

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

## **IN THIS ISSUE**

**Meditation:**

**Jesus' Sheep**

**New Theology and Old  
(Graduation Address)**

**Obeying Parents**

**(see: The Strength of Youth)**

**Jamaica Mission Report**

## CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
Jesus' Sheep .....	434
Editor's Notes .....	436
Graduation Address —	
New Theology and Old .....	437
Question Box —	
About Infant Baptism .....	443
Contending for the Faith —	
The Doctrine of Atonement .....	445
Studies in Election —	
Its Resistance .....	447
The Strength of Youth —	
Obeying Parents .....	449
The Day of Shadows —	
The Initial Generation Gap .....	452
Sketches on Jamaica Mission —	
Sundry Matters of Interest .....	454
News From Our Churches .....	456

## THE STANDARD BEARER

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**Meditation****Jesus' Sheep**

Rev. M. Schipper

*"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."*

John 10: 27 — 30.

Directly these words of Jesus were spoken by the Lord to the Jews who had gathered about Him during the feast of the dedication as Jesus walked on Solomon's porch at the temple in Jerusalem.

Interesting it is to note that in substance the Lord had spoken the same truth on an earlier occasion, as

we observe in the preceding context. Then it seemed that the Jews had been greatly divided in their opinion of Him. But now, two months later, Jesus is talking to them on the same subject. Only this time the conversation is occasioned by a direct question as to Jesus' true identity. They say: "How long dost thou



make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered and said unto them: "I told you before, but you did not believe. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep."

On this dismal background Jesus paints as it were the picture of the Good Shepherd and His sheep. Particularly concerning the latter He speaks in our text.

Blessed is he who is incorporated in the threefold description Jesus gives here of His sheep!

First of all they are the called ones!

"My sheep hear my voice!"

The voice of the Shepherd calls them!

He is the Good Shepherd!

And that means, in the first place, that He is the divinely appointed Shepherd. God has set Him, Who is His only begotten Son, to be the Shepherd of His people. It is this that the psalmist David, also a shepherd, recognized when he declared: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." And of Whom the prophet Isaiah wrote: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

That He is the Good Shepherd does not reflect so much on His ethical perfection and virtues, though He is, indeed, the sinless and perfect Son of God in the flesh; but the term evidently reflects on the truth that the fullest realization of the idea of the shepherd is to be found in Him. All the qualities of the real shepherd are found in Him. At the same time, He is the antitype of all shepherds that preceded Him, while they all were simply imperfect figures of Him that was to come.

The Good Shepherd calls, and the sheep hear His voice!

He calls by His Word and Spirit!

In another Scripture (John 1:1), that Good Shepherd is called the very Word of God. God calls, and He is pleased to do this through the voice of the Good Shepherd. That voice of the Good Shepherd was heard in all the prophets that appeared before His incarnation. That voice was heard of Him when He appeared in the flesh and walked among men. At the very moment He uttered the words of our text to contemporary Jews, His sheep heard His voice and His call. And they still hear it in the faithful preaching of the gospel. Fact of the matter is, that the highest point of all true preaching is for the sheep to hear the voice of the Good Shepherd speaking to them. And that they do when that Word is graciously applied to them by the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ.

That the sheep are called is the result of the efficacious working of grace in them, whereby they not only hear with all their senses the saving call of the Good Shepherd, but His call reaches into their hearts, into the very center of their spiritual being. So they hear His voice, and that very voice works in them in

such a way that they respond.

O, indeed, there were many who heard His voice; even the Jews to whom He was now speaking. But they responded not, except antithetically. They did not believe, because they were not of His sheep; but they heard His voice. That very voice evoked in them all the antipathy, hatred, which they were presently to heap on Him when they would bring Him to His cross. Always the voice of Jesus has this twofold effect: it either arouses in the hearers the murderous cry: Crucify Him, Crucify Him!; or, it gently persuades the true sheep to seek His face, and to follow Him whithersoever He will lead them.

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them!

Implicit in these words is the truth, first of all, that the sheep are the Good Shepherd's peculiar possession. They were given unto Him by the Father from everlasting. He makes them His own through the ransom price of His own precious blood. And consequently He knows them. He knows them all, and each one, by name. Not you understand, by the name given them by their parents; but by their spiritual names: pure in heart; poor in spirit, the merciful, and those who are hungry and thirsty after righteousness, etc.

By these names He calls them, and these hear His voice!

And they follow Him!

The Lord's description, therefore, in the second place, describes His sheep as obedient sheep!

To hear, in this instance, has more in it than merely to understand intelligently what has fallen sensibly upon the ear drum, so that it is known what is spoken; but implicit in this hearing is also response, obedience.

The sheep hear His voice, but the voice of strangers they will not hear. This was what was so apparent now as the Lord spoke to His adversaries. They had in their leaders set themselves forth as the shepherds of Israel. Ruthlessly they had imposed upon the sheep of Christ commandments too grievous to be borne, but which were intended to make the sheep follow them. Vainly they called to these sheep to follow them. But these blind leaders would only lead them astray, and by their endeavors seek to blot out the very image of the true and Good Shepherd. But the sheep would not follow them! And this truth obtains still today. Many there are who would beckon Christ's sheep with gracious offers, and a watered down gospel in which the sheep can find no semblance of the Christ of the Scriptures. Indeed, these false shepherds have a following, and in the time to come this following will increase, for there will indeed be a great falling away. Scripture makes very plain that many shall follow their pernicious doctrines and ways, but this is only the falling away of unbelievers, — those who have lived in close proximity to the church and her preaching, those who have tasted of the heavenly gift, been made partakers of the Holy



Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. These shall fall away, that is, follow after the doctrine of the false leaders. But not so the true sheep of Christ!

Only the voice of Jesus they will hear! Not of themselves, you understand, but because of the efficaciousness of that voice and that call. That voice they love. To that voice they will respond, and obey. When He calls them, they will come!

That they follow Him, is due therefore, first of all, to the drawing power of their divine Shepherd. But, in the second place, to the very nature of His Word and Spirit that works in them. Subjectively they must respond, join themselves to Him, cleave unto Him, and become His disciples. With confident trust they implicitly rely on Him, and follow Him whithersoever He leads them. They are not afraid of Him with the fear of fright, but they fear Him with the knowledge of love.

And, in the third place, the Lord describes His sheep as those who are perfectly safe!

Positively, the Lord says: "And I give unto them eternal life!"

And, according to Jesus in another place in John's gospel (17:3), "This is eternal life, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent." In other words, eternal life consists in the perfect, spiritual, intimate knowledge of God Who is Jesus Christ, Whom He has sent. Accordingly, this eternal life is the constant adaptation of the life of the eternal God which is in them. As the fish lives, when it constantly adapts itself to the water; and as the tree lives when it constantly adapts itself to the soil; so the sheep of Christ live as they are constantly adapted unto Him, the God of their salvation.

This eternal life the sheep experience already now. It was merited for them by the Good Shepherd. It is wrought in them by His Spirit and grace. Their hearts are filled with it in regeneration, resurrection life. They taste the peace of it in justification. They walk in the hope of it in way of sanctification. And presently in body and soul, with their whole being, they shall experience it when death and the grave have prepared them for everlasting glory.

Negatively, the Lord says: "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

O, indeed, like natural sheep, they may wander sometimes far from the fold, they may go astray, and even fall when their eyes are not constantly stayed on their Shepherd. And the Shepherd may allow His sheep, which for a time imagine they are independent, self-sufficient, rebellious, and sinful, to go astray to their hurt. But they shall never perish! And no one shall be able to pluck them out of His hand!

The reason? "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand, I and the Father are one."

Double security, therefore!

What is not of God and of Christ, perishes!

What belongs to Christ, Who is the God of our salvation, is eternally blessed!

What solid comfort in these words of the Shepherd for all the sheep of Christ!

They are eternally safe!

With the hymn writer I will sing, "When at last by His grace, I shall look on His face, that will be glory for me!"

Will you sing it with me?

Amen!

## Editor's Notes

*TEN for TWO Progress Report.* From our Business Manager comes the information that our TEN for TWO introductory offer of 10 issues of our *Standard Bearer* has thus far brought us 161 new readers, the 161st being from Hawaii! A remarkable response, far beyond our expectations, for which we are thankful! Oh, yes, I should also mention that among our new readers are 15 from the far away land of New Zealand. To all our new readers, welcome! We also invite your comments and opinions. We invite you, too, to take an active part in our *Question Box*. In due time, you will also be invited by our Business Manager to become regular subscribers.

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*Only One Issue in August.* Following our usual publication schedule, we will publish only one issue during the month of August. This gives all of us on the

staff a "breather." In September we will return to our regular schedule of two issues per month.

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*Staff Changes.* Speaking of returning to our regular schedule, our Staff has made a couple of changes for the new volume-year which begins in October. Rev. Dale Kuiper, who contributed several guest articles this year, will take the department *In His Fear* on a regular basis. Rev. Jay Kortering will divide his efforts between *The Strength of Youth*, for which he has been writing in the past, and *Voice of our Fathers*, in which he will comment on our confessional heritage. Rev. Robert Decker will share the exegetical department, *From Holy Writ*, with Rev. Lubbers in the coming year. And Rev. David Engelsma will begin a series of doctrinal studies.

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*Question Box.* Questioners, please have patience. As soon as time and space permit, we will try to answer your questions. Meanwhile, keep the questions coming, please!

## Graduation Address

# New Theology and Old

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

*[The following is a transcript of an address delivered at the commencement program of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Those present at the time of the program will notice that some parts of this address which were abbreviated, for lack of time, when the address was delivered are here represented in considerably expanded form.]*

Mr. Chairman, Fathers and Brethren of the Synod, Class of 1972, and Friends gathered with us:

That we live in times described by the chapter which our chairman read this evening, II Timothy 3, is becoming increasingly and more emphatically clear today. There are the times in which men have "a form of godliness, but (are) denying the power thereof" (vs. 5). They are the times described in verse 13, in which "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." It is in this connection that I wish to speak to you — particularly to you of the graduating class of 1972 at this last opportunity for me to instruct you — about the so-called "new theology." I have not chosen this subject because we, as Protestant Reformed Churches, are internally concerned with this new theology. Thankfully, we are not: none of us is a disciple of it. We are one of the very few today who have no internal denominational concern and problems with that new theology. But this new theology has made rapid inroads into the Reformed community. And we are called to take position and to testify and warn against it. Moreover, it is my conviction that we must take position and testify against the new theology not merely on generally orthodox grounds, but from the viewpoint of and on the specific ground of our Protestant Reformed theology, that which, according to my sincere conviction, is the "old theology" in its pure form.

In order to take position over against the new theology and in order to testify and warn against it, we must understand that theology. There is much vague and general discussion about it and its evils. And in a general way, I suppose, many of us are acquainted somewhat with its errors. But there is need of specific definition. We must understand clearly what this new theology in the Reformed community stands for; and we must understand its works. We must know the enemy and his position in order to do battle against him.

I wish to limit myself and this address to what belongs to the very essence of the world-and-life view of that so-called new theology. As I suggested, we are all more or less acquainted with various aspects of that new theology, such as its critical doctrine of Scripture, its so-called "new hermeneutics," its emphasis on de-confessionalization, its denial of sovereign predestination, its support of revolutionary activities in society and in the state, its emphasis on the new morality. Undoubtedly, too, there is at the basis of the new theology an entirely radical approach to all that belongs to the six loci of dogmatics — though I am not aware of any complete "dogmatics" of the new theology having been written as yet. But at this occasion I want to call attention to two specific aspects of that new theology which are at present receiving attention in the Netherlands in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. In our own country, too, there are adherents of the new theology in Reformed circles; but there is not much original development of theology here; most of what is taught is borrowed and imported. But in the Netherlands, especially in connection with the views of Dr. H. M. Kuitert (and others like him), attention is being paid (also synodically) to especially two items. The first is "a consistent horizontalization of faith." And the second is "the latent kingdom as fruit of the anonymous word of promise." (I may insert here that the question has been raised synodically concerning the viewpoints "whether this conception does not need correction and deepening because it does not bring to sufficient expression the incomparably greater work of God's salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.") In these two items, as I hope to explain, there is embodied a very definite world-and-life view of the new theology. It is in this connection that I address you on the subject "New Theology and Old."

*The New Theology*

*The World-Wide Significance of Salvation*

It is strongly emphasized by the new theology, first



of all, that God's salvation which has appeared in Jesus Christ is of universal significance. Believers are concerned in this salvation in a particular way. But God's salvation embraces much more than personal salvation. It concerns no less than the liberation of the whole world from the strangling grasp of sin. The atonement and reconciliation of Jesus Christ also has to do with the whole world.

Now the above could be understood in a good sense. There certainly is a proper sense in which it may be said that salvation is universal. But this is not the idea of the new theology. The new theology emphasizes that this salvation which is of universal significance has reference to this present world and this present earth. God in Jesus Christ through His Spirit is busy renewing society on this earth and causing this world to correspond to the purpose which He has with it. Salvation, therefore, must not be sought "above." It comes, indeed, from above, from God; but the New Jerusalem comes down upon the earth. When the Bible speaks of a "new earth," then *this earth* is meant, which is renewed and becomes new under God's hand. God's salvation, therefore, is earthly salvation. His promises have reference to this world, and here below those promises will be realized. On the horizontal plane of our earthly reality God is busy making His salvation-history.

In close connection with this notion of a universal salvation is the idea of on-going history. Indeed, all salvation that is realized here and now is still imperfect because of the remaining power of evil. But God's liberation-work — the reconciliation-ministry of Jesus Christ — progresses. Jesus Christ is busy coming again. In world history sin shall be conquered. God's continuing saving concern with this world will eventually triumph over all opposing forces. Finally, we will have in our midst the triumphant Savior, plainly visible here on earth; and that will be cause for great joy. In short, not in a world above this world, and not in a world after this world, but out there in our own world lies the full salvation for the taking. History is not characterized by a level course of development; but the history of God's saving activities moves in the direction of the liberation, the reconciliation, the renewal of our world.

#### *Horizontalization*

Horizontalism emphasizes that the expectation of our faith properly concentrates entirely upon this earth and its future. As God's allies, we are called in faith to devote ourselves unconditionally to the livability and inhabitability of *this* world. As administrators of the gospel of reconciliation, we will be active in social and industrial and political activities in which the rights of the poor and the oppressed are asserted and whereby liberty and brotherhood in the world are served. In such healing conduct on the horizontal plane of earthly reality the

reconciliation-act of Jesus Christ should be worked out and verified by us.

This is what is meant by a "consistent horizontalization of faith." God's work of salvation is directed horizontally toward the future of this earth. In this we with our human responsibility of faith are wholly concerned and involved. It comes down to this, that we go along with our God and Savior in the exciting adventure of faith, together on the road to heaven on earth. Too often the church defaults when it comes to this horizontal action. This is especially true with respect to political and industrial and social relationships. It can hardly be seen that the church goes along with our God and Savior in the ministry of His healing grace for human society. It is asserted that many of the younger generation see this clearly, and that their attitude is that "whoever is married to the church experiences the disappointment of his life." And this same younger generation maintains that the non-Christian world is after all not so bad.

#### *The Anonymous Word of Promise*

The third element in this world-and-life view of the new theology is the very strange idea of what is called God's anonymous word of promise.

It is claimed that at the same time that the church preaches this gospel of this worldly salvation, she comes into contact with fragments of human reality which, in greater or smaller measure, already correspond to this salvation in the world outside of her influence. This, it is claimed, is the present day discovery: a kind of reality of salvation such as the church preaches is apparently called into being outside of and apart from the church. In this connection it should be stated that the new theologians proceed from the oneness of God's grace and salvation. (In other words, there is no distinction between a saving and a non-saving, a special and a common grace of God.) They claim that they do not want to weaken the absoluteness of God's revelation of salvation in Jesus Christ. On the contrary, they exactly want to point out how from out of the revelation of Christ the window is opened toward salvation for the whole world. In Jesus Christ have appeared the goodness and the love of humanity of our gracious God, bringing salvation for all men. And in that one salvation for the world is involved at the same time the phenomenon of true humanity outside of the church.

It is in this connection that these new theologians refer to the operation of what is called "the anonymous word of promise." They claim not to deny the unique value of the preached gospel; but they point to the fact that the value of the preached gospel depends on the promising God. "I Am That I Am" is itself the promise for man and the world. And in the appearance of Jesus Christ God has once and for all proved Himself as such, II Corinthians 1:20. From thence also God's created word of promise proceeds,



born forth by His Spirit going out into the world for good, bringing salvation. In the church this powerful word of promise asserts itself with the name and surname of our promising God, who stands behind it. But also in the world which does not know His name this word of promise is operative, but it is *anonymously* operative. And also in this namelessness — with the sender unknown! — this mighty word of promise makes use of men, men in whom it arouses faith and expectation. It is through this that it comes about that men in the Spirit of Christ whom they do not consciously know offer a cup of cold water, devote themselves to the needs of others, go through the fire in behalf of the miserable and the oppressed, declare their solidarity with those who are deprived and discriminated against (Matthew 25:31-40). It is by this anonymous word of promise that these men of the world are also inspired to help in building the future world of righteousness and peace in which God's salvation receives shape.

Thus it is that the new theologians explain the true humanity, the beneficial, wholesome activities, and the active expectation which, they claim, can also be discovered in the world. With emphasis it is claimed that this active expectation that can be discovered in the world outside of the church must be understood as a response to the powerful, saving word of promise of God which goes forth into the world anonymously, that is, without God's name attached to it. Not only in the preached gospel, but also in God's anonymous promise Christ is presently operative with His Spirit and with the power of His resurrection. And thus it comes about that also men outside of the church are captivated by a new expectation of life and are also included in the advance of God's salvation for mankind and the world.

### *The Idea of a "Latent Kingdom"*

It follows, therefore, that all salvation that is realized through the service of men who are outside of the church here in this world must be recognized as the proper work of the same God Who through the gospel and under a plain name calls the world to His salvation. The same triune God and Savior Who through the means of the call and the action of the church is busy establishing the kingdom of His grace also asserts His gracious dominion without the church and outside of the church; and in the latter instance He does so incognito. The men concerned in this do not acknowledge Him. They miss the believing self-consciousness which makes the church church. Nevertheless they stand in a hidden relation to the salvation-bringing God. Without knowing it, they participate in His saving dominion.

To denote this idea the term "latent kingdom" has been used by Dr. Kuitert. The term "latent" means "hidden," in contrast with that which is manifest, or

revealed. Hence, this expression of a "latent kingdom" means that the God of all salvation is also operative outside of the church in order to bring the world under the domination and rule of His message and mission of salvation. The emphasis in this connection is said to be not so much on the idea of individual and personal salvation. The idea is not so much to say that everyone, as a fruit of this anonymous promise, is involved in this latent kingdom is saved. It is true that everlasting salvation may not be excluded here. It is also true that in the order which we have, the order of the preaching, conscious personal union with Christ is necessary. Nevertheless, outside of the reach of the preached gospel, the anonymous can also take hold of men for good and cause them to participate in Christ's reconciliation. But the emphasis is on the salvation which the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ brings into being in the world along the hidden ways of His anonymously operative promise of salvation and through the employment of non-church men. And the emphasis is upon seeing this salvation in unbreakable unity with the salvation that is worked out through the means of our preaching and our faith. And the new theology stresses that we must have an eye and a heart for this. Thus it is, too, that the new theology emphasizes that as church we must not live for the great future of the completed kingdom of God without the world, but in and with the world.

Such, briefly, is the world-and-life view of the new theology. [I am indebted for the above description to Dr. F.L. Bos, of Vlaardingen as reported by *Friesch Dagblad*, April 20, 1972.]

### *II. The New Theology and Old Error*

That all of the above is *error* I hardly have to argue. One cannot recognize the truth of our Reformed confessions in the above presentation. It is universalism of the rankest sort. It is post millennialism of the crassest kind. It embodies a denial of all of the precious truths of the gospel which Reformed believers have always held dear. One can only stand amazed at the fact that views such as those described can be promulgated in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, and that then those churches allow themselves to become involved in long and dilatory discussions with those who advance them.

And that the presentation described above is *old* error is also hardly in need of demonstration. There may, indeed, be some new facets. But anyone who is at all acquainted with the Social Christianity which came into vogue about the beginning of this century will recognize in the above presentation a close facsimile, if not an absolute identity.

One may, of course, mention several influences which are factors in the development and rise of such a theology — if, indeed, it may be called a theology — in Reformed churches, particularly in what used to be the citadel of the Reformed faith, and specifically in what



was supposed to be the bastion of Reformed learning, the Free University of Amsterdam. One may mention the influence of Barthianism, which has undoubtedly played a part. One may make mention of the influence of the entire critical school with respect to Holy Scripture, particularly of Rudolph Bultmann. One may mention the influence of the God-is-dead Theology, along with its new morality and its horizontalism. It would seem to me that anyone who is acquainted with the history of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* must needs see the development today in connection with the long term influence of the movement of "*de jongeren*" in Reformed churches. This movement arose shortly after World War I. Its emphasis was upon the need of something new and broader. It sought a broadening of the confessions. It clamored for escape from what they called the isolationist shell of Reformed churches.

But the question is: how is the rise of this new theology fundamentally possible in the very citadel of the Reformed faith? How could these views ever arise? How could even the aforementioned influences *be* influential? How was this possible in the light of the fact that the new theology is so completely foreign, so diametrically opposite to the Reformed faith?

To phrase the question differently, was there somewhere some fertile soil, doctrinally speaking, which could give rise to this new theology in Reformed circles and which could bring forth such corrupt fruit?

My answer to this question is *Yes*. The fertile soil in which the seeds of the new theology could germinate, take root, spring forth, and blossom out is the Kuyperian theory of common grace. The so-called "new theology," I am saying, is the logical development and outgrowth of the old error introduced into Reformed theology by Dr. Abraham Kuyper, Sr. I am not saying that this development took place necessarily in a conscious way. I am not asserting that men have consciously built upon and appealed to Dr. Kuyper's common grace theory in rearing the structure of the new theology as described above. I have found no evidence, thus far, to make this claim. Twice in recent months I have seen journalistic references to common grace in connection with the views of the new theology. In fact, the very article by Dr. F. L. Bos to which I referred above speaks at length of Kuyper's views in connection with the new theology. Besides, it is rather commonly recognized that a so-called neo-Kuyperian party in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* is responsible for and largely influential in the development of the new theology. Nevertheless, I have no specific grounds on which to base a claim that this development is a conscious development from the philosophy of common grace. But if not consciously, then at least in a sub-conscious way the new theology has sprung forth out of the soil of the old error of common grace. That is, over a period of years, especially since the rise of the "*de*

*jongeren*," the tendency has been in the direction of the broad, modernistic, universalistic, post-millennialistic world-and-life view of the new theology, due to the fact that the common grace theory furnished the fertile soil for the growth of today's complete denial of the antithesis.

Parenthetically, let me explain — for those who think of the Three Points of 1924 in connection with common grace — that I am not now referring to the theory of a general, well-meant offer of salvation in the preaching of the gospel. This also is an error, and a serious one. Perhaps, because of the tide of Arminian evangelism that sweeps the churches in our day and because of the emphasis which the well-meant offer has received in connection with the controversy about the Three Points, we are inclined to think first of this when we hear the expression "common grace." But this is not what I have in mind; neither did Dr. Kuyper teach the error of a well-meant offer of salvation. In fact, he rather strongly emphasized particular grace as far as salvation is concerned. But by the Kuyperian theory of common grace is meant a non-saving favor of God toward men in common, elect and reprobate alike, which is temporal and which pertains to the things of this present life. We shall come back to this later; but I want to emphasize that it is with this Kuyperian theory of common grace that the so-called new theology is connected. At the same time, I want to emphasize that I am increasingly of the conviction that this theory of common grace has proved to be a very dangerous and insidious and devastating error. I fear that we tend sometimes to forget this and to ignore this aspect of the whole subject of common grace, or at least to under-estimate its importance. Arminianism and the Arminian theory of general grace and the Arminian notion of a general, well-meant offer of salvation embodied in the First Point of 1924 is also a very serious error. There is no question about that; today one looks almost in vain for a Reformed view of the preaching of the gospel even in the Reformed community. But the common grace theory is also a very serious error, though its influence is felt in a different area than the influence of the general grace theory of a well-meant offer. The common grace theory makes its influence felt in the area of the world-and-life view of the Christian, and therefore in the area of sanctification and of our antithetical calling to be a separate people. The common grace theory serves as a bridge between the church and the world, with the result that the world and its evil influences is brought right into the church. The common grace theory serves to blur, and eventually to eradicate, the lines of demarcation between church and world, between light and darkness, between Christ and Belial. For this reason I want to emphasize — or re-emphasize, if you will — the importance of opposing the error of common grace and of holding to the truth



that God's grace is always particular. But this only in parentheses.

Permit me briefly to point out the doctrinal connection and similarity between the common grace theory and the new theology.

Dr. Kuyper's theory, in brief, is as follows. In the first place, Dr. Kuyper taught that with a view to eternity and the eternal blessedness of the kingdom of heaven, God is gracious only to the elect. But, in the second place, he taught that there is a restraining influence of common grace, operative ever since the fall of man, upon the physical and the ethical corruption of the world and upon the heart of man, so that the principle of total depravity cannot work through. In the third place, Dr. Kuyper taught that there is a positive influence of God's common grace upon the mind and will of fallen man whereby he is so improved that he can still live a positively good world-life. By this positive influence of common grace, it is alleged, the development of the human race is made possible; but also a positively good world-life on the part of the fallen human race and in connection with all created things is guaranteed. In all the progress and civilization of mankind, in science, art, industry, commerce, as carried on by the world — in a word, in all the mighty works of the natural man, there is good. By virtue of common grace fallen man accomplishes many good things and performs many good works. Through the alleged covenant of common grace, fallen mankind even becomes the ally of God over against the devil. Thus, finally, the common grace theory holds that to an extent and for a time God's original creation ordinance is carried out.

It is very plain that the new theology, as described above, goes farther than the common grace theory. But it is also very plain that the new theology is simply a further development of the common grace theory of Dr. Kuyper. In a way, though it is totally wrong, certainly even more wrong than the theory of common grace, it is more consistent.

Let us make a comparison, and thereby see the relation and the development. The new theology also denies that God's grace is only particular, in the first place. It teaches that God's grace is common, universal. The difference, however, between the new theology and the common grace theory lies in the fact that the former teaches that God's grace is ONE. It no longer posits any difference between special grace and common grace, but holds that God's grace is always saving, bringing salvation to the whole world. Parenthetically, I may remark that it is no wonder, then, that the new theology is also characterized by a denial of reprobation. In the second place, common grace is said to furnish only temporary relief and enlightenment for fallen mankind. It restrains sin temporarily; but ultimately common grace comes to an end and fails. The new theology goes farther, and is at

least consistent in this respect also: for it holds that God's grace brings, or is at least capable of bringing, salvation to the whole world, to all mankind, both within the church and outside of the church. This is plain in the description which I gave in the first part of this address. In the third place, common grace is said to make it possible to develop the potential given with creation to a certain degree, and that, too, only temporarily. Also the positive influence of common grace is limited, and ultimately fails. But the new theology stresses that through God's one, universal grace, salvation is worked out in this world, also among those who are beyond the church and her preaching. At least in a certain measure that universal salvation is made a tangible reality here and now. The dream of a heaven and earth — not in the *hereafter*, but in the *here-and-now* — is the mirage of the new theology.

What has been the motive power of this development?

Via the bridge of common grace and in response, over a period of years, to the clamor of "*de jongeren*," the church has more and more come out of her isolation. She has come into contact with the world. And today on a far greater scale than ever before she has come into contact with the non-Christian world. The result has not been that the church has influenced that world. On the contrary, as is always the case, the result has been that the world has influenced the church. That world, viewed through the spectacles of the common grace theory, has made a favorable impression on the church. That world and its evil influences has been brought into the church. More and more the church has discovered that she can cooperate with the world. And today the church — also in large measure the Reformed church — has "discovered" that she can cooperate with the non-Christian world toward the realization of salutary ideals for human society. And the new theology with its world-and-life view simply spells out this possibility for the church, and thereby gives it added impetus.

#### *The Old Theology Versus New Error*

The old theology stands fundamentally and diametrically opposed to this new error, even as it stands opposed to the error of the common grace theory.

What do I mean by the "old theology?"

It is not my purpose to outline for you the old theology in all its ramifications and details. That would be a complete course in Reformed dogmatics.

But permit me briefly to emphasize the cardinal points of that old theology in this particular context. And then I would call attention to the following:

1) God is God, and always He performs all His good pleasure. He proceeds directly to His goal, according to His counsel; and all things — also Satan and sin and the ungodly world — serve Him in the achievement of this goal. All things are moving toward



their final consummation in the parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the wicked world shall be destroyed, and when the new and everlasting kingdom of glory shall be ushered in – not post-millennially and in this present time, but through the wonder of grace and in the new creation.

2) God's grace, which is indeed one and always saving, is directed toward the organic whole of the church, in Christ as its Head, and in connection with the organic whole of all creatures of the entire cosmos. The ungodly reprobate are never the objects of this grace.

3) Besides the operation of God's drawing, saving, glorifying grace toward the elect kernel of created things, there is an operation of God's rejecting, repelling wrath on the reprobate shell.

4) All things of this present life are means which God uses – either in grace or in wrath – as means to fulfill His counsel. In so far as man uses those things of this present life, they constitute so many obligations whereby man is placed before the demand to thank and serve God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength.

5) Sin develops in this world and in the course of history as rapidly as possible through an operation of God's wrath upon the lusts of the flesh; there is no restraining and improving operation of the Holy Spirit on natural man apart from regeneration.

6) The Christian does not separate himself physically and locally from the world. Neither is it the calling of the Christian to improve this world, which is impossible. It is his calling to be *in* the world, but not *of* the world. Positively, it is his calling to live from the principle of regeneration and according to the Word of God, and thus to represent the cause of the Son of God here in the world as being of the party of the living God.

It is on this basis of the old theology – and I insist that Protestant Reformed theology is not something new, but is indeed the old, Reformed theology – I say that it is only on this basis of the old theology that you can successfully resist and oppose the new error. He who would reject the new theology, but fall back only to the position of the old error of common grace will fail. The theory of common grace brings the church right into the world; or rather, it brings the world into the church. Common grace has produced

the new theology, and the latter is a development of and an improvement upon the former. It is only on the basis of the strict line of sovereign predestination and sovereign, particular grace and the absolute antithesis that the new theology can successfully be resisted.

If I may apply all this personally for a moment to our three graduates at this, my last opportunity to instruct them and to warn them, then I would emphasize their calling to stand in the truth, and from that stance in the truth to do battle in all their preaching and teaching and exhortation against the increasing error and the growing apostasy of our day.

Does that mean that as future Protestant Reformed ministers of the gospel you must fight the battle of 1924? By all means! Should you fail to do that, you would be unfaithful!

But does that mean that you must fight that battle as though you live in 1924, or in the immediate post-1924 era? That is neither possible, nor necessary! We do not live in 1924. You graduates stand two generations removed from 1924. You have not experienced it. Even I myself belong to the post-1924 generation, though in the nature of the case I stand much closer to that struggle than do you. But we live in 1972, and we must fight the battle as living in 1972. And remember, there has been development – both on the side of the truth and on the side of the lie.

In order to fight that battle in 1972 you must have understanding of the times. You must understand the times theologically; and you must understand the times practically. And in order to understand the times, you must understand history, specifically our own history. You must understand the history of doctrine and the development of the truth. You must understand the history and the roots of the lie. You must understand new theology and new error in the light of and in connection with old error and old theology.

And therefore, my concluding word to you at this occasion of your graduation is: Remember the rock whence you have been hewn – also the rock whence you have been hewn ecclesiastically and theologically. And exercise yourselves in the old theology, in order that you may be well-equipped to fight the new error and to lead the church in the old, but ever new and glorious, paths of the truth.

**New Zealanders! Our New Zealand agent is Mr. W. Van Rye, 7 Ryeland Avenue, Christchurch 4. We invite you to take advantage of our introductory offer of 10 issues for \$2.00!**



## Question Box

# About Infant Baptism

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

From a Grand Rapids reader I received the following interesting questions about infant baptism. I will at least begin to answer them in this issue; but perhaps this answer will have to be in two installments. Here are the questions:

"Some time ago my wife and I had the opportunity to visit with a Baptist Minister who prided himself in the fact that he was truly Calvinistic, that he believed in the sovereignty of God and all it implies, that he believed in the Covenant, and yet he insisted on the baptism of *believers* only and not the baptism of infants.

"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 minister also stated that nowhere in Scripture are we told that Baptism has taken the place of Circumcision, and therefore we may not draw this conclusion nor may we do anything that is not specifically taught us in Scripture.

"I would like to have you answer these arguments in the *Standard Bearer*."

### Reply

Permit me to answer the second argument first: it is the more important of the two, even though the first argument raises some interesting questions. I will by-pass the question as to just how *Calvinistic* this Baptist minister is. I only want to make two remarks about that. In the first place, if this minister truly holds to the truth of God's covenant as well as to the truth of God's sovereignty, and if he understands that truth of God's covenant thoroughly, then I would say that before long he will have to forsake his Baptist

position and hold to infant baptism. He is not far from the kingdom in that respect. In the second place, Calvin himself insisted very strongly on infant baptism — over against the Anabaptists of his day. He devotes an entire chapter of his *Institutes* (Book IV, Chapter XVI) to an exposition and defense of infant baptism; and in the introduction to this chapter he makes it plain that he considers infant baptism a matter of "purity of doctrine in a capital point." Now while I am personally not fond of the term *Calvinistic*, it will be plain that one who disagrees with Calvin on what that man of God called a matter of "purity of doctrine in a capital point" can hardly be 100% entitled to the name of *Calvinist*. This chapter of Calvin's *Institutes*, by the way, contains much worthwhile and Scripturally founded instruction.

Before I deal directly with the matter of baptism taking the place of circumcision, I must make this remark. The argument that baptism has come in the place of circumcision is only *one link* in the chain of Scriptural argumentation in favor of infant baptism. That argumentation is: 1) That there is but one covenant of God both in the old and the new dispensation. 2) That there is essentially but one sign of that covenant both in the old and new dispensations, though that sign takes different forms. 3) That God continues His covenant, both in the old and in the new dispensation, in the line of continued generations.

And also this remark I must make. The argument which the Baptist makes that he holds to the baptism of *believers*, thereby implying that those who hold to infant baptism do not hold to baptism of believers but of non-believers, is a specious argument. This will be dealt with in the quotation I am about to make. But I want to emphasize this. I also hold to the baptism of *believers*! And I do so, too, when I hold to and engage in baptism of infants!

As far as Scriptural evidence is concerned, this is not difficult to produce. Of course, if you are looking for a *literal statement* that baptism has come in the place of circumcision, you look in vain — even as you look in vain for a *literal statement* that the Lord's Supper has taken the place of the Passover. But that it is the clear teaching of Scripture cannot be doubted. And I find the Scriptural evidence marshalled on pp. 691-694 of H. Hoeksema's *Reformed Dogmatics*, a section which I here quote in full:

But there is more. Not only are the people of God



in the old and new dispensation the same, but also the sign of the covenant, though different in form, is the same in both dispensations. Those that maintain the baptism of infants have always called attention to this truth, and correctly so, for it is an important and necessary link in the chain of the Scriptural argument for infant baptism. The objections which Baptists love to make against the baptism of infants is not a Scriptural one, but rather one which they draw from their own mind. It is that baptism is a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith, of the forgiveness of sin, of regeneration, and that therefore it may be administered only to those whom we know to be believers, that is, to those that confess their faith; that it is an established fact that many of the infants that are baptized in later life prove to be no children of God at all, and are lost; and that for this reason it is certainly wrong to administer the sign of baptism to children of believers before they have come to years of discretion. Against this argument many counterarguments may be adduced, such as, the fact that faith can be, and is, in fact, in the hearts of infants, implanted immediately by the Holy Spirit. Although they do not yet actually believe, yet they have the faculty or power of faith. Moreover, if Baptists argue that one must be sure that faith is present in the heart of anyone before he can be baptized, the Baptist himself cannot baptize on that ground either, for the simple reason that there may be, and are in fact, hypocrites among them that are baptized. But the chief argument which the Baptists here produce turns against themselves. For what they here argue against baptism holds in its full force against infant circumcision. Yet circumcision is directly enjoined by the Lord upon the seed of Abraham in their generations.

Also circumcision was a sign of the righteousness which is by faith, of spiritual circumcision, of the circumcision of the heart, of regeneration and sanctification, of the cutting away of the old man of sin, of the love of God in a new heart. In all these respects the significance of the old covenant sign is the same as of the sign of baptism. The identity of the two signs, though they differ in form, can be very clearly proved from the Word of God.

This is proved from those passages of Holy Writ that refer to the sign of circumcision only. Thus, for instance, in Leviticus 26:40, 41 we read: "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they have trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity." It is evident here that an uncircumcised heart is the same as a heart that will not confess sin and iniquity. To be uncircumcised in heart is to be unconverted. By implication this means that a circumcised heart is a regenerated and converted heart, from which there arises sorrow over sin and confession of iniquity. Of such a heart, therefore,

circumcision was a sign. In this respect circumcision has the same significance as holy baptism. In Deuteronomy 10:16 we read: "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiffnecked." Here too it is evident that circumcision was a sign of a circumcised, that is, of a sanctified heart. Circumcision and baptism, therefore, have the same significance. Confer also Deuteronomy 30:6: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of the seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Circumcision, therefore, was a sign of the work of God's grace in the heart, whereby the heart is filled with the love of God, and therefore it was a sign of the same grace that is signified in baptism. Again, confer Jeremiah 4:4: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem." It is evident that in the language of the New Testament this is the same as saying: "Put off the old man of sin, and put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of God in true righteousness and holiness." Circumcision and baptism, therefore, are essentially the same in meaning. And finally, confer Romans 4:11: "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." In this passage circumcision is presented as a sealing of the righteousness which is by faith. God seals in the sign of circumcision that He justifies the believers by faith and counts their faith for righteousness. Again, the same is true of baptism.

That this last is true will be evident if we compare with the above passages those that speak of the significance of holy baptism. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Baptism, therefore, is a sign of the remission of sins, or, if you please, of the righteousness which is by faith. The same is taught in Acts 22:16: "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Again, in Romans 6:4 we read: Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Baptism, like circumcision, is a sign of renewal, that is, of the renewal in Christ. In baptism we die with Christ, and we arise with Him in newness of life and walk. The same is expressed in Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Baptism, therefore, is a sign of putting on Christ, that is, of being renewed in Him. These passages may easily be multiplied, but the above texts may suffice.

Finally, I want to call your attention to the passages in Scripture that simply identify the two, circumcision and baptism. Thus we read in Colossians 2:11, 12: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of



Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Here the apostle plainly identifies the sign of baptism and circumcision with respect to their significance. He writes to the church of the new dispensation that believers are circumcised in the spiritual sense of the word, and that this spiritual circumcision took place when they were buried with Christ in baptism. A more direct proof that circumcision and baptism are essentially the same in meaning, the change of form being due to the transition from the old into the new dispensation, that is, from the dispensation of the shadows to that of the fulfillment, could not be given. At the same time this passage also implies that baptism is come in the place of circumcision, as all our Reformed fathers always taught. The same is true of Philippians 3:3: "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Here the apostle does not mention baptism neither does he refer to it. But nevertheless he maintains that not the Jews, but the church of the new dispensation in Christ are the circumcision. Essentially, therefore, circumcision has not been discarded, but is continued in the church of the new dispensation in the sacrament of baptism.

The Baptists, of course, deny that baptism has come in the place of circumcision, as is plainly expressed in our Baptism Form. Yet, nothing could

be more evident from the Scriptures. It is simply an historic fact that baptism forced circumcision must be discarded. For a time they existed side by side, especially in Jewish Christian communities, and circumcision tried to maintain itself alongside of baptism. But this proved to be impossible, and circumcision was forced to surrender its place in the church. And what is the reason? The reason is that the Word of God plainly teaches, as we have shown, that essentially baptism has the same significance as circumcision, that the two signs with the same meaning could not exist side by side, that circumcision belongs to the time of the shadows and therefore must make room for baptism as being the sign of fulfillment. Hence, if one would still insist that circumcision were necessary for the Christian church, he could only do so because he attached significance to it as an element of the law, sought the righteousness which is of the law, so that Christ had become of none effect to him. And surely, baptism as being the same sign essentially, and having the form proper to the dispensation, has come in the place of circumcision. So true this is, that the apostle can write that we are the circumcision, which are baptized.

Thus far the quotation from *Reformed Dogmatics*.

To the other argument raised by this Baptist minister to my questioner I will try to answer next time, the Lord willing.

## Contending for the Faith

# The Doctrine of Atonement

THE REFORMATION PERIOD  
THE SYNOD OF DORDT  
THE CANONS

H. Veldman

The ninth and final article of Head II of our Canon of Dordt, calling our attention to the death of Christ and the redemption of men thereby, reads as follows:

This purpose proceeding from everlasting love towards the elect, hath from the beginning of the world to this day been powerfully accomplished, and will henceforward still continue to be accomplished, notwithstanding all the ineffectual opposition of the gates of hell, so that the elect in due time may be gathered together into one, and that there never may be wanting a church composed of believers, the foundation of which is laid in the blood of Christ,

which may steadfastly love and faithfully serve Him as their Saviour, Who as a Bridegroom for His bride, laid down His life for them upon the cross, and which may celebrate His praises here and through all eternity.

When the fathers speak of "this purpose" in the very beginning of this truly wonderful article, they undoubtedly refer to the Lord's sovereign counsel, also called the most gracious will and purpose of God the Father at the beginning of Article VIII. This refers to that purpose of the Father according to which the



quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of God's Son should extend to all the elect, saving them even unto the uttermost. And the fathers begin this ninth article by calling attention to the fact that this purpose proceeds from God's everlasting love towards the elect. This we read literally in Isaiah 44: 1 — 2: "Yet now hear, O Jacob My servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, My servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen." And this is also set forth in Romans 8:29—30: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Indeed, the love of God toward His elect is a sovereign, everlasting love.

Notice, in the second place, that the foundation of this Church of God, powerfully preserved throughout the ages, is laid in the blood of Christ, and that this church, always preserved throughout the ages, will love and faithfully serve Him as their Saviour, Who as a bridegroom laid down His life for His bride upon the cross. This church, therefore, is anchored in the cross of Calvary. It is the blood of the Lamb of God which guarantees the everlasting life of all the elect. This is a far cry from the Arminian conception of universal atonement. This Arminian presentation, we have seen, guarantees nothing. According to it, everything depends upon the free will of the sinner. According to the fathers of Dordt, however, the foundation of the church is laid in the cross of Christ. Because of this death of the Son of God, the salvation of all the elect is assured, resting in the unchangeable love of God.

Thirdly, God always powerfully accomplishes His counsel of the salvation of all the elect. This article speaks of the "gates of hell." The expression, "gates of hell," refers to all the evil powers which issue forth out of the power of darkness. These are the powers of persecution and reproach, of suffering and death, of fire and sword and prison, the temptation of vain philosophy, of the treasures and pleasures of this world, the dominion of sin and of the flesh. The devil will reveal himself either as a devouring lion or as an angel of light. Sometimes he uses the power of the sword whereby he kills the body, and at other times he resorts to vain philosophy and to the undermining of the truth, the very foundations of the Church of God. And always these "gates of hell" seek the destruction of the Church of God in the midst of the world.

How true this is throughout the Old Dispensation! This struggle of the ages is set forth by the Lord already in Gen. 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his

heel." The very first child born, Cain, slays his brother, Abel, because Abel was righteous and Cain was wicked. Think of the struggle of the church in the ages before the flood. The Scriptures speak of proud and wicked Lamech, the father of Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-Cain. He has two wives, and boasts of the fact that he had slain two people, probably people of God. We also read of Enoch, a preacher of righteousness. They sought him, which means that they looked for him in order to kill him, but found him not because the Lord has translated him. And when the Lord destroys the world with a flood, only 8 souls were saved in the ark. How fierce the struggle had been!

The struggle becomes more intense after the flood. Shortly after the flood, the wicked, disobeying God's command to scatter over the earth, under the leadership of Nimrod, the mighty rebel, are determined to organize into one mighty world kingdom, and build a city, with a tower that would reach up into heaven. But the Lord confused their speech and compels them to scatter over the earth. And how the "gates of hell" fumed and raged against the Church of God in the land of Egypt! After forcing them into slave labor, a maneuver which failed utterly, the king of Egypt gave the commandment that all the male infants should be cast into the River Nile, thereby attempting to choke off the life of the nation of Israel and to prevent the birth of the Christ-Child. Indeed, all these attempts of the powers of darkness throughout the Old Dispensation are held before us in Rev. 12:3: "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads." Then, we may also recall the efforts of the powers of darkness to destroy the people of the Lord while they were in the wilderness. Amalek comes forth to wage war against them, is defeated by the hosts of the Lord, and Moses receives commandment from the Lord to record this in a book, in order that Amalek may be utterly destroyed, Saul receiving a commandment from Samuel to accomplish this. Then, think of the time when Israel dwelt in the land of Canaan. How the people of the Lord were harassed from within and without! In this connection, we may recall the period of the Judges, when heathen nations, time and again, invaded the land of Canaan to molest and harass the people of the Lord. How often did it not happen that wicked kings would sit upon the throne of Israel, leading the people of the Lord away from the statutes and precepts of Jehovah! The ten tribes rebelled against the house of David, set up their own kingdom of the ten tribes, and only Judah was left as a remnant of the covenant God. But also the kingdom of Judah would be led, time and again, by wicked kings. Always the great red dragon is standing before the Church of the Old Dispensation (Rev.12), eager to present her from bringing forth the Christ-Child. Finally, the people of the Lord are taken



into captivity. Seventy years they spend in the heathen land of Babylon, and we listen to the complaint of the Church of God, in Ps. 137: 1-3: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion." After returning out of the land of their captivity, the people of the Lord were in imminent danger of destruction because of wicked Haman, as narrated in the book of Esther. That diabolical plot did not merely concern the Jews who were living in Persia, but it was directed at all the Jews throughout the world. Indeed, how unique is the history of the people of God throughout the ages! Upon what people has so much hatred and enmity been directed for so long a time and by so many nations and peoples of the earth! This has been continuing throughout the ages. The world never tires of heaping all its ridicule and hatred upon the people of the Lord. Haman, too, would destroy this people of the Lord, and also here we have an attempt by the great red dragon to destroy the Man-Child, Christ Jesus. And finally, in the Old Dispensation, there are the fearful times experienced by the Cause of the Lord after Israel's return out of the captivity. Well might Israel lament as we read it in Ps. 129: 1-3: "Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say: Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against. The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows." How true is this lament especially in the days when the people of the Lord were oppressed by Antiochus Epiphanes. This Antiochus Epiphanes, Old Testament type of the Anti-Christ, was a monster of iniquity. It was he who came upon the Jews with a great army, took Jerusalem by force, and slew many of the Jews. And, also according to Josephus, not satisfied either with his unexpected taking of the city, or its pillage, or with the great slaughter he had made there; but being

overcome with his violent passions, and remembering what he had suffered during the siege, he compelled the Jews to dissolve the laws of their country, and to keep their infants uncircumcised, and to sacrifice swine's flesh upon the altar. Terrible cruelties were inflicted upon the people of the Lord by this monster of iniquity. But never did the "gates of hell" prevail against the Cause of God in the midst of the world. Always did the Lord preserve a church and watch over His covenant people. And always the Lord accomplished His counsel not only over against all the gates of hell, but also thus, that the powers of evil had to serve this accomplishment of His counsel.

And thus it also was during our Saviours' earthly sojourn. All we need do is recall all the attempts to destroy Him and keep Him from the way of the cross. As soon as He was born His life was threatened by Herod the Great. Learning of the wise men that the King of the Jews had been born, and also learning upon inquiring of the scribes that the King of the Jews was to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David, he instructs the wise men, after they had brought their homage to this king of the Jews, to report to him in order that he, too, might worship the newly born King of the Jews. And thereupon he commands all the children that were in Bethlehem to be slain, and all the children in all the coasts thereof. How the devil, when he tempted Christ in the wilderness attempted to keep the Saviour away from the cross, proposing to Him that He take a "short cut" to fame and honour, rather than to follow the tortuous way of the cross, the way of Divine obedience! And, finally, the attempt was made by the prince of the powers of the air to destroy the Son of God by nailing Him to the cross of Calvary. There he gathered all the forces of hell, and made the Christ of God an object of public ridicule and shame. But all these effects were in vain, inasmuch as the Lord raised Him from the dead, lifted Him up into the highest glory, and gave Him a place in His own right hand. The Lord willing, we will continue with this in our following article.

## *Studies in Election*

### **Its Resistance (Continued)**

*Rev. Robt. C. Harbach*

In our last installment we showed how this truth meets with bitter protestations and the methods of attack against it. Very frequently, the one who opposes this truth is almost wholly ignorant of what it is all about, hardly knowing what he is up against. Usually, his ignorance is the result of failure to enlighten himself on the subject. He has made not even

a cursory study of the matter. What little scrutiny he may have given it has been darkened by the veil of prejudice which blindfolds him. It makes no difference to him whether you can prove that election is the fountain of holiness and good works. He only wants to do away with it. For it throws too strong a searchlight on his inferior, humanistic gospel.



Among the bitterest and most unrelenting enemies against the doctrine of election are the Romanists. They are among the oldest protagonists of "free willism," and salvation by works and human merit. The Roman Catholic Church with its Dogmatic Decrees of the Council of Trent has never ceased to oppose sovereign grace and divine predestination. Not by the gracious power of a preached gospel, but by power-politics and by humanistic, even secularistic, ecumenism, Rome strives to be the one-world church. Then the liberal, modernistic and radical so-called Protestant ecumenists, themselves deniers of predestination and sovereign grace, lead their dead, apostate churches to ultimate union with Rome. She, compared to other church bodies in the world, has both political and ecclesiastical power uncomparable, and, in addition, enjoys more prestige than any other organization in the world. Her power increases when so called Protestant pulpits preach the things which give her aid and comfort and advance her interests. She is delighted with the modern prophets of mass-evangelism and of the charismatic movement, who preach fallen man's power to accept Christ and believe, rather than God's eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. Pretenders to Protestantism attack or undermine the doctrine of election, using the same objections against it that came from the ultramontanist church back in counter-Reformation days.

So the enemies of this truth have always raged against it, and regard the proclaimers of it as downright wicked. When such ire and epithet fall upon you for the truth's sake, take it as an indicator that you are on the right track. As the book, *The Holy War*, describes them, modern election-doubters are Diabolonians who know how to misrepresent the truth, but are unable to disprove it with evidence and argument. They can caricaturize the truth, but they are unable to debate it. Also, as already shown, for years in the past there has been an underground movement in the Presbyterian, Reformed and Calvinistic churches to subvert this truth. Arminianism in the churches has always led underhandedly to Modernism. Now, today, we see openly how Modernism leads to socialism, and, it should be equally plain, to communism. More and more, the opposition comes out into the open. Read Ernest Gordon's *The Leaven of the Sadducees*, where you will see how Modernism and Socialism ruined the originally Christian colleges and universities by infiltration. Now these evils are much more out into the open. We need not go very far afield to prove this.

Recall, for example, the publication put out by students of Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, known as *The Chimes*, in its April 22, 1966 issue. There it is stated, "The faith of our fathers . . . is plainly out of date." This means that the faith of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is out of date; that Hebrews

11 is out of date. The implication is that the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not the God of the living, but of the dead, hence that God, too, is out of date. The meaning is also that our later and Reformed fathers of Dordrecht are long out of date. Their doctrine belongs under glass in the museum. To go on: "If archaic theological methods still dominate the Seminary, that is too bad — too bad for the Seminary and too bad for the denomination." If anything, this means that Calvin, Calvinism and the Reformed Confessions are passe, defunct and "too bad" to be maintained in this enlightened (?) age. With such a modernist spirit in the seminary, it will soon pervade the churches. It is an old saying, but it hits the nail on the head, "As goes the seminary, so goes the church."

"Perhaps systematic theology was meaningful once; and perhaps it will be meaningful again some day. But now it is harmful. We Christian Reformed people are so used to thinking in terms of election and reprobation, predestination and free will, redemption, justification, providence, and all the rest that our religion has been reduced to theological fence-tending." In the Belgic Confession we have what we may call systematic theology. But it is all meaningless now, and detrimental. It is a positive threat to the existence of the church — it is dangerous. This sounds much like the Dewey-philosophy, inimical to divine authority, regarding it as an alien standard, along with all "structured" or "organized religion." This is also a deliberate attack on what the Reformed have always called *Cor Ecclesiae*, the heart of the church, which is the central dogma of predestination in its positive and negative aspects of election and reprobation. Here, too, is a slur against the heart of the gospel, namely, redemption and the foundation truth of justification by faith. Also here is insult to all Reformed ministers and officebearers who sign the Formula of Subscription and so swear in the name of God that they will preach, teach and defend these doctrines against every lie repugnant to them. Such oath-bound men are thus branded "harmful." But the brazen, anti-intellectual striplings go on: "With our thought gone sterile, strait-jacketed by remote abstraction, each with its own parcel of proof-texts, our moral behavior has become legalistic and fundamentalistic . . ." Years ago, Arminians and liberals accused believers in the three great Reformed Confessions as being hyper-Calvinist. But now if you still hold the confessions, you are *legalistic*. Now you are not "hyper" any more, but quite a bit less, "fundamentalistic." Theological thinking, of the Reformed calibre, according to these adolescent experts, is sterile and strait-jacketed. Why? Because there is a lack of fresh presentation in the preaching? Or because of a failure to develop the Reformed truth? You know that's not their meaning. They mean that



there are still a faithful few who still think according to the faith of our fathers, as exemplified in the Canons of Dordt. But creeds are sterilizing factors in the church, you know. So the enemies of creeds and Reformed symbols have always ranted.

What did these youthful wonders recommend to the churches? "To begin with, chuck every theological abstraction — the entire symmetrical system — and start theologizing all over again." Here is proof that there is an element in the younger generation that wants to be rid of the Reformed Confessions. They would jettison the Reformed cargo, drop its banner and sail under a false flag to turn the church into a "peace corps." It is insult to the Spirit of grace, who throughout the ages led the church into all the truth, to do away with the Reformed Faith and to start from scratch. It is subterfuge to speak of "theologizing all over again." They do not intend to theologize. Theology they despise. They mean to philosophize, to theorize, to "demythologize," to romanticize, to hallucinate. They would turn the church into a dreamery.

"Second," they go on to recommend, "learn to read the Scripture like any other book." If we did, we would not continue daily with it, as the Christian does and plans to do throughout his life. This inept recommendation is deep-dyed Modernism. The Christian cannot read the Scripture like any other book simply because the Scripture is not like any other book. Any other book is a natural book. The Scripture is the only book that is a supernatural book. You cannot read a supernatural book like a natural book, for that would be to deny the supernatural, and treat it like a mere natural book. You cannot read the infallible Word of God like any fallible word of man. You've got to read it as it is — the very unique, incomparable, verbally inspired Word of God. Nor can

the Christian read the Scripture like any other book simply because he cannot deny his own faith. As a Christian, one of his basic presuppositions is that all Scripture is God-breathed. It is an article of his heart-centered faith to believe that they are "holy and divine Scriptures . . . they are from God . . . the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in *all* respects. Neither do we consider of equal value any writing of men . . . with those divine Scriptures." They alone are "the truth of God," and "the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore we reject *with all our hearts*, whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule, which the apostles have taught us, saying, 'Try the spirits whether they are of God' . . ." (Belgic Confession). The *Christian* cannot read the Scripture as any other book simply because he cannot read it as the natural man. He cannot confess, "Inspired it is," and at the same time treat it as something purely human.

"If the Old Testament picture of God shows a marked change from Genesis to Psalms to Malachi, we ought to admit that, rather than trying (sic) to reconcile the variant concepts . . ." This insinuates the evolutionary philosophy of God, the German rationalistic theory of God. In Genesis God is conceived according to man's early ignorance as a bestial boor who demanded human sacrifice (chap. 22). In the Psalms He is conceived but little better, as a vindictive imprecating tyrant. Whereas, in Malachi we come closest to that advanced concept that the one God is the universal father of all men (2:10). So runs the old Modernism, as it is taken up by the "now" generation. Even where we may speak of a *restraint* of sin, as in the case of Abimelech (Gen. 20), there is still *resistance* to truth. There is more of this collegian folly we intend to examine, but it must follow in the next installment, the Lord willing.

## The Strength of Youth

# Obeying Parents

Rev. J. Kortering

The Holy Spirit knows human nature.

He directs us in the way from which we are most inclined to wander.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands. No wife wants that, especially in this age of women's lib!

Husbands, love your wives even as Christ loved the church. Again, it is much easier to be tyrannical than loving, especially when one is considered the "boss!"

Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath. We

would rather carry a big stick and a big threat, than bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

And here we have the same approach. The Holy Spirit in dealing with young people touches them where it hurts, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth," Eph. 6:1-3. Quite obviously, children don't



like to hear that any more than wives like to be told to be subject to their husbands, husbands told to love their wives, or parents told to refrain from provoking their children to wrath. It isn't a question of what we like to hear, rather a willingness to be instructed.

Here the Holy Spirit deals with children and young people.

### **SPECIAL CHILDREN**

The fact that the Word of God contradicts human nature indicates that God's Word is not directed to the whole human race, as if God expects all children of the world to heed His commands. To be sure, the demands of God are directed to everyone who reads the Word of God. Not everyone however, will give heed simply because they read it. To children devoid of the grace of the Holy Spirit, these words are from the ancient past, which the NOW generation refuses to heed.

To you covenant young people there is, however, a difference. This is the Word of God. It is God's Word directed to you as members of His covenant. It is a Word that deals with your responsibilities to your covenant parents. When the Word says, "Children, obey your parents," you realize that your parents are very special. They have authority given to them by God to direct your life in a way that is right and pleasing to God. They must make the will of God known to you, expect that you walk in it, and discipline you when you fail to do that. This is for God's sake.

You are special young people in that God has given you a place in such a home. From childhood to the present, you have been set aside by God as *His* children. "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," Jer. 1:5. That wasn't true just for Jeremiah; it is true for all God's children. "For the promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts. 2:39. Even though we are conceived and born in sin, as children of God we are redeemed by the blood of Christ and made God's special people.

This makes us to have a profound respect for His Word.

God says, honor and obey your parents.

### **HONORING AND OBEYING**

What must we do to honor our parents?

Some young people suggest that to honor parents, they must heap all kinds of affection upon them. They confuse love and honor. Love is basic to honor, but not the same. Love provides the proper motivation to honor. Love recognizes the *person* for what he is. Before God we recognize the person of our parents, and this draws us closer to them, as it draws us closer to God. If we love our parents, we tell them how much they mean to us and how deeply we appreciate all they are doing for us. This children do in both word and deed

in the sphere of the home.

Honoring parents is something different. It is a special expression of love. To honor parents is to give recognition to their God-given *position* over us. Just as honoring our government means that we realize that God has placed them over us to perform His will through them, whether the ruler recognizes this or not, so it applies to our parents. Honor your parents means that we see them as appointed by God to control our lives and that we do not resist this, but respect it.

Do you want to honor your father? Understand clearly that he is God's appointed head of the home and that he is called by God to make God's demands upon everyone who lives in the home. Your father must exercise his calling and will have to give account to God as to how he does this. Young People honor their fathers, then, by co-operating and making this task easier for him, not harder. We may not resist this and insist that our privacy means that our parents leave us *alone*. It is not so, that growing up means that we turn our back to anything that others, including our parents, have to say to us. Honoring parents means that we hear them out and recognize that when they speak to us out of the Word of God, God is speaking to us through them. Thus mothers and fathers are united not only in marriage, but also in parenthood. Honoring mother means that we recognize that her position is to assist father in the task of bringing up children. To honor her means that we will not try to drive a wedge between her and father, as young people often like to do. We may not try to play one parent against the other. If we are to honor them, we will recognize their mutual responsibility to control our lives in the way God wants it to be done.

Obedience is the practical result of honoring. If we honor our parents and recognize their position is given them by God to control our lives, it stands to reason that what they demand of us will be performed by us. To obey our parents is a practical demonstration that we honor them. If we disobey them, we cannot say that we honor them.

This touches much of our young lives. Our parents are called by God to guide us in our whole life. From birth on they are concerned about our physical health and safety. Proper diet, cleanliness, grooming, clothing, are all their concern. Parents are to teach us the management of money, to help us learn the will of God for our future place of service. Their responsibility is to supervise our social life, friends, dates, places of entertainment. Parents must guide in spiritual growth, schooling, study for catechism, church attendance, personal prayer life and meditation.

It stands to reason, then, that parents that are trying in the least to be faithful to this calling, are going to have a great deal to talk about with their children, especially teen-aged and growing young people. Here is



the most crucial area of honoring and obeying. Parents are going to make many demands of us, are going to explain this to us and try their best to tell us why we must not do certain things and why we should be doing others. This is called communication. If young people are going to honor and obey, they must be sure to *listen*. The advocates of the new morality are trying to get their wicked notion accepted by stressing the so called generation gap. Young people are told to distrust anyone over twenty years of age, and consequently parents are of a different generation and shouldn't be taken too seriously. The devil would like to have you believe this lie. But you are different and your parents are different. We are not of the world, nor may we be part of the apostate church. We are different because God has made us members of His covenant. We must honor and obey our parents by listening to them, and recognize that they speak with divine authority, and therefore must be obeyed for God's sake.

### WHY HONOR AND OBEY

Why should we honor and obey our parents?

Let's be careful that we don't fall into the trap by producing poor answers, for then we might convince ourselves that it isn't too serious if we fail to practice this, after all.

It might be suggested that we should obey parents because that is the least we can do for all the things they have done for us. Parents do a great deal for their children; it might be argued that children and especially young people at least show appreciation for this by doing what they require. It might even be added that some young people would be better off if they would obey their parents. Disobedience strains the relationship between parents and children; if they would obey, they would have things going their way. Sometimes we stress the need for family harmony: each member must do their part if we are going to have peace at home. All these are true to a certain extent, but do not afford the deepest reason why children should obey their parents.

And what is that? "For this is right before God." Thus in a brief and pointed way, Scripture tells young people why. God requires this, and if we love God, we will honor and obey our parents. This is the great test and proof of young people's love for God. Do you love your parents? Do you show this love for them by honoring them and obeying them?

Another reason, "This is the first commandment with promise." This also follows from the above; if we

are right with God we may expect His blessing. True, this is typical Old Testament language. Added to the fifth commandment it is, "That thy days may be long in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee." Also in Ps. 55:23, "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." Or in Prov. 10:27, "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days." The application is obvious. During Old Testament times those who kept God's law might expect His favor upon them to be demonstrated in a physical and material way. Today the typical factor is done away with, but the spiritual principle is the same; those young people who obey this Word of God and honor and obey parents may expect God's blessing to rest upon them.

How will this be expressed?

Look at it negatively first. Disobeying parents is listed amongst those sins that demonstrate depravity, Rom. 1:24-30. We are warned that it will increase as the end of the world comes upon us and man will make himself worthy of God's judgment, II Tim. 3:1. The curse of the Lord rests upon those who refuse to honor and obey parents. Just look about you: young rebels causing trouble in the schools, rioting in the street, rebellion in the church, broken families, divorce, open lawlessness in every sphere. This doesn't just happen. This is God's judgment upon a generation of young people who break God's law and do not honor and obey their parents for God's sake.

Conversely, how beautiful is the life of someone who has learned to keep the fifth commandment in the sphere of the home. Such young people contribute to the joy of the home; it becomes a testimony to the world that only God's covenant of grace produces such a citadel of strength in a changing world. These kind of children know their place in school. They become good citizens and obey those in authority. The church is to them of great value, for it is the source of their spiritual nourishment that brings them into closer fellowship with God.

This also doesn't just happen. This is God's blessing upon covenant young people who by God's grace honor and obey their parents.

To be sure, this doesn't come naturally.

The Word of God seems to deny us what we like and what seems the easy way. Remember that the easy way leads to destruction.

Covenant young people are special, made such by God.

He has a secret which He shares with you, "Honor and obey your parents." It makes all the difference. The praise is God's alone.

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## *The Day of Shadows*

# The Initial Generation Gap

*Rev. John A. Heys*

Adam and Eve were believing parents. Let us not lose sight of that fact, nor of the fact that they believed in Christ.

Before they fell they believed in God; and from this they fell. When they were restored to faith, it was faith in God as He had now revealed Himself as the God of their salvation in Christ. This, by the way, set them apart from the devil and the fallen angels, who in a sense, as James points out, also believe in God. They believe that there is one God. They know His holiness and sovereignty, His might and His mercy. But they do not believe in Him as the God of *their* salvation, for He is not; and they do not trust in Him, nor seek His mercy. Adam and Eve did. They trusted God as He through types and shadows had presented Himself in Christ when He clothed them with skins of animals, and when He gave them to hear of the hatred against Satan that God would place in their hearts, and of the ultimate victory that He would give them in the Seed of the woman.

But a spiritual gap appeared between them and their first-born son, Cain. It was there from his birth, but it did not manifest itself until much later in his life.

Cain had a great deal of what is sometimes called Historical Faith, even as the devil does. He, Cain, saw those cherubim there with the flaming sword. He had heard over and over again on father's and mother's knees the story of their expulsion from paradise and the folly of their sin of eating of the forbidden fruit. As a normal child he was filled with inquisitiveness and asked a host of questions. He conformed outwardly to the worship of God that he had been taught by his believing parents to follow. For a time, after he came to years of discretion, he, as they, brought his bloody sacrifice on an altar to God. His father prayed, and he also went through the motions of praying. His mother and father spoke of God, and he likewise made use of God's name. At first there seemed no gap between them, and instead he seemed to be the continuation of the same family as a likeminded believer.

But there came a moment when he became bold to reveal what was in his heart. He had been giving some serious thought to all that which from a child he had been taught. But he found that it was time to break with the establishment, to express himself, to do away with the old things and find a "more meaningful" worship of God. There came a moment when the seed of Adam and Eve's sin began to sprout forth and show what kind of plant this seed would ultimately produce, not only in the crucifixion of the Son of God – even as

Cain killed Abel – but in the man of sin, the son of perdition, the Antichrist in all his violence and opposition to the cause of God's kingdom, and development of false worship and false doctrines.

A spiritual gap that seemed at first only to threaten to become reality now showed itself as always being there; and that Cain was not the continuation of the line of the seed of the woman broke out into the open.

What was his sin?

It was unbelief as a rejection of Christ. It was rebellion as a refusal to walk in God's way. It was a further development of the Arminian activities practiced already by Adam and Eve. It was a denial of salvation by grace with an emphatic defense of salvation by works.

Is all this saying too much? Consider the facts and cease defending this wicked man and his deed. God taught Adam and Eve (and they taught Cain) that God can be approached only through the shed blood of Christ. Adam and Eve did not *find* that God was pleased to have a lamb sacrificed on an altar. We never find ways to serve God. We learn them, and then we learn them by sitting at God's feet, listening to Him as He speaks. God, by slaying the animals to provide a covering for their nakedness, taught them to come to Him in Christ's blood, that is, in connection with *the death* of a creature in their stead. Cain broke with that truth when he came with the fruit of his garden. He turned his back upon Christ. In this also he simply refused to walk God's way; and in effect he said, "God will walk my way." And as far as the Arminian activities of Adam and Eve are concerned, Cain sought God's favour by his works rather than by Christ's blood.

Let us appreciate the fact that it was quite a sacrifice on Cain's part. At this point in our consideration of history we already begin to forget those words of God that man would eat in the sweat of his brow, and that the ground would bring forth thorns and thistles. What Cain managed to obtain from the cursed ground was not a gift that was there for the taking. He had to work hard for it. Food was precious. What he brought was his own hard, back-breaking work. Here was the fruit of hours of toil and something that could not quickly be replaced. It was not a case of taking off the shelf a bit from a bumper crop that had been stored away, or of giving that which would spoil anyway because there was so much that it could not all be eaten within a reasonable time. No, this was the fruit of the field which he obtained in



the way of hard work. The word "tiller" in Genesis 4:2, when we read that Cain was a "tiller of the ground" has in it the idea of a servant. The ground is the master, Cain, and with him all mankind, was the servant who had to serve that ground in order to get something out of it. (Being a keeper of sheep as Abel was did not require the same degree of sweat and toil.) It was his *works*, therefore, that Cain brought to God.

There was work involved in Abel's sacrifice as well. But the whole point is that Abel came with his lamb or bullock because he believed that we can come to God only in Christ, only in the way of the blood of the cross, only in the way of the payment of the death penalty for us. Cain said in his heart, "Nothing doing! I can please God by my works, and He will accept me because of what *I* give Him." Abel said by his sacrifice, "I will be pleasing to God only because of what *He* gave me in Christ." Cain came to God with Cain. Abel came to God with Christ. Cain came in unbelief. Abel came in faith in Christ. And Abel's is the "more excellent sacrifice," the one that alone pleases God.

Place Cain and Abel side by side in this incident, and you see a spiritual gap which sets them apart as seed of the woman and seed of the serpent. A generation appears that from a spiritual point of view is quite distinct from what manifested itself in believing Adam and Eve, and was seen continued in Abel. Abel died before there could be generations of believers through him; but that sharp division of the whole human race into two spiritual camps began to manifest itself in the very first two sons born to Adam and Eve.

A generation appeared that would seek its wellbeing by its own works. And alongside of it grew up a generation that would seek salvation by grace. The one, the latter generation, was Christian. The other was the beginning of the Antichristian kingdom. The one asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The other did not ask. It simply stated, "I am going to do *my* thing." The one cried, "God be merciful to me the sinner." The other boasted, "God ought to be mighty thankful to me for giving Him that which cost me so much energy and toil." The one said, "I am an awful sinner." The other said, "Look what good I did!" The one was the spiritual father of the publican in Jesus parable. The other was the spiritual father of the Pharisee. And what a gap — even if you cannot call it a generation gap — there was between Jesus and those miserable Pharisees who found fault with His works, while the fault was in them!

What does it all mean for us?

For one thing, the truth abides that all change is not improvement. Let the churches take note!

We live in a time when the churches on every side are seeking change. They seek doctrinal change, confessional change, liturgical change, and a change in translation to make the Scriptures more "meaningful." It would be laughable, were it not so serious a matter.

Never was there a generation more literate than the present one. Never before was there such an educated generation as ours. Never before were children, our sons and daughters, given to delving into such deep scientific and philosophical matters. And these need the truth of God's Word in simple terms that a five year old can understand it!! Shame on us!

We dare to Praise ourselves for our intellectual and educational advances, and then dare to cry of our difficulty in understanding spiritual matters. Is it then due to the translation, the wording, the beautiful old English form of speaking, which in the field of *other* literature we laud to the sky? Is the reason not a spiritual one rather than an intellectual one?

Let the churches teach doctrine once again. Let them dare to wean their constituency away from milk and begin to introduce meat! Let them not listen to the cries of their highly educated children that this is too deep, and this is too much. Do that and you widen the gap. And each generation will widen the gap still further until you have to water down even the milk of the word to such a point that you have to tell them what sin is, what the word Saviour means, and perhaps even what that word God means and has to say to us.

While we seek development in every natural sphere, let us not be found disintegrating in matters that are spiritual. And by all means let us not teach our children that you have to be a Cain before you can become an Abel, that you have to begin with the lie to come to the truth. You say that this is not done? Are you asleep? The world is full of the philosophy that you must tell *every one* that God loves him or you cannot do missionary work. And *that* is the lie! If it is the truth, then we can also do missionary work with the devil and his fallen angels; And then we must, for then God loves them too.

Nay, tell man what uneducated, that is, uneducated as far as our scholastic standards are concerned, what uneducated Abel could tell you. He did not tell Cain that God loved him, but told him that he had committed a terrible sin! And then the generation gap becomes all the clearer; for Cain sought to wipe off this earth the generation that continued in the way of his father's and mother's faith.

But it also means for us that parents who diligently and faithfully strive to bring up their children in the fear of God's name to the utmost of their power, and then begin to see a gap between them and their children which becomes ever wider and separates them spiritually from their children, are to bow before the sovereignty of God and not murmur at His ways. Strive to train their children they must. Pray they are certainly called upon to do, and to do so fervently. But they are to do this in the consciousness of that truth of Genesis 3:15 that *God* will put enmity between seed and seed, and that there are going to be two seeds by divine decree, the one a seed of believers in Christ, the



other of unbelievers whom it has pleased God not to cause to be born again, and thus not to receive enmity in their hearts against Satan and his works.

Through the ages believing parents have found what Adam and Eve so painfully found, namely, that we can teach our children but cannot make them believe; we can discipline them but cannot make them love God

and His law. When they do believe, and do love God, it is His grace that accomplishes this and not our works. When they do not believe and do not love God it is because sovereignly He has made a gap that in eternity shall not be closed, but in eternity will by the saints and holy angels be confessed to be the sovereign good pleasure of God.

## Sketches on Jamaica

# Sundry Matters of Interest

*Rev. G. Lubbers*

At the time of the writing of this contribution for the *Standard Bearer* Mrs. Lubbers and I are at home in Michigan. It was a real joy to arrive in the Kent County Airport on June 5th to be greeted by our family and friends; it was also most blessed to be greeted and received by the many, many brethren and sisters of the various churches in and around Grand Rapids. Really, I am thinking in this sketch very much about the dear brothers and sisters in the congregations outside of the Grand Rapids, Michigan area.

Synod of 1972 is about to come to the conclusion of its important labors. I might personally attend many of the sessions. After many days of waiting finally the matters of the Jamaica Mission were brought under discussion. Some important decisions were taken. Permit me to tell you a bit about the Jamaican problems which Synod faced and on which they gave directives, looking for the gracious blessings of the King of the church.

One matter of extreme importance is the matter of giving help to the undersigned by calling a second missionary. Synod seriously faced this reality, discussed the various facets of it, the problems involved, the advantages to be gained by it. However, Synod was not ready to thus decide. Instead they decided an alternate proposition, to send a man for two three-month terms to Jamaica in the next year. Of course, this will need be one of our ministers now serving in one of our churches. There are reasons for this. In the first place, one coming to Jamaica to aid in the work must be able to preach in Christ's Name. Then, too, one who comes should be able to teach for three months in the "Protestant Reformed Jamaica Bible School." He will need to teach courses in Hermeneutics (Methods of Bible Interpretation) and Homiletics (art of Sermon-making). The undersigned would then continue in teaching the four students in Doctrine, Bible History, Church History and English Composition. Thus we will have more than one string on our teaching-harp.

We are thankful to God for Synod's decision. We realize that this involves more expense. However, the Jamaica Mission is conducted ever with minimum possible expenditures. A realistic sum of some \$5000.00 (American) was allotted for this purpose. This should cover travelling for two trips, the renting of a second car, and the renting of suitable quarters for the emissary minister and his wife. It would hardly be correct to decide that the emissary and his wife move in with the missionary and his wife for a period of two three-month periods. Synod did not even suggest such a possibility as a workable solution. So a sizable amount of money is needed for this emissary (s) to Jamaica. We are most confident that whoever the Mission Committee requests to go will have the whole-hearted support from his consistory and congregation; moreover, they will receive the blessing of the Lord for such a sacrifice of love!

Perhaps it will interest the reader to know the grounds for such "help" for your Missionary and his wife. I quote the following from one of the "reports" as the grounds submitted by the undersigned for a helper, yes, for a second full-time missionary.

1. A missionary needs the spiritual and moral support of a fellow-missionary. Paul ever had such a man. Christ sent out two-by-two.

2. The field needs more preaching, incisive preaching, inculcating the Reformed principles. Their ministers do well there, but there are not enough of them. There is need of more preaching in more churches each Sunday and during the week. And the students are not yet ready to meet such responsibilities.

3. The School (the students) would profit by having another minister teaching, besides the undersigned.

Mrs. Lubbers and I face an immediate problem when we return to the island of Jamaica. This is a matter for which we covet your earnest prayers. We will need to move from our home in Coral Gardens which the Mission Committee has rented now for over three years. The present owner bought it so that he might rent



it out. Thus we and our interest were vouchsafed. The problem now arises in that Mr. Anderson must sell, and attempting to sell it to one who would rent to us limits his selling prospects greatly. Mr. Anderson gave us therefore the first opportunity to buy it as churches for a sum of seventeen thousand five hundred Jamaican dollars, or about twenty two thousand United States dollars. The Synod did not decide to purchase this property. They declined on the following grounds:

1. That the location is not good. The missionary should live in or around Savanah-La-Mar. This is also lower rent community and the Missionary would live nearer to more of the churches; he would also be thirty-five (35) miles nearer to the school.

2. The price of the property is too high; it is inflation price and the roof needs repairing.

#### NOTICE

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Hull, Iowa on September 6, 1972, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. Material for the Agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk thirty days before the convening of Classis.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk.

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to our members, Mr. and Mrs. Klaire Berens, in the loss of their father,

MR. BEN H. BERENS.

It is our hope and prayer that they may receive comfort in His Word and by His Spirit.

"Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto His people." (I Kings 8:56).

Rev. C. Hanko, Pres.  
Mrs. Chet Haveman, Sec'y.

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Men's Society of our South East Protestant Reformed Church, of Grand Rapids, Michigan hereby express their sincere Christian sympathy to Mrs. Herman Dykstra and her family in the death of her husband, and their father,

HERMAN DYKSTRA.

Our hope and prayer is that she and her children will – "Commit their way unto the Lord; and trust also in Him. . . ." (Psalm 37:5).

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.  
F. Ondersma, Clerk.

#### ANNIVERSARY

On June 19, 1972, our parents,

MR. and MRS. CLARENCE PRINCE

celebrated their 30th 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

Now we will need to be led by the Lord Himself to our next place to live. May the Lord direct our footsteps and give us once more a suitable place to live; a place where we can have discussions for the ministers, where the clothing can be stored from the clothing-drive.

Pray for us, brethren!

There are more matters with which we would inform you, but this must wait for a later sketch of our labors.

We would then desire to inform you concerning some of the basic church-political problems on the island and also concerning some important decisions which were taken by the Jamaican brethren to have some more order in their churches on Presbyterian – Biblical principles.

their earthly walk.

Mr. and Mrs. Chet Haveman  
(Sharon)  
Doug Prince

#### ANNIVERSARY

August 16, 1972 marks the fiftieth wedding anniversary of

MR. and MRS. JOHN BOELEMA

The congregation of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, of which they are members, gratefully acknowledge with them the goodness of God, and His wonderful faithfulness as they might experience this in the midst of His church throughout the fifty years of their married life.

As we confess with them, "Great is His Faithfulness," we also commend them to the grace of God, Who is able to do far above all that we can ask or think.

"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" Psalm 31:19.

The Consistory of the Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church  
Henry J. Boer, Clerk  
Rev. C. Hanko, Pres.

#### ANNIVERSARY

On July 10, 1972, the Lord privileged our beloved parents and grandparents

MR. and MRS. GEORGE JOOSTENS

to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank the Lord that he has kept them for each other these past years and for the covenant instruction we were privileged to receive from them. We pray to God for His continued blessing upon them as they traverse life's pathway together.

Their children:  
Mr. and Mrs. Meindert Joostens  
William  
and their grandchild



## News From Our Churches

Classis East met in regular session on July 5, 1972 and, as has been characteristic of the last few sessions, accomplished its business in short order. The only business other than the routine business before Classis was a request from a consistory to have Classis approve an increase of censure from the first to the second step. This request was approved by Classis.

Rev. G. Lubbers, missionary to Jamaica, was present with us and was given advisory vote. Later in the session, Rev. Lubbers shared with the Classis the trials and indeed the joys of his labors on the island. Rev. C. Hanko, chairman for this session, assured Rev. Lubbers that the prayers of the church were raised daily in behalf of both Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers.

After the preliminary business of reading the credentials and the agenda, receiving the credentials, and the signing of the Formula of Subscription by first-time delegates, Classis began its work.

Rev. J. Heys and Elder J. Buiter were appointed to the Finance Committee and later reported expenses, including those of the church visitors, of \$23.20. The Classical Appointment Committee composed of Rev. H. Veldman and Elder J. King presented and Classis adopted the following schedule for Hope Church: July 16 — M. Schipper; July 30 — J. A. Heys; August 13 — H. Veldman; August 27 — R. C. Harbach; September 10 — G. Van Baren; September 24 — C. Hanko. Elder C. Doezeema was appointed to thank the ladies of Holland Church for their catering.

The delegates of Classis were certainly heartened by the report of the church visitors. The final paragraph of their report reads as follows:

And so we look back on the past year and can say Eben Ezer. There is reason for abundant thanks to our God for the blessings of grace that He pours out upon our churches. Our ministers are faithful in presenting the riches of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so that the positive fruit is evident in the lives of our people. Small as we are, our witness goes out to the ends of the earth. God is certainly using us to preserve the truth delivered to us from the saints, even in times of great apostacy. Obviously there is still much imperfection among us, but divine grace abounds. God's strength is accomplished even through our weaknesses. To Him be the glory.

The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and satisfactorily answered. Rev. M. Schipper closed the meeting and Classis stood adjourned until its next regular meeting on October 4, 1972 in Southwest Church.

Jon Huiskens, Stated Clerk

Several of our churches have extended calls during the past few weeks. The calls from both Forbes and Randolph have gone to Candidate W. Bekkering. Hope Church has called Rev. Lanting. Redlands has called Candidate M. Kamps.

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Summertime is vacation time — also for our ministers. And with vacation time comes, frequently, pulpit exchanges. For Rev. Engelsma and Rev. Van Baren, that pulpit exchange was accompanied by a very convenient parsonage exchange. For Rev. Heys, on a week's vacation in Maine, a pulpit exchange was out of the question; but he preached in Maine, nevertheless. According to Holland's bulletin, Rev. Heys was invited to preach in the Cornville Orthodox Presbyterian Church, a few miles north of Skowhegan, Maine. Rev. Heys reported that "this small but attentive congregation expressed interest in the Reformed truth which we as churches have been given to know and love. The pastor, The Rev. Harold L. Dorman, reads eagerly all of our printed material that he can obtain and listens to all the taped sermons sent to him from our circles."

Summertime was also vacation time for our missionary, Rev. Lubbers. He returned to his labors in Jamaica on the 19th of July. His parting words to the congregation of First Church, expressed in that church's bulletin, are certainly of interest to all of us; so we'll take the liberty of quoting them here:

"Dear brethren and sisters in the Lord,

Hereby Mrs. Lubbers and I wish you a fond adieu. We tarried a bit in your midst and feel refreshed in our spirits by the mercies of God. Now we look toward Jamaica, the work, the arduous and multiple duties once more. A sense of helplessness creeps over our souls; our only help is in the Name of the Lord. God bless you and us."

Rev. and Mrs. G. Lubbers"

The response of the consistory of First Church, which reflects, no doubt, the sentiments of all of us, reads as follows:

"Dear Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers:

May you experience God's grace and a keen sense of His nearness to you as you again take up your labor of love on the island of Jamaica; and be assured of our continual prayers for you and His cause there."

D.D.