

The STANDARD BEARER



A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

If you ask me what is the most peculiar treasure of the Protestant Reformed Churches, I answer without any hesitation: their peculiar view of the covenant.

And what is their particular conception?

It stands closely connected with their denial of common grace, and with their emphasis on the doctrine of election and reprobation.

Moreover, it emphasizes and carries out the organic idea.

Briefly stated, it teaches that God realizes His eternal covenant of friendship, in Christ, the Firstborn of every creature and the First-begotten of the dead, organically, and antithetically along the lines of election and reprobation, and in connection with the organic development of all things.

That is, in a nutshell, the peculiar Protestant Reformed heritage. [See page 287]

March 15, 1974

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MEDITATION

The Cry of the Forsaken One

Rev. M. Schipper

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:46

Three words of the Saviour on the cross had already been uttered, and the third only a moment or two before the sun had reached its zenith.

At noon, which was the sixth hour, when the sun normally would be shining in its glory, unexpectedly for the multitude that surrounded the cross a mysterious darkness suddenly descended upon the earth. An unusual and supernatural phenomenon, not to be explained by natural causes! Symbol of the judgment of God, through which the world was to pass, but also the Son of Man, the redeemer of His people!

A darkness it was which must have struck terror into the hearts of the onlookers, accompanied as it was with a terrific earthquake which rent the veil of the temple in twain from top to bottom, and opened the graves of many. A darkness it was which suddenly brought to an end the service in the temple, and hushed the mockers at Calvary into amazement.

For three hours, from the sixth to the ninth hour, the darkness prevailed, during which time also the Saviour hangs silently on the cross!

And who can tell of the thoughts and agonies that troubled His soul, and pounded in that feverish body, as He hangs suspended between earth and heaven? God is pleased not to tell us what thoughts dwelt in His soul, and what awful sufferings He endured. And therefore we shall have to pass over these hours in a silence of reverent awe.

It is only at the very end of this period of judgment that we hear the cry that indicates the agony He bore. An out-cry that seems to rise as it were out of the very abyss of hell! "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

It is the cry of the forsaken One!

Gradually during the hours of darkness He had been sinking under the awful weight of divine judgment. And at the moment of the awful antithesis when Light's darkness, Love's wrath, and Mercy's justice meet, then it is that you hear the piercing cry, which constitutes the fourth word of the cross.

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

Strange question!

Could He, Who is the very Son of God, Who is eternally in the bosom of the Father, be forsaken?

O, indeed, we understand that He is the divine Son in human nature, Who utters this cry! He is the Infinite in personal union with the finite, the eternal Son in intimate connection with the temporal. And we understand, too, that this is the hour of His deepest humiliation, when He suffers His blessed body to be nailed to the cross; and, hanging on that accursed tree, He gives His life for all those whom the Father had given Him. But even so, is He not the eternal Son of God that descended from heaven, while He is still in heaven, that went out from the Father, yet is still with the Father? Is He not Immanuel, God incarnated, in Whom the union of God and man can never be broken?

Moreover, is it not also true that He is the obedient Servant in whom God always finds His good pleasure? We remember, do we not, how that only a short time before this hour He had the testimony of this when He was on the Mount of Transfiguration, when He was glorified in the presence of Moses and Elias, and before the eyes of His favorite disciples? Did not the Father exclaim on that occasion: This is My beloved Son? Was it not a testimony which strengthened Him to go down from that mountain and to descend into the valley of suffering and humiliation? Is it not true that He always gave evidence that it was His meat and drink to do the will of Him Who sent Him? That

though He feared, He never murmured, though He dreaded the hour He never rebelled, though He had prayed that the cup might pass from Him, He was always submissive to the will of Him Who had given Him that cup to drink?

Is He then, in this supreme moment of conflict, not the beloved Servant of God's good pleasure? Can God forsake Himself? Or the Father forsake the Son? How could it be possible that Jehovah God should forsake His Servant, leave Him in utter desolation, and that, too, at the very moment of His most perfect obedience, and supreme sacrifice?

Strange question, indeed!

And why does He raise the question?

Does He not know?

Listen to Him cry out: Why hast Thou forsaken Me?

And the meaning of that "why?" is: for what reason? because of what? What is the ground of my being so utterly forsaken?

Does He perhaps forget the why of this dreadful hour? But how could that be, when you remember how that all along He had spoken of this very hour? Constantly He had reminded His disciples of the nearness of the hour. And even for this hour He had prayed.

And how is it to be explained that while He senses that he has been utterly forsaken by His God, that He still addresses Him: My God, my God?

The answer to all these questions lies bound up in the fact that this hour of darkness is at the same time the hour of redemption!

In such an hour, and especially in its darkest moment, it is the meeting time, the confrontation of the most astonishing truths, of God forsaken of God, of the obedient Servant suffering God's displeasure, of calling upon God, while being utterly forsaken of Him.

It is the redeeming hour!

When the most abundant mercy executes righteous judgment, when the most unfathomable love pours out vials of holy wrath, when the most absolutely Innocent suffers the most dreadful, just punishment. When He Who knew no sin, is made sin.

Awful reality!

Forsaken of God!

Let us understand it well. This cannot mean that the one forsaken no longer has the consciousness that God is, and that he is not near to him and surrounds him on every side. Even one who descends into hell cannot escape His presence. Fact of the matter is, hell

is precisely hell because God is there. Also on Golgotha God is present, sustaining the cross and its Sufferer. He is present in the darkness.

But to be forsaken means to lose the consciousness of His friendship! In His friendship there is life and joy and pleasures forevermore. Such joy and fellowship the Saviour had heretofore always experienced. But in the intense darkness Jehovah now hides His face and withdraws His fellowship from Him. It is the darkness of the judgment hour! In it God concentrates the presence of His offended holiness, and of His avenging justice, His righteousness and truth upon that cross and its victim. And withdrawing from the consciousness of His Servant all His favor, and the joy of His fellowship, He causes Him to feel the terror of His justice; as He, the Son of God in the flesh, alone could feel it. It is the anguish of one that stands face to face with the living God as Judge of sinful man. It is the suffering of one upon whom all the vials of God's holy wrath are poured out. He is forsaken, plunged into the horror of one who is cast away in God's holy and righteous anger. The cross and its Sufferer are, as it were, plunged into the blackness of hell!

Yet, conscious that God is His God!

In all the desolation, He is still God's Son!

Conscious He is that the Father loves Him. Never did the Son lose sight of that divine relationship, the only comforting assurance He had as He entered this darkest hour. And always that Son responds to that love of the Father. My God, my God, Thou knowest that I love Thee!

Conscious is He also that He is the Father's obedient Son! While He is the Son lying in the bosom of the Father, He is also the Son in human nature, doing the Father's will. He suffers not because He was disobedient, but because He is obedient, even unto death. His suffering He knows is not for His own sin, of which He had none; but for the sin of His people. His most amazing passion is an act of sacrifice, a deed of loving obedience.

He suffers as Mediator!

The place of His brethren He took in the hour of God's judgment! The chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. Willingly and obediently He bore it to the bitter end.

Hence, the apparent conflict! The hour of the most perfect obedience is the moment of deepest gloom. Though forsaken, yet calling upon His God!

And there is an answer to that question which was wrung out of Him as He hung midst the stream of Jehovah's wrath!

You ask, My Son, why thou hast been forsaken of Me?

Why, My Son, dost Thou cry so loudly for an answer?

Dost Thou not remember, My Son, that when Thou wast sent into the world it was with the express purpose to save My people whom I have given unto Thee from the wrath to come? Didst Thou, as Thou didst bear the torments of hell in their stead, become so amazed at the terror of My holy wrath over against their sin, that Thou didst lose out of sight that nothing less than Thy death could harmonize justice and mercy? Hast Thou forgotten as the pains of hell gat hold upon Thee, that Thy people could never endure My wrath over against their sin, so as to bear it away? And that Thou alone couldst endure the judgment, while at the same time fulfilling the mandate of My holy law?

Such, indeed, must have been the answer to the cry

of the forsaken One! Though no answer could be heard, nor no audible reply was given, God surely heard the outcry, and satisfied the quest of His Son. The evidence must be seen in the succeeding words of the cross: "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst . . . When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished . . . And when He had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost." None of this could or would He have said, had He not received the satisfying answer to His out-cry. When He is assured that He has finished the work the Father had given Him to do, only then can He commend His spirit to Him Who gave it.

And all we can say after meditating on all this, is —

My God, my God, how unfathomable is Thy everlasting love over Thy people!

And, my Saviour, how wonderful Thou art!

EDITORIALS

Editor's Notes

Change of Address, Editorial Office. Effective March 15, all correspondence for our Editorial Office should be addressed to 4975 Ivanrest Ave., Grandville, Michigan 49418. Moving is at best a rather traumatic experience, especially if it involves moving an office and a library and trying to keep everything operating smoothly meanwhile. It will help if all correspondents take note of this change of address. Incidentally, the mailing address — and this applies to the seminary as well as to my address — is *not* Wyoming (though we are actually located in that city), but GRANDVILLE.

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Recordings of the Dedication Program. A 90-minute cassette tape recording or a reel-to-reel tape recording (7-inch reel) which includes all of the program of the Dedication of the Seminary Building

except the song-service is available at a cost of \$3.00. If interested, send your name and address and enclose a check or money order for \$3.00 to our Business Office, P.O. Box 6064, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506.

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Except for the brief editorial about the subscription campaign, we are devoting the usual space of Editorials and Question Box to a transcript of Prof. Decker's Dedicatory Address and some pictures of the Seminary Building and the dedication program.

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We take this means of extending our sympathy to two members of our staff, Rev. Cornelius Hanko and Prof. Herman Hanko, in the death of Mrs. C. Hanko on Saturday, March 2. May the Lord comfort the bereaved by His Spirit and Word.

One Thousand!

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

That is the number of new subscribers which has been set as the goal of an extended drive which the Board of the R.F.P.A. is beginning with this issue. And a committee of the Board has asked me to give some editorial emphasis to this drive.

First of all, why is this drive being conducted? The reason is not one of money and profit. Ours is in the most literal sense a non-profit organization: our subscription-price of \$7.00 does not come near meeting the ever-increasing costs of publication. And while it is true that an increase of one thousand subscribers would mean a proportionate reduction in the cost per copy, this would only be a side benefit; and it is definitely not the motivation for this drive. Fact is, we would probably need more than two thousand new subscribers before the subscription-price would cover actual costs of publication. Besides, our supporters, both churches and individuals, have demonstrated over the years a willingness to give generously to meet our expenses.

Why do we want new subscribers?

Because we firmly believe that we have a message to spread abroad, and that, too, a distinctively Reformed message. The purpose of our *Standard Bearer* from the very beginning has been to send forth by means of the printed page a Reformed witness! That remains our purpose today.

In fact, it is more emphatically our purpose than ever before. We are of the conviction, in this day of galloping apostasy, that there is no other magazine quite like ours, no other magazine which consistently, explicitly, thoroughly, boldly, and clearly sets forth the truth of the Word of God according to our Reformed confessions. And we are of the conviction that in this day when the Reformed truth is becoming a scarce item in the ecclesiastical marketplace and when many a church paper and religious magazine is offering stones for bread, it is more necessary than ever before to send forth our Reformed witness to as many as we can possibly reach.

Nor is this conviction merely our own, private conviction. As has been reported to you recently,

there have been some modest increases in our readership. And one of the most encouraging aspects of this increase is that most of our new readers are people of God outside our Protestant Reformed Churches. What is even more encouraging is their almost uniform reaction to the *Standard Bearer* once they have become acquainted with it. People will write to our Business Office that they are "just delighted" with the *Standard Bearer*, or that they "read it from cover to cover," or that they "wish they had known of the *Standard Bearer* long ago," or that they wish that many more who are of basically Reformed convictions would read it.

And such kind reactions serve to confirm us in our conviction as to the Reformed witness of our magazine. But they also serve to remind us of the necessity and the responsibility to try to reach as many readers as possible. This is not a matter of pride. It does not arise out of a desire to be big, something which we never shall be anyway. We believe that this is our calling before God! That explains the reason and the motivation for this subscription drive.

The goal of one thousand is rather arbitrary. We have set that number only to have a realistic target at which to aim. And personally, I consider that goal entirely realistic — if only we all persistently strive to attain it.

That brings up the big question: how do we reach that goal?

The problem is: how can we reach potential new readers? How can we even get others to *sample* our magazine, to taste it? For we believe that once many people of Reformed convictions get a taste of it, they will want more.

This is the point at which you, the readers, enter the picture.

Enclosed with this issue is a reply-envelope. We are asking all our readers to furnish us with one or two or three names of acquaintances or friends or relatives who do not now receive the *Standard Bearer* but

should, in your opinion, receive it or who might be interested in receiving it. Write their names and complete addresses (including zip codes) on the inside flap of the postage paid envelope. If you need more space, write the addresses on a slip of paper and enclose it. And mail it promptly!

That's all! It won't cost you a cent; only a few minutes of your time. With a little cooperation from our readers, we could easily have two or three thousand names!

But don't postpone it! And don't leave it to the other readers!

Here is a simple opportunity for each subscriber to do something to promote our magazine.

And what will the R.F.P.A. do?

The committee in charge intends to send a sample copy of the *Standard Bearer*, along with an introductory letter, to each address which you send us. Your name will not be mentioned; in fact, you need not even include your name. Just send us names and addresses, and the Board will do the rest.

Let me emphasize, however, the success of this first step in the campaign for one thousand new subscribers depends on your cooperation. The Board has other plans; an entire campaign has been mapped out. But let us all help to get this campaign off to a flying start!

SEMINARY BUILDING DEDICATION

That All The Earth May Know That Jehovah Is God

Prof. Robert D. Decker

(The text of the address given at the Dedication Program of the Protestant Reformed Seminary Building)

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Theological School Committee, esteemed colleagues of the faculty, students, brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ; the Lord has done great things for us whereof we are glad! This first of all! We rejoice tonight in what God has done and not in what we have done. To rejoice in our accomplishments would be quite vain and very sinful. We must be careful lest we fall prey to that great evil.

If we ask, what has God done to make us glad this evening, the answer is: He has given us a fine building for the work of our Theological School. Though modest by comparison with many other seminaries, it is a beautiful facility with all the necessary rooms for the various functions and affairs of the Seminary. There is an assembly room for practice preaching, chapel, and denominational affairs; an office and a workroom for business affairs and the publishing of

the lectures, *Theological Journal*, and syllabi for the various courses of study; a library, bookstore, three fine classrooms; and a large faculty lounge which doubles as an office for conference and study. All these are completely and beautifully furnished. Certainly this is a great thing which the Lord has done for us and we are glad. It is the Lord Who inclined the hearts of our membership to see the need and to give liberally so that we have not only adequate but beautiful facilities to meet the needs of an expanding curriculum and enrollment. And there it stands, the Protestant Reformed Seminary, on that southwestern hill overlooking the entire greater Grand Rapids area. After nearly fifty years of history, the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America has a home of its own. Certainly we ought to rejoice in humble thanks for that!

But if this be the end of our rejoicing, it shall prove quite hollow. In the final analysis it is not the building which counts: that is only brick, stone, steel, and wood. To rejoice in that would be to rejoice in

the earthly, which perishes. It is the world, not the church, which rejoices in buildings and lands. So we rejoice in this: God has preserved the TRUTH among us! Think of it! We are able to say at this late date in history and in the context of rampant apostasy that the faith of our fathers, that great heritage of the Reformed Truth, is living still in our hearts and lives. That is *the* great thing the Lord has done for us whereof we are glad.

To this end we dedicate the new building. It must be dedicated as the place where the task of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches continues to be performed as long as time endures. And, that task is: the defense and exposition of the Truth set forth in the Confessions (Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dordrecht, Belgic Confession of Faith) according to the Holy Scriptures. This must be done in order that young men may be trained to be pastors and teachers in the churches.

In order to reach this purpose of dedication we call your attention to I Kings 8:55-61; the passage containing the concluding speech of Solomon to the children of Israel at the dedication of the temple. In the form of a prayer to Jehovah Solomon reminds Israel of three great truths evident in the completion of the temple. The first of these is: "... there hath not failed one word of all his good promise ..." (vs. 56). God in His covenant faithfulness has given rest to His people. This implies a calling: "... The Lord our God be with us ... that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments ..." (vss. 57, 58) Finally the purpose of this obedience must be: "... That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else." (vs. 60) It is true, of course, that our seminary does not occupy the place in our fellowship which the temple did in Israel. Yet, there is a legitimate parallel here to our place and calling as part of God's church. Therefore as we dedicate this building let it be along this same threefold line. Let us acknowledge, then, God's great faithfulness. Let us dedicate this building to sanctified obedience to the Word of God and let us do this in order that the purpose of God may be attained: "that all the earth may know that Jehovah is God".

I. God's Great Faithfulness

At the dedication of the temple, Solomon simply could not help but be reminded of the great faithfulness of Jehovah. He thought, no doubt, about the deliverance from Egypt, the wilderness wandering, the conquest of the promised land begun by Joshua and completed by his father, David. Now the inheritance is complete and God's dwelling place is made permanent on Zion's holy hill. Jehovah is present with His people in the sanctuary. All this can

only mean; "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise." Precisely according to every word of His promise God has given His people the rest of Canaan. The only response to that can be: "Blessed be the Lord."

A parallel situation obtains for us at the occasion of the dedication of our new Seminary building. The occasion itself simply impels us to look back over the course of the nearly fifty years of our existence as Protestant Reformed Churches. Practically synonymous with the origin of our denomination was the beginning of our Theological School. The beginning was small and there did not seem to be much prospect for the future. There were only a few students, three protesting Christian Reformed congregations, and one of these was very small. Though we never did become big, God provided in a wonderful way. Churches were organized until we numbered some twenty-four or five congregations by the late forties. But there was always trouble. The history of the Protestant Reformed Churches has been stormy. By the beginning of the second semester of the very first Seminary term one of the faculty, the Rev. Henry Danhof, resigned and with most of his congregation in Kalamazoo became independent. The churches were never large, they were widely scattered, and often beset by internal difficulties. Then there were the sad events of 1953 when nearly two-thirds of our clergy and membership departed from the truth. And, even apart from all this, the Protestant Reformed Churches have either been ignored or despised for the truth's sake. One can well imagine that our leaders must often have wondered what would come of it all. But, God has been faithful. He provided a goodly number of students, professors of theology, and a beautiful building in which to work. We are still very small as denominations and seminaries go, but surely the fact that by the grace of God we have built this building is testimony to the faithfulness of God. Indeed, "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise!"

But there is a much greater testimony to the faithfulness of God and that is: WE HAVE NOT CHANGED! We are still preaching and teaching both in the churches and on the mission fields the same precious Reformed Faith of the Scriptures as expounded in the Creeds. The same truth prevails in our fellowship, the truth on account of which our fathers were expelled from the mother church. From our youngest to our oldest pastor comes the same blessed truth of the Word of God! And with the same emphases! The absolute sovereignty of God, the total depravity of man, God's eternal covenant of friendship with His elect in Christ, salvation by grace through faith, the gift of God; without shame and without a bit of compromise this is what is being

taught in our Seminary and preached from our pulpits. It is an account of this that we are becoming more and more unique among the seminaries of the world. The Theological School is unique in having a faculty of professors who believe heart and soul in the inspired and infallible Scriptures, — this is rare in our times! We are unique in our uncompromising commitment to the truth of the Word of God set forth in the Reformed Creeds; the truth in all of its constituent parts is defended and taught without the slightest reservation on the part of any of the professors. Creation in six days by the Word of God according to Genesis 1 & 2, the fall of the human race into sin, the flood and all the miracles recorded in the Bible, sovereign election and reprobation, the eternal covenant of grace established, maintained and realized by God in Jesus Christ by His Spirit and Word; all these truths and more form the content of all the instruction given in our seminary just as they always have in the past. This, more than anything else, is clear testimony to the truth: "there hath not failed one word of all his good promise!" We did not accomplish all this. God forbid that we should ever boast in ourselves. God by His wonderful grace preserved us in the truth! One aged saint of one of our Western churches is fond of putting it this way, "Our God kept us by the truth."

Let us dedicate this building, ourselves, and all that God has given us to thankful praise to our faithful God Whose promise has not failed. And may it be by God's grace that we and our children and our children's children, should the Lord tarry, say: "There hath not failed one word of all his good promise."

II. The Call To Obedience

This means we must dedicate the use of this building to sanctified obedience to the Word of God. Solomon made that very clear to the children of

Israel. The fact that God realized every word of all His good promise implied a calling for Israel. Israel must walk in God's ways by keeping God's commandments, His statutes, and His judgments. And, because Solomon knows only too well that Israel can never persevere in obedience in its own strength, he prays that Jehovah may be with them just as He had always been with their fathers, that He may never leave or forsake them; but, that He may maintain His cause by inclining the hearts of Israel to obedience. (I King 8:57-59)

Surely this is our calling today! God has not failed in all these years; He has faithfully kept every word of His promise. This means we are to walk in His ways by keeping His commandments, His statutes and His judgements. We are to be faithful to His Word. Apart from thankful obedience to the Word of God in the days to come all these blessings become a witness against us. To this end let us dedicate our new building. Let it be the place where the Word of God is always honored, where professors and students alike always bow before the Scriptures in humble submission.

And, thus let our seminary be a place where preachers of the Word are trained. This has always been the emphasis. It must always be the emphasis. And for good reason! If God's people are going to be obedient to the Word and live lives of gratitude to the praise of God; if indeed they are to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved, they need faith in Christ; and the Bible says to believe in Christ one must hear Christ, and to hear Christ one needs a preacher who is sent. (cf. Romans 10:13-17) God's people need preachers committed to the Word, preachers who will say, "thus saith the Lord." They need such preachers so that in all their wanderings, troubles, sicknesses, sorrows, and burdens they may hear the voice of Jesus.

USE THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO SEND US NAMES AND ADDRESSES.

NO POSTAGE NECESSARY.

Our Seminary is unique in this respect too. Everyone knows that preaching has fallen on hard times these days. The office of pastor-teacher (the “parish ministry” in today’s terminology) is held in disrepute. Seminaries are training specialists in church administration, institutional chaplaincy, social ministries, and what have you! By the grace of God our Seminary still trains men to know the truth and to preach and teach the Word. To this let us dedicate ourselves and this new building. Let us do it in the awareness that this is what the church so sorely needs in our times — preachers of the Word! The church needs pastors who truly represent Jesus Christ, good Shepherd of the sheep. By preaching the church will be saved; and *only* by preaching will the church be saved! Let the world call that preaching of the cross “foolishness”! By that “foolishness” God destroys the wisdom and power of the world and saves His church! (I Cor. 1) Our prayer then as we dedicate this facility is: “Lord incline the hearts of thy people to walk in all thy ways by keeping thy commandments, statutes, and judgments. Never leave or forsake us, Lord. Be with us as thou hast been with our fathers. Maintain thy cause among us. Give us preachers of the Word, Lord; and continue to give us a Theological School to train them.”

III. The Purpose

For what purpose? “That all the people of the earth may know that Jehovah is God.” (vs. 60) That was God’s purpose with Israel. He redeemed them from Egypt’s bondage and gave them the rest of the promised land, and lived with them in covenant fellowship as their God and Father and called them to obedience to His Word in order that all the earth might know that Jehovah is God. By divine intent God’s glory is inseparably bound to His people in Jesus Christ. Everything serves them in order that they may serve Jehovah so that His glory may be revealed in them.

That is God’s grand purpose always. Why, we may ask, has God elected a church in Christ to everlasting life, why has He washed that church in the blood of Jesus, why has He called and sanctified that church,

and why does He preserve that church? Why must the church preach the Word, train pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry? Why? The answer is: “That all the people of the earth may know that Jehovah is God!” That is God’s purpose with the Protestant Reformed Churches and their seminary. Sometimes, often even, we can be so very short-sighted. Our churches are small, the denomination so insignificant on the church-scene, we cannot accomplish much. Then we ask, what’s the use? Why spend all the time, effort and money to erect a building in which to train a few men for the ministry and missions? It seems so hopeless. Let it be said, we must never think and talk this way! Our task as Protestant Reformed Churches and as part of the universal Church of Jesus Christ, and, therefore, the task of our Seminary is world-wide! Jesus said it, too: “Go ye into all the world baptizing and preaching and teaching the gospel”, Think of that! **ALL THE WORLD!** All the people of the earth must know that Jehovah is God! Not in some post-millennial sense so that all will ultimately be converted so that Christ may come to claim His kingdom. But, all the earth must know in the sense that the elect out of every nation must be gathered, sin must be revealed as sin in all its horror and in all its terrible rejection of God. Then shall the end come. Christ will come and every eye shall see Him and He will judge all men. The present earth and heaven will be destroyed in the fire of God’s wrath and a new heaven and earth will be created. Then, all the people of the earth will know that Jehovah is God. Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father! Every knee and every tongue! Of the wicked too. They shall have to confess out of eternal hell that Jehovah is God. The righteous shall know in glory!

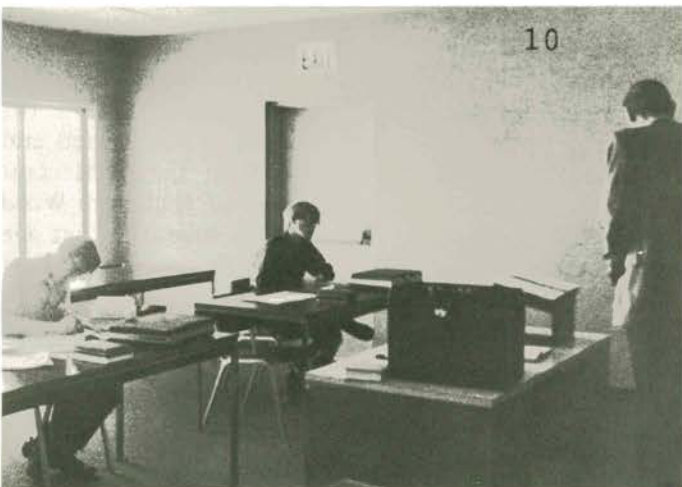
To that end we dedicate this building! It is a glorious task! Let us be on with it! In great courage and boldness of faith, without shame or compromise, and without apology let us train pastors and teachers and let us vindicate sound doctrine. God is with us and God will use us. Nothing can be against us! Praise His Name!

Photos following on pages 284 and 285.

Know the standard and follow it. Read THE STANDARD BEARER.

Seminary Building Dedication

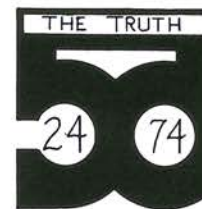




1. Front view of building from parking lot.
2. North exposure — classrooms.
3. South Holland visitors at open house.
4. Part of the audience at Dedication Program.
5. Profs. Hanko and Hoeksema talking things over at open house.
- 6 & 7. Views of the library area.
8. Workroom and bookstore area.
- 9 & 10. Classroom views.

The Standard Bearer

In Retrospect



Rev. G. Van Baren

[It was the year 1950. The Protestant Reformed Churches were in the process of celebrating their 25th anniversary. On what would have normally been an occasion of great joy, there was reason for sorrow. Disagreement on fundamental doctrinal issues was evident in the churches. It seemed not impossible that a rift would occur. Rev. H. Hoeksema writes his editorial for the March 15th issue of the Standard Bearer in a spirit of gloom and disappointment. At the same time, he pinpoints the reason for the existence of the Protestant Reformed Churches and expresses their calling for the future. G.V.B.]

"PROTESTANT REFORMED"

Rev. H. Hoeksema

It is by no means with an unmixed feeling of joy that *The Standard Bearer* celebrates the twenty-fifth anniversary of the existence of our churches.

Rather is our sentiment expressed in the text from Ezra 3:10-13, on which the Rev. C. Hanks preached on the occasion of this celebration, and while we are thankful to the Lord for what it pleased Him to do for and through our Protestant Reformed Churches in the past, nevertheless we feel like "many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers", who "wept with a loud voice", when they compared the foundation of the house of God that was then laid with the glory of Solomon's temple which they had seen.

The reason for this attitude on our part must be evident to all that read our papers.

As Protestant Reformed Churches we no longer present a united front as far as the truth is concerned.

And although it might probably be expected that no church in the world could stand for any length of time on the basis of such pure and strong Reformed truth as that which is represented by the Protestant Reformed Churches; and although, years ago, at an outing of our young people, I said that I conceived of the possibility that, if I lived long enough, I would be

cast out once more; yet it cannot but be a cause of deep sorrow when, after so short a time, this departure from the pure basis of the Protestant Reformed truth becomes evident.

You probably consider me a pessimist.

But this I deny.

I am thoroughly convinced that God will preserve His Church through Jesus Christ our Lord even unto the end of the world, and that the gates of hell shall never overwhelm her. And in that faith no one can ever be a pessimist.

But, at the same time, I am also thoroughly convinced that Christ uses His Church as His battle host overagainst the powers of darkness, that His Church is where the Word of God is maintained and preached in all its purity, that the Protestant Reformed truth is the expression of that pure Word of God, and that exactly in the measure that we depart from the basis of that pure Protestant Reformed truth we lose our power as the battle host of Jehovah, and compromise with the enemy.

Recently there are indications of such compromise.

It is not necessary for me to point out those indications. You know as well as I do to what I am referring.

It is being said that some are emitting an *entirely different sound* from that which is blasted from the trumpet of those men that always stood for the Protestant Reformed truth, that the conception of the latter is not the doctrine of our churches, and that most of the Protestant Reformed do not think as they. And a conditional theology is being introduced the sound of which is surely foreign to our Protestant Reformed truth.

The statements to which I refer above have never been openly challenged, still less contradicted. And as long as they are not given the lie, I have no choice but accept them as true.

Are you surprised, then, that on this twenty-fifth anniversary, I rather mourn than celebrate with rejoicing?

But, I ask, what is the heritage of the Protestant Reformed Churches? Is there any part of the truth which they have emphasized and further developed in distinction from other Reformed Churches?

To this question some, perhaps most of us, will answer: the Protestant Reformed Churches deny the theory of common grace. And that is, of course, true. But that is a mere negative answer. And we must have something positive. No church can live by a mere negation.

Others will answer more positively: the Protestant Reformed Churches teach the doctrine of sovereign grace; and that is also true. But, after all, that is not their peculiar heritage and their particular contribution to Reformed theology. Do not all Reformed Churches believe, officially at least, the same truth? Do not even some Baptist churches confess this? It may be true that the Protestant Reformed Churches lay more emphasis upon this

truth than other Reformed churches, but it cannot be said that the doctrine of sovereign grace is their peculiar heritage.

If you ask me what is the most peculiar treasure of the Protestant Reformed Churches, I answer without any hesitation: their peculiar view of the covenant.

And what is their particular conception?

It stands closely connected with their denial of common grace, and with their emphasis on the doctrine of election and reprobation.

Moreover, it emphasizes and carries out the organic idea.

Briefly stated, it teaches that God realizes His eternal covenant of friendship, in Christ, the Firstborn of every creature and the Firstbegotten of the dead, organically, and antithetically along the lines of election and reprobation, and in connection with the organic development of all things.

That is, in a nutshell, the peculiar Protestant Reformed heritage.

He that has been captivated by this beautiful Reformed truth must have nothing of anything that smacks like Heynsian theology, nor will he ever retrogress into a traditional conditional theology.

But rather than go backward, he will go forward and continue to develop the pure Protestant Reformed truth of God's eternal covenant.

To do this is the specific calling of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Failure to do this is our death. It is the end of our distinctive existence.

And that is the reason why, under the present circumstances, I cannot wholeheartedly join in with the joy of celebration.

"There is not a phase of character or experience which is not touched on and treated in the contents of Scripture; and it is a profound loss to a congregation if it is not fed on the entire wheat of the Divine Word. Eliminate from our food-stuffs one ingredient, and the children around your board will pay dearly for your neglect. Similarly, it is impossible to omit any of the teachings, re-proofs, corrections, or instructions of Scripture without leaving the man of God incomplete and inadequately furnished unto good works. 'Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable.' "

— F. B. Meyer

CRITIQUE

Scripture, Tradition and Infallibility

Prof. H. Hanko

SCRIPTURE, TRADITION AND INFALLIBILITY, by Dewey M. Beegle; Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1973; 332 pp., \$4.95. (Continued).

In our last article, we began a review of this book and promised to continue it in a further article. We think the book deserves lengthy review because it promotes a view of Scripture's infallibility and inspiration which is increasingly influential in evangelical and Reformed circles.

The book is an open and unblushing attack on the doctrine of inspiration, inerrancy and authority. It repudiates the traditional view which has been held by the Christian Church, and substitutes a view which makes major concessions to the rationalistic higher critics of more modern times. The book does this, not because it is written from the viewpoint of modern, higher criticism, but because the author is convinced that the time has come for all the Church to abandon what he disparagingly calls a "Maginot-line mentality"; i.e., a position which, in the face of the evidence, can no longer be maintained.

We remarked last time that the author's basic error is that he approaches his subject and examines the question of the doctrines of inerrancy and inspiration from the viewpoint of the inductive method. He specifically repudiates the deductive method as an inadequate tool in his search for a doctrine of Scripture. By the latter (i.e., by a deductive method) is meant that method which inquires what Scripture itself teaches concerning its own inspiration and inerrancy. By the former is meant the scientific approach which takes into account all the available evidence garnered through a study of Scripture, of non-canonical writings, of the styles, habits, characteristics, etc. of the so-called secondary authors; and which, on the basis of this evidence, comes to a conclusion concerning the doctrine of inspiration, inerrancy and authority.

We characterized the deductive method as being the method of faith; while the inductive method is basically rationalistic. These two stand opposed to each other. One can learn the doctrine of Scripture, not by a rationalistic approach to God's Word, but only by a faith which confesses that this truth is a part of the whole of the faith of the child of God. The battle in the defense of the Scriptures is a battle between faith and unbelief.

What are the views which the author develops in this book? We cannot, of course, treat them all; nor can we even treat the ones we discuss below in any kind of exhaustive fashion. But there are a number of points which ought to be made.

The first question is: Why does the author repudiate the historic view of inspiration? Why does he inveigh against the traditional conception of verbal inspiration, of inerrancy, and of absolute authority of Scripture?

There are several answers to this question. In the first place, proceeding from his starting point (the use of the inductive method) he concludes that the evidence does not warrant this. And that evidence is to be especially found in the fact that there are many discrepancies, self-contradictions, obvious errors in the Scriptures. A rather large number of these he treats — some of them in considerable detail. We shall not enter into this question in this review, chiefly because the author does not come up with any essentially new data; his "errors, discrepancies," etc., are, for the most part, the same as those which have been brought up dozens of times over the years by others who have attacked Scripture's inerrancy. And they have been adequately answered time and time again by scholars who have believed in the Scriptures as God's inspired Word. It is only necessary to point out at this point that here is already an indication of how far apart the views of those who believe in the doctrine of

inerrancy are from those who deny this truth. The author mocks those who take the position that any seeming discrepancies and self-contradictions are easily solved with adequate study or are, as of now, not yet capable of solution because all the necessary light has not been shed on the problem. The author claims this is merely refusing to face the issue in honesty. Nevertheless, this is precisely the issue at stake. One who adopts the so-called deductive method, i.e., one who comes to Scripture with the basic assumption of faith that Scripture will give us its own doctrine of inerrancy and inspiration, assumes that there are no discrepancies, errors and self-contradictions in God's Word. This is an article of faith to him, and he approaches Scripture assuming that any kind of error is impossible. While the author mocks this position, it is nevertheless the position of faith, and we must not be ashamed of it. It is the inductive method which finds all kinds of errors because the approach is not of faith, but of reason. Edward J. Young, in his important book, "Thy Word is Truth" deals with this very matter. He writes: (p. 165)

The proper method of dealing with difficulties is not to dismiss them as positive errors, for if the Bible is indeed God-breathed, it follows that it must be true and infallible. To assume that God could speak a Word that was contrary to fact is to assume that God Himself cannot operate without error. The very nature of God therefore is at stake. If we assert that the autographa of Scripture contain error, we are saying that God is guilty of having told us something that is not true . . .

The approach of faith is the only proper approach to the Scriptures. Only the one who comes with humble faith will be able to hear the Word of God.

But there is one point which the author makes in his vendetta against inerrancy which is worth a bit of discussion. The author's reasoning goes something like this. During 99% of the Church's history, the Church has lived without an inerrant Scripture. This is true because of the fact that, if Scripture is inerrant, only the autographa are inerrant. (The autographa are the original manuscripts which Moses, David, Solomon, Paul, Peter, etc., wrote). These autographa have not been in existence for many hundreds of years. Hence, it is obvious that an inerrant Scripture is not necessary for the Church since it has lived without them during most of her history. Or, if it is necessary for the church to have an inerrant Bible, then we must conclude that all the copies made of the autographa, all the translations, all the various transmissions are also infallible. This argument seems, at first glance, to be rather plausible. And the fact of the matter is that everyone knows that we do not have the autographa in our possession

any more; nor do we have that inerrant Bible which came, through men of God's choice, to the Church.

But the author misses here a very important point. We readily grant that a translation of the Bible cannot be inerrant. We also readily grant that through innumerable copyings of the autographa various errors have crept in. But two points must be made. In the first place, every child of God who holds in his hand a reliable and accurate translation of the Bible may be absolutely certain that he has in his possession the Word of God. Though there be perhaps thousands of different "readings" in the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts of Scripture which are in our possession today, every Bible scholar knows that not more than a minute part of 1% of these various readings has any effect upon the sense of God's Word or upon a point of doctrine. This is a marvelous display of God's providential care of Scripture. And every Bible student knows that a translation, reliably made, while not infallible, brings to God's people God's very Word. On this there can be no dispute.

In the second place however, even though we readily admit that we do not have an inerrant Scripture today, it is of essential importance to maintain that the autographa were inerrant. Perhaps it is true that the Church herself does not need an inerrant Bible in order to know the Word of God. But one thing is true. The whole doctrine of the *authority* of Scripture stands or falls on the question of inerrant autographa. If the autographa are not inerrant, they are not authoritative. The authority of Scripture rests upon Scripture's inerrancy. And while the Church does not need an inerrant Scripture, it desperately needs an authoritative Scripture. Thus, God's Word is authoritative because it is God's Word in all its parts and down to the very words. Take away the inerrancy of the autographa and you have robbed Scripture of its authority, for to the extent that Scripture is not inerrant, it is not God's Word and has no authority of God.

We turn now to his view of inspiration. As far as the author's general view of Scripture is concerned, he writes:

From the objective side of the issue, therefore, the gospel consisted of that collection of books and letters which were written (for various reasons) by the apostles and their associates as witnesses of the incarnate Christ. On the subjective side, the gospel was the experience of the presence of Jesus Christ made possible by the aid of the Holy Spirit at the hearing or reading of the gospel content. p. 112.

The Scriptures themselves were formed by various authors, scribes and editors who gathered traditions, historical data from various records, religious experiences of Christians, etc., and who incorporated them into the Scriptural records or who edited

material, rearranging, rewriting, and reworking all the material which occupied their attention. The contents of Scripture are therefore due to all kinds of factors including the insights of the authors. This does not mean that the Spirit was totally inoperative in the work of Scripture, but his work is limited to a certain control of the central contents of Scripture.

In order to understand this, we must understand the author's view of revelation. He distinguishes between what he calls primary and secondary revelation. He writes:

In summary, the purpose of the designation "primary revelation" is to highlight the fact that God made known to a few gifted people the basic insights concerning his redemptive purposes for his creation and his creatures. In the words, deeds, and death of Jesus, the Living Word, God made the ultimate disclosure of himself. With the interpretation of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension by his disciples and some of their associates the determinative history of God's redemptive activity came to a close . . .

On the other hand, God worked through the rational capacity of his servants to draw out from the major insights such references and implications as were appropriate for the covenant community. Although secondary in development, some of these insights preserve the permanent quality and relevance of primary revelation . . .

Not all the insights of secondary revelation had permanent relevance, however . . . pp. 73-75.

In other words, primary revelation has to do with that which is "redemptive" in content, while secondary revelation has to do with interpretation, added data, etc. In connection with this, primary revelation ceased with the close of the apostolic age (p. 74), but secondary revelation goes on and continues even today.

In this connection, too, the author also distinguishes between primary and secondary inspiration. The former is connected with primary revelation; the latter with secondary revelation. Also the latter type of inspiration continues beyond the writing of Scripture and is to be found in valuable books which interpret Scripture, hymns and songs which the Church writes, etc.

This view of revelation and inspiration has all sorts of consequences. For one thing, the author argues for the multiple authorship of the Pentateuch and concedes, in certain respects, arguments to the higher critics. (p. 28.) He speaks of the fact that Matthew and Jesus both held different views of the inspiration of Scripture.

It is quite clear, for example, that Matthew is close to the rabbinical concept of inspiration. On the other hand, Jesus and Paul spoke with a unique

authority that confounded their opponents and convinced their followers. There is a genuine difference in their understanding of inspiration and in the way they use the Old Testament. p. 131.

He concludes that all the copies, transmissions and translations of the Bible which have appeared over the years are just as inspired as Scripture is. (pp. 174, 175). He writes of Luke:

What distinguishes Luke from Christians today is not inspiration as such, but rather the unique period of revelation that he was privileged to witness . . . p. 258.

He goes so far as to deny that God is the Author of Scripture:

While Scripture claims unequivocally that God was the source of revelation and inspiration, it is interesting that nowhere does the Bible teach that God was its author. p. 203.

Quite naturally, such a conception has all kinds of serious consequences. There is a tendency in the book to deny some of the miracles. The miracle of the passage of Israel through the Red Sea, e.g., is a tradition inserted in the record by an editor. (p. 202.) There is also the rather natural consequence of raising scientific discoveries to a position of superior authority in relation to Scripture. (pp. 187, 188.) But most seriously, this whole conception leads to erroneous ideas concerning the canon of Scripture. The author argues against the canonicity of such books as Esther. He describes the canon as something flexible (pp. 262, 263), by which he means that there is room for the addition and subtraction of books in Scripture. He states that the apochryphal books have more value in some instances than the Scriptures:

Some portions of the apochryphal books appear to have greater worth than some sections of the canonical books . . . p. 260.

All of this, of course, means that one must separate the truth from error in Scripture by means of human judgment. (p. 282). But this only means that the author sets human judgment above the Scriptures, and ultimately, above God.

We have not treated all the data in this book, but our main concern is to demonstrate that the results of a rationalistic approach to Scripture, in distinction from the approach to faith, leads to the most serious consequences. The fact of the matter is that the inevitable results of such an approach is the loss of Scripture as the Word of God.

Let all this be a warning that we tamper with the truth of Scripture only at the peril of our soul's salvation. The child of God comes to Scripture in faith and confesses that the Scriptures are God's Word in all their parts before which he must bow in humble submission.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

God's Bow In God's Cloud

Rev. John A. Heys

In all of this earthly creation there is no phenomenon as beautiful as God's rainbow upon the background of His storm cloud. It has color like nothing else. It has such perfect symmetry. It is such a welcome sight after the thunder rumbles at a point beyond where it shook our homes just moments before, and after the brilliancy of the frightful lightning-flash has also been dimmed by the distance of the storm beyond our position of the moment.

Being a natural phenomenon it has a natural explanation. Man will tell you that it is caused by the infraction of the white light of the sun, as it passes through the falling rain of the receding storm. At such an angle does this light of the sun strike those drops and sheets of rain that the one white light of the sun is broken up into all the colors, and shades of colors, from red through violet. (We used to learn those seven colors by remembering the name of the fictitious boy, Roy G. Biv, and thus red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet.) Where the rain storms come from the east and recede into the west, we had the unique experience in 1967 of seeing a rainbow caused by the brilliant light of a full moon in the sparkingly clear atmosphere of Jamaica. The perfect arc was there. The colors were not brilliant, but more on the order of different shades of gray. But it was unmistakably a rainbow caused by the light of God's moon, reflecting the light of His sun. Four of us saw it; and it was no dream.

But, natural phenomenon that it is, and one that man can duplicate by sending up a spray of water in the bright sunlight, it nevertheless is God's sign, and thus God's speech to us, as well as it was to an amazed and entranced Noah and his family after the flood. They had never seen anything like this before; and we may believe that it was a most perfect and extremely brilliant rainbow at that, one that reached in a perfect arc from the earth to heaven and down again to the earth. We can only wonder at what went through the minds and souls of the family of eight when they saw this piece of beauty in God's creation that had such tremendous significance. For let it not

be forgotten that God explained that bow to them, and that before the flood they had never seen anything like it.

Being a sign it was also the speech of God. Also as a sign it was a visible manifestation of an invisible reality. It was that which man could see, and it spoke of that which the natural eye cannot see. It was (and is) a token of God's grace in the midst of a world in which His curse is still so clearly seen and sorely felt. And let it not be overlooked that God says to Noah and his family as He explains this rainbow, "And it shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud," Genesis 9:14. Plainly enough God is going to send His cloud again. The whole earth will not be covered with water. But there will be storms. Not always will it be a gentle cheering rain. There will be severe storms in which God will thunder, and wherein He will blow with winds before which man cannot stand. He will in these display His fierce wrath and speak of His curse upon the world because of sin. He is not going to bless all men. Besides His bow, which speaks of His love and mercy and grace, there will be fierce and violent demonstrations of His holy wrath. The two shall be in the world until He comes with the judgment of fire.

Two seeds are upon the earth; and God's dealings with them is different, even as these seeds are spiritual opposites. On the seed of the serpent His wrath and the curse will continue to rest. On the seed of the woman His mercy and grace in Christ will unwaveringly rest. That you must see in every rainbow; not only the beauty of His grace to His Church, but also His abiding wrath upon the world.

Here, too, in the rainbow you have a general "preaching" of a particular promise. It is all there for those who want to see the truth. The bow is in the cloud and never appears apart from it in this life. Soon there will be the sea of glass like crystal with no ripple of discontent and perfect peace between God and His people. That new creation will have no storms to disturb it. There will be no curse there or

sign of a curse. Heaven and earth will be united — as they are by the rainbow — as one realm far more beautiful than any earthly rainbow can be. All the shades, all the degrees, all the delights, the joys and wonders of God's grace will be seen in all that creation. The reality of that of which the rainbow is only a sign will be seen and enjoyed every moment of that everlasting life. But until that day that curse most assuredly will still be here in all its power. "Smile, God loves You" is a wicked lie that is not borne out by the works of the holy God every day in this creation. He preaches no covenant with all men in the rainbow. He promises no grace and blessing to all mankind. But exactly in the midst of all the curse, which still brings suffering and death and bereavement also to the believers, God says to His church in His rainbow, "Be of good cheer. I do love you. My grace unto you is exceedingly rich and colorful. I reach down in it to bless you. Look at my dark cloud, for it speaks of my holy wrath against My and your enemies. But fail not to see my bow, for it speaks of my grace to you."

And it does this exactly because it is the token or sign of His covenant of grace. It is in connection with telling Noah (verse 11 of Genesis 9) that He will establish his covenant with him and his seed that God gives this token in the sky. In the same sky that poured out such terrible devastation upon the first world, God now puts His bow that speaks of the covenant of grace.

That God will establish that covenant that Noah does not mean that God will *begin* a new covenant with Him. It means that He will *continue* His covenant with him and with his seed after him. Referring to Galatians 3:16, which speaks of Abraham rather than of Noah, we find that the Seed with Whom God establishes that covenant is Christ. For here, too, with Abraham it is the same covenant of grace that God made known to Adam immediately after his fall into sin. And the word establish does have the meaning of confirm. Thus the word is translated in Esther 9:29 and Ezekiel 13:6 among other passages of Holy Writ. It is one covenant of grace from paradise to the fulfillment in the day of Christ.

But, as we began to say, the rainbow was a particular promise that is preached to all mankind. It was not with Noah and *all* his seed. There is Canaan, the son of Ham, who is cursed. And this clearly indicates, since it is the work of an unchangeable God, that God did not have in mind all men when he said to those out of whom the whole human race would be born, "I will establish (confirm) my covenant with you, and with your seed after you," Genesis 9:9. There is that dark cloud, remember, which forms the background of the rainbow that

speaks of wrath and judgment (condemnation) at the same time that the bow speaks of grace and mercy.

And referring back again to Galatians 3:16, that Seed with Whom God establishes that covenant in both Noah and Abraham, is not Shem and Isaac but Christ. As the arc of the rainbow begins on the earth and reaches to the heavens and then returns to the earth, Christ, who was born on this earth of the virgin Mary, crucified and buried, rises to the heavenly heights where He now is, and returns at the end of time to confirm that covenant in its glorious fulfillment. And here, too, you have that dark cloud of God's terrible and holy wrath against sin for He comes *in judgment*. You and I can see and appreciate the beauty of the bow of the arch of Christ's descension into hell, ascension into heaven and return in glory at the end of time, only on the background of the awful judgment of God upon our sins. That is why Christ had to go down to hell for us, being one of us by a virgin birth, having the beginning of His human nature here on this earth, lifting it to heavenly glory through his resurrection and ascension and insuring a beautiful and glorious return with all the degrees of the glory of our salvation.

There is no pot of gold where the rainbow touches the earth, but there is a glorious salvation when Christ returns to this earth. Think about that return of Christ when you see that rainbow reach with its beauty to a point of this earth. Look at that dark background, those clouds that symbolize God's judgment upon sin; but do so appreciating the smile of His love that causes this life of His Son on our earth and descension into hell, His resurrection, ascension and return with glory for us.

A rainbow will not be seen except upon the background of clouds of a rainstorm. But a rainbow likewise will not be seen except there be the bright shining light of the sun. And God is that Light. It is His smile of love and approval upon us in Christ that brightens the dark night of sin for us and confirms His covenant friendship with us and with our seed.

And you and I must not simply stand in awe when we see such a rainbow — how often do we? — but we must also stand amazed at the faith of the Old Testament saints who lived in the day of the shadows. They saw so little in comparison with what has been revealed to us, and yet they enjoyed so much! They had no cross yet. For they had no Bethlehem yet. But in spite of all this they walked by faith and took God at His word. They trusted Him and never questioned His faithfulness nor His love. They with so little saw so much. We with so much, often see so little. They, living under the shadows, and in the shadows, saw richly what we in the day after the Light is come often see so weakly and meagerly.

Surely it was that grace of God that opened their eyes so that they could believe in a coming Christ. And it is that same grace of God that enables us to see the Christ Who is come. We ought never to forget that. The faith of the Old Testament saints who lived in the days of the shadows, and the New Testament saints who live in the year of our Lord have the same faith. The only difference is that the Old Testament believer looked for Christ to come and was sure that He would, while the New Testament saint looks at a Christ Who is come and is sure that He came and has ascended to God's right hand after making atonement for our sins.

Since that day when Noah and his family saw that first rainbow, countless thousands have seen God's bow in His cloud. It has always been and still is today

a general "preaching" of God concerning His covenant. Before the gospel shall have been preached to all nations, that sign will have been seen by all peoples, tongues and tribes. That they do not understand it as a sign of His covenant does not alter this fact. They have seen the sign. But the promise is only for some who see the sign of that covenant promise. That was true even of the eight who saw the first one. Only a comparatively short while after they saw this sign in the heavens the curse was pronounced upon Canaan, the son of Ham. And thus that promise, given by an unchangeable God, could not mean and did not mean *all* of his seed. The sign, indeed, is general, being displayed to all the peoples of the world in a most literal sense. The covenant is continued and confirmed only with those chosen in Christ, the Seed of Noah and of the Woman.

IN HIS FEAR

Two By Two?

Rev. D. H. Kuiper

As our churches become more and more engaged in mission work, this activity becomes increasingly a topic of conversation: among ministers, on Sunday evening visits between saints, even among the young people. Frequently questions arise concerning the methods that we presently employ and have employed, in Jamaica and in other places. The remark is even heard from time to time that one reason our mission efforts have been only meagerly successful is that we do not follow the Scriptural principle of sending out two missionaries to work the same field together. Therefore, the question to be answered is whether or not the Scriptures do indeed teach that the Church of Jesus Christ perform her missionary function through the labors of two or more missionaries. And in close connection with that, another question: Do the Scriptures teach this as a principle? That is, does working "two by two" on the mission field belong to fundamental doctrine and law as, for example, do the sacraments and the offices in the church? Our recently-returned missionary from Jamaica, Rev. G. C. Lubbers answers the question with an unequivocal "Yes." When his permission was obtained to record his answer here, it was pointed out

that this has long been his position. In the Acts of Synod, 1972, p. 78, we find in the Supplemental Report of the Mission Committee: "The Mission Committee received a letter from Rev. Lubbers, dated April 7, 1972, in which he stated, in part, "I do believe that Synod should be notified and instructed to face seriously the question of calling another missionary to the island; there should be no less than two ministers here. Grounds: 1. A missionary needs the spiritual and moral support of a fellow-missionary. Paul even had such a man. Christ sent out two by two." (Other grounds follow here, not pertinent to our subject.) The Mission Committee forwarded this request to Synod, the Committee of Pre-advice advised Synod to call another missionary for Jamaica on the first three grounds supplied by Rev. Lubbers, and the Synod decided to refer this matter to the Mission Committee for further advice and grounds. (Cf. 1972 Acts of Synod, Arts. 111, 122) No recommendation on this matter was made to the 1973 Synod, although we find in the Acts of this Synod that ministers were sent to Jamaica to help our missionary for approximately six months during the early part of 1973.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Before we examine Biblical passages that speak to this question, we want to call attention to some positions taken by our Synods in the past when this matter was brought before them. In fact, a little history of past years will prove interesting here.

1. In the Acts of Synod, 1946, p. 69, there is a Supplement IV that proposes "that the Mission Committee suggests to Synod to arrange for the calling of two home missionaries instead of one so that these brethren may labor together in this work." Five grounds are offered, the first of which is: "This is a sound Scriptural principle with respect to Mission labor. Cf. Luke 10:1, Acts 10:23, Acts 13:2, etc." (The interested reader will want to read the rest of the grounds.) In Articles 82 and 83 Synod decided to assure the Home Missionary of assistance in his labors by permitting the Mission Committee, in conjunction with the calling church, to ask the help of a fellow minister. This decision was thought to be of sufficient importance that it is incorporated into the Constitution of the Mission Committee (Cf. p. 44 of the Church Order Book.)

2. On pp. 60-61 of the Acts of the 1947 Synod, a committee of pre-advice again urged Synod to mandate the Mission Committee to call two missionaries to labor together in the work of home missions. This committee reminded Synod of the five grounds presented to the 1946 Synod (see above) and stated that to ask for the aid of another minister would never prove feasible. In Article 83 Synod decided "that the calling church call two missionaries to labor together in the work of home missions."

3. In September of 1947 Rev. W. Hofman and Rev. E. Knott accepted calls to be our home missionaries. After both missionaries labored for a time in Byron Center, Michigan, Rev. Hofman was sent to investigate prospects in Lynden, Washington, while Rev. Knott continued in Byron Center. (Cf. Acts of Synod 1948, pp. 24-26.) That these two men were separated by thousands of miles is further evident from the Acts of Synod 1949, p.14: "... that the Rev. Knott take up his residence in Lynden, Wash., to labor there and that Rev. W. Hofman reside in Ontario, Canada to begin work there . . ." This separation of missionaries was vehemently protested by the late Rev. Ophoff against First Grand Rapids, the calling church. (Cf. Acts of Synod 1949, pp. 24-47) First Consistory did not sustain him, but upon appealing to Classis East he was sustained by that body. Next, First Consistory appealed to Synod, and Synod expressed agreement with the decision of Classis East in sustaining the protest of Rev. Ophoff. Thus, at the end of the 1949 Synod, the Protestant Reformed Churches held to the position that

missionary labor ought to be conducted by two ministers working together, and that this was Scripturally and principally correct.

4. There is one more chapter to this history of missionary thought. The Mission Committee asked the 1952 Synod to go on record "that the mission committee be permitted to send out two missionaries, at such time as the Lord again gives us two missionaries in the field, either to work together or alone, according to the discretion of the mission committee in conjunction with the calling church." (Cf. Acts of Synod 1952, p. 43) Under grounds, the Mission Committee calls attention to some of the decisions listed above, as well as stating that there were many Scriptural instances when men were sent out alone. We will come back to the passages that are cited a little bit later. The committee of pre-advice urged Synod to adopt the above recommendation, which Synod did not decide to do. Rather an amendment was made to refer the Mission Committee to former decisions of Synod, to continue to operate under them, and to appoint a committee to study the Mission Committee Report and make recommendations to the 1953 Synod.

This study committee advised the 1953 Synod to adopt the request of the Mission Committee upon the grounds advanced, (Cf. Acts of Synod 1953, pps. 42, 43) and Synod did so.

Whatever conclusion is reached as to whether Scripture demands that we labor "two by two," it will have the support of at least one Synod of our churches. Of course, the decision of the last named Synod has the binding power.

EXAMINATION OF GROUNDS

We want to examine briefly the grounds offered by the study committee to discover whether they are of sufficient force to maintain our present policy and to quiet the fears of those in our midst who claim we are not altogether correct in our approach. It ought to be remembered that no one claims a man may not be sent out alone *ever*; that is, we are all agreed that there may be times when there simply aren't two men to go out. The point is, if there is one missionary, should the church stop calling for a second? What is the optimum, the Scriptural way? If the Lord gives us a home missionary soon, ought we immediately call another or would it be possible to let it remain there? The first grounds given by the study committee are those advanced by the Mission Committee in 1952. In the first place this ground states, "The Scriptural proof, cited in favor of having two missionaries labor side by side, has no intention of laying down this method as a rule for the church." Reference is made to Luke 10:1, Acts 10:23, and Acts 13:2. The very

fact that no explanation of these verses or their context is given means that the question is begged. What must be proved is simply stated. Take, for example, Luke 10:1, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come." Is this not normative for mission work? What about verses 2 and 11: "Therefore said he unto them, The harvest is truly great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into His harvest . . . Even the very dust of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." These thoughts are always thought to be valid for present labors.

Acts 10:23, "And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him" (to Cornelius), does not constitute proof one way or the other since these brethren are not designated as office-bearers. Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." This is, in all minds, the crucial text. In the first place we ought to remember this is found in the book of the Acts. In this significant book we find recorded the history of Pentecost; the rest of the contents of the book gives us not the acts of the apostles but those things which Jesus continued to do through His Spirit. Without great fanfare we find in chapter six the institution of the office of deacons. It is not literally stated that this is normative for the church for all time, yet we believe this to be so, mainly because the Spirit has been poured out in the church. That same Spirit speaks, mind you, in Acts 13:2, "Separate Me Barnabas and Paul for the work . . ." Acts 14:23 also gives us a church principle for all time: elders must be ordained in every church. Yet this is not stated in terms more binding than Acts 13:2. Our conclusion, tentative at this point, is that it is not sufficient to say simply that these texts do not constitute binding proof for the "two by two" principle. In the second place, the study committee reminds Synod that there

are many instances in Scripture where men were sent out alone. References made to the O.T. prophets, of course, are non-applicable since no one claims the church of the Old Dispensation did mission work in the sense of the New. The church was restricted to national Israel. The other references of Philip being sent to Samaria, to the Ethiopian, to other cities (Acts 8) and of Peter and Barnabas laboring alone for a while have some weight, although it ought to be remembered that Philip seems to have been sent to confront a single man, and Barnabas was on the way to join Paul.

The next ground offered by the study committee is that our churches have received a rich blessing during the time one man labored alone. The examples of Rev. H. Hoeksema and Rev. Kok are cited. Could there have been success if a principle of Scripture was violated? No one denies that in times of stress and trouble, when a supply of men is very limited, the Lord can and will use an individual man. But is this optimum, and ought this to be always followed? The next ground is also a simple practical matter: "If it is a Scriptural principle that there must always be two men working side by side in mission activity, then our present missionary must be barred from doing any more such work until we can obtain a missionary to labor with him." Again, if we call several and only get one, he ought to get to work in the field, but then could we not continue to call others? And finally, the fourth ground again begs the question badly: "The decision of 1949 does not, in practice, give the Mission Committee the permission it now requests." That is no ground!

As far as the grounds of 1953 are concerned, at best they are indecisive, present little Scripture and no explanation, and contain practical arguments that are not overwhelming. The result is that some members of our churches hold to the decision of 1949, some to 1953, and the latter decision is binding as far as our mission labors are concerned.

The next time, the Lord willing, we hope to examine closely various Scriptural passages as well as to face some of the practical problems that a lone messenger faces.

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CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to begin studies this fall in either the pre-seminary or seminary department of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches are requested to appear before the Theological School Committee at its meeting to be held on Friday, March 29, 1974, at 7:30 P.M. in the Theological School Building, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418.

Pre-seminary Department:

Permission to pursue the pre-seminary course of study shall be granted by the Theological School Committee. A transcript of grades from High School and College (if any), a letter of testimony from a student's pastor or consistory, and a certificate of health from a reputable physician shall be submitted.

Seminary Department:

Permission to pursue the Theological course in the seminary shall be

granted by the Synod, upon recommendation of the Theological School Committee, to such an aspirant only who comes supplied with a testimonial of his consistory that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith and upright in walk, and also a certificate from a reputable physician showing him to be in good health.

A complete high school education and the equivalent of a four year (125 hour) college education are required for entrance into the seminary department. Moreover, each entrant into this department must produce evidence that he has credit for the required college courses.*

In the event you cannot be present at this meeting, please notify the undersigned secretary of your intentions, prior to the meeting. Mail all correspondence to the Theological School.

*Requirements are listed in the school bulletin, available from the school.
Richard H. Teitsma, Secretary

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Dick Dykstra, in the death of her beloved husband, MR. DICK DYKSTRA.

May the God of all grace comfort the sister and her family with the hope of eternal salvation for them who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mrs. T. Newhof Sr., Pres.
Mrs. C. Pastoor, Secy.

Change of Address

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
4975 Ivanrest Ave., S.W.
Grandville, Mich. 49418

Dedication Program Tapes

A 90-minute recording of the Seminary Dedication Program may be obtained for \$3.00 by writing to the business office, P.O. Box 6064, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Please note whether you want a cassette tape or a reel-to-reel tape.

NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session, the Lord willing, on April 3, 1974 in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated in this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least ten days prior to the convening of this session.

Jon Huiskens
Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!!

The Free Christian School of Edgerton, Minnesota, will have an opening for the 1974-75 school year. A teacher for the lower grades is needed. Those interested, contact Allen Brummel, R.R. 1, Box 115, Edgerton, MN 56128.

NOTICE!!!

The Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School will be in need of a teacher for the 1974-75 term. Those interested in teaching the lower grades at this school should contact Mr. Max H. Moore, 707 N. County Road, Loveland, CO 80537.

News From Our Churches

REPORT OF CLASSIS WEST

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches met in Doon, Iowa on February 6. The Classis met a month earlier than the date originally scheduled, in order to examine the then Cand. M. Hoeksema, as was requested by the Ebenezer Church of Forbes, North Dakota. Nine ministers and thirteen elders represented the eleven churches of Classis West. Three ministers from the East, Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. J. Heys, and Rev. G. Van Baren, attended Classis as delegates ad examina. Rev. R. Moore ably presided over this Classis.

The main work of Classis was the examination of Mark Hoeksema, who had accepted the call to our Forbes Church. Cand. Hoeksema preached the required sermon, before the delegates of Classis, at a special worship service of the Doon congregation on the evening before Classis. The sermon was on Romans 1:16. In accordance with the requirements of the decisions appended to Article 4 of the Church Order, Classis examined the candidate in dogmatics, in his practical qualifications, in his knowledge of Holy Scripture, in his knowledge of the confessions, and in controversy, as well as in his ability to preach. With the concurring advice of the delegates ad examina, Classis approved the examination and advised Forbes to proceed with Cand. Hoeksema's ordination. Classis expressed its heartfelt thanks to God for the gift of another pastor to His Church and for the gift of a seminary where young men are trained to be capable, faithful undershepherds of Christ. May God bless this young servant and make his ministry fruitful.

The Reading Sermon Committee reported that few churches are requesting reading sermons, and that many reading sermons are missing, because churches

have not returned them after using them. Churches that have these reading sermons are asked to return them to the committee. Our Edgerton consistory is in charge of these sermons.

Classis also heard reports from its Classical Committee, its Taped Sermon Committee, the Stated Clerk, the Church Visitors, and the Delegates ad examina.

Attached to the Stated Clerk's report was a letter to Classis from Mr. L. Regnerus, clerk of the consistory of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church. This letter informed Classis that all of the properties of Oak Lawn had been sold. The assets of the church, in the amount of \$37,786.19, were divided equally among three funds in the Protestant Reformed denomination: the R.F.P.A., Domestic Missions, and the Emeritus Fund. The letter also stated that the necessary legal steps had been taken to disband the congregation and dissolve the corporation. Classis approved Oak Lawn's distribution of its money, and sent the information to Synod.

Loveland was given classical appointments: March 17, 24, 31 - Miersma; April 21, 28 - Kuiper; May 5, 12, 19 - Hoeksema; June 2, 9, 16 - Moore. Rev. Miersma was appointed counselor of Loveland.

Classis granted subsidy to Edgerton, Isabel, Loveland, Lynden, Pella, and Randolph. Forbes is to send its request to Synod through the Classical Committee of Classis West.

Classis decided to revise its classical diploma in conformity with the revision recently made by Classis East.

STUDENT AID APPLICATIONS

Pre-seminary or seminary students who intend to enter the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches in the 1974-75 Term and who are in need of financial aid are requested to contact:

Mr. Theodore Engelsma,
2333 Clyde Park Ave., S.W.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49509

or

Mr. Gerrit Pipe,
1463 Ardmore, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

ATTENTION!!

SECRETARIES AND CLERKS!

Reports of standing and special committees of Synod must be submitted to the undersigned by April 15 if they are to be included in the Synodical Agenda. These reports ought to be typewritten; if lengthy, please follow standard outline form for easy reference.

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

Forbes' request that it be permitted to ask for collections in the churches of the West to help pay for its new parsonage (a new mobile home) was granted. The request was sent to Synod for approval as regards the churches of the East.

In its evening session, Classis conducted elections. The results were the following.

Rev. J. Kortering was elected to the Classical Committee.

Rev. G. Lanting was chosen as *primus* delegate ad examina; Rev. R. Miersma and Rev. W. Bekkering were chosen as *secundi* delegates ad examina.

Chosen as church visitors were Rev. J. Kortering and Rev. G. Lanting.

The ministers elected as delegates to Synod are: D. Engelsma, J. Kortering, D. Kuiper, and G. Lanting. Their alternates are: W. Bekkering, M. Kamps, R. Miersma, and R. Moore.

The elder delegates to Synod are: E. Bruinsma (Loveland), E. Gritters (Hull), J. Hoekstra (Hull), and H. Huisken (Edgerton). Their alternates are: A. Hendriks (Edgerton), B. Menninga (Pella), D. Rolffs (Pella), and H. Vander Veen (Lynden).

The cost of this Classis was \$2,303.05.

The next meeting of Classis will be held in Randolph, Wisconsin on September 4, 1974, the Lord willing.

Rev. David Engelsma,
Stated Clerk
Classis West

On Tuesday afternoon, before Classis, the delegates and officebearers from the area attended a conference on the office of the deacon. Rev. R. Moore gave a paper on the subject of the offerings taken in our worship service. An animated discussion followed. The men decided to pursue the subject of the diaconate at a later conference. It was suggested that the conference be longer, perhaps two days, and that deacons be invited to attend. How such arrangements can be made remains a mystery as yet; suggestions are welcome. Rev. W. Bekkering was appointed to serve with Rev. Engelsma as the committee on conferences.

D.E.

THE STANDARD BEARER

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