

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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**“Preaching and Historical-Critical Research”**

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**Who In The World**

**The Pilgrim and Marriage**

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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**Editorial Policy:** Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

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Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

**Subscription Policy:** Subscription price, \$7.00 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

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## Meditation

## The Child and Lord of the Church

Rev. M. Schipper

*“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”*

Revelation 12:5.

And she brought forth a man child!

She was the woman, according to the preceding context, which the seer of Patmos beheld in ecstatic vision as constituting the first of two great wonders or signs.

He beheld a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried,

travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

The other great sign the apostle was given to see in heaven was relative to a great red dragon. In appearance the dragon was revealed to him as having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns were upon his heads. And concerning him the apostle observed two things: that with his tail he drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to



the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Moreover, the seer observes that after the child was born, who was to rule the nations with a rod of iron, God took Him to heaven and to His throne; while the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

What can all this symbolism mean? For that we have to deal here with symbolism is very plain!

Briefly, the woman is the church of the old dispensation, extending from the dawn of history and reaching over into the new dispensation until the end of history.

Indeed, she appeared gloriously!

Clothed with the righteousness of God!

Crowned with sovereign election!

For such is the implication and significance of the descriptive appearance as the apostle beholds her in his vision.

That the woman was great with child, was due to the fact that she had conceived in the mother promise, expressed to Satan in the presence of our first parents, immediately after the fall in Paradise. All through the old dispensation the church was pregnant due to this conception. Consequently, every believing mother in the line of the covenant hopefully brought forth her children in anticipation of the promise and its fulfillment; even Eve, who with the birth of her first-born declared: "I have gotten a man from the Lord." We know, however, that none of the faithful could produce Him, for the promised child was not to be born by the will of man, but through a wonder of grace. The pregnant woman, culminates in a virgin, whose conception was of the Holy Ghost, and the man child she brought forth was the Son of God.

Great was also the appearance of the great red dragon!

With his seven heads and seven crowns he appears as the head of the antichristian world power. This is indicated in the number seven, a number he borrows from the church; and the number ten with the horns, — symbol of the fulness of power. While he opposes the woman and her seed, he nevertheless appears as the church, for to deceive. Important it is, however, to observe that he appears as the dragon. Back of the antichristian power is the devil and Satan, who, when he fell from his original high estate in the angelic world, dragged with him other angels in his rebellion, which with him stand together in their evil purpose to destroy, if possible, the church and her holy seed.

All through the old dispensation the dragon stood before the woman which was to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. This we see in the case of Cain and Abel; and before the flood, in the world versus Noah. Later we see this again when

Pharaoh of Egypt sought to extinguish the seed in the slaughter of the Israelitish infant males; and in the time of Esther, when Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, sought to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom of Ahasuerus. This onslaught culminates in the edict of Herod the Great to slay all the male children of Bethlehem, in the hope of snuffing out the life of the Christ-child. "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not," as Jeremiah the prophet had predicted. But the man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, is kept safely; and the dragon prevailed not to exterminate Him.

Her child was caught up unto God!

After He had accomplished all God's good pleasure in the redemption of His people!

Oh, surely, for a small moment it appeared that the devil had succeeded when, through wicked hands he had inspired men to nail Him to the accursed tree! When on the cross He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, it seemed that the dragon had triumphed. But the man child escaped out of his hands when He commended His spirit unto God Who gave it; and God raised Him up from the dead, and He ascended unto the right hand of the Most High. On that cross, in His death and resurrection, He sealed the destruction of the dragon and his cohorts. Consequently, not the dragon but the man child holds the sceptre with which He rules over all the nations with the rod of iron.

And the woman, the church of Christ, is prepared a place in the world, where God feeds her through His Word and Spirit, and where she must remain to the end of this present dispensation.

That is the meaning and significance of the vision of the seer!

Out of all this it must be noted that the text speaks of the child of the church!

The church is mother!

Not Eve, nor the Virgin Mary, as some would interpret! A tie to Eve, or to Mary does not save us; even though it is true that the man child was borne by them.

And the child the church brought forth is at the same time the Saviour of the Church!

Wonder of wonders! While the church bears the threats of the dragon, the man child bears away her sin and guilt!

Notice, too, that not only is He the church's child, but also the church's Lord!

Caught up is He into the highest heavens!

Unto God and to His throne!

From God He came, and unto God He returns!

Not, however, before He had first made restitution for all our sins; brought an atoning sacrifice that did satisfy God's justice, and merit for us a righteousness wherewith we can now appear before God as those



who have no sin and guilt. Nor before He had first overcome Satan and his hosts, destroyed the power of death and the grave.

Only then did God raise Him up from the dead, and exalt Him to His right hand.

Glorious ascension!

Clothed with power, dominion, and majesty!

Into His hand is placed the rod of iron wherewith He rules over all the nations. Whereas the kings of the earth had set themselves, and the rulers had taken counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying: Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens laughed at them, and the Lord held them in derision. He it is Who hath set His King, and given all the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Though they may rage, they imagine only a vain thing when they cry: Let us break their bands asunder; for He must reign over them, yea, with a rod of iron shall he bring them into obeisance.

So, also, the child of the church becomes Lord over His church!

Oh, yes, He is indeed Lord over all things, but as Lord of His church!

God hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

Under His lordship the church receives blessed advantages!

At God's right hand He ever liveth and maketh intercession for us. He is our advocate with the Father, and constantly pleads our case for us.

Flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone is He Who resides in glory, and is become the pledge also of our glory.

From thence also He sends forth His Spirit as an earnest into our hearts, applying unto His church all the graces of salvation He has merited for us.

As glorious Head of His church, and Governor over all, He makes all things to be subservient unto our final and glorious salvation.

By His power and majesty He defends and preserves His church over against all her enemies.

Safe she is therefore, though she is yet in the wilderness of this world. Here she is fed and nourished by His Word, His Spirit, and His grace. Nothing can separate her from His love.

And while the church is yet in the world, He is busy preparing for her a place. For God has willed to tabernacle with His people forever. Of this the Lord reminded us when He said: In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And forget it not, — that place shall not be prepared for you, until you also are prepared for that place.

Consequently, that glorified man child, that Lord of the church as the right hand of the throne of God, as an anchor of hope draws us unto Himself. All our expectation is vested in Him.

Consequently, too, the prayer constantly whelms up in the heart and over the lips of the believing and hoping church:

Come, Lord Jesus, yea come quickly!

## Editorial

# "Preaching and Historical-Critical Research"

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

The above is the title of the inaugural oration of Prof. Dr. Klaas Runia at the time of his installation as professor of practical theology at the Theological School in Kampen, The Netherlands. This oration received more than passing notice in some of the church papers; and it has now been published as one of the series of publications from Kampen known as the *Kamper Cahiers*. This editorial comment will serve at the same time as a review of this booklet which was sent to us by the publisher, J. H. Kok, of Kampen.

We are interested in this publication for several reasons. In the first place, we are interested because we became acquainted with the views of Dr. Runia in connection with the controversy in Australasia when

he expressed his views about Scripture, and particularly about Genesis 1-3, at the time when he was professor at Geelong Theological College in Australia. At that time, you will recall, we were critical of the views of Dr. Runia; and now his inaugural oration is on a subject very intimately connected with his view of Scripture, so that we should be able to test our former criticism. In the second place, we are interested because of the fact that this subject is also connected with much of the controversy — if such it can be called — that is presently going on in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* concerning the authority and infallibility of Scripture. It was claimed by some, when Dr. Runia received and accepted an appointment to



Kampen, that this was the appointment of a conservative and that Dr. Runia would strengthen the so-called conservative cause in The Netherlands. This address should give some indication whether this expectation was correct or not. In the third place, we are interested because of the fact that also in this country the whole question of Scripture, and particularly of historical-critical research, is at issue in more than one denomination. This is, in fact, from a technical hermeneutical point of view *the issue* in all the debate going on about the authority and infallibility of Holy Scripture. This is true, for example, in the Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod), as is plain from the many reports in *Christian News* concerning Concordia Seminary. This is at bottom the issue, I believe, in the current debate in the Christian Reformed Church about Report 36, on the Nature and Extent of the Authority of Scripture. Hence, it is worth our while — let alone the fact that this subject is of considerable interest and value in itself — to give our attention to this published address of Dr. Runia.

In the main, we would characterize Dr. Runia's oration as an attempt to find a place for historical-critical research of the Bible in a Reformed and orthodox view of Scripture. To us, this is a hopeless attempt. It is an attempt to reconcile what is fundamentally irreconcilable. Scripture and historical-critical research mix like fire and water. But this is also a very dangerous and deceptive attempt. In the main, this is what has been going on in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* for some time; theologians have assumed a critical stance over against Scripture, and have principally adopted the methods and the views of so-called higher criticism, meanwhile claiming that these are consistent with a Reformed view of the inspiration, authority, and infallibility of the Word of God. This has been the problem with regard to Holy Scripture in the case of such men as Kuitert, Baarda, and Koole. And, of course, the more one leaves the impression of a Reformed and orthodox view of Holy Scripture, emphasizing apparently strongly that Scripture is the Word of God, the more inconsistent, but also the more deceptive and dangerous is the attempt nevertheless to find a place for the historical-critical method. This, we believe, is characteristic of Dr. Runia's inaugural address. To us, the attempt of Dr. Runia is not only altogether inconsistent, as we hope to show; but it is also the more dangerous because he attempts to leave the impression that he stands in the tradition of the Reformers and wants to maintain Scripture as the Word of God, though he finds a place for the historical-critical method. Instead, therefore, of standing without compromise in the line of Luther and Calvin, he leaves the impression of doing so while he nevertheless departs in a very subtle manner, but in a fundamental respect. Personally, we have more respect

for a man who forthrightly adopts the position of higher criticism than for one who claims to reject it, but nevertheless finds a place for its methods.

But let us take a look at Runia's position.

Dr. Runia begins by calling attention correctly to the emphasis of the reformers upon preaching, and that, too, preaching of the Word of God, according to the Scriptures. He next calls attention to the fact that today on every hand this traditional reformation vision of the preaching is no longer shared, and that it is maintained by the critics that it is no longer possible. Moreover, thus he explains, the critics maintain that it is no longer possible because the reformers' principle of Scripture can no longer be maintained. He refers in this connection especially to Wolfhart Pannenberg, who teaches that there is a two-fold gap for modern theologians, which distinguishes them from the Reformers: in the first place, a gap between the New Testament documents and the actual history of which they testify; and, in the second place, between the documents and our present situation. Runia points out, further, that if you ask the critics what had happened since the reformation that makes the modern theological situation so totally different, their answer is: the rise of a new historical mode of thinking and, consequently, the rise of historical-critical research of the Bible.

After tracing the rise and development of historical criticism, Runia makes the point that the Reformed theologian also has something to do with all this. He points out that for a long time in Reformed circles there was sharp opposition against historical-critical research and that this opposition was also quite understandable because especially in the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century this research was characterized by a purely rationalistic approach to Scripture. Nevertheless, appealing to Berkouwer, he points out that even Bavinck and Grosheide found a possibility of true criticism which respects the nature of Holy Scripture. But he goes on to state that it cannot be denied that in recent years (he is speaking about Reformed circles) there has been a much greater openness for critical questions than the previous generation thought possible (page 9). This is undoubtedly connected with the fact that in recent years we have come more deeply under the impression of what Berkouwer calls the "humanness of Scripture." "We have learned better to see that God indeed speaks to us *in* human words and that therefore historical-critical research is 'legitimate and necessary.'" Thus Runia, quoting Berkouwer. Nor, according to Runia is this a typically Reformed matter; one finds the same development, for example, also among the 'Evangelicals' in the English speaking world and also in Roman Catholic theology.

This is a rather critical juncture in Runia's address. In a way, it is the turning point of the entire address,



both from the point of view of the fact that here Runia introduces the element of the so-called "humanness" of Holy Scripture, without which it is absolutely impossible to speak of historical-critical research, and also from the viewpoint of the fact that in a footnote he attempts to make plain what he means by "criticism" in a good sense. The footnote reads (I translate the Dutch portion):

The word 'criticism' itself is, of course, heavily loaded historically and for many includes the idea of standing critically *above* Scripture and critically sifting within the Scriptures, whereby the researcher determines what is and what is not God's Word. In this sense the word functions in the well-known combination of Scripture and criticism in the term 'Scripture-criticism.' When Grosheide speaks of 'true criticism,' he uses the word in its original meaning of judgment, evaluation. George E. Ladd means the same when he writes: "'Criticism,' as we would define the term, does not mean sitting in judgment on the Bible as the Word of God. Criticism means making intelligent judgments about historical, literary, textual, and philological questions which one must face in dealing with the Bible, in the light of all the available evidence, when one recognizes that the Word of God has come to men through the words of men in given historical situations." *The New Testament and Criticism*, 1967, 37.

This is also the manner in which we ourselves understand the word 'criticism' when we speak in this oration of the legitimacy of historical-critical research. Cf. also Berkouwer, who emphatically rejects the *prokrima*, *op. cit.* 427.

This is a crucial point in Runia's position.

In the first place, we should note that the entire position hinges on the recognition of an alleged "humanness" of Scripture. This can only mean that there is indeed an element, an aspect, a side of Scripture, which *can* be subjected to criticism. This is a dualistic view of Scripture, not in harmony with the

organic conception of inspiration — although I am well aware that organic inspiration has frequently been incorrectly reduced to this two-factor, two-element (divine and human) characterization of Scripture.

In the second place, we should note that for all the attempt to distinguish this allegedly legitimate idea of the term "criticism" from illegitimate criticism, the effort fails. It is a simple fact that according to the very term, first of all, the idea is that of *judgment*. This implies the idea of a judge, one who sits above the Scriptures and passes judgment upon them. This becomes very plain from the last sentence of the quotation from Ladd: "Criticism means making intelligent judgments . . . in the light of all the available evidence, when one recognizes that the Word of God has come to men through the words of men in given historical situations." Over against all this, I insist that there is only one "judge," or "critic," of Scripture, namely, *Scripture itself*. As soon as you depart, in any sense, from the principle which the Reformers always strongly insisted upon, *that Scripture is its own interpreter*, be it ever so mildly, you have principally joined the camp of the higher critics and set yourself up as a judge over Scripture. As soon as "all the available evidence" includes *outside evidence*, evidence other than Scripture itself, you have acknowledged the existence of a critical standard to which Scripture does, or does not, conform.

And if, in that case, you attempt, as Runia does in a measure, to cling to the truth of Scripture as the Word of God and to allow for criticism, you have a contradictory position. The result can only be a continual erosion of Holy Scripture until you finally have nothing left, but have been forced to concede everything to the critics!

This becomes clearer in the remainder of Runia's address, which we will discuss in the next issue, the Lord willing.

## All Around Us

# Who In The World

Prof. H. Hanko

The title of this article is the title of a book published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. It is a book which is edited by Clifford Christians, Earl J. Schipper and Wesley Smedes, but is the result of the work of a large number of contributors who wrote papers on the subjects covered in the book. It is available in paperback for \$1.95.

The occasion for the book is "Key '73," a cooperative effort on the part of 125 denominations and Christian agencies to join together in a massive

evangelistic thrust during the year 1973.

That our readers may have some idea of what "Key '73" is all about, we quote from *The Sower*.

How did it start?

Key '73 is a direct result of an editorial in "Christianity Today," written by Dr. C. F. Henry calling evangelical Christians to unite in evangelism. As a result of that editorial, several prominent Christians began to meet together to lay plans for a historic cooperative evangelistic effort. Key '73 was born in those meetings.



The theme of Key '73?

Key '73 has adopted this theme: Calling our continent to Christ. The theme text is: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever (Hebrews 13:8).

Who belongs to Key '73?

Membership is open to all denominations and agencies desiring to participate. At present there are approximately 90 denominations and 30 agencies which have joined the movement. Many more are expected to join during the latter part of 1972. Membership is subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

The purpose of Key '73?

The purpose of Key '73 shall be to provide a means whereby Christians of all denominations and groups may cooperate in a simultaneous task of communicating the message and the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the United States and Canada, with particular emphasis during the year 1973 using the slogan and symbol "Key '73."

How is Key '73 organized?

The Key '73 organizational structure is minimal. The Central Committee, consisting of one representative from each participating denomination or group, is the decision-making body. The 15-member Executive Committee elected by the Central Committee is charged with interim action. . . .

It is apparent that the large number of denominations participating means that widely divergent church groups are banded together in this effort. Salvation Army is one such organization. Campus Crusade for Christ is another. Pentecostals and Mennonites are also participating. In fact, at this point three Roman Catholic dioceses in this country have officially decided to take part in the program.

The Christian Reformed Church is also a part of the program. Hence, this book.

As an explanation for such diverse participation, the following is given as stated in *Christian News*.

Participants may function ecumenically or separately; local areas and individual congregations will determine their activities to a large degree.

"No denomination is called to affirm the theology or methodology of any other participant," according to Dr. Thomas F. Zimmerman, chairman of the "Key '73" executive committee and head of the Assemblies of God.

"The participating denominations and groups are involved at a variety of levels. While some are encouraging cooperative activities, others are saying they will participate in only certain segments of the program calendar and only by themselves."

As far as this "program calendar" is concerned, we quote the following from *The Banner*.

Evangelism Thrust (the name given to the program insofar as the Christian Reformed Church intends to participate. H.H.) guides a church through four phases: 1) self-study, 2) setting goals, 3) working for goals, and 4) review and evaluation. Now these four steps are simply ways to help a church answer the

very basic questions — Who are we as God's redeemed people in today's world? Where do we believe God wants us to be (what goals)? How, with our resources and gifts, can we achieve these goals? And in review, what can we learn from our successes and failures to help us be more effective witnesses?

Now put those together and you have the Thrust strategy.

— Phase 1 is a three-month self-study.

— Phase 2 is a month for setting goals (December).

— Phase 3 is a six-month period to work for evangelism goals (January-June).

— Phase 4 is a review and evaluation (May or June).

The question will inevitably arise: Is the Protestant Reformed denomination participating in this program in any way? And if not, why not? This article is intended to be an answer to that question although it must be understood that the matter has never been officially before our synod; and that, therefore, the views expressed here are mine.

This article is really a book review because the book *Who In The World* was sent to our magazine for review. But an adequate review must, of necessity, say something about the whole program.

I know that there are some difficulties in objecting to a program of this nature. The difficulties are not so much in discovering what is wrong with such a program: the objections seem to me to lie on the surface and to be clear to anyone who wants to be Reformed. Rather the trouble is that in today's ecclesiastical world, anyone who is opposed to such a program seems to be putting himself into a category of people who are opposed to motherhood and apple pie. To raise objections is automatically to invite criticism. How can anyone be opposed to such a noble endeavor as evangelism? Is not the evangelizing of the North American continent an eminently desirable goal? Can you in good conscience set your opinions over against the collective wisdom of over 100 denominations?

It would, however, be a dereliction of duty to be silent. The program is a travesty of all that Scripture calls the Church to do in her missionary efforts. For the sake of the truth of God it must be done.

While a great deal of my criticism of the program must be made in connection with the book *Who In The World*, nevertheless, there are a couple of remarks about the program itself which ought to be said first of all.

In the first place, and most glaringly, it is evident that the program is based on an entirely anti-Scriptural ecumenism. It seems to me a thing incredible that almost all denominations in the United States and Canada which in any way call themselves "Christian" can participate together and cooperate with each other in this program. This is ecumenicity at its worst.

The objection may be raised that each denomination is permitted to participate in the program to the extent



that it desires; and that no one denomination need subscribe either to the views or to the methodology of any other denomination; but the fact remains that there is cooperation. And cooperation implies, of necessity, approval.

This ought to be plain. If I can cooperate with the United Methodist Church or with the Salvation Army in such mass evangelism, then it seems clear that the very least I am saying is this: these groups are able to perform evangelism in the true Scriptural sense. They are able to bring the gospel and the truth of the gospel to the unbeliever. And I, in cooperating with them, approve of the gospel which they bring and the content of that gospel which they proclaim.

Perhaps an example will make this point. I may desire to raise a large amount of money for the Cancer Fund. To do this, I enlist the aid of the Mafia. I cooperate with them in this venture and say before all the world: I and the Mafia are raising money for the Cancer Fund. I explicitly disavow the philosophy of the Mafia and I disassociate myself from their "methodology." But I ask no questions. If they choose to raise such money by means of extortion, murder, robbery, that is their business and I shall not inquire into their methods. It is sufficient that we are cooperating together. Any one would immediately have serious and legitimate questions about my moral standards. Cooperation necessarily implies some measure of approval. And especially in the case of evangelism, cooperation with the Roman Catholic Church means that I am saying that this Church is capable of doing evangelism.

And if the objection is raised that it will hardly do to compare the "methodology" of the Mafia with the "preaching" of apostatizing churches, then they need to be reminded of what Paul writes in Galatians 1:8, 9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

That is one objection.

And the results are obviously going to be disastrous.

When a denomination which is openly modern and liberal, which denies the blood of atonement and scorns the divinity of Christ performs "evangelism" and "saves some lost souls," I am obligated to recognize these efforts and acknowledge that they are the work of salvation even though these people might learn to their anger that they have been given a corrupted version of the truth of Scripture.

But another objection ought to be raised. That objection has to do with the whole matter of evangelism itself. I am not saying that evangelism is not the calling of the Church of Christ. But this is not the question. There is a startling lack of definition in all

the material available for distribution as to what, precisely, Scripture means by evangelism. There is no effort made to define carefully and clearly the Scriptural teachings on this subject. Not even the book *Who In The World* does this, as we shall see. Some of these questions which need answering we ought to mention. And they are not peripheral questions which have little to do with the program. They are basic questions which involve the heart of the matter.

What are these questions?

Well, first of all: Does the Scripture call us to do the kind of evangelism which this program envisions? Does the Bible tell us that it is the calling of the Church to go again and again to those generations which have apostatized to bring the gospel to them again and again and again? I know that this question involves other questions which have to do with the "individualism" of Arminianism overagainst the organic approach which the Scriptures take. And these questions are not always so easy to answer. But if the answer to these questions is *Yes*, then one wonders whether there ever comes an end to the work of evangelism. Does not Christ Himself ever finish His work? Does not Christ ever put a roof on His temple? After all, there are unbelieving people in so-called "Christian" countries until the Lord returns. Is there always a calling to evangelize these people? Is there always a number of souls which has to be saved from them? If so, then it seems that the work is not even finished when Christ comes back; and we may then well bemoan the fact that Christ returns when He does, for there are people who perish because Christ returned too soon.

And, in keeping with this! What does the truth of election and reprobation have to do with the work of evangelism? No one mentions these Scriptural and creedal doctrines. And no one seems to consider the importance of these truths in the work of evangelism.

And again, what is the relation between evangelism and the coming of Christ's kingdom. I ask this question because some of the reading in this field leaves one with the inescapable question: Must we look for the kingdom of Christ to be realized on this earth? Must we look for a mass conversion of North America (and the world)? Does Scripture hold out any hope of this? Much of the material put out seems to accept this possibility.

One would expect to find the answers to these and similar questions in *Who In The World*. One would expect to find some extensive treatment of, for example, the beautiful statement of the Heidelberg Catechism: "The Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith. . . ."

One would expect this because one knows that this book is written by members of one of the most



Reformed bodies participating in this program. Here adequate justification will surely be found. Here the answers to these questions will appear because this is a look at the program from Reformed perspective.

And this brings me to an actual review of the book itself.

But this must wait, the Lord willing, for our next issue.

## Question Box

# As To Acts 14..3

From a Grand Rapids reader I received two questions, one of which I will answer in this issue: "A question has arisen in our Men's Society as to the interpretation of Acts 14:3, 'Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the name of the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.' This is our question: to whom does the pronoun 'which' refer, to the apostles or to the Lord? And, in either case, what must we understand by 'gave testimony'?"

### Reply

According to good English grammar, the pronoun "which" can refer only to the Lord. And if there were any doubt in the English, the Greek leaves no doubt whatsoever. If you want the technical explanation, in the Greek there is no pronoun, but only a participle plainly modifies "the Lord."

The second part of this question is more significant. The expression is the term which often occurs in Scripture for "bearing witness." It refers to the fact that the Lord confirmed the apostles' speech by

granting "signs and wonders" to be done by them. The signs and wonders, just because they were wrought by the same apostles who spoke in the name of the Lord, confirmed the fact that their speech was indeed true. I think it is especially significant that the text here speaks of *signs and wonders*. The idea is not merely that these miracles confirmed the apostles' speech by the fact that they were marvellous works, obviously of divine origin and power. But they were marvellous works, wonders, which were at the same time *signs*. Now a sign is a visible manifestation of the in itself invisible wonder of grace. In other words, these miracles were the breaking through of the wonder of grace in the darkness of our misery and death, and as such they pointed to *the* wonder of grace, by which God in Christ saves His people from sin and death and raises them unto everlasting life and glory. As such, these "signs and wonders" tangibly bore testimony – not only by their obviously divine character but also by their *significance* – to the apostles' preaching of the gospel.

## News Feature

# News From The United Kingdom

*Rev. Stanley R. Baxter*

One of the main ways in which the Lord has been pleased to promote interest in the Reformed faith is through Ministerial Conferences. There have been a number of these held in recent weeks, and others, both large and small, are, D.V., being held in the future.

The most famous conference is arranged every year at College Hall, University of Leicester, by the Banner of Truth Trust. This year's conference had a good American flavor, with a touch of Scot added to it. Our main speakers were the Rev. Albert Martin, of New Jersey, a Reformed Baptist; Rev. Dr. J. R. de Witt, of

South Carolina, a Southern Presbyterian; and Rev. Donald MacLeod, M.A., of the Free Church of Scotland. The Rev. W. J. Grier, of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland was the Chairman for most sessions. Prof. John Murray was unable to be present at the conference and was greatly missed. The subjects covered were as follows:

"Preaching the Reformed Faith," by Dr. de Witt;

"The Minister as Father and Husband," by Rev. A. Martin;

"Sanctification," by Rev. Donald MacLeod.



For good measure, the Rev. Iain Murray, B.A., read a paper on "Robert L. Dabney." There were stimulating times of discussion held, and rich fellowship in the Gospel. There were over 160 ministers, missionaries, and students in residence, as well as a number of day visitors. Do continue to pray for the work of the Banner of Truth Trust, as it will be moving its main base from London to Scotland. Although, of course the Trust have very good reasons for their move, it will be a great loss to the Reformed cause in England, where the Trust has provided a center of interest for the Reformed Faith. The Trust is also purchasing the assets and taking direct oversight of the Carlisle, Pennsylvania office of Puritan Publications, thus extending its international work.

In addition to the main conference at Leicester, the English Reformed Fellowship has held a number of evening meetings; the latest one was held in April, and the subject was a discussion on "Church Membership and Baptism," led by the Chairman (Rev. Murdo MacLeod, M.A.) and the secretary (Rev. Stanley R. Baxter) of the Fellowship. The next evening meeting will be held in June, and the Rev. Donald MacLeod of the Free Church of Scotland will speak on "The Doctrine of the Church." At the Annual Conference, to be held at the Welsh Church, Chiltern Street, London on the 7th of October this year, the subject will be on "Mission" and two papers will be read by Rev. Paul D. L. Avis, "The Reformers and Mission" and the Rev. Stanley R. Baxter, "The Reformed Faith and Mission."

In January of next year the Carey Conference will be held. This is a conference of Reformed Baptists in England; and they will, D.V., be meeting in Liverpool. Among other things they will be discussing the relationship of the Westminster Confession to the Baptist Confession of 1689. These Baptist brethren hold to a very strong Confessional position. Full details of this conference and the work of Reformed Baptists can be obtained from Pastor Errol Hulse.

There has been much heart searching among Evangelical brethren in membership of the Baptist

Union of Great Britain and Ireland over the heretical views of one of their College Principals, the Rev. Michael Taylor. Dr. Taylor denied the essential Deity of our Lord at last year's Union Assembly. One of the results of this has been that at a meeting held in the famous Metropolitan Tabernacle over 100 delegates gathered together to plan the formation of an Association of Evangelical Churches. This meeting decided upon a doctrinal basis, and passed a resolution convening a special assembly at which the new Association would be formed. Another resolution declaring the following aims was passed:

1) That the formation of this Association be for the purpose of affording its members one means of becoming better acquainted with each other so as to encourage one another in the faith and to stimulate brotherly love, practical aid, and zealous cooperation in the cause of Christ both in Britain and overseas;

2) That this Society disclaims all manner of superiority and superintendence over the Churches; or any authority of power, to impose anything upon their faith and practice; their sole intention is to be helpers together one of another in promoting the common cause of Evangelical Christianity and the interests of the member churches; and that in the light of this we agree that the "organization" of this Association be as loose and simple as possible. We further recognize that, whatever its formal constitution may be, only the continuing work of the Holy Spirit can enable it to remain faithful in practice to the doctrines and principles.

While many will be praying for these brethren, it is to be regretted that they do not seem willing to have adopted a Confessional basis, and that in practice this will be a mixture of Calvinistic and Arminian Evangelical Baptists. This being so, there would appear to be already present the germ that can in the future bring about the same position as is at present within the Baptist Union.

We value the prayers of all our friends as we continue to seek to commend the Reformed Faith to others.

## Contribution..

# In Appreciation

Dear Editor:

In the role of a faithful reader of the *Standard Bearer* I beg of you a little space to thank the writers of the various rubrics and feature articles in your priceless magazine. In the April 15 issue, which I have at hand, I found reasons for appreciation: in Rev. Schipper leading us in the meditation of our "change"

in the last moment of time; for the editor's warning against the dangers of academic freedom which lead to heresies; for Rev. Harbach's inimitable phraseology, "like a titanic, wrap-around, three-dimensional television screen with the volume turned up full, clearly reveal the invisible things of God by the things that are made," as he directs our attention to the



powerful witness found in Psalm 19:1, 2; for Rev. Veldman's contemplation of the doctrines of the church which declare that God requires of us a general preaching of a particular promise; for Rev. Hanko's provocative special feature concerning Christian stewardship in the matter of school tuition; for the faculty letter of information concerning our Seminary; for Rev. Engelsma's concern for reformation in Luther's time in Christian education; for the welcome news from our Jamaican Missionary and their dispensing of the mercies of Christ represented in the

clothing sent from the States; for the pictorial news item of an officebearers' conference held in Pella; and last, but not least, for the page of church news which we all read first.

And to think that every year you turn out twenty other issues full of like treasures! We thank you, editors, one and all!

I wanted to sign myself *Anonymous*, that I might truly represent each one of us; but I know that the editor does not permit anonymous contributions.

— J. M. F., Grand Rapids, Mich.

## Friendship With God..

# God's Covenant Counsel

Rev. B. Woudenberg

God is "The God of truth," Isaiah 65:16. The word "truth" here is interesting; it is the Hebrew word "Amen" and indicates certainty. That is what truth is, it is that certainty which comes forth from the mind of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, united in thought and will together.

In the Bible the mind of God is called His counsel. Isaiah 46:9, 10 describes it most beautifully, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else, I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Here we have the source of all created reality. Only that which comes from God's counsel is true and real.

Nevertheless, among those realities preknown and predetermined by the counsel of God not all have the same value, as is reflected in Psalm 147:10, 11. "He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." There are some things that are good and give pleasure to God for what they are in themselves, as in Jeremiah 9:24, "I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." And then there are some things that are willed by God only because they serve a desired end, like the sin of Jacob's brothers, Genesis 50:20, "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive." Such things God has no delight in for what they are; they only serve in His mind as a means of bringing about a desired end.

For us there is an immediate, practical purpose in

recognizing this distinction. As image-bearers of God, it is important that we should know and reflect the values of God as the guiding principles of our lives. In fact, this is the beginning of wisdom. Paul explains this in I Corinthians 3:19-23, "For the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their craftiness, and again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

In this text, one thing is established first: that is, that the world in itself does not form an object of divine delight. At its best it is "vain." What God does see in it is only a means for the service of His people, the "ye" of the text, and through them "Christ" and "God" Himself.

Moreover, this latter series in itself becomes important.

"All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." The people of God are first mentioned as those so favored by God as to receive the service of all things in the world; but they in turn become the means for the service of Christ. And so it is with Him. Christ is first such an object of divine delight that He receives the service of all of God's people and all of history through them; but He in turn becomes the means for the service and glorification of God. Only there does the series end, for God and His glory is the end of all things. But through it we gain an important insight into the values of the counsel of God.

Last in purpose and therefore first in importance is "God" Himself. The ultimate purpose of all things is



He and the glory of His name, as Romans 11:36 says, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

Sadly, we in the frailty of our human minds are so ready at this point to object, God would not be so selfish! But really, could it be any other way?

God is the eternal one, as Psalm 90:2 says, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." It means that before this world ever was or any creature existed God dwelt alone with Himself in eternity. There was no one else for whom that which He was to do could be done. That which God in eternity determined to do in the bringing forth of this creation was simply an expression of His own good-pleasure, a determination within Himself to set forth an expression of His own greatness and glory.

Moreover, it is a Triune God who did this. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live together in eternity in the perfect communion of a divine love [John 17:5] in which they are perfectly dedicated to each other and to the life which they share in common. It was out of this joy of their common life together that the determination to broaden the expression of this joy through the creation of this world and its inhabitants arose. Here then is the first origin of this creation, the joy which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have within themselves. Could anything be more glorious? more wonderful?

Nor are the Scriptures in any sense apologetic about this truth. In fact, repeatedly when it comes to the fore, they rise up in doxologies of praise and exultation. So we have the beautiful closing refrains of Romans 11:33-36, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." And so again in exulted refrain Paul writes in I Timothy 1:17, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Meanwhile, in Revelation 4:11 we are allowed to hear the song of the elders in glory, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." This is a wonderful truth and true Christianity must have at its beginning the unreserved humility which is ever ready and willing to acknowledge the supremacy of the divine glory and to join in joy in the expression of it.

But there is more. Next in order of divine importance is "Christ" who according to I Corinthians 3:23 "is God's." This means that Christ is the chief

means by which God gives glory to His name, the chief means by which the Triune Godhead gives expression to the glory of the life which they live together. But at the same time Christ bears special mention, because He is within Himself an object of divine joy and delight.

The fact that Christ is the chief means by which God expresses His glory is clearly set forth in Scripture. This is why Christ is called "The Word" in John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." A word is simply the means by which thoughts are communicated between persons, and Christ is the means by which God communicates His glory to His creatures. Thus, farther on in verse 18 John the Baptist is quoted as saying, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Jesus says much the same thing in Matthew 11:27, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he is to whosoever the Son will reveal him."

The importance which this gives to Christ in the economy of time is beyond estimation.

Creation itself, of course, is an expression of the divine glory, Psalm 19:1, 2, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." [See Romans 1:20.] Thus it is that the creation could only come into existence through Christ, and so it did, John 1:3, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." [See also Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2.] And it follows, of course, that only those who know Christ and are in rapport with Him are ever able to receive the message of glory of which creation is the expression.

But Christ's expression goes far beyond this. As John 1:14 puts it, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld this glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." And what glory! Not a glory of physical expression, but spiritual, as in I John 4:9, 10, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Who but God could conceive of such an expression of ultimate glory? and who but a sinner can understand how great it really is?

And thus it is that in Himself Christ stands in history as an object of divine joy and pleasure. So much is this so that once and again the heavens themselves would not be silent, but broke forth saying, Matthew 3:17 and 17:5, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Paul grasps this beauty of Christ in a wonderful way when he exclaims



in Colossians 1:15-19, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature . . . And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."

And then there are those called "ye" in I Corinthians 3:23. Particularly they were the members of the church at Corinth to whom the epistle was written, but they stand as representative of the church of all ages.

These, too, are set forth in Scripture as so many means to the expression of God's glory. The Lord says so much in Isaiah 43:20, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." This after all is the proper function of man, he is the imagebearer of God (Genesis 1:26) whose place is to reflect the spiritual virtue of his Maker. Thus God's word to His people Israel was, Leviticus 20:26, "And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."

The wonder is that these people should stand in the counsel of God as objects of pleasure and delight much in the way Christ does. This is not true of all men, for we are told in Psalm 11:5, "The wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth." And, in fact, the people of God are no better than these as they appear in time, Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Nevertheless, the same Scriptures say, Psalm 149:4, "For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation." In fact, when Balaam and Balck stood looking down upon the oft carnal and rebellious Israel, pleading for a curse to be placed upon them, this answer was placed in Balaam's mouth, Numbers 23:19-21, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent . . . He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel."

Behind this there is but one explanation, divine election. God already in eternity chose a people and gave them to Christ to be His peculiar possession and to share in His glory forever. Thus Christ explained His own mission in John 6:38, 39, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Paul explains it all most beautifully in Ephesians 1:3-6, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,

according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." The beauty and joy which man has for God is only that which is in belonging to Jesus. Our glory is only in Him.

But it has an amazing result, as I Corinthians 3:21 puts it, "For all things are yours." Or II Corinthians 4:15 puts it more completely, "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God." It is simply the same thought as in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

It is certainly an amazing wonder. Here we are in our smallness, members of the church of God saved by grace alone; and God tells us that all things that happen, even the great and mighty things of this world, are for our sakes. This is precisely the emphasis of Paul in I Corinthians 3, as he enlarges upon it in verse 22, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours."

And all Scripture bears this out. It includes: the courses of nature, Isaiah 43:2, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee"; the nations of this world, Isaiah 43:3, "I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life."; even the great and mighty rulers of this world, Isaiah 45:1-4, "Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus . . . For Jacob, my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." Even though this world itself has become repulsive to God in its sin and is reserved unto final judgment (II Peter 3:7), God endures it with longsuffering because He would not have one of His elect to go lost (II Peter 3:9).

And included here also is the vast world of persistent unbelievers, the world of reprobation. In themselves they are no worse than what the elect are by nature; all are totally depraved, Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." But there is a difference. The elect are those who are drawn by grace into a living union with God in Christ (Psalm 65:4; John 6:44) while the reprobate remain adamantly attached to the ways of rebellion and sin. The former, therefore, are covered by the atoning righteousness of Christ, but the reprobate remain responsible for their wickedness unto the end. And why does God endure them? All we can say is what Paul says in Romans 9:22, 23, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath



fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Once again it is for His own glory in Christ and for the sake of His people, His

chosen.

It is an awesome truth before which one can only stand in humble fear, and worship.

## *The Day of Shadows..*

# The War To End All War

*Rev. John A. Heys*

In this twentieth century the world has seen two so-called world wars. Men fought in these wars, it was claimed, "to make the world safe for democracy."

They failed!

Today, as a result of this failure, we have an armament race that has produced some exceedingly devastating weapons, for a war that in its awful reality will be a world war, with battles on every continent, and with bombs falling in every quarter of the earth. And the enemies of democracy are today more numerous, but also militarily more powerful, than they were before either of the two so-called world wars. Men, therefore, have turned to diplomacy, to treatie and alliances, and to negotiations, and to try to realize a lasting peace.

They will fail!

The reason why they will fail is that the world in its attempt to create lasting peace is not simply ignoring but fighting the Prince of Peace. Did Jesus not declare? "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Matthew 12:30

We wish not only to warn our readers, but also to point out to them the right direction in regard to true and lasting peace, by presenting what the Word of God says already in the early days of the shadows.

In February of this year a sleek jet plane landed in China, bringing a group of men who undoubtedly were serious in their desires for peace in our generation. And who would not be serious about it in the world situation in which we find ourselves today? Now the name of that sleek jet was "The Spirit of '76." Tragically enough, the Spirit of Christ, the Prince of Peace did not travel to China for those meetings. From all we have heard or seen of the whole visit, the Prince of Peace was not asked to go along on that diplomatic mission. A prayer may have been uttered in the White House before departure. It was not made known. Nor was the Prince of Peace ever mentioned as the one Who alone could make the mission a success. No dependency upon Him was ever mentioned. In no communique was His name used. No prayers were

made known as being offered to Him at the many banquets. Our coins may still declare, "In God we trust," but that did not come out for one minute in China, or from anything we have read or heard of the whole mission. Were this the case, that our trust as a nation is in God, would this whole journey have been found necessary? Would there not also have been a witness given in that godless nation of our God and His Son, Whom He sent as the Prince of Peace?

Of course, they did not go there as missionaries. But are missionaries the only ones who pray to God? Are they the only ones who declare faith in God? Are they the only ones who can and do say with the psalmist: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, come upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host (of communists, too) should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this (war) will I be confident." Psalm 27:1-3

Man has found that there will be no peace through the shedding of man's blood. Swords and guns, bombs and hand grenades do not create peace. Words of men in conference, whether in private or in open session, may produce a deceptive, yea, will produce the deceptive, temporary peace of the reign of the Antichrist over all the nations of the earth. This will, however, only serve to realize that dreadful Battle of Armageddon, when Gog and Magog shall come up against the camp of the saints. Revelation 20:7-9 and Revelation 16:13-16.

But the very day that man declared war on God in paradise, God spelled out clearly the only hope of peace and reconciliation. By the shedding of the blood of His Son on the Cross, and by His Spirit, peace will come to man. Not by "The Spirit of '76," but by the Spirit of Christ in the heart, as He fills it with the love of God, will reconciliation between God and man be realized, and between man and his neighbour.

On the day that man declared war on God, the Almighty spoke of a war that would end all war. In



what has come to be known as "the mother promise" of Genesis 3:15 God spoke of and predicted a spiritual war that would end all war. "I will," He declared, "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." Here, in unmistakable language, God announces not only spiritual warfare on this earth, but also a victory that will bring lasting peace to the seed of the woman.

The individual to whom these words were addressed was Satan, who was still inside the serpent. We do not have here a mere prediction of aversion on man's part to snakes, with the desire to crush their heads. (The Hebrew word means crush rather than bruise) That is not in every instance true. Some men collect and protect them. Some run from them, instead of at them to crush their heads. Some in cold climes have never seen a serpent and can have no enmity against them. Besides, God is speaking of what He will do, not of what has already happened. When Eve gave her bold reply to God, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat," she expressed an enmity against the serpent that was already in her soul.

This does not take away God's sovereign right to humiliate and change the serpent, that Satan used, to become lower than any other beast of the field (for the serpent was a beast of the field). Hath not the divine Potter the right to do with His clay as He pleases? Nor is the serpent the only creature to suffer because of man's sin. Paul tells us in Romans 8:19-22 that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth, waiting for the day of the deliverance of the sons of God. The sovereign God may do that with His creation.

But to return to the subject, man declared war on God, and that which is behind that declaration of war against God is made plain in the text. Man had enmity in his heart against God. This is confirmed by Romans 8:7 where Paul declares that the minds which men receive as descendants of fallen Adam are full of enmity against God. Satan succeeded by his lie to cause man to hate God. And God's word here in Genesis 3:15 is that He is going to put His love back into the hearts of some, so that they will have enmity against Satan and his whole kingdom to wage spiritual warfare against him and his seed.

Now hatred against God means hatred against the neighbour. Jesus taught that clearly in Matthew 22:37-40. The principle of the law is love to God; and when one loves God, that one loves His creatures and bows before God's will in regard to them. John writes in I John 4:20 as well, "If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?" Thus when the promise of Genesis 3:15 is, from a positive point of view, that God will put love towards Himself into the hearts of some, then He will thereby also put in them love

towards their neighbours.

To realize this peace God declares war on Satan and his whole kingdom here in Genesis 3:15. God speaks of the war that will end all war, because exactly here in this beautiful text God speaks of the coming of His Son, Whose heel Satan will crush at the Cross, but Who by that very Cross will crush Satan's head. And that is a fatal wound! Yes, Christ The Seed of the woman (and note the singular in Genesis 3:15, "... thou shalt bruise *his* heel") also dies. He does this by laying down His life when the servants of Satan "crushed" His heel by nailing Him to the tree. Satan did not in actuality kill him. The Jews did not in fact take His life. In their hearts they did. But he declares Himself in John 10:17, 18, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father." And by laying down His life on that cross, He, according to Paul in Colossians 2:15, spoiled principalities and powers, made a shew of them and triumphed over them.

There are, then, two elements here. The Seed of the woman will fight for our justification; and He will realize it when the seed of the serpent nails Him to the tree of the Cross, thus crushing His heel. But this Seed of the woman will also thereby merit the right to send His Spirit into our hearts, to put into them the love of God and enmity against Satan and his kingdom. This Seed of the woman triumphed over the Serpent on His cross exactly because there He earned the right to deliver His people from Satan's slavery of sin by giving them a new birth and by instilling that love of God by His Spirit.

And in this way peace is brought back to the human race. The seed of the serpent shall be crushed and cast off this earth into the lake of fire. They will no longer fight us physically, or spiritually. And we will be filled with the love of God in body and soul when Christ returns to raise us up from the dead. A new creation appears in which all men on earth love God from the bottom of their hearts; and loving Him love each other, so that all war is forever at an end. That is why in Revelation 4:6 before the throne of God there is a sea of glass like unto crystal. No ripple of discontent is there to mar that peace and beauty. The sea is as calm as though it were of glass that does not form waves when the wind blows upon it. In fact there will be no wind in all that creation. The love of God shall issue forth from the throne, and not the wind of His wrath.

With all this the world does not reckon and does not want to reckon. With hearts that have only enmity against God as seed of the serpent, they cannot even see this kingdom, cannot imagine such a peace. They leave God out of the picture. They leave the Seed of the woman out of the picture. They speak of love,



love, love but only of a carnal love for man, without thought of God. They continue to declare war on God, and think that in that way they can still achieve peace among men. It is all so foolish.

And many in the church of today speak so glibly and flippantly of peace by a social gospel, which is no gospel. Let the church go back to fundamentals. Let the church reckon with sin and the enmity of the natural mind against God. Let the church then direct men to this peace that God realizes through the cross and Spirit of Christ in the way of a rebirth, confession of sin and hatred towards it.

Sin separates!

The cross and the Spirit of Christ reconcile men to God, and thus reconcile men with each other. Men's

wars and men's words add to the flame; and riots are in our streets and cities even while and because while we fly halfway around the world to seek peace with a distant power. We do not see the enmity of God in the heart of our neighbour, nor even in our own hearts; and then we seek a peace that cannot be and will not be.

Listen to the God of all peace, as Paul calls Him in Romans 16:20, Who there promises shortly to bruise Satan under our feet, when He says, "I will put enmity." Here is the declaration of a spiritual war against the devil and his host that will end all war for God's Church and bring her to perfect, everlasting peace.

## *In His Fear*

# The Pilgrim and Marriage

*Rev. D. H. Kuiper*

The outstanding quality of marriage is that it is an absolutely unbreakable union or bond. That is not a popular truth, but it belongs to a faithful witness and a faithful pilgrim life to state and to live that uncompromisingly and boldly. Marriage is a bond of intimacy between one man and one woman which is *for life*, and which has for its purpose the revelation of the salvation of the Church in Christ, and the bringing forth of covenant seed. That marriage is not capable of termination as long as both mates are living is clearly the teaching of Scripture. I say Scripture teaches this clearly: we must disagree completely with those who say "no substantial and conclusive evidence can be produced" to the contrary. The Scriptural data is overwhelming. If you read your Bible honestly and in submission to it, without looking for something you are trying to find, you will have to agree. The first three verses of Romans seven teach that death of one of the mates is the only way in which marriage can be terminated. Jesus states in Matthew nineteen and Mark ten, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Man is not *able* to undo a work of God, nor may he try. In a passage that is echoed in Mark ten, Luke sixteen, verse eighteen, states: "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." I save reference to Matthew nineteen, verse nine, until last for several reasons: this passage has puzzled some, this passage is appealed to most by those who advocate remarriage of divorced persons, and finally it must be understood in the light of those

passages previously mentioned.

The words are very similar, yet there is one additional phrase: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." The added phrase is: *except it be for fornication*. But do you really think that phrase is going to overturn what a dozen other passages clearly teach? Does one book of the Bible violate another? Is it not rather the truth that there is an explanation of this phrase that will allow all the other passages to stand intact, in all their power? The words "except it be for fornication" do not modify the following phrase "and shall marry another," as if the fornication of a wife allows the man (the innocent party) to marry again; but they go with and modify the beginning part of verse nine which speaks of putting away a wife! Thus the intent of Jesus is that a wife may not be put away for every reason, but only for the ground of unfaithfulness or fornication. So the sum of the matter is: put away, or live in separation from your marriage mate only rarely and then only for the cause of fornication. But in *no case* may either the husband or the wife, the innocent or the guilty party, remarry. That would constitute adultery; and adultery is also committed if a third party comes along and marries either of them. No man and no church can change that!

### **Eunuchs for the Kingdom's Sake**

The disciples did not miss the importance of Jesus' words. They considered it a hard saying. They said, "If



the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry!" Or, if a man can never rid himself of a wife, even if she be a poor cook and housekeeper, a nagger and a bickerer, a poor mother and a boring companion . . . then it is better not to marry, and thus run the risk of spending a lifetime with such a person. And of course, in the disciples thinking a woman would be running an equal risk. At this point Jesus introduces the subject of eunuchs; some are eunuchs by birth, some by the hands of men, and some have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. The context makes clear that Jesus is saying that a man or a woman who has been put away by his mate, or who has put his mate away, must become a eunuch for the kingdom's sake; that is, this person does not remarry, but learns to live without a mate in the kitchen, living room, and bedroom.

Now the Church of Christ, and the pilgrim husbands and wives within her, must be faithful to these words if she is going to reveal that she is the Bride of Christ. For the reason that marriage is an unbreakable bond is to be found in the fact that the Church can never be separated from her Savior! Christ will never leave those for Whom He died. He loved them unto death! And Christ will not even allow His people to forsake Him, even though they sin and commit adultery; rather He brings them to confession of their vile sins, forgives them, and leads them in a new way! To allow the remarriage of separated, or what the world calls divorced persons, is a practical error that finds its way, cancerously, into the very doctrine of the church. For first of all, the fellowship of pilgrims called church denies, when it allows such remarriage, that her salvation is an everlasting certainty in Christ, and that the bond between Christ and the Bride is of such a permanent nature that the gates of hell cannot destroy it. Man might not like that, but he cannot have it both ways: the picture and the reality must correspond. If one is enduring and firm, so is the other; if the picture is breakable and flimsy, so is the reality.

In the second place, if adultery in the physical sense is allowed in the church and at the communion table, then be sure that all kinds of other iniquitous practices will soon follow. This is observable in the churches today. Those who have left the Scriptural truth concerning marriage are those who also fall away in other areas of doctrine. Doctrine and life become corrupt simultaneously because the truth is one. I fear that the reasons for this carnal inroad into the life of the church are basically two. The church has become a man-pleaser rather than a God-pleaser. She does not want to seem old fashioned, too traditional or unchanging, nor has she any taste for discipline. There must be room for a little bending and a lot of tolerance. Secondly, there is an improper stress placed on the importance of the *here and now*, as if the present time and circumstance is *all there is!* "Do you

mean to tell me," one deserted wife wailed to me, "that God wants me to live the rest of my life without a husband and my children without a father, just because I picked a bummer?" When I assured her that was the will of God for her according to the Scriptures, her response was that she knew what the Bible said but she did not believe it! Well, it was not given her to receive, but the answer is still *Yes*. And God will take care of the deserted wives and the fatherless children in His tender mercies. The answer is *Yes* also because God has something far better in mind for His people than earthly marriage, He will give them a place at the everlasting *wedding feast!*

#### Practical Implications

In conclusion, a few practical remarks ought to be made so that the pilgrim may be encouraged in marriage faithfulness. To hold fast to this doctrine, both in our walk and conversation, will cause a certain amount of suffering. Generally, the child of God who holds unwaveringly to the Word of God encounters reviling and mocking. It is no different when He maintains the Biblical view of marriage. As you testify to this truth in your wedded life but also from time to time verbally, you will experience rage and scorn. Do not be surprised and do not fear. Also, a very few pilgrims may find it necessary to live as eunuchs for God's sake. That will entail loneliness, grief, and temptation of the highest magnitude. But God will not forsake you. He will supply all your needs in Christ Jesus!

Secondly, since no one is capable in himself of fulfilling the demands of the wedded state so that in his marriage the perfect union of Christ and Church is revealed, and since no one is even beyond the committing of the sin of adultery, the calling is urgent that husband and wife really *live together* and *pray together*. Husbands, take the lead in discussing your marriage with your wife. Study the Scriptures together on the topics of marriage, home, and children. Admit your failings one to another. Confess your sins, and forgive one another even as God has forgiven your sins in Christ. Here is the reason that a husband or a wife must put away his mate so seldomly. They have learned to forgive again and again!

Thirdly, there is much room for the giving of instruction concerning marriage to older children and teen-agers in the home. Since marriage is a sacred institution of God, since no man may put asunder what God has joined together, then marriage is not something that just happens, or into which two young people simply fall. Let it be understood that dating is courting. Look for a suitable mate when you date, otherwise there is no need to date. And when you look for a mate, know what you are looking for! Look carefully for a fellow pilgrim, look for a Reformed pilgrim, and look for such a mate, ideally, in your own church if you value and esteem marriage. Here, too, it



will not do to yoke one's self together with an unbeliever because it will be a heavy yoke if you do, and it will be a yoke that is with you until death! We could wish that parents would show a little more interest in, and know a little more about, the nocturnal habits of their children.

The faithful pilgrim receives a great benefit when his marriage is a true reflection of Christ's. As saints, husband and wife have the closest possible communion of the saints. They know one another more intimately than any other person alive. They are acquainted with each other's fears and doubts, hopes and aspirations, weaknesses and strengths. Dwelling

together there is opportunity to speak of spiritual things, to warn in love, to give of self, to encourage on the long journey. And on that journey towards heaven, the pilgrim may carry with him in his marriage, and thus in his very bosom, the assurance that he shall reach his destination. Just as surely as a Christian husband and wife can clasp each other in their arms, so surely can they know that they shall one day see Christ! For marriage speaks of the love and faithfulness of Christ, Who gave Himself unto death, and Who will never, never forsake His Bride! All the way to heaven is heaven, because Christ is the Way. And all those on that way shall never be separated from Him!

## *Contending for the Faith*

# **The Doctrine of Atonement (Reformation Period)**

*Rev. H. Veldman*

We will now call attention to Article VIII of Head II of our Canons, undoubtedly the heart and core of this section of the Canons. This eighth article reads as follows:

For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to Him by the Father; that He should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He purchased for them by His death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever.

According to Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, this translation is a good translation of the original Latin in which these Canons were written.

It is in this article that the fathers of Dordt set forth, positively, the Scriptural truth of the Atonement of the cross. This article undoubtedly expresses the heart and core of Head II of the Canons. This article is our fathers' answer to the second point of the Remonstrants, which reads as follows:

That, agreeably thereto, Jesus Christ, the Saviour

of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that He has obtained for them all, by His death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer, according to the word of the Gospel of John 3:16: "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And in the First Epistle of John 2:2: "And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

It has been observed that if one should elide this key article from Head II of our Canons, the Arminian, too, would be able to subscribe to the remaining articles of this second head. How true! Remove this eighth article, and any Arminian would surely be able to subscribe, for example, to Article 3, where we read of the death of the Son of God that it is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world. This also applies to Article 5 where we read of the promise of the gospel that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life, and that this promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction. And this is also applicable to Articles 6 and 7.

Article VIII is a clear and beautiful example of the necessity and importance of distinctive preaching. Indeed, it is relatively simple to preach in such a way that the Reformed man must agree and the Arminian is only too glad to agree. How simple it is, in answer to the question as to who are saved, to reply: "Those who believe in Jesus." On the one hand, this answer is



surely thoroughly Scriptural. And, on the other hand, it appears to have everything in its favour, provided that we understand faith as it is generally understood today, or confine it merely to a conscious embracing of Christ and all His benefits. Then the Reformed man must agree with you, and this for the simple reason that the answer is very Scriptural. And the Arminian, of course, will accompany you gladly. Practically, therefore, an answer of this nature will not encounter any opposition. However, the answer cannot completely satisfy, and this for the simple reason that everybody does not believe. Why is it that everybody does not believe? Perhaps one may ask the question: "But whence is this faith?" This question is surely inevitable. Fact is, everybody does not believe. And all men are corrupt. So, the question is surely inevitable: "Why, whence is this faith?" Shall we answer this question by replying that faith is of God? Also then the Arminian will accompany you. He, too, will answer that faith is of the Lord. Are we not saved by grace through faith, and that is a gift of God? And if one does not add anything specific to this answer, we have not as yet arrived at a distinctive conclusion. Again the Reformed man must agree, because also this answer is according to the Word of God, and the Arminian agrees gladly because he is only too happy to have the opportunity to settle himself in the church of God.

How important it is that the truth be proclaimed sharply and distinctively! How important it is that the lines be sharply drawn, that there cannot possibly be any disagreement! We must part company with that Arminian. He is only too glad to establish himself in the church of God, as termites settle within a house. To the question, therefore, as to who are saved, we must give an answer with which he cannot possibly agree. To say that faith is a gift of God is not a conclusive answer. Of course, in a real sense of the word, the Arminian denies every phase of the truth. But, in a certain sense, he will accept the answer that faith is a gift of God, inasmuch as the Word of God clearly teaches that faith is a gift of the Lord, and he cannot therefore very well deny it. Hence, but one question remains and this question will force the Reformed man and the Arminian to go their separate ways, namely: "To whom does God give faith?" To this question the Remonstrant answers: who will to receive it. And the Reformed man says: to whom it pleases God to give it. The Arminian knows that the elect will be saved, but the elect, to him, are those concerning whom the Lord foresaw that they would will to believe. The Arminian knows that we are saved by faith, that that faith is a gift of God, that only the Lord can save us by His grace. But, according to the Arminian, I must open the door of my heart; I must will to be saved; the first impulse or desire must proceed from me; I must allow God's grace to operate in my heart. The Arminians and Pelagian heresy

teaches that the will of the natural, unregenerated sinner can will to choose the good. According to him, sin is only in the deed, the act. I do not sin because I am corrupt, but I become corrupt through my sin. A man is righteous only according as he does righteousness; and he is unrighteous only in the measure that he commits sin. Man does not will as he is, but he is what he wills to be. The sinner is never essentially and inherently corrupt; he can always choose the good as well as the bad; he can always will to accept the gospel; this is the conception of Pelagianism and of all Arminianism. When, therefore, upon the question as to who are saved the answer is given: to whom God gives faith, the Arminian and Reformed must come to the parting of the ways. The Arminian knows that the sinner is saved by grace (as taught literally in the Word of God), but he will insist on the teaching that it is up to man whether the Lord will give him this grace, and it is the sinner who decides and can determine whether he will receive it.

Article VIII is clear and concise. And this ought to teach us something. This certainly teaches us that we, too, ought to be clear and concise. We must never be ambiguous. Mind you, these heads of doctrine in our Canons have two sections: a positive part and also a section called the rejection of errors. And this eighth article we are discussing now is certainly a beautiful and striking example of what it means to set forth the truth in a manner that there cannot possibly be any doubt. May our churches never become weary in this fulfillment of their calling: to divide rightly the word of truth and the preaching of the Word in a clear and concise manner, a distinctly reformed setting forth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice, in this eighth article, the fathers of Dordt speak of God's sovereign counsel, of the most gracious will and purpose of God the Father. This article, setting forth the Scriptural truth of the atonement, begins with this counsel of the Lord. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself teaches us this truth. In John 6:37-39 we read: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." And in John 10:25-29 we read: "Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. 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." And in a dream to Joseph the angel of



the Lord informs the betrothed husband of the mother of the Lord that the name of the Child shall be called Jesus, because He shall save His people from their sins. The fathers, here, setting forth the doctrine of the atonement of the cross, therefore anchor this fact of our redemption in the eternal and unchangeable counsel and will of God. Notice how the fathers give expression to this truth. We read: "For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect . . . : that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, etc, all those, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to Him by the Father."

This also indicates what the fathers mean when

they speak of "limited atonement." We prefer the expression: "particular atonement," although it must be borne in mind that when mention is made of "limited atonement," the expression means that the atonement of Christ is limited to the elect. Fact is, however, in a certain and real sense the atonement of the cross is unlimited inasmuch as the blood of Christ is of infinite, unlimited value, covering all the sins of all the elect throughout all the ages, and meriting for them everlasting life and glory. Be this as it may, it is plain from this article what the fathers mean when they speak of limited or particular atonement. Also the Remonstrant was compelled to believe in a limited atonement. He believed that Christ died for all men and for every man, but yet he, too, was forced to acknowledge that the death of Christ was limited. To this difference, and also to the rest of this article, we will call attention in our following article.

## *The Strength of Youth*

# Bringing Up Children

*Rev. J. Kortering*

Quite a task!

It's one thing to bear children; it's something else to bring them up.

This difficulty is accentuated in Eph. 6:4, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." That conjunction, but, emphasizes this. "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, *but* bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." We must not provoke them to wrath, but on the contrary, bring them up properly.

Nurture and admonition are inseparably connected. Admonition emphasizes the formal instruction, the putting of things in the mind of a child. Nurture emphasizes the element of discipline, correction. We cannot have instruction without discipline and that too, in the Lord or according to the instruction we receive from Christ.

### INSTRUCTING CHILDREN

Anyone who takes seriously the task of bringing up children, readily admits that something almost miraculous takes place. In making use of the verb to bring up, Paul pictures before our mind the growth of a tree. It is a wonder to see an acorn germinate and the first tender shoots break out of the ground. The tender tree needs fertilizer; it must be fed, in order that the shoots can become stronger and the roots sink deeper. As it grows larger, restraints have to be placed on the branches so that they grow in the proper direction.

Some pruning is required, and soon the small acorn becomes a giant oak tree. So it is with bringing up children. The first tender sense impressions are made upon the child's mind. More and more is added along with warning and guidance to cause the child to grow in the right direction. Soon the child becomes an adult, making his own decisions and living his own life.

God has made us in a fearful and wonderful way. He has given to us the basic tools whereby we are able to learn things. Take the brain itself. What a marvel! It is estimated that in a lifetime, an average person collects one million billion pieces of information in the brain. That's a one with fifteen zeros. All this is impressed upon ten billion nerve cells contained in a brain that weighs about three pounds. If man were to try to duplicate the brain, even with solid state circuitry, it would be a computer as large as the Empire State Building.

If we ask the question, how do the different senses make impressions upon the brain, we soon realize there is a great deal of uncertainty as to just how this does take place. There is an element of electrical impulse connecting the nervous system with the brain. But is the brain just a storehouse of electrical impulses? Others say no, there is more than an electrical impulse, there is a chemical relationship between the cells of the body and the brain. Just as electrical shock can disorientate the brain, so also insulin shock or other



drugs can influence it. Lately, the study of the molecule itself has opened up another area of interest. By analyzing DNA and RNA it is suggested that each cell in the brain contains all the pieces of information registered through memory. Just as the sex cell contains millions of bits of information called heredity, so each brain cell might contain a million billion pieces of information.

That amazing organ called the brain is not our mind; it is the tool of the mind. Each person has the ability to think, and these thoughts are formulated through the use of the brain. If one has a diseased or injured brain, the thoughts cannot be properly formulated. So a healthy child looks about him and contacts the outside world through his five senses. They impress him and he perceives them; he sorts them out and is able to identify them. All this is stored in the brain and becomes part of his memory which can be recalled later. With this vast storehouse of information he has the knowledge with which he can reason, understand, and form judgments.

If this were all we could say about our children, we still would not have reason to rejoice in "bringing them up." What we have said so far applies equally to covenant children and to those born outside the sphere of the covenant. Our entire bodies, including our brains have been affected by the physical power of death. Each man still has the faculty of memory and reason, but he uses it in the service of sin. The natural man as he is born into this world is not born in the image of God. Consequently, his natural abilities are brought into subjection of sin and rebellion against God. His nature is depraved; he is an enemy of God and His commandments. Our children are no different in themselves.

God, however, assures us that He has performed His work in our children. He establishes His covenant with believers and their seed, Gen. 17:7, Acts 2:39. In the way of regeneration, John 3:3, our children are distinguished from those of the world. Did not Jesus say, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," Mark 10:14. Paul describes this work of salvation in Eph. 4:23, 24, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." When God gives faith to our children, he changes them spiritually. Out of a regenerated heart there flows forth the power to influence the mind and will and direct the faculties of life toward God and His will.

Because of this great work within our children, bringing them up is a wonderful task. We have reason to believe that our children will receive good instruction because God has prepared them for it. This does not mean that our children are not influenced by sin. Their nature is derived from parents, and we

parents know all too well that we still sin. Rather, it tells us that the principle direction of their life is also heavenward.

This truth determines for us the content of instruction. We must bring them up in the instruction *of the Lord*. We must tell them that their life is God-centered. They are called into this world to serve Jesus Christ who is our Lord. All truth is centered in God and therefore the Bible must be the key to all interpretation. The motivation for our daily work, the purpose we have in living, the way we do things, and the things we do, are all determined by God through Jesus Christ, according to the Scripture. We must have God's approval upon all we do, or we fail. We must believe we live according to the will of God or life is useless. The only thing that gives real purpose to the children of God is that we may serve God's cause and kingdom and therefore live to His glory.

A covenant child is most susceptible to this instruction.

There are two reasons for this. First, the ability to learn and receive knowledge is greatest during the days of youth. No one can go back to those days when the mind was keen and the brain like a sponge that could absorb almost anything. So quickly those times are gone forever. How careful we parents have to be in that we don't judge our children's ability to learn and study by our own ability. Of course, they can do more than we can: for this reason the Scripture emphasizes, "Train up a *child* in the way he should go." Secondly, a child has the gift of implicit faith. He will believe anything you say because he trusts you. He doesn't have a great deal of why's and wherefore's. That comes later, as he grows up. As a very small child he simply accepts anything you say. That's the time we must fill up that mind with the knowledge of God's Word.

This requires dedication on the part of the parents from the day the child is born. All too often we imagine we can wait and do a better job of bringing them up later on. We like to reason we are so busy now, but probably sometime in the future it will be more convenient. Sometimes we think that little children don't understand anything anyway, so when they get older we will concentrate on their spiritual instruction. What heartache has come from such reasoning, for either we bring up our children from infancy on, or we will see them depart from the right way. There is no re-doing when it comes to instruction.

It should be apparent that this also requires of parents that they do their utmost. The admonition comes to fathers not at the exclusion of mothers, but as the responsible head of the home. As parents we make this promise at the baptism of our children. So often we think in terms of schooling when we stand before such an injunction of Scripture. This is important, and parents must do their utmost to have the home and the school brought into harmony with



the instruction received in the church. God's Word is one and must be brought in that way to our children. Yet, the home must receive the emphasis. No one can take the place of the parent in the calling to instruct. *Assistance* may be sought, but not replacement.

### DISCIPLINE

Part of the learning process includes discipline. In fact, the instruction and discipline go together. We cannot have instruction without discipline, nor can discipline be effective without instruction.

As we mentioned, the reason for this is the fact that our children are conceived and born in sin. The work of regeneration does not change their nature entirely; it infuses new qualities into it. The struggle of Paul recorded in Rom. 7 depicts the conflict of a Christian, a struggle that begins already in infancy.

We must tell our children what is right and what is wrong. In fulfilling their calling as children, they sometimes fail. They sin against God in the things they do wrong. By discipline, we must show them in every deed that sin is serious business. They must learn to reject evil and seek that which is good. By instruction and discipline, we must act on God's behalf to impress upon them that God is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins. Note carefully, we must not take God's place: we must act on God's behalf. All discipline must be "in the Lord." We must tell our children that correction is required, because they have done wrong before God.

This will have a two-fold effect. It will help us as parents to discipline correctly. The discipline we place upon our children will be God-like. Yes, we will be

angry, but we will not sin in our anger, Eph. 4:26. Sometimes we will reprimand and correct by admonition. Other times we will use the rod of correction. We will understand that discipline is not seeking revenge on our children that have sinned against us, rather we will recognize that all the methods we use in discipline must be directed to the end of correcting and making our children more spiritual in their struggle to overcome sin. The other effect will be that our children will receive that discipline for their own good. If we tell our children that they should obey us because we do so many things for them and they should treat us nicely, we miss the point in discipline. If we scare our children into obedience because we are so much stronger than they are, we make fearful slaves out of them. We may even try a little psychology and tell them that life is so much more enjoyable if everybody does his part in the home, all of which is true, but misses the point of discipline. If we truly tell our children that *God* is terribly displeased with all our sins, we impress upon them a sense of repentance and godly sorrow. The end of discipline must be repentance and forgiveness by God.

Under His divine blessing, instruction and discipline will bear fruit, in that our children will know the right way and walk in it. Yes, they will stumble along the way but we will patiently deal with them. Our children must not only see God's wrath against evil, but God's forgiving love and mercy as well.

Such instruction and discipline is heavenly, for it is in the Lord.

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## Book Reviews

*WISDOM THE PRINCIPAL THING*, by Kenneth L. Jensen; Pacific Meridian Publishing Company, 1972; 167 pp., \$2.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

The subtitle of this book is "Studies in the Book of Proverbs." It includes some helpful material on the structure of Proverbs and on the form of the proverbs which are contained in it. It attempts to treat the book under several general headings and enters into a detailed explanation of various key passages. While there is a great deal of help to be found in the book in an understanding of this difficult part of the Old Testament Scriptures, its main weakness is probably that it fails to see Proverbs as part of the revelation of God in Christ; the result is that oftentimes the book is reduced to a series of moral homilies which lead to the good life, along with large sprinklings of psychology. We recommend the book if read with a great deal of discretion and if the reader will apply himself to the study of Proverbs itself from the viewpoint that Christ is the Wisdom of God.

*NEW TESTAMENT ESSAYS*, by Vincent Taylor; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972; 146 pp., \$2.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

The author of this book (1887-1968) was a Methodist minister who spent his life in New Testament studies. In this book are several essays which deal with subjects which were his specialty. While Taylor was not as radical as some of his contemporaries, he accepted form criticism as a legitimate tool in New Testament studies. The result of this was that he opposed the doctrine of inspiration as verbal and infallible, rejected various elements in the gospel narratives as being unhistorical, spoke of proto-gospels as sources for the gospel writers, and admitted a certain validity to *Gemeindetheologie*. The book contains a brief review of his life and a discussion of his major works, especially those on the atonement. It is of some value to those who are interested in the views of a more conservative form critic; but it is an interesting insight into the vagaries and speculative thinking of



those who reject Scripture's inspiration.

*A COMMENTARY ON THE REVELATION OF JOHN*, by George Eldon Ladd, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 308 pp., \$6.95 [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

This volume can be a welcome addition to any library. It is a sober and thoughtful explanation of the book of Revelation which blends the preterist and futurist viewpoint. The book rejects the fanciful and arbitrary interpretations of Revelation as well as the pre-millennialist interpretation. It is, on the whole, a trustworthy exposition.

We do not agree with all the interpretation. E.g., the author claims that the six seals lead up to the end; then, with the seventh seal, the scroll itself is opened and the events of the end are described in the remainder of the book. He also speaks of a national restoration of Israel as one of the events of the end, appealing in support of this view to Rom. 11:26.

Nor is the book a detailed commentary. While its brevity has many advantages in giving to one a concise explanation of Revelation, it has the disadvantage of leaving some key passages inadequately explained. This is very strikingly evident, e.g., in the author's treatment of the wound of the beast mentioned in Rev. 13.

If used in connection with other writings on Revelation and if carefully weighed, we recommend this book as a valuable help in the study of the last book of the Bible.

*THE LORD'S DAY, A Theological Guide to the Christian Day of Worship*, by Paul K. Jewett; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972; 174 pp., \$2.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

Although we cannot agree with all the conclusions and with some of the exegesis in this book, it is an extremely worthwhile contribution to the study of the Christian Sabbath. It treats a number of important and worthwhile subjects: The Jewish Sabbath; the transition from the Seventh to the First Day; the development of the idea of the Christian Sabbath in the early Church; the theological arguments involved in the whole question along with some thorough and helpful exegesis of the key points in Jesus' teachings concerning the Sabbath; the observance of the Sabbath from a historical viewpoint and from a theological perspective. We heartily recommend this book to all our readers and assure those who study it that it will give them valuable and helpful information on this question. Since especially among some branches of Presbyterianism the Sabbath question is once again a live issue, we recommend this book as helpful in these controversies.

#### NOTICE!!!

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## News From Our Churches

At a congregational meeting held at Hope Church (Grand Rapids), on April 26, the decision was made to extend a call to Rev. Engelsma. He was elected from a trio which included also the Reverends J. Heys and G. Lanting.

Rev. B. Woudenberg has asked for, and been granted, an extension for his consideration of the call to serve as home missionary. We can now expect his response three weeks after the conclusion of this year's gathering of Synod.

Rev. D. Engelsma, Stated Clerk of Classis West, notes that an error has appeared in the Classis Report in the April 1 issue of the *Standard Bearer*. The name of Rev. D. Kuiper, as a secundus minister delegate to Synod, was omitted.

On March 29 the final lecture in a series on "The Christian's Witness" was held in our church in Hull. Rev. Kortering spoke on the subject, "The Activity of Witnessing," in which he offered an evaluation of the lay witness movement, Campus Crusade, and the Jesus movement. The series consisted of three lectures, planned by the Reformed Witness Committee of Doon, Edgerton, and Hull. Prior to the presentation in Pella, the series had been delivered, also, in Doon. The first lecture, by Rev. Lanting, was entitled, "The Calling to Witness." The second, "The Power to Witness," was delivered by Rev. Moore. According to Pella's bulletin, special invitation cards were prepared and placed in the bulletin rack, and the members of the congregation were encouraged to "distribute them to interested people either personally or by sending them through the mail." "May God's blessing," the announcement concluded, "rest upon this effort to witness to our community concerning the truth of our calling to witness."

Of more than passing interest is an announcement, also from a Hull bulletin, that an informal meeting of the members of that congregation was going to be held to discuss the possibility of the erection of their own school. According to the bulletin, it was the concern of various members, expressed during family visitation, which prompted the consistory to call the meeting. The paragraph concluded with the remark, "Let's all be there to discuss the possibility of providing Protestant Reformed education for all our children." We'll certainly be interested in learning of developments.

In connection with that last item, perhaps, we could mention that each of our Protestant Reformed Schools has contracted its entire staff for the 1972-1973 school year. The fact that Boards had completed that task by

May 1 is a reflection, already, of the current teacher supply. But we can add to that, that there were actually more *applicants*, this spring, than there were *openings* for next school year. That must be a first in the history of our schools. Education Committees, we suspect, are beginning to breathe more easily.

In dipping into "the box," I discovered another school news item which, though recent by no stretch of the imagination, is, nevertheless, not old as far as interest is concerned.

Joint chapel exercises, attended by the students of our Doon and Edgerton schools (fifty-five miles apart, if the Editor-in-chief's odometer is more accurate than the news editor's meter stick), is not the only instance of fellowship experienced by our western schools. Teachers of those two schools met in Colorado, in convention, last November, with the teachers of our Loveland school. We can appreciate the fact that, since the schools are quite small, the teachers really enjoy the opportunity to meet together. Evidence of that gratitude we find in the *Ledger*. Miss Beverly Hoekstra, principal at Loveland, wrote, "We are thankful to God for giving us some time together to be instructed and to share one another's problems and opinions in discussions."

Interestingly, the eastern schools were not entirely "left out" of that convention. Part of the program consisted of a "taped speech by Prof. Hanko, given at the Teachers' Convention in Grand Rapids."

The highlight of the convention seems to have been the speech by the principal of our Edgerton school. According to Mr. John Kalsbeek, in the *Polaris*, from Doon, "not only the teachers but also the Loveland congregation, met together and listened to an excellent speech by Mr. Tom De Vries on 'Discipline in the Christian Home and School.'" That speech has, subsequently, appeared, as you know, in the *Standard Bearer*, and, subsequent to that, has been used as the basis for discussion in one of the monthly Sunday evening discussion group meetings, attended by various members of First Church.

The convention, apparently, was a very worthwhile thing. Miss Hoekstra expressed the confidence that "God uses this as a means for the upbuilding of the teachers to further instruct in the fear of His Holy Name." And, according to Mr. Kalsbeek, "we were again brought face to face with our overwhelming responsibilities of instructing and correcting His children. He directed us to acknowledge our total inability of fulfilling this difficult task in our own strength."

D.D.