; and God sins when He does not bless that creature who "does his own thing" in regard to the worship of God.

Many churches — and individuals in the church — who today want to do their thing, want to pray to God as they see fit, rearrange and change their form of worship to satisfy the fleshly cries of men, better listen once to Abel, and not ridicule him, for he spoke God's Word. They better listen to God who alone can tell man how He must be worshipped and can be worshipped.

Abel lost his life for it.

And this is not only quite characteristic of what men who lift themselves up in pride against the living God do, but also prophetic of what we may expect in the future. For Cain is going to talk to Abel again. Cains have talked with Abels through the ages, and murdered them because they maintained God's cause and said: Repent!

The Viper's brood, which John the Baptist and Jesus called such by name, talked with The Seed of the Woman; and in that same anger of Cain they took Him and nailed Him to an accursed tree. Abel's blood was a picture of far more precious blood that would be shed.

And today Cain is still talking with Abel. The more purely, therefore, that Abel defines the truth and opposes the heretic in his corruptions of the truth, the closer Abel will be to feel the blow of Cain. The false church does not want to be told that sin lieth at the door. She wants to be applauded for her social achievements and numerical growth. She wants to open the door and let sin rule her. Dare to point out to her that she corrupts God's Word and is endangering her whole constituency, and you will find not only that she is wroth with God, but with you for being a representative of a righteous God Who will not bless in the way of sin. And soon enough she will manage to obtain the mark of the beast to bury you in the sand, continuing to defend herself and claiming to be worshipping God.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement (Reformation Period)

Rev. H. Veldman

How the gates of hell attempted to destroy the Church of God and of Christ shortly after Christ's resurrection from the death and His ascension into heaven! Think of the efforts of the godless leaders of the people, the Sanhedrists, as they first threatened the disciples by word of mouth and then commanded them to be beaten, and this for no other reason than that they had spoken and witnessed of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom they had crucified and slain, declaring of Him that He, the crucified and glorified Lord, had healed the impotent beggar who sat daily in the gate of the temple! Think of Paul who had one all-controlling passion: to destroy this cause of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This apostle may have done this in ignorance, but it is surely true that the gates of hell were operating through this learned man of Tarsus. Think of all the sufferings which Paul was compelled to suffer for the name of Jesus, listed by the apostle in 2 Cor. 11: 22-28. Did not all the apostles suffer martyrdom, with the exception of the apostle John?

How the gates of hell sought to destroy the Church of God in the second and third century, called "The Heroic Age"! The people of the Lord were called an impossible people, and the Church of God was regarded as a menace to all society and civil

governments in the midst of the world. This was also the charge hurled at our Lord Jesus Christ. And, principally, this is the accusation hurled at the Cause of God throughout the ages; and it will surely reach its greatest fulfillment at the end of the ages, in the days of the antichrist. The persecutions suffered by the followers of the Man of Sorrows, as endured, e. g., in the arena in Rome, are surely familiar to all of us!

Greater, however, was the suffering heaped upon the flock of the Lord in the days of the Reformation. It has been said that the affliction visited upon the faithful people of the Lord in those days was at least five times greater than in the days of the Roman emperors. And all this will reach its climax in the days immediately prior to the coming of the Son of Man upon the clouds of heaven. Of those days it is written in the Scripture that they will be shortened for the sake of the elect.

How comforting is the truth that the Lord always gathers His Church! It is only in the light of this truth that we may believe that the Lord will also realize His purpose in the future. The Arminian cannot have this comfort. He can never say that the Lord's church *shall* be gathered. We understand, of course, that there can never be any certainty upon the basis of free will. A

chain is never stronger than its weakest link. If the salvation of a sinner be dependent upon the free will of a sinner, one can never have the assurance either that any individual sinner will be saved or that the Church of God will be gathered and completed throughout the ages. However, if the Lord Himself accomplishes His counsel, who will be able to prevent or frustrate it?

What is the result of this, according to this ninth article? Well, in the first place, in connection with the blessed truth that the elect are always gathered in due time — which, we understand, is God's time — this applies, first of all, to this present time. The Lord takes care of it that His elect are always gathered, so that there is always a true church on earth and in the midst of the world. This, of course, takes place, on the one hand, through the mission work of the church as performed among the heathens. Of course, we must understand that also this is determined by the will of the Lord, and that as stated by the fathers in Article 3 of Head I of our Canons. But this gathering of the church also occurs when the church backslides and becomes the false church. The Lord sees to it that reformation always occur in the midst of the church. We cannot, of course, call attention to this in detail. But we do well to understand that this, too, is the work of the Lord. It is He Who always gathers His elect people again. The Word of God abounds in this truth, in the Old as well as in the New Testament.

That the elect are always gathered in due time also applies to the final gathering of all the elect in everlasting glory. Then the body of our Lord Jesus Christ will be complete. Then all who belong to that body of Christ, as according to God's election, shall have been gathered together. Not one shall be missing in that day. It is surely not necessary to emphasize that this is exclusively the work of the Lord. How foolish it is for man to try to gather the church of God. He spends millions of dollars to win souls for Christ, hires untold singers and orchestras, etc. What folly! What nonsense to go through all this trouble to win souls! Man cannot win souls anyway. This is exclusively the work of the Lord. The Lord does not need all this assistance. He gathers His church through His Word and Spirit.

And the glorious task of that church is: to love their Saviour and to serve and to praise Him. This, too, we read in this ninth article of this head of our Canons. For He loved them as a bridegroom his bride, and laid down His life for them on the cross. How true it is that this can be confessed truly and sincerely only by the Reformed Christian! The Remonstrant cannot really say this. In the first place, only the Reformed child of God can confess that the people will praise their Saviour. After all, according to the Remonstrant, he contributed something to his salvation. He cannot ascribe *all* the glory to the Lord. Man did something, too. And what man did is vital. Fact is, had man not

contributed his part to this salvation, no man would have been saved. It is true that, according to the Remonstrant, the Lord prepared this salvation. This heavenly Host prepared the meal. But, in the work of saving the sinner, God offers this salvation to all who hear the gospel. And it is the sinner who accepts this offer, who agrees to be saved. And without this concurring will of the sinner the Lord is not able to save a single soul. As the undersigned heard Billy Graham say once: if man does nothing, God cannot do anything for him. Isn't this a terrible presentation. And, in the second place, notice that the fathers, in this ninth article, say of this Bridegroom that He laid down His life upon the cross for His people. Again they speak of the cross as the foundation of our salvation. And this, too, is truly Reformed and Scriptural. The cross of Christ is the foundation of our salvation. According to the Arminian, the efficacy of Calvary depends upon the free will of the sinner. As far as the Arminian is concerned, the possibility exists that, although Christ died upon the cross for sinners, none would be saved. But the fathers of Dordt must have nothing of this. They present the cross as the foundation of our salvation. The cross does not save us because we believe, but we believe because the cross has saved us. All our salvation rests upon and in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. God, Who delivered Him for us all (the elect) will surely with Him freely give us all things. Then, upon the cross of Jesus Christ, our Lord, our salvation was settled once and for all. This is the comforting truth of the atonement of Him Whom we confess to be our Saviour, our Bridegroom Who laid down His life for His bride!

When we discuss the Rejection of Errors which the fathers add to each head of the Canons, we do well to bear in mind that these errors, as stated by our fathers in these articles, are not necessarily admitted by the Arminian. He will probably raise his hands in holy horror when confronted with the accusation that he is guilty of these heresies. There is a Dutch saying that the heretic "kemt niet met de klompen aan." This means that he does not approach us wearing wooden shoes. He does not approach so that we are aware of his coming. He approaches stealthily. He hides his heresy underneath a cloak of the truth. He deceives the church of the Lord. Those are always his tactics. The apostle Paul speaks of this in Eph. 4:14, and we quote: "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." What a severe, cutting, but true indictment the apostle here hurls at the heretics. Imagine! He speaks of the "sleight of men." This word "sleight" means literally: to play with dice. This means that the heretic is a gambler. He "plays" with the Church of God! He gambles with the truth to seek his own aims. And, employing the sleight of men, he

resorts to cunning craftiness. Literally, we read in this passage that he employs cunning craftiness unto a system of error. He uses cunning craftiness which is designed to set up a system of error. He is wickedly clever. He concocts a system of error which is designed to deceive the people of the Lord. The Arminians were guilty of this. This is evident from their Five Points of the Remonstrants. Some of these articles are drawn up in such a way that it is difficult to discern truth from error. And the heretic does this deliberately. He knows that the people of God love the truth. So, he does not reveal himself in his true identity. He is really a wolf but he comes in sheep's clothing. He approaches you as a friend. He, although deliberately distorting the truth, comes to you as near to the truth as possible. How true this is today! The modernist makes use of terms which are derived from the Word of God. He speaks of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and of His coming again to set up His eternal kingdom. He also speaks of sin and grace. But he lays a meaning into those terms which is completely foreign to the meaning of the Word of God. This is also true of the Arminian. He speaks of election and reprobation and will appear horrified should you accuse of denying these Scriptural truths. He speaks of atonement and will accuse you of misrepresentation should you lay it to his charge that he denied this fundamental truth. He tells you that the sinner is saved by grace and that faith is a gift of God and will denounce any effort on your part to accuse him of the error of denying these

revelations of the Word of God. But he surely does not interpret those truths in the Scriptural sense of the word.

Do we understand the implication of this? How important it is that we remain distinctive in the full sense of the word! To recognize the wolf in sheep's clothing demands on our part the power of keen and spiritual discernment. How difficult it is to recognize him! How important that we be constantly on the alert, "on our toes." Sometimes we may hear the complaint of those who say that we are too distinctive in our preaching and teaching. They claim that all that is necessary is that we preach and teach positively the Word of God. They lament and bemoan it when the preaching is distinctive. How sad it would be should we heed this outcry of some! The Scriptures, however, declare that we must divide the Word of God rightly. The Word of God declares that we must no more be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine. The Word of the Lord demands on our part an unceasing vigilance, that we must constantly be on the alert. And our Church Order demands it of us, as when we read in Art. 55: "To ward off false doctrines and errors that multiply exceedingly through heretical writings, the Ministers and Elders shall use the means of teaching, of refutation, or warning, and of admonition, as well in the Ministry of the Word, as in Christian teaching and family-visiting." May our churches ever remain faithful unto that end!

From Holy Writ

Exposition Of Ephesians 5: 15-21 (con't.)

Rev. G. Lubbers

BE YE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT (Eph. 5:18b)

Not all students of the Bible will agree as to what is meant with the Scriptural injunction "be ye filled with the Spirit." There is a false mysticism which makes being filled with the Spirit the shibboleth of what constitutes a christian; it is the special criterion of what is to be considered the earmark of true spirituality. This is true of all the Holiness Groups; we find it in Pentecostal Churches and their affiliates, as the outgrowth of John Wesley's teaching concerning the "second benefit." This latter refers to such an influx of the Holy Spirit that the believer now instantaneously becomes sanctified, even as he was thus justified once and for all by faith. And then the infallible evidence of such attained sanctity must be

that one is filled with the Holy Spirit and speaks with tongues. And in such speaking with tongues we have the rock-bottom assurance and guarantee that one is redeemed and surely saved.

In view of this rather perverted understanding of what is meant with, "be ye filled with the Spirit," we do well to carefully study what Paul means here in the text; we must know the mind of the Spirit here. We may begin by pointing out that in the Greek text for "Be ye filled" is a present, imperative, passive verb. The present tense indicates that the being filled is never fully finished; constantly the believers need to be filled with a new supply of the Spirit. Next, we should notice that the passive voice indicates that as far as the being filled is concerned this is not the act and initiative of man, but of God himself. The filling with the Spirit is

God's work; it is His divine energy. He works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. This is quite in line with the teaching of Paul in Ephesians 4:23 "And *be renewed* in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Also here the "renewal" is the act of God; man is wholly passive as far as the renewal is concerned. This renewal affects the entire inner man: mind, heart and soul. It is not only a renewal of the soul, the feelings, the aspirations; it refers also to the renewal of the mind (*nous*), yea, the renewal of the *spirit* of the mind. "What is to be renewed is not merely the outward habits, a mode of life; not merely transient tempers or dispositions but the interior principle of life, which lies back of all of this" (Hodge, Commentary on Ephesians).

And still there is one thing more about this verb in the Greek text, translated "filled with the Spirit," to notice. We must notice the imperative mood here employed. It tells the believer to do something. When he has been gifted with the Spirit of Christ, and lives in the Spirit, he must also walk in the Spirit. (Gal. 5:25) Rigidly and exactly we must walk in the Spirit within the entire compass of our life, according to every commandment. It is evident that the exhortation to be filled with the Spirit points in this latter direction. There is such a spiritual reality as to "yield ourselves to the Spirit." This is the putting on of the new man due to being "renewed in the spirit of the mind." Thus the Canons of Dort teach "Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, *becomes itself active* (I underscore). Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent by virtue of the grace received." (III, IV, 12 b)

To be filled with the Spirit, therefore, refers to being controlled by and placing ourselves under the control of the Holy Spirit. Thus we read that Jesus was filled with the Spirit . . . and was led of the Spirit into the wilderness" (Luke 4:1) We read that Stephen was a man, "full of the Holy Ghost," and that the church chose "Stephen, a man full of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 6:3, 5) It is also affirmed of Barnabas that he was a man, "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." (Acts 11:24) In the present instance here in Ephesians 5:18b it seems that Paul is referring to that operation of the Spirit whereby we are inwardly sanctified and uplifted, and through whom we ourselves ought to be inspired and urged on to a higher purpose, joyful courage, more profound insight and spiritual uplifting of the soul.

It is quite evident from the numerous instances in Scripture which speak of the being "full of the Holy Ghost" that we must not think of this in a physical sense like water filling a pail; neither must we think as if the Spirit would only fill us with a certain type of excitable enthusiasm, often under the artificial stimulus of mass psychology. This is not so superficial and

artificial as all that; it is the profound fruit of the Spirit working sanctification in our hearts, so that we love God, His law and precepts from the heart; it is that we do not only begin to live according to some of God's commandments, but according to all of them! This is evident from the strong contrast drawn here by Paul in this text: be not drunk with wine . . . but be filled with the Spirit.

THE TONGUE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SPIRIT (Eph. 5:19)

From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. God places the fruit of the Spirit upon our lips. It is the continual sacrifice of thanksgiving. It is the perpetual sacrifice to God. God takes coals of fire from the altar and purifies the lips of Isaiah. (Isaiah 6) And when this happens we have an exalted and uplifting speech. This is not the song of the drunkard; it is the song of the Spirit-filled saint.

Paul is not inventive when he connects the "speaking" in Psalms and hymn and "spiritual songs" with being filled with the Holy Spirit. Fact is, that the text is such in the Greek that the "speaking to yourselves" is presented as being continuous action, contemporaneous with the being filled with the Spirit. The speaking is the fruit of the Spirit constantly. And this fruit must be constantly upon the lips of the congregation. And these spirit-filled saints must "speak" in psalms and hymns and spiritual odes. Why? Because a Spirit-filled saint must speak language which is God-breathed; he will need to sing only that which is itself given by the Spirit in the Scriptures. These psalms and spiritual odes are themselves given by inspiration of God. There is not an iota of man in them; they could never have risen in the heart of man. They are given by revelation and inspiration of God. This calls for thorough instruction in the meaning of the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. They must be studied in the light of their historical situation and their prophetic meaning, as they all point to the necessity of the Christ to suffer in order to enter into his glory! They speak of the suffering of Christ (Ps. 22) and of the Pentecostal glory in the great congregation. (Ps. 22) They sing of the resurrection of Christ; (Ps. 16) and they sing of his ascension to heaven; (Ps. 47 and 68) and they jubilate concerning Christ's sitting at the right hand of God; (Ps. 110 and Ps. 2) and they speak of Christ's return to judge the quick and the dead! (Ex. 15:20, 21, the Psalm of Miriam).

No, the apostle Paul does not speak here of a distinction of the Old Testament psalm and the New Testament hymns and songs; Paul is looking at the Old Testament psalms from various viewpoints. It is rather climactic that he says last of all "spiritual songs." That is what all the psalms are. One must be filled with the Spirit of Christ to truly sing the psalms, the songs of Zion.

How must we speak in these *spiritual* songs?

Certainly not by a few artificial and loud babbling in a makebelieve gift of tongues. God forbid! Here is speech that edifies that is enjoined by the apostle in the church of Ephesus.

Does not Paul speak here concerning *teaching*? It is first of all a matter of doctrine, which is the important thing in the singing in the church. How well the enemy of the truth knows this! Is this not the tactic of all the Arminians? Is this not that practice of the Pentecostal enthusiasm with its emphasis on singing. Yes, it is singing, but it is singing which inculcates and prolongs erroneous and heretical teaching. Do not the revolutionary groups in the political world use singing as a means for their propaganda; is the same not true of the modern-day attempt in the church world to insinuate false doctrine to the church with its siren songs which are un Biblical in their content, lacking the prophetic word which shines more and more unto the perfect day? Our speaking, in contrast, must be that of *teaching*; it must be the sound doctrine; it must be a return to the law and the prophets; else there is no dawn to us.

This teaching must be a definite "instruction," a putting in mind of the things of the Scriptures and of the Christian faith. The speaking must not be simply an unfolding of the mystery of godliness, but it must be a compelling to the obedience of Christ. And this must be done in "all wisdom." What a wisdom of heaven it requires to teach in the church of God. It is only by means of the Holy Spirit that we can thus speak, teach and instruct. Such teaching is necessary in every Protestant Reformed Church, in our seminary,

our schools, whether they be the primary grades or whether in the high school. Let our churches and schools instruct also in the meaning of the psalms. Such is also the call of the hour here in Jamaica on the mission field!

Only thus, when we are thoroughly instructed in the meaning of the Scriptures shall we be filled with the Spirit and our tongues be placed under the guidance of the Spirit. Only thus will the *fruit* of the Spirit be upon our lips.

GIVING THANKS IN CHRIST'S NAME

There is a close relationship between speaking in the power of the Holy Spirit, teaching and exhorting with Psalms and spiritual Songs, and the giving of thanks to God, the Father. The latter is perhaps the acme of the former. Giving thanks really means that we are full of the thoughts of God. A little study of the term "thanks" when compared with the Dutch "danken" which in turn we compare with the German "gedanken" which mean: thoughts. We have but to compare this with the old English "thunk" which means "think" in past tense. We see, do we not, that the idea of thankfulness means: to be brimful of thoughts for and of God in Christ. It is a very full sacrifice which will thus result. God will be the end of all our thoughts. Him we will worship with our praises and thanksgiving. It will be particularly as "Father" that we will worship him. Does not the apostle begin this letter with "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places"? (Eph. 1:3)

Sketches on Jamaica Mission

A Presbyterian Form of Government?

By Rev. G. Lubbers

It should be borne in mind, that, when the Protestant Reformed Churches began their work in Jamaica, they did not begin to work where no one had preached the gospel of Christ; they began to work in a rather established and accepted form of church-life. It is now some ten years ago that we first contacted these churches through a certain Rev. Moraly from England who was the "bishop" of the *Bible Holiness Churches*. The Rev. Clinton Elliott, who visited our country and churches two years ago, was affiliated with the aforementioned Rev. Moraly. Some of our readers have

heard of the Rev. J.E. Frame from Lucea, Jamaica. The latter was affiliated with *The Evangelistic Churches*, headed by a certain Dr. Hopkins from the U.S.A. A third minister, the Rev. S. E. Ruddock was not affiliated with any church; he was a rather self-proclaimed preacher in the regions of Porter Mountain in the Westmoreland Parish, Jamaica.

Now each of these ministers was the "minister" of various churches in the island. Hence, there was a certain *status quo* when we arrived. I am informed that our emissaries first contacted the Rev. Frame who at

that time was ministering in several churches: Lucea, Waterworks, Shrewsbury and Latium. Later, contact was made with the Rev. Elliott who resided on the eastern end of the island at Islington. We remember the rather glowing reports which were brought back, the pictures shown by the elder emissaries, and also by the ministers whom we sent to Jamaica. These reports were not really reporting in depth, to my settled judgment and conviction; they hardly could represent a rather clear and concise picture of the confused situation. For Rev. Elliott was minister in the following churches on the island: Islington, Hope Hill, Santa Cruz, Belmont, Lacovia, Northampton, Cave Mountain, Grange Hill, Port Maria. A large assortment of churches to be sure; they were scattered over the island, tucked away in inland roads and sometimes high on some hill to which a mountain path leads. Obviously, our emissaries did not have the time to visit all these churches; they could not gauge the condition in each church during their short and intermittent visits. I am told that representatives of Rev. Elliott's churches travelled across the island, to the eastern end of the Island, in Islington to come and hear our Rev. C. Hanco preach on John 10:27, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." As could be expected, these people believed this word; but this was hardly enough evidence and instruction to warrant them to leave the *Bible Holiness Churches* to become *Protestant Reformed Churches in Jamaica*. I am told that Rev. C. Hanco told them to wait a year, and then we would see next year. But the Rev. Elliott avows to have said, "There is only one truth; this is it." And the people said, "If minister says it is good, it must be." It was a rather implicit faith.

However, the question may be asked: what form of church-government did they adhere to? Was it Congregational, Episcopal or Presbyterian? It is difficult to give a clear-cut answer to this question. It is almost certain that none of these groups ever faced any of these questions and asked: what form will the Lord have us to maintain in His church? Perhaps one might say that their form of government "just grew" like Topsy. And, yet, there is a form of government, a certain pattern in evidence. Historically the English Episcopal Church was strong on the entire island. And the churches seemed to have been born under the direction of a "leader," and "elder." In most churches there were more than one deacon, but one elder. He was the ruling elder, he was also the preacher, sometimes for bad or for worse. At other times such an elder did the best he could in teaching Sunday School, reading the Bible with his comments and observations. But as might be expected, in a rather strong matriarchal home-life, certain women pushed themselves forward as the "Church-mother" who claimed to have "received the Holy Ghost." This phenomenon is now not general, but was rather

frequent in these churches. The elder was under pressure, whereas he did not have fellow-elders to support him. And the dangers of one-man rule were sometimes in evidence — either no rule at all, or there were symptoms of tyranny. Besides, when a knotty question arose in the church it was convenient to call a meeting of the congregation (mostly women) to decide the issue.

Then, too, these churches had no connection with each other in an ecclesiastical sense. They were good neighbors as churches; often where respective elders were friends they would join services for a Sunday, suspending the services in their own church. On that Sunday the children could drift and shift for themselves. And the churches of Rev. Elliott, take an example, did not know each other; for he had churches in the far-eastern end as well as in the extreme-western end of the island. They had this in common, after our arrival, that they had one Missionary who visited all the churches; they also were hearing a different message from their ministers. Some loved it; others did not, and they left either in groups or as individuals.

A meeting has been held on April 5, 1972 and another meeting on May 23, 1972 to face this question of Church-government, and thus to come to the root of the difficulties and confusion. The first of these meetings was of the Trustees-elect of the contemplated "Incorporation of Churches," the latter meeting was a representation of all the churches by one elder each and of the three ministers. Concerning this meeting I can write a very gratifying report. The decisions taken, if executed with conscientious godliness and determination, have far-reaching implications for the future. Here follow the decisions, taken at this meeting:

1. The matter of whether an elder could become a minister was decided as follows: "Elder Wright and Elder Spence moved and supported a motion which would inform all the churches that elders would not be permitted to become ministers because this would destroy the cause of the school in Lacovia." The motion passed without a dissenting vote.

2. The relationship between the ministers and their churches was discussed; it was the understanding that the relationship between the ministers in the island and their flocks should be placed in a proper presbyterial form of government; that a distinction must be made between the *teaching*-elder and the *ruling*-elders in the church. This discussion resulted in the following decisions:

- a. It was decided that henceforth those churches which *cannot* have more than one elder will be considered as having the status of a Mission Station. Obviously this means that many "churches" will come under the direct control of the Missionary; it will also be an incentive for those churches, who, either through

ignorance or neglect, have but one elder, to work to rectify the situation.

b. It was also decided that the ministers must be properly called and installed in office in their respective churches. Obviously, this decision has the result that, without being installed in certain churches, they cannot claim churches which are not churches; nor can they claim to be a minister in a church without being called and installed. And the churches, in turn, cannot simply dismiss their minister at their own whim and fancy and then seek for another minister. Unfaithful ministers will also need to come under ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

It will require time and patience, firmness and tact, to bring this all about. However, these decisions were not coerced; they were entirely voluntary. Fact is, that I told them to wait with deciding for at least three months. However, I was assured that they understood what they were doing, and that they called to proceed in the name of the Lord.

Thus we have the rudiments of a Presbyterian form of government according to the Scriptures. May the King of His church bless these our efforts and the decisions taken to His glory. He will have decency and order in His church!

All Around Us

More on Key '73

Prof. H. Hanko

Key '73 is an interdenominational program to reach all the people in North America with the Gospel by 1973. We have reported on this program in past issues. We have a couple of other related matters to report in this issue of *The Standard Bearer*.

We have obtained a copy of the pledge which some participants in this program have been asked to make. It reads as follows:

1. We pledge our spiritual gifts and resources to establish evangelism as a priority and set specific evangelism goals for which we will pray, plan and work.

2. We pledge to be open to the Lordship of Christ and to the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we analyze our Church fellowship by using the Thrust Booklet "Called To Serve" and set goals for the future.

3. We pledge to discover, rediscover and emphasize the Biblical teachings of the purpose of our redeemed community in the changing world and local communities in which God has placed us.

This is so far removed from all that is Scriptural and Reformed that it scarcely needs any comment.

In contrast to this, *Christian News* carried a resolution passed by unanimous vote by the annual meeting of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches which reads as follows:

Since the Word of God enjoins believers to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1); and,

Since the Scriptures clearly warn: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (II John 9-11); and

Inasmuch as the program, organizational makeup and personnel of KEY '73 completely ignore the above teaching of Scripture in the name of evangelism; and

Inasmuch as the Executive Committee of KEY '73 includes leaders from apostate denominations; and

Inasmuch as KEY '73 "proposes to raise an overarching Christian canopy in both Canada and the United States under which all denominations, congregations and Christian groups may concentrate on evangelism during the year 1973," and

Since KEY '73 leaders emphasize that it is a "smorgasbord of ideas" in which "each church or group may choose the precise form or extent of its participation" and that "varieties in evangelistic expression are anticipated" thus opening the door to confusion about the central message of evangelism;

BE IT RESOLVED: That we, the messengers to the annual meeting of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, meeting in San Diego, California, this 30th day of June, 1972, go on record as being thoroughly opposed to any ecumenical evangelism which seeks to promote unscriptural cooperation without regard to the doctrinal position of the participants; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That we warn our people of the confusion which will result from a KEY '73 program that allows the presence of liberals, Roman Catholics and others whose social gospel or sacramental gospel is not the gospel of Christ; and

BE IT RESOLVED: That we urge our pastors to boldly proclaim the message of Galatians 1:8: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That we urge our pastors and people to faithfully, fervently and daily reach the lost of our communities with the gospel of Christ in a program of evangelism that honors the full

intent of the Great Commission and insures the

purity of the local New Testament Church.

An Interesting Poll

In *Affirm*, a conservative publication of a group in the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, we ran across the following very interesting results of a poll taken among Lutherans. To understand the chart, the reader must know that “L” = Laity, “C” = Clergy, LCA = Lutheran Church of America, “ALC” = American Lutheran Church, “LCMS” = Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, and “WELS” = Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.”

		LCA	ALC	LCMS	WELS
1) The Bible is the Word of God in all its parts.	(L)	29	35	62	77
	(C)	10	19	74	100
2) Only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior can go to heaven (agree)	(L)	56	58	75	84
	(C)	43	52	84	100
3) Man plays no part in his own salvation (agreeing)	(L)	14	16	19	26
	(C)	22	33	73	93

4) Do you tend to see all Protestant religions as equally good? (Yes)	(L)	72	71	55	44
	(C)	60	28	10	0

It is interesting to note that the Wisconsin Lutherans are by far the most conservative body among Lutherans in this country. But it is also interesting to note that there are differences at rather key points. Among all but the Wisconsin Synod Lutherans the laity are more conservative than the clergy in the first two questions and less conservative in the last two questions. But among Wisconsin Synod Lutherans the clergy are, throughout, more conservative than the laity. It is also interesting that among the laity there are only small percentages of people that reject the heresies of Arminianism and Pelagianism. While the clergy in the Missouri Synod Church and Wisconsin Synod Church generally believe the doctrines of sovereign grace, the laity do not. This is rather surprising and shows to what extent Arminianism has gained a foothold in the thinking of the people in these denominations.

Some Interesting Notes on Music

A long time ago already a very interesting and instructive article appeared in *The Banner* under the title “A Church Musician’s Credo” which was written by Howard Slenk, Professor of music at Calvin College.

We cannot quote the whole article in these columns, nor even the interesting parts. But a few quotes are nonetheless worthwhile repeating.

In connection with “rock music” the author writes among other things:

Since I believe that the meaning of music lies in its relationship to our bodies and minds as they move through time, I believe that rock has very clear extra-musical meanings. I believe that the insistent, overpowering beat is a call to an immediate and intense motor response to the music, and that the extra-musical meaning of this strong stimulus is movement without purpose, action without thought. I also believe that the obsessive repetition of melody and harmony has a similar anti-intellectual meaning. All three of these elements of rock, plus the ear-splitting volume at which they must occur, have convinced me of the basically sensuous, sometimes hypnotic, meaning and effect of this music. The musical meaning of rock, not to mention the social effect, does indeed have moral implications.

In connection with the insistence by many that the Genevan tunes are often adaptations of secular songs, Slenk writes:

Here I insist on laying to rest the old myth that

the Genevan melodies were forged from the popular tunes of the day. Although you will read this in all the encyclopedias, even music encyclopedias, and find it in the writings of great men like Albert Schweitzer, there is not a scrap of musical evidence to support it. About a century ago, a French writer, Gretin Douen, illustrated some similarities between a few Genevan melodies and some French chansons. The similarities are limited to short groups of notes here and there, and can more easily be described as idiomatic coincidences than as direct borrowings. Pierre Pidoux, the Swiss authority on the music of Calvinism, has shown conclusively that the Genevan melodies are fashioned much more after Gregorian chant than after French chansons. Although it is true that a few Lutheran chorales, such as “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded,” are adaptations of tunes first used for secular words, this borrowing process involves only a very small part of the total Lutheran repertoire. It should no longer be used as a justification for the use of popular music or folk music in church.

He concludes with the words:

To conclude, I would like to stress again that we consider music *as music*. So often we listen only to the words, or we remind ourselves of the sincerity of the performer, and never give a thought to the music itself. Music has meaning, *universal* meaning because of its resemblance to the motion and actions of human life, and *particular* meaning because of the

individual cultural experiences each listener brings to the music he hears.

Both types of meaning reinforce the claim that there are different kinds of music. There is dance music for use in dance halls. There is folk music for use at work, at play, and around the campfire. There is rock music for use as . . . There is theater music, beer-hall music, and concert-hall music.

And there is church music! It does not have to be old to be good. It does not have to be played on the organ to be acceptable. It need not use archaic

language to be religious. But it must be honest in its meaning as music, not a campfire ditty or a dance-hall tune or a barbershop arrangement or an operatic aria parading as church music.

If we believe that man may rise to the contemplation of the divine through his senses, then we will also believe that through his senses, man may sink to the exploitation of the carnal. I believe that music has this twofold power.

To this we respond with a hearty "Amen."

Calvin on Worship

The loud pleas for liturgical change which are being made in the church world today are subject for contemplation. Such contemplation took up a considerable amount of my time the other day as I was reading John Calvin's reply to Cardinal Sadolet. Our readers probably know that when Calvin was ousted from Geneva, Cardinal Sadolet thought he saw a good opportunity to woo the citizens of Geneva back to the Roman Catholic fold. He addressed a letter to these citizens to accomplish this purpose.

In a very masterful work, Calvin answered the Cardinal and defended eloquently the Reformation.

Among other things, Sadolet had said in his letter: "Nothing (is) more perilous to our salvation than a preposterous and perverse worship of God." To this Calvin responded with the following:

The primary rudiments, by which we are wont to train to piety those whom we wish to gain as disciples

to Christ, are these; viz., not to frame any new worship of God for themselves at random, and after their own pleasure, but to know that the only legitimate worship is that which he himself approved from the beginning. For we maintain, what the sacred oracle declared, that obedience is more excellent than any sacrifice, (I Sam. xv. 22.) In short, we train them by every means, to be contented with the one rule of worship which they have received from his mouth, and bid adieu to all fictitious worship." (This is taken from the Beveridge translation, p. 34.)

Calvin insists here that that worship only is proper which is in obedience to the demands of God. One could wish that those who claim to be Calvinists and yet holler so loudly for liturgical change which is founded upon the fads of the times rather than upon God's Word would pay a little more attention to what Calvin himself wrote.

Book Reviews

Christian Perspectives On Sex And Marriage

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON SEX AND MARRIAGE, by William Fitch; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971; \$2.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

There is a flood of books about sex and marriage pouring from the religious press these days. This is not in itself bad. There is a need for sound Biblical literature in this field because the devil and the world are working overtime to corrupt the institution of marriage and the most sacred of life's relationships. But to find good books is not so easy.

This one too falls rather far short of the mark. The main difficulty with most books in this field, and with this one as well, is that they do not spend sufficient time on the principles of Scripture in these areas. For example, there is almost nothing in this book

concerning the institution of marriage, the meaning of marriage, the purpose of marriage, etc. When these principles of Scripture are not dealt with, one gets a book which is a kind of moral homily which in the long run is not of much use to anyone.

The book is written in question and answer form. It is, however, too explicit at certain points to be recommended to young people. The author tends to forget that Paul speaks of the fact that "it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of (the wicked) in secret." Eph. 5:12. There is altogether too much emphasis placed upon the sexual aspect of marriage — as if this is really the only important part of married life. We are still waiting for a book which can safely and heartily be recommended to parents and young people as a Scriptural guide in this area of life.

Earth's Most Challenging Mysteries

EARTH'S MOST CHALLENGING MYSTERIES, by Reginald Daly; Baker Book House, 1972; 403 pp., \$3.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

There are more and more books appearing on the market which are efforts to explain various scientific phenomena in the light of six-day creation and a universal flood. This book is one such effort. These efforts are to be applauded, for there is indeed a great deal of work which can and ought to be done in this field.

The author, who has taught in a number of colleges and universities, discusses various problems in especially the fields of geology and paleontology. His purpose is to show the foolishness of the explanations which are offered by geologists who are committed to evolution. The book is very interesting and profitable in this respect. It demonstrates rather vividly that evolutionism is often contradictory; that evolutionists disagree, sometimes violently, among themselves in their efforts to explain various phenomena; that mostly their explanations are very poor and inadequate interpretations of scientific data in these fields.

The author discusses such problems as the origin of life, the existence of large fossil beds, the formation of coal, the problem of ocean canyons, deltas and other under-ocean phenomena.

While the author uses the works of Rehwinkel, Morris and Whitcomb rather extensively, he has a great

deal of original material in his book as well. To his credit, he explains evolutionism in terms of unbelief and discusses the fact that evolution is a religion and poses a problem for those who maintain that no religion may be taught in the public school system of this country.

There are some weaknesses in the book. He seems to reject the Carbon-14 method of dating at some points, but to accept it at other points where it serves his purpose. He is too definite and dogmatic about antediluvian conditions and events and stretches one's credibility a bit in his interpretation of how the flood explains various geological phenomena. He gives too much value to pagan myths of the flood even to the point of using them to help explain the miracle of the flood. (Cf. pp. 337, 338.)

We believe that all scientific data can be explained in terms of the flood and the work of creation in six days. But it is not always easy to describe precisely how God performed all these works in their details. Some is admittedly speculation. For example, the author accepts as true the so-called "canopy theory" as an interpretation of sudden climatic changes.

If the book is read carefully, it can be of profit to those who are interested in this whole question. And we wish to encourage those who engage in this work so that the study of God's creation can be advanced and knowledge increased in true science.

The Bible: God's Word

THE BIBLE: GOD'S WORD, by Tenis Van Kooten; Baker Book House, 1972; 231 pp., \$2.95 (paper) [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

The purpose of this fine book is presented in the Preface: "This little book is presented as a guide in the study of the inspiration and authority of the Bible, and to assist in the evaluation of the 'new interpretation' of the Bible and its results. The self-testimony of the Bible is the point of reference in determining what the Bible is. The new interpretation (the new hermeneutic) and its results will be viewed in the light of the nature of God's self-revelation as given in the Bible. The approach throughout is evangelical: the Bible is received as the Word of God."

This purpose is admirably fulfilled. The author treats of such subjects as "What is the Bible?", "The Inspiration of the Bible", "The Authority of the Bible", "The Bible is Infallible", "The Canon of the Bible", "Archeology and the Bible", "The Bible and Miracles", etc. The book is a vigorous defense of the verbal inspiration of Scripture, of the complete infallibility of

God's Word, and of its absolute authority. Especially delightful is the author's constant and repeated emphasis on Scripture itself as the sole determinative rule for our doctrine of Scripture.

What is of special value is the author's treatment of these topics in the light of many modern errors which have risen both in the field of unbelieving higher criticism and within the Reformed Churches. He explains and exposes the errors of such men as Bultmann, Robinson, Kuitert and others. And he does this in such a way that those who are not trained in textual criticism can easily understand what he writes. It is a book which can be read with profit by anyone including our young people. Another advantage of the book is the author's extensive use of quotations from those who have, in the past, and who today defend the infallible inspiration of God's Word.

The book is written partly with a view to its use in study groups, discussion groups and societies. It has a number of interesting and worthwhile questions appended to each chapter for study and discussion. We heartily recommend the book to all our readers.

SEMINARY REGISTRATION AND CONVOCATION

The Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches will begin its new term on Wednesday, September 6, the Lord willing.

All students (seminary and pre-seminary) should report for registration at 9 A.M.

The PUBLIC CONVOCATION will be at our Southwest Protestant Reformed Church at 8 o'clock in the evening, D.V. Prof. H. Hanko will give the convocation address. All our people are cordially invited to join us on this occasion.

We commend the Seminary to the prayers of our people and churches.

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, Rector

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society and the Men's Society of The South Holland Protestant Reformed Church express their sympathy to the family of

MR. ALEX MIEDEMA,

who at the age of 85 years passed from his earthly home to live everlastingly with Christ.

May our Heavenly Father comfort the bereaved with His Word. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. 5:1).

Rev. Robert Decker, Pres.
Mrs. John Busker, Sec'y.
Mr. Mike Van Baren, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 9, 1972, the Lord willing, our beloved parents,

REV. AND MRS. HERMAN VELDMAN

will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Heavenly Father for preserving them for each other and for their covenant love and guidance they have given us. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless them in their remaining pilgrimage together.

We deem it a privilege that our father was able to proclaim God's Word during these past forty years.

Their children,
Mr. and Mrs. Cornie Den Ouden
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Van Dyke
Mr. and Mrs. Jon Huisken
and 10 grandchildren

NOTICE

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on September 6, 1972 in Hull, Iowa, at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

*HOPE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
25TH ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET*

These interesting and informative booklets, which include pictures and the history of the school, are available for \$1.25 each. Please send your order to Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School Booklet 1545 Wilson Avenue S.W. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

ANNIVERSARY

On September 9, 1972, our parents,

MR. AND MRS. HARRY ZWAK

will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary. We thank our Covenant God for preserving them for each other and for us these many years. Our prayers are for His continued blessing on them throughout their earthly walk.

Their children,
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Kamminga
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Burt
and 11 grandchildren

NOTICE!!!

The Annual Membership Meeting of The Reformed Free Publishing Association will be held, the Lord willing, on Thursday evening, September 28, at 8 P.M. in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Our speaker at this important meeting will be our Editor in Chief, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema. Prof. Hoeksema promised that his speech — entitled *THE STANDARD BEARER AND FOREIGN CONTACTS* — will be limited to a twenty minute synopsis. The board urges ALL members to be present. A special appeal is made to the YOUNG MEN of our congregations to attend this meeting and become acquainted with this important kingdom activity.

The Board of the R.F.P.A.
G. Bol, Sec'y.

NOTICE!

The correct address of the CATECHISM BOOK DISTRIBUTING COMMITTEE SECRETARY is: MR. SEYMOUR BEIBOER, 2193 CLYDE PARK AVE., S.W., GRAND RAPIDS, MI. 49509.

News From Our Churches

Of keen interest, no doubt, is news concerning the calls which have been extended during the past months. For that reason, it's not likely that many of our readers will learn of these calls for the first time through the *Standard Bearer* news column. But we'll report them, nevertheless. Rev. Lanting declined the call from Hope Church (Grand Rapids). Candidate W. Bekkering, who received calls from both Forbes and Randolph, has accepted the call from the latter. Candidate M. Kamps received and accepted the call from Redlands, California. Rev. Woudenberg has declined the call extended to him from Hope Church (Grand Rapids) to serve as home missionary. And Rev. Engelsma has declined the call to become third professor in our Seminary. That call has therefore been extended to the synodically chosen first alternate, Rev. Kortering, of our Hull Church.

Some time ago we included, in this column, information concerning various projects of the Evangelism Committee of our South Holland congregation. The expressed aim of this committee was that it "be diligent in the dissemination of the truth with which He has singularly blessed us." That it has indeed been such, is evident, we think, from the work which has been done. Several recent speeches have been printed in pamphlet form and distributed, as a result of their efforts. Perhaps you have seen "Shall There Be Reformation No More?" — a pamphlet made from Rev. Van Baren's 1971 Reformation Day address in South Holland. Another has been made of the speech by Prof. Hanko which dealt with the film arts.

There are, however, a couple of recent publications which deserve special attention. One is entitled "Pentecostalism, in the Light of The Word," which you may recognize as the title of the lecture given by Rev. Decker in Holland last spring. The other is a pamphlet containing meditations which appeared on the bulletins of First Church during the war years of 1941-1946. The meditations, written by Rev. Herman Hoeksema, were, according to the Foreword "published in this Booklet as a testimony of the marvelous grace of God in Jesus Christ which alone is able to sustain God's children in times of sickness, old age, sorrow, poverty, distress and affliction."

Of primary importance, certainly, is the *contents* of these pamphlets; but we could mention in passing that a striking feature of both booklets is the attractiveness of the *covers*. For the intended use of these pamphlets, their appearance is no doubt of some *importance*, too. But, to return to the contents, it's the opinion of the committee that both pamphlets "should have universal appeal; the *Pentecostalism* booklet speaks to one of the issues plaguing the church world today, the

Consolation booklet likewise lends itself to wide usage. The thinking of the Evangelism Committee is that this booklet can be used in making pastoral sick calls, visiting the bereaved, and other pastoral uses. It can also be supplied to local funeral homes to be placed on their lamp tables in the visiting rooms or it can be placed in doctors' offices, in hospital waiting rooms and at bedsides, and in the homes for the aged. . . . The booklet is also suitable for personal distribution to friends, neighbors, and relatives."

It is the desire of the Evangelism Committee that there be wider distribution than can be achieved by "the immediate work of our local South Holland congregation." To that end, the committee is "willing to send each of our congregations the quantity they desire, free of charge. A free-will gift to the work of our Evangelism Committee will be gratefully received."

Incidentally, cassette tapes of the Pentecostalism lecture are also available, at a cost of \$2.00 each. For the tape and/or the pamphlets, write to:

The Evangelism Committee
South Holland Protestant Reformed Church
16511 South Park Avenue
South Holland, Illinois 60473

From our Business Manager we have the following contribution, which is, typically, as interesting as it is informative:

"Facts and figures are always of interest. Here are a few of each, which might prove of interest to the readers and the subscribers of our *Standard Bearer*.

"Of all the names appearing in the telephone books and the city directories of our country, the name *SMITH* is perhaps the most common. However, this fact is not found to be true in regard to the names appearing on the 'subscription list' of the *Standard Bearer*. Only one — just one single *SMITH*, is found on our mailing list! That one is *SMITH, JAKE*, of Ward, South Dakota. Rather, the name *KUIPER* appears most often — in fact 19 *KUIPERS* subscribe to our paper. *DE VRIES* runs a close second, with 18; *DYKSTRA* third, with 17; and the *LUBBERS* and the *VAN BARENS* follow with 13 each. (Incidentally, Mr. 'News Editor,' the *DOEZEMAS* outnumber the *VANDER WALS* by 7 to 4, even after a *VANDER WAAL*, residing in Natal, South Africa, is included.)

But regardless of the name — whether it be a *SMITH*, a *KUIPER*, or *DE VRIES* — the board of the REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION is indeed thankful to send the truth of God's Infallible Word to each and every subscriber and reader of this Distinctively Reformed Publication — *The Standard Bearer*."

D.D.