

**The
Standard
Bearer**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Editorial:

“Preaching and Historical-Critical Research”

Feature:

Pentecostalism in the Light of the Bible

All Around Us:

“Who In The World”

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Meditation**The Spirit of Adoption**

Rev. M. Schipper

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Romans 8:15, 16

Not the spirit of bondage!

But the Spirit of adoption, you have received!

And concerning the certainty of His reception there can be no doubt, for the apostle produces the evidence as it becomes manifest in us — that Spirit in us cries, "Abba, Father"; and He bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

Oh, indeed, there is another spirit that was manifest, also on the day of Pentecost, the spirit of bondage again to fear. That spirit was operative in the hearts of those who were busy in the temple with their sacrifices, which could never take away sins, which left the worshippers bound in the shackles of the law with its ordinances.

Not that spirit have you received!

For you have been delivered from the bondage of the law, through the sacrifice of Christ. The law and its bondage has no more dominion over you. You stand now in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free.

But you have received the Spirit of adoption!

The Spirit of freedom of sons!

Such is the thought which the apostle develops in our text and its immediate context, which is but a delineation of the main thought in this chapter — the victory song of faith!

You are the living children of God, who have received the Spirit of Life. You have been freed from the law of sin and death. And though the body must still enter death, the Spirit of Him Who raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies; and with body and soul we shall live with Christ. God is for us. Nothing can be against us. Yea, nothing shall separate us from the love of God. We shall live!

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God!

Children of adoption!

Not natural children of God are ye!

God has but one natural Child — His Only Begotten! Eternally generated of the Father, and His express image! In Whom the Father beholds eternally His likeness. In Whom all the fulness of the Father dwells. Expressing all the infinite perfections of the Godhead. In Whom the Father eternally finds His delight. No more natural children does the Father have than His Only Begotten Son.

Yet it pleased the Father that He should have other children!

And these He purposed to obtain through the legal and spiritual process of adoption!

Natural children ye were of your natural father, Adam; and with your first father and through his fall into sin, you became children of darkness, children of wrath. Children ye were, naturally, of your first father, who was created originally in the image and likeness of God; but who lost that image through his disobedience, and was converted into the image of the prince of darkness. Children, ye were, who were conceived and born in sin, with natures totally depraved, incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all evil. Hopelessly bound you were in the shackles of sin and death.

But now you have received the Spirit of adoption!

Not because you have opened your hearts to receive Him! Nor was it so that you received Him because you fulfilled certain conditions necessary to make your salvation possible!

God forbid! How could that ever be? How could children of darkness and of wrath ever do that? That is utterly impossible! Fact of the matter is, that when you received Him, your natural, your Arminian god,

perished with the act.

— No, rather did that mighty Spirit of the risen and exalted Lord, that Spirit of Pentecost come into your heart which He first regenerated and renewed. He laid hold on you whom the Father had adopted, for whom the Father had already made out the adoption papers and signed them with the pen of blood, the blood of His Only Begotten Son. And with that regenerating grace, whereby you were given a new heart, you were also given a true, a saving faith, whereby you subjectively, with all the other children He adopted, were enabled consciously to embrace Him as the Spirit of adoption.

This is the wonder of Pentecost!

For then the Spirit was poured out over the church of Christ and into the hearts of believers; and He abides in the church and dwells in the believers whom it pleased the Father to adopt. He is the Spirit of adoption, that is, the Spirit Who works out the adoption in us. That Spirit you have received only after He first came into your heart.

Children of adoption ye are, and therefore children of God!

Heirs of God, and with Christ, His Only Begotten! Christ is become our elder brother, and with Him we are given all the rights and privileges of sons!

But that is not all. There is much more that is implied in our adoption. In natural and legal adoption of children, children come into our homes who were born of other parents. These children partake of the nature and characteristics of their natural parents, not of the nature and characteristics of the parents who adopt them. As much as adopting parents may desire that their adopted children would look like them and reflect their likeness, they cannot change these children. But wonder of wonders! When God adopts us He transforms us into His image, by conforming us to the image of His Son, so that spiritually we begin to reflect the very image of our heavenly Father.

Marvelous grace!

God adopts children who show forth His likeness!

All this is the fruit of the reception of the Spirit of adoption!

And that is what that Spirit witnesses in us!

He beareth witness with our spirits! That is especially His work, namely, to witness. He has nothing to say of Himself; but what He heareth the Father and the Son speak, thereof only He speaks. For He searches out the deep things of God. And these things God reveals unto us by His Spirit. (I Cor. 2:10). No man knoweth the things of God, but by the Spirit of God.

And what does the Spirit say?

Oh, blessed Spirit! Listen to Him speak!

This is what He says. He witnesses that we are children, the children of God! Mystically He testifies in us to our spirits. Not, you understand, with a false

mysticism. Not with some spiritual mutterings which no man can understand. Not with some vain gibberish which gets hold of you so that you get all excited with some emotional vanity you cannot at all explain. Those who make this claim talk of another spirit than the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of adoption. Nay, rather, always the language of the Spirit is the testimony of the Bible, of which He also is the infallible Author. Never apart from the Scriptures does the Holy Spirit speak!

But what is His testimony?

That God has loved us from before the foundation of the world; that He has chosen us in Christ Jesus to be His people; that He has redeemed us through the blood and sacrifice of His Only Begotten Son; that the raised and exalted Son in our nature has received the Holy Spirit without measure at God's right hand; that the Son poured out His Spirit into the church on Pentecost; that that Spirit abides with us as the true Comforter Who will also lead us into all the truth; and that it is that Spirit Who testifies with our spirits that we are now become the children of God and co-heirs with Christ of all things. Moreover, He reveals to us that when His work shall be finished in us, we shall appear before God, and we shall see Him as He is. In body and soul we shall be completely transformed into His perfect image. Such is the testimony of the Spirit as He witnesses within our spirits.

And that testimony within us causes our spirits also to witness!

And what may that witness be?

Abba, loving Father!

It makes no difference from whence these children come naturally; whether they come from the Jew or the Gentile, they both speak the same language, when

it comes to acknowledging their adopting Father. For such is evidently the significance of this sacred designation, mentioned first in the Hebrew, and then in the Greek.

All together their spirits respond to the witness of the Spirit within their spirits; with ecstatic wonderment they all cry out: Father!

Understand well, also the children of God have nothing to say of themselves. What they have to say is by inspiration of the Spirit within them. Note how the text emphatically expresses this: whereby we cry namely, by the Spirit Who works in us the adoption — we cry, “Abba, Father!” And the reason for this must be that when these children of adoption respond to the work of the Holy Spirit in them, that response also must be entirely the work of God in them.

Then, it also follows, that the cry, “Abba, Father,” is not merely an acknowledgment that God is our Father; but at the same time the expression is intended as praise and adoration of Father.

In that light, how meaningful becomes the cry!

Wonderful, loving Father!

How great Thou art, that Thou couldst have had such infinite inclinations of love and mercy so as to incorporate us into Thy family, and to make us to become Thy sons and daughters!

And when we look at ourselves, our Father, how could it ever be that of such unfit material we should be made to reflect Thy perfect image? All we will ever be able to say in response to Thy eternal love towards us is:

“Father, we love Thee, only because Thou hast first loved us!”

“Abba, loving Father!”

Editorials

Editor's Notes

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

By the time this appears in print, we are assured, Volume 3 of *The Triple Knowledge, An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*, will at long last be available — at the price of \$8.95. This means that the entire reprinted set is now available. For those who have not purchased the volumes separately, the complete set can be purchased for \$24.95. And, by the way, these books would make a fine graduation gift for someone! If you hurry, you can get them before most graduation dates!

We call special attention to two articles in this issue. First of all, we mention Prof. Hanko's critique of Key '73 and of the book *Who In The World?* Secondly, we call attention to Rev. Decker's first (of two) article on Pentecostalism. Read these for yourselves, and be instructed. And when you have finished, pass them on to a concerned Christian Reformed friend. Or better still, send that friend a gift subscription under our TEN for TWO introductory offer.

"Preaching and Historical-Critical Research"

In our previous editorial about Prof. Dr. Klaas Runia's inaugural address on the above subject, we saw that at the outset Dr. Runia adopts a dualistic view of Scripture and makes room for what he calls criticism in a good sense by pointing to an alleged "humanness" of Holy Scripture, *a la* Dr. Berkouwer. We pointed out, however, that already at this point he fails to distinguish successfully this criticism in an alleged good sense from criticism in an evil sense. He fails to show how anyone can engage in criticism without sitting in judgment above that which he criticizes. This is a crucial point, I believe, in Runia's address; and it is one which can be traced through the entire address. At no point does he show how it is possible to engage in historical-critical research and at the same time to maintain the absolute, divine authority of Scripture. He tries, in a measure, to maintain both; but he fails to reconcile the two. And it is our contention that the two are fundamentally incapable of being reconciled.

Dr. Runia, however, insists that such historical-critical research is absolutely necessary for both theologian and preacher, (I translate):

All this, then, means at once that today no one can escape this historical research, also not the preacher. He may not be a professional theologian, but as soon as he opens his Bible and bows over his text in the preparation of his sermon, especially if it is a text from the historical parts of Scripture (but certainly not exclusively in such portions!), he confronts the question: what is the historical quality (*gehalte*) of this text? This question is not simply answered by the fact that he as Reformed preacher believes that this text is a text from the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit. Of course, this is of great importance for his approach to the text. It means, among other things, that he comes to this text with deep reverence. Still more, in the faith that in this text, as in the entire Scripture, he has to do with the trustworthy Word of God. He also knows that it is his task to pass on to the congregation the specific message of this specific text as God's Word. But the acceptance of inspiration does not solve the historical problems. It remains the task of the theologian — both the professional theologian and the preacher-theologian — to ask: what factuality is here imparted, and how is this factuality imparted?

It is plain that the posing of *these* historical questions touches the basis of the entire Christian message and of the entire Christian faith. The Christian faith is after all an 'historic' faith, in this sense, that it is founded upon definite historical facts. C. H. Dodd says in his book *History and the Gospels*: "Christianity rests on the affirmation that a series of events happened in which God revealed himself in action for the salvation of men. . . . Christianity does not repudiate the revelation of God in nature or spiritual experience. But Christianity as based on the

O.T. and N.T. finds the primary field of Divine Revelation in History because it is the field of Divine Action. If God is the Maker and Ruler of all Mankind, there is a sense in which his action may be discovered anywhere in History. But this is not what Christianity means primarily by affirming that God is revealed in history. . . . Christianity takes the series of historical events recorded and reflected in the Bible from the call of Abraham to the emergence of the Christian Church and declares that in those series the ultimate reality of all history is controlled by the supreme event of all — the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This valuation of the series is not imposed on it from without, but is an integral part of history itself."

This proclamation, however, does not come directly out of heaven to us, but is transmitted to us through a number of documents which are written by a great number of authors and date from widely different ages. In other words, it comes to us through the means of historical documents which as such in principle stand open for so-called historical-critical research as this takes place according to the historical-critical method.

A few remarks are in order here.

In the first place, it is very plain that Runia here insists upon the inescapable necessity of historical-critical research. The reader should not be confused, by the way, by Runia's interchanging of the terms *historical research* and *historical-critical research*. The former can refer to what is frequently called "the historical method" of exegesis. This is a proper part of the sound, believing exegetical method. It simply means that the exegete takes into account the historical setting, background, circumstances, etc., of any part of Scripture *as these are set forth by Scripture itself, and in so far as Scripture itself makes plain their significance*. This, however, is by no means the same as historical-critical research. The former is recommended by any Reformed teacher of hermeneutics. But the latter is carefully distinguished by almost every sound text-book on hermeneutics from the so-called grammatical-historical method. And the fundamental difference lies exactly in the word "critical." Runia wants historical *criticism*! But it is deceptively inaccurate to speak of this as merely "historical research."

In the second place, here is an example of a deceptive ambivalence toward the authority of Scripture which is so often characteristic of those who claim to have a "high view" of Scripture but who want to make concessions to higher criticism. It is a "Yes . . . But" position. Yes, the text is part of the Spirit-inspired Word of God. Yes, this is of great importance in one's approach to the text. Yes, it implies deep reverence in approaching the text. Yes, it

means that one is dealing with the trustworthy Word of God. BUT this acceptance of inspiration does not solve the historical questions! Even apart from this miserable two-handedness, it should be noted that there are certain things Runia does *not* say in this paragraph. He does NOT say that the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant. He does NOT speak of unconditionally bowing before the authority of Scripture, but only of "deep reverence." I claim that no Reformed man should speak this kind of language.

In the third place, Runia uses the worn out "red herring" that the Bible "does not come directly out of heaven to us." Now no one in his right mind has ever claimed this, especially not among Reformed theologians. In fact, any Reformed theologian will not only recognize the fact that Scripture came to us through "holy men" and over a period of many centuries; but a sound Reformed theologian will even emphasize that this enhances the *wonder* of Scripture. But why, pray tell, do theologians who want to make room for a "human element" in Scripture and for a certain amount of historical criticism keep on talking about this? It is a belittling of Scripture's divine authorship, nothing less. And, if it does not mean that Scripture's divine origin and authority and infallibility are called in question, then how in the world can the conclusion be drawn that Scripture is "in principle" open for historical-critical research? This Runia never explains; and he *cannot* explain it.

At this point in his oration, Dr. Runia enters into a description and criticism of the method of historical-critical research. He points out that the method has its philosophical basis in the Enlightenment, according to which the wonder was excluded. He shows that the Enlightenment and the historical-critical view have a radically different view of reality and of history than does the Christian faith. And while the emphasis in this section – in which he also criticizes several modern theologians of the critical school – is not sharply on the faith-unbelief antithesis and is not sharply formulated in terms of the authority and infallibility of Scripture, nevertheless, on the whole his criticism at this point is rather well made. At least, for the purposes of this critique, I would not fault it.

What is inexplicable to me is the fact that after all this, Runia does an about-face, and writes: "All this does not mean at all that he (the Christian) may not investigate this history, which is proclaimed in Scripture, according to the historical method which we previously sketched briefly. But it means that this method must be employed now in the context of the concept of reality derived from Scripture *itself*." However, Runia fails completely to show how this is possible. He fails to show how there is room for historical criticism in a Scripture which is above all criticism.

But yet there can be no doubt about it that Runia wants real criticism. For on page 18 he becomes very specific, and writes: "This does not mean that he (the preacher) has it very easy and need not conduct any historical research. On the contrary, he has to do with historical documents, *and he has to use the various techniques which in the course of years have been developed in historical-critical research. All the usable critical techniques: those of textual criticism, literary criticism, form-historical criticism, redaction-historical criticism, and whatever more there may be, stand in principle at his disposal.* (italics added) Of course, he will have to use them within the frame of Biblical presuppositions. But within that frame, then, he *must* also use them."

It is plain, therefore, what Runia wants. He wants genuine criticism.

But once more, he fails utterly to show how this is possible under a Reformed view of Scripture. With the exception of textual criticism, which is a legitimate theological science and which Runia has no right to lump together with the techniques of higher criticism, Runia is trying to mix fire and water! But he never shows how they can be mixed. Nor can he show this! If he wants the fire of the Spirit, he must throw the cold water of rationalistic criticism away; and if he insists upon the water of criticism, he must sacrifice the fire of the Spirit in the Scriptures!

Nor must Runia, as he tries to do at the conclusion of his address, attempt to say that he is in the line of the Reformers. While he concedes that the Reformers did not know of the modern methods, he claims that his position represents a contemporaneous advancement of what the Reformers did in the 16th century. He even claims that Calvin "certainly was not un-critical in his approach to Scripture," – something for which I would like explicit proof!

For my part, I prefer the position stated by Dr. Robert Preus, who is engaged in a controversy about historical criticism in the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. This is in a Lutheran context, to be sure. But on the doctrine of Scripture Luther and Calvin stood together. And here is what Dr. Preus writes in answer to a Dr. Arthur Repp:

Brother Art assumes that the historical-critical method can be used with "Lutheran" presuppositions, a Great Myth which I think must have its origin on this campus (Concordia Seminary, H.C.H.). But this is methodologically impossible. To my knowledge no reputable scholar outside our circles has ever suggested the possibility of such a procedure. Why? Because the historical-critical method with the presuppositions peculiar to it is incompatible with Lutheran hermeneutics (as elicited from our Confessions). To impose Lutheran presuppositions (gathered, I presume, from our Confessions) upon the historical-critical method would eo ipso destroy the foundation underlying the

method and the method itself. Let me give an example. Historic Lutheranism in its Confessions holds to the divine origin of Scripture and of biblical doctrine. The historical-critical method holds to the human origin of Scripture and of biblical doctrine. It is simply not possible that two such totally contradictory principles as these, each essential to a certain way of approaching Scripture and doing exegesis, can be used together and consistently by an exegete. Either he must deny a presupposition essential to the entire historical-critical enterprise or he must so radically modify the sola Scriptura authority principle of historic Lutheranism as to

abandon it altogether as a *working* principle. (*Christian News*, April 17, 1972, page 6)

According to Preus, no reputable and consistent practitioner of the historical-critical method today would or could operate faithfully and consistently with these Lutheran principles as he carries out the exegetical task. I would add: the same is true of Reformed principles of Holy Scripture.

Dr. Runia cannot have things both ways. He must choose.

Or is it more correct to say that he has chosen?

Feature

Pentecostalism in the Light of the Bible (1)

Rev. Robert D. Decker

Perhaps no movement has made more of an impact on the church world than Pentecostalism. Certainly no movement has done so in the last ten to twenty years. "The growth of the Pentecostal movement in . . . the United States has also been impressive, particularly the increment in mission of the Assemblies of God, which is reported to be building one new church a day in America and to be supporting over seven hundred and fifty overseas missionaries on a missionary budget of over seven million dollars, in addition to maintaining the largest number of Bible schools in the world today." (Frederick Dale Brunner, *A Theology Of The Holy Spirit*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1970 p. 25) Brunner goes on to say: "In terms of simple numbers international Pentecostalism reports the largest number of adherents in the United States (about three million), Brazil (two million), Indonesia (one million), Chili (nearly one million), and South Africa (one half million) usually listed in that order. Numerically, at the very least, the young Pentecostal movement has plowed a broad furrow into the first two-thirds of the twentieth century and reaped success," p. 25.

In addition to the Pentecostal Churches there is a related movement which has come to be called "Neo-Pentecostalism." "Less than twenty years ago, Brumback (Carl Brumback, a Pentecostal, R.D.) confessed: 'We might as well face the facts; speaking in tongues is not acceptable anywhere except in the Pentecostal movement.' This statement could not be made today, because speaking in tongues is *now* being accepted as part of normal, personal and church life among Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and even Catholics. This outburst of tongues among the historic denominations has been called the New Penetration, the New Pentecostalism,

Charismatic Renewal (or Revival), and the modern tongues movement. Both liberal and conservative churches, schools, mission boards, and publications have felt the impact of this new movement . . . Thus it becomes important for every believer to understand this new manifestation of tongue speaking." (Robert G. Gromacki, *The Modern Tongues Movement*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. Philadelphia 1967) We might add that the Reformed community of churches both in this country and abroad has not been unaffected by Pentecostal inroads.

Tongue speaking (and other miracles and signs) did, of course, occur in the New Testament church. We find references to this in Mark 16, the book of Acts, and I Corinthians 12-14. It is noteworthy, however, that from A.D. 100 to 1900 tongue speaking virtually disappeared and is not to be found in the mainstream of the church. It is found among the Montanists in the second century and in various other minority groups and sects. (There is no space for a study of the history of the movement. I would urge the reader to consult Brunner's book for an excellent and detailed history of Pentecostalism.)

Pentecostals themselves explain this phenomenon (the virtual disappearance of tongue speaking and other miracles and gifts from the mainstream of the church) as due to a lack of faith in or rejection of the Holy Spirit by the church. Brunner quotes David duPlessis, a leading Pentecostal, as writing: "The Holy Spirit continued in control until the close of the first century, when He was largely rejected and His position as leader usurped by men. The results are written in history. The missionary movement halted. The dark ages ensued." (Brunner, p. 27) Pentecostals feel that their movement is a new Reformation, "a worthy and

perhaps even superior successor to the Reformation of the 16th century and to the English Revival of the 18th, and nearly always as a faithful reproduction of the apostolic movement of the first century." (Brunner, p. 27) Pentecostals are convinced that the way back to the church's experience and power is via Pentecost, i.e., by way of the baptism *in* or *with* (not "by") the Holy Spirit with its accompanying signs and miracles. The way back to real, vibrant christian life and service is to have the experience of the Apostles at Pentecost, to be "filled with the Holy Spirit" (cf. Acts 2). Without the experience the believer, and consequently the church, will remain impotent, virtually dead.

It is out of this conviction that Neo-Pentecostals especially level a very serious charge at the non-pentecostal churches and believers. They claim to hold fast to the "faith of the fathers," the confessions of the church. Only, they claim to have something more, something in addition to the traditional teachings and practices of the church. And, that something more is the Baptism in the Holy Spirit with its resultant power and gifts which make the christian and the church *effective* in service and life. This, they say, the non-pentecostals lack; and, therefore, the churches today are guilty of *dead orthodoxy*. They are lifeless, powerless, ineffective and busy themselves sweeping around dusty dogmas. They are very seriously disobedient to the King of the Church, Christ.

While we cannot go into all of the implications of this charge, this much must be said. The Pentecostal (neo) must understand that his view of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit radically affects his understanding of the truth of the Scriptures: his view of God, first of all (The Holy Spirit is God!); of God's Christ, and therefore of the doctrine of salvation, particularly the Spirit's work of applying the merits of Christ in the elect — regeneration, calling, faith and conversion, justification, sanctification, preservation. And his view necessarily affects his understanding of the truth of the infallible inspiration of the Bible.

Into all of this we cannot go. What we want to do is examine the key passages of Scripture in Acts and I Corinthians especially to see if the Bible teaches that the miracle of Pentecost, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit as evidenced by tongue speaking is to be repeated, experienced, and sought by believers today. It is at this point that Pentecostalism stands or falls.

Finally, by way of introduction, in the making of this speech I am indebted to Brunner and Gromacki cited above. Dr. Anthony Hoekema of Calvin Seminary for his book, *What About Tongue Speaking?* (Eerdmans); the Rev. George Lubbers for an excellent exposition of I Corinthians 12-14 found in the *Standard Bearer*, vols. 33 and 34; Pentecostals which I've consulted are Dr. J. A. Schep, *Spirit Baptism And*

Tongue Speaking According To Scripture; John L. Sherrill, *They Speak With Other Tongues*; And A. G. Dornfeld, who wrote a pamphlet entitled, "Have You Received The Holy Spirit?"

The key concept in Pentecostal belief is: "The Baptism in, or with, the Holy Spirit." We find this in all four Gospel accounts; Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:18, Luke 3:16, and John 1:33. In these passages we learn that John the Baptist baptized with water unto repentance but prophesied that "One mightier than I," Christ, was coming after him and would baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. In Acts 1:5 Jesus speaks of the fulfillment of this prophecy: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." In verse 8 of the same chapter the Saviour goes on to explain: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." For this reason Christ instructs His disciples to "... wait for the promise of the Father, which ... ye have heard of me," (vs. 4). The disciples upon the ascension of the Lord and in obedience to His command returned to Jerusalem, and together with the women and Jesus' brethren "continued with one accord and in prayer and supplication," (vs. 14). Two of the Gospel accounts mention this also. Luke 24:36,ff, teaches that the disciples were commanded to "tarry in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (This is the origin of the Pentecostal "tarrying meeting," where seekers of the Spirit baptism pray and tarry for the baptism in the Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues.) Mark 16:14-20 informs us that Jesus promised that signs would follow them that believe, casting out devils, speaking in new tongues, drinking deadly things and not being hurt, taking up serpents, laying hands on the sick so that they recover.

All this finds its fulfillment in Acts 2:1-4 when on Pentecost they were "all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." And, say the Pentecostals, it happened repeatedly throughout the book of Acts: to the Samaritans (Acts 8), Cornelius and his house (Acts 10), and those baptized with the baptism of John (Acts 19). And most Pentecostals believe there were more such experiences, as for example Paul's conversion.

Pentecostals call this or regard this baptism in the Spirit a *crisis experience* of the full reception of the Holy Spirit. They claim this crisis experience is elsewhere described in the Bible as: to be "filled with the Spirit," Acts 2:4, Eph. 5:18; to "receive the Spirit," Acts 2:38; to be "sealed by the Spirit," Eph. 1:13, "anointed with the Spirit," II Cor. 1:21. It must be clearly understood at this point that Pentecostals speak not so much of a *doctrine* of the Holy Spirit or

Spirit baptism, but of the *experience* of that. They teach that the experience of the apostles and early Christians can, does, will, and should occur in the lives of believers today. The point is that the experience of the early church is *normative* for the experience of Christians now and always.

Pentecostal belief contains three essential elements (admittedly this is but a sketch). First, they teach that distinct from and following and in addition to the new birth (regeneration) and conversion is the baptism in or with the Holy Spirit. (Note that Pentecostals generally have an Arminian conception of mediate regeneration which is identified with conversion, not a Biblical conception of immediate regeneration and its fruit in daily conversion.) They teach that all Christians are through the new birth and conversion baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit, but not all Christians are baptized by Christ into the Spirit. Thus, according to Pentecostal belief, when we are born again and converted, we receive Christ; but there is *more*, and that *more* is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is the baptism in or with the Spirit. When in addition to being baptized into Christ by the Spirit we are baptized by Christ with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit comes personally into our hearts and lives, bringing to us the *charismata* (literally, "grace things"), the gifts and power that we need for personal growth and service to God in the Church and in the world.

Secondly, this baptism in or with the Spirit is evidenced initially by speaking in other tongues. It is correct and fair to say that Pentecostals, with perhaps a very few exceptions, would agree that the speaking in tongues is not mere gibberish or unintelligible sounds, but a speaking in real languages, which, however, are unknown and unlearned by the speaker. Certainly that is the case with the sign of tongues as it occurs in the Scriptures both in Acts and in I Corinthians 12-14. When a believer is filled with or baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit so overpowers him that he is in a state of ecstasy with no control over his faculties. The Spirit

then enables him to speak in other languages the praises of Jesus. This is the sign that one has been filled or baptized with the Spirit.

Thirdly, this experience of Spirit baptism and its initial evidence in tongue speaking must be earnestly sought by believers. It doesn't just happen, conditions must be met. Consciously, fervently, actively the seeker has to do these things. Often, too, he needs the assistance of others already filled with the Spirit. These must pray for him, lay hands on him before the Spirit will come. These conditions vary, but generally they are: worship, joyous faith, earnest expectation, praise and thanksgiving, obedience, separation from sin, intense desire, baptism, asking of God, etc. Consciously the seeker must exercise himself in these things, often it becomes for him a long and intense struggle before the Spirit will fill him. But the point is that the believer must fulfill these conditions before the Spirit will come. Once having fulfilled them and having been baptized with the Spirit he must continue in these conditions so as to retain the Spirit and receive the continuing gifts of the Spirit as listed in I Corinthians 12. Pentecostals are very insistent on this; one must totally yield himself, cleanse his heart of all known sins, pray fervently before the Holy Spirit will fill him. It is not difficult to recognize the Arminian and Perfectionist influences at this point. Let it be said that the Bible *never* presents faith, obedience, regeneration, prayer, etc., as *conditions* for salvation or for receiving the Spirit. These are *fruits* of the Spirit (cf., e.g., Gal. 5) or gifts of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Pentecostal theology is to be severely and uncompromisingly condemned at this point.

The above, though a sketch, is a description of Pentecostal belief. In our next article, D.V., we shall examine the Biblical evidence in Acts and I Corinthians especially with this question: "Does the Bible teach that the Pentecostal experience of the Apostles and New Testament Church is to be repeated and sought after by believers today?"

All Around Us

"Who In The World"

Prof. H. Hanko

The title of this article is the title of a book which was published in connection with "Key '73." Written by Christian Reformed men, it is intended chiefly for the use of the Christian Reformed denomination in its participation in this program.

In our last article we discussed the "Key '73" program itself; in this present article we intend to discuss this book which was sent to the *Standard*

Bearer for review.

The purpose of the book is more explicitly set forth in the "Foreword:"

The undergirding conviction of these chapters is that every local congregation must be an effective center for God's redeeming power in the world, and that the church can best put its enormous potential into action by having goals, by knowing who it is and exactly where it is going. Written for the lay church

member, *Who in the World?* is designed as a resource material for Key '73, the North American movement of more than 100 denominations and religious groups that aims to confront every person in the United States and Canada with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Apart now from the rightness or wrongness of participating in such a broadly ecumenical movement in the cause of evangelism, one would expect that a book intended for use in the Christian Reformed Church would have some elements of distinctive Reformed truths in it to give direction to a Reformed Church in evangelism. One would expect that in such a book one would find sharp distinctions made which chart a course for the Christian Reformed Church which would set that Church apart from all the other denominations and religious groups who are participating in the movement. One would expect to find Scriptural definition given to evangelism and principles of the Reformed faith to pervade the book.

But if such is one's expectation, he is in for bitter disappointment. There is no essential reason why any denomination, no matter how liberal, could not use this book in its entirety. Even such a group as the Salvation Army (a group participating in Key '73) could not disagree with anything which is said. One looks in vain for anything Scriptural, Reformed, or Calvinistic. It is not a good book.

There are innumerable points that ought to be criticized, countless errors that ought to be pointed out, and many details so far removed from the Scriptures that one can scarcely recognize Scriptural truths in them. We have chosen to concentrate upon some of the more important points.

Before we enter into some criticism of the book, there is one comment which ought to be made about the book's use of Scripture. Perhaps this comment is even fundamental, for one's use of Scripture determines one's theology. We have in mind the fact that, while there are many references to Scripture found throughout the book, nevertheless, the book takes a very loose view of Scripture and quotes the Scriptures in a very misleading and incorrect way. For one thing, we have not been able to determine what version of the Bible was used, and the authors nowhere tell us. One gets the impression sometimes that the translations belong to the authors themselves. But these translations often do considerable violence to the Scriptures and teach something all but opposite of what the Scriptures mean to say. Secondly, the book is filled with partial quotes and texts taken completely out of their context, with the result that Scripture is made to say things which are quite different from what the Word of God teaches. Perhaps one example of this will suffice.

Through the myriad voices that came to the men of Isaiah's time, one voice came to him and said "Cry." The prophet asked "What shall I cry?" The answer was: "good news." (Isaiah 40:6, 9)

Because of this kind of use of Scripture, it is essential for anyone reading the book to check on every Scriptural quotation to find out for himself what the Bible teaches, for the book is quite untrustworthy in this respect.

The Structure Of The Church

In various places throughout the book, the structure of the Church of Christ is discussed.

In connection with this discussion, the offices in the Church are discussed, and an altogether incorrect view of the offices is given.

When the Spirit created structures, He was responding to needs. He gave gifts as they were needed, and the kind of gifts He gave were determined by the needs of the church.

The Spirit gave people to do certain types of work for the church. Since they filled these jobs regularly, we call some of these jobs offices. Note this well: offices are only designated and recognized jobs or duties. . . . pp. 106, 107

There is no mention made of the Reformed teachings concerning the offices in the Church as positions of authority through which Christ is pleased to rule His Church as the only King and Shepherd of His sheep. The offices are spoken of as "jobs." It is not surprising then that the book advocates radical change in the whole "structure" of the Church to meet modern needs. Thus we read on pp. 108, 109:

One thing is stressed here: structure is given to the church to serve a purpose. For this reason, the organization of the church in the New Testament is fluid. . . .

We notice a kind of vagueness about the way in which each gift was to be used. There was a job that needed to be done, but we do not get the impression that the job description was detailed or set out for all time. . . .

It is not clear as we sometimes think which offices were meant to be permanent and which were only for the time being. The church is probably correct in holding that the tasks of elders, deacons, and pastors are permanent. But are we absolutely sure that there is no place for healing, for prophecy, or for discerners of spirits?

If the structure is given in order to meet the needs of the church — if this is the New Testament pattern — does it not make sense for us to let needs shape the structure today? Needs change. . . . Perhaps we ought to consider the whole structure of the church in terms of whether it answers the changing needs of the people — the people of the church and the people we are summoned to reach in the world. If we think more of needs than of keeping the organization running smoothly, we will be ready to respond more swiftly to the Spirit's gifts.

With such a view of the offices in the Church the authors take less than a Reformed view of the means of grace as well. While the book insists that the preaching is the Church's most important calling (p. 41), nevertheless, the authors mean something quite

different by preaching than do the Scriptures. In the first place, the work of preaching is assigned to the Church, but not to the called ministry. For another thing, the book says nothing about the official calling of ministers of the gospel as ambassadors of Christ. (cf. pp. 44, 45) And, in connection with this, preaching is considered in terms of the use of modern communications and technology, overhead projectors, cassettes, pictures, etc.

In like manner, radical changes are suggested in the celebration of communion, changes which alter completely the Lord's Supper as a sacrament instituted by Christ for the strengthening of the faith of His people, and as a sign and seal added to the preaching to confirm the truth of the gospel.

Listening to sermons while looking at each other's backs is one thing; taking communion without looking at each other is something else. Can we break with the tradition of passing the elements of the sacrament through the pews? We might do this by serving communion twice every Sunday in small circles. Perhaps this could take place in the church fellowship hall (communion in a fellowship hall sounds right). Let a loaf of bread be passed around the circle, each person breaking off a piece. (There is nothing sacred about the neat cubes of crustless bread to which we are accustomed.) Let a cup be passed around, each person taking a sip. After this comes the hard part: each person expresses one personal concern that he asks the others to share with him — not the "missionaries on foreign fields," but something out of his own life. And then (it gets harder) let each person make one personal confession — a weakness or a sin that he needs forgiveness for from God and his brothers and sisters. Could it work? Do we have enough communion now to risk it?

Do we limit our spiritual community to "our kind of people?" If so, our communion is not of the Spirit or of faith, but perhaps of blood or color. Maybe we should plan some sort of regular meeting with the congregation nearest ours, not merely a pulpit exchange or listening meeting, but a sharing meeting, in which each group shares what the other group looks like to them. . . . If we are going to discover whether communion can cross the borders of congregations, we will have to gather together and share together. (pp. 81, 82)

With almost total disregard for the Confessions of the Church and with an attitude of "We know better than God how to operate the Church," the book advocates abandoning everything Scriptural and historically Reformed.

The Content Of The Gospel

A section of this report must deal with what the book has to say about the content of the gospel. This is not to leave the impression that the book actually discusses this subject; it does not. But from various references in the book, one can gain a certain impression of what the authors consider the content of

the gospel to be.

Before we go into this matter, it is well to note that the lack of definition on this point is a critical one. If the book is to be an aid in evangelism, one would expect that a large part of the book would be devoted to the subject of the content of the gospel and the truth which must be brought to the unconverted. But there is almost nothing of this. And, indeed, even the little that is said, is so vague and general that it can very well be accepted by any church or denomination in the whole country.

Yet we must pay attention to some items which fall under this general subject. The first of these is the fact that the book is thoroughly Arminian. A few quotes will demonstrate this.

God is *for* the world. He brings Himself to the world. This is what we confess when we call Jesus *Immanuel* — God with us! God lets the world know who and what He is, and He does for the world what needs to be done. (p. 19)

In connection with this, the book breathes throughout a spirit of universalism. Perhaps this is only hinted at in what is said; it is much more clearly evident from what is not said. Never is the gospel or its contents defined in terms of election and reprobation. Never is the gospel discussed as God's power to save His people. Never is the hardening power of the gospel mentioned. There is scarcely any oblique reference even to the antithesis — especially of the truth over against the lie. If not explicitly stated, always the impression of universalism is left.

What the gospel offers is not a self-centered dream for each individual that he will survive death. To be sure, life after death is part of it: nothing is worth anything without this. The gospel does point to a life of tearless joy, no more death, no more pain, no more destructiveness. But that is far from the whole of it. The church's message does not merely satisfy the survival instinct of every man. The church's message is hope for the *world*, the whole of it.

"We look forward to new heavens *and a new earth*, the home of justice." (II Peter 3:13) (The underlining in the quote from Peter's epistle is that of the authors.) Christianity is also earthly. God became flesh, and in becoming flesh He created the beginnings of a new earth. Good news! The whole earth is going to join the Hallelujah to God the Creator, and men will dwell in brotherhood and peace. (p. 35)

It is not difficult to detect in the above quotation the universalism, and even post-millennial overtones of modernism.

We might also point to failings in the doctrine of Scripture: the authors fail to speak of Scripture as the infallible record of God's revelation (p. 18); of an unacceptable definition of saving faith: "Faith is surely a belief that certain things are true. But faith is more: it is the life of a man opened up to Jesus Christ. It is a

matter of the open heart as well as of the convinced mind." (p. 72); of a definition of election in terms of service — a relatively ancient heresy: "Israel was called to be God's servant to the world, the witness to the freedom of God's grace and the goodness of God's will. . . . That is the idea of election that prevails in the New Testament. . . ." (p. 111). But what is eminently sad is the discussion of the meaning of Christ's atonement. This passage is so thoroughly modern that it is difficult to imagine people who claim membership in a Reformed Church writing this way.

Since we must suffer with Jesus, we must ask what Jesus' style of suffering was. His whole life, from birth to death, was styled by suffering. What made Him suffer? The answer is *people*. The needs, the tragedies, the pains, the suffering, as well as the resistance of people made Him suffer.

Jesus was involved. He was God's own way of getting at our sin and misery. We were caught as captives of the law of sin and death, and Jesus got inside our life on earth — not as a tourist sightseeing, but as a citizen of our world. This is what incarnation means. Once He was totally involved, He was vulnerable, open to hurts. And since He was really involved when suffering is epidemic, He was hurt.

Jesus did not hurt only when people savagely struck Him or when they reviled Him. He hurt *with* people. He wept when others suffered. He suffered because He was involved, deeply and personally, in their suffering lives. (pp. 136, 137)

Even when, in the next paragraph, the book talks of the fact that Christ suffered *for* people, there is no mention made of a particular atonement and no mention made that this suffering was bearing the burden of God's wrath.

But Jesus did not only suffer with people; He suffered *for* them. His was the work of atonement. "On himself he bore our sufferings, our torments he endured. . . . He was pierced for our transgressions, tortured for our iniquities . . . stricken to the death for my people's transgression." (Isaiah 53:4, 5, 8) He suffered for us as well as with us. This is our last and only recourse. What He did for us need never and can never be done again. In this His suffering is finished. "We have been consecrated, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10:10)

Our Calling

With this subject of the Church's calling the book is, of course, primarily concerned. We have not the time or space to go into detail on all that the book has to

say about this. In general it is important that we mention that the book is almost exclusively concerned about person-to-person relationships, about societies' problems. It is totally lacking in any discussion of man's calling in relationship to God. This is a false and dangerous position which leads inevitably to a serious horizontalism (which is essentially humanism) and a social gospel.

The Word of God takes hold of souls and turns them about. To take hold of a human soul is to take hold of a life, and to take hold of a human life is to take hold of the whole of society. . . .

God's Word must speak, therefore, to the sins and the needs of society. "Let justice roll on like a river and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Amos 5:24. This is God's Word — not a comforting word to a private soul, but a gauntlet laid down to a people. All of God's Word zeroes in on the injustices that afflict the people — not of Israel, but of your town and mine. If a church does not hear this, it has no right to claim that it honors the Word of God and allows it to cut like a sharp sword through the sins and to the needs of our time. (pp. 43, 44)

God's purpose is plain: to create a new humanity in Christ. The church is called to be the front-runner in His program. . . . (p. 113)

It is especially in chapter 3 that this whole matter is discussed. With a reference to the footwashing by Jesus of the disciples on the night of Christ's betrayal, the book speaks of the "sign of the towel" which the Church must bear. This is interpreted to mean that the whole Church must be servants to all men. The mission of the Church is chiefly one of allaying social problems. The deacons must lead the way in caring for needs, especially those of the blacks.

God's compassion for the violent city, born of a vision of the city as people, souls, human beings, led Him to hold the city in His arms. . . .

What about compassion for our city? Do we have compassion for the children of the city? p. 152.

Many similar quotations could be quoted almost at random in this third section of the book.

This is then the kind of evangelism which the authors of this book have in mind as the Christian Reformed Church participates in Key '73. Can any blessing of God be expected on anything which departs so completely from God's Word? How can anyone who knows the Scriptures harbor even the passing thought that good will come of this?

**Following our custom, the Standard Bearer will appear
once per month during June, July, and August.**

Question Box

As To "Coals of Fire," Rom. 12:20

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From the same Grand Rapids reader whose question we answered in our last issue I received the following question: "I also have a text which bothers me personally: Rom. 12:20. Will you please define the phrase 'Heap coals of fire on his head?' And why is that commendable?"

Reply

First of all, let us get the text in question in its context before our minds. To do this we must look at verses 19-21: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

I think it is important for the understanding of verse 20, and particularly for the understanding of the expression in question, that we understand clearly the admonition of verse 19. This is true, not because the admonition as such is not clear: for it is very plain, "avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath." But it is true from a practical, spiritual point of view; an admonition of this kind is one of the most difficult to heed because it is contrary to our every natural inclination. Our very first inclination is to do exactly the opposite of what this passage teaches us. Hence, to understand the expression about which my questioner asks, it is necessary to understand clearly and in its full thrust the admonition not to avenge ourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. And we must also understand the reason given: "for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord." Only then can we understand the admonition given in verse 20, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him," etc. This is very plain from the fact that the admonition of verse 20 follows the teaching of verse 19 as a conclusion, "Therefore..." Hence, let us briefly look at verse 19 first.

In considering verse 19, we may ask first of all: what is the idea of vengeance? And then we may answer that vengeance is a covenant idea. It presupposes the relation of friendship, of love, between God and His people. This is also the reason why the apostle introduces this admonition by the words "Dearly beloved." The reference is not to the apostle's beloved, but to *God's beloved*. And this covenant relation of love between God and His people implies, as the Scriptures also literally teach, "I will bless them that

bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." In the second place, vengeance implies *injured* love. It presupposes that as God's people we walk in the world as His beloved. We walk as friends of God, keeping His precepts and glorifying His Name. We walk as children of light. In that position and in that walk, all things are ours by right, in Christ. They do not belong to the ungodly; but they belong to us, the friends of God. We are heirs of the world. But we are persecuted for Christ's sake. The ungodly world takes everything away from us, and it causes us to suffer, leaving us no standing room in the midst of the world. It does this because it hates God, and therefore hates the friends of God. And it manifests this hatred according as and in the measure that the people of God reveal themselves as friends of God in the midst of the world. And because we are the friends of God, His covenant people, the hatred and the persecution of the people of God by the world cause the love of God to be provoked to wrath. Thus it is in history. The saints of the old dispensation suffered the reproach of Christ. And the saints of the new dispensation, even until the time of Antichrist, suffer that same reproach. And Christ Himself stands in the center of that history. He did no evil, neither was guile found in His mouth. But Christ and His people all through history are the object of the bitter enmity and reproach and opposition and persecution of the ungodly world.

And all this calls for vengeance.

What is vengeance? True vengeance is justice. It is not merely the recompensing of evil for evil. This is the idea of wrath and revenge among men. And then usually that wrath and revenge are not characterized by any justice whatsoever. But vengeance in the true sense of the word is justice. It is the execution of just wrath.

This vengeance, which is the execution of just wrath, consists with respect to the ungodly world in this, that they be dispossessed of all things, to which they laid claim all through the history of the world and of which they deprive the people of God to whom these things rightfully belong. And, secondly, this vengeance with respect to the ungodly world consists in this, that they be punished for all their hatred and persecution of the people of God. On the other hand, with respect to the godly, this vengeance, the execution of justice, implies that they be publicly justified before their enemies; and it implies that they become the possessors of all things. Such, briefly, is

the idea of this vengeance.

For this vengeance the people of God cry. It is the object of their longing. The text certainly does not mean, and cannot mean, that God's people may not long for that just revenge. Scripture never presents matters thus. Vengeance is justice, holy justice, the bringing to light of the right, for God's sake, and that through the recompensing of the enemies of God's people. And for this vengeance God's people long. David cries for such vengeance in almost all of his psalms. God's people cry day and night for such vengeance. The parable of the unjust judge teaches us this. And in the book of Revelation, the souls under the altar, who have suffered for the sake of God's Name, are presented as crying "with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" And all of history cries out for such vengeance, the setting straight of all things.

But the point is that vengeance belongs to *God*. It is God's affair. Our affair is to do well, also over against the enemies. But God's affair is that He is our covenant Friend. We are His beloved. And to take care of our rights, of our justice, is *His* concern. We therefore leave our enemies to Him for time and for eternity. "Beloved, avenge not yourselves, for that belongs to God."

This leads us to the positive thrust of verse 19: vengeance is a divine prerogative. God's alone is the vengeance. This is the reason for the "it is written" from Deut. 32:35. The apostle reminds the people of God that the ground for the admonition not to avenge ourselves lies in the declared will of God, according to which vengeance is strictly His prerogative. Vengeance belongs to Him. And not only does it belong to Him, but He will take care of it, too. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." This is true, in the first place, because this vengeance concerns God's glory. The covenant is His. Hence, God's glory, God's righteousness, God's holiness, are concerned when God's people are persecuted in the midst of the world. This is true, in the second place, because God's is the sole right to judge. Vengeance implies judgment. It implies the authority to judge and to pronounce judgment. It implies the might and the power to pronounce such judgment according to strictest justice. And it implies the power to execute that judgment and to recompense according to the just desserts of its objects. This all belongs to God. God's alone is the authority and the ability to judge. He has never delegated that to us. All judgment belongs unto God, never to us. God's alone is the ability to judge according to justice. He Himself is the standard of all righteousness and justice. And God's alone is the power to execute judgment and to recompense according to justice, to carry out His own judgment even unto the very end.

This is the ground for the negative admonition,

"avenge not yourselves." As I suggested in my introductory remarks, we are inclined to avenge ourselves, and inclined very much to do so. On the one hand, this is because of our own sinful flesh. It is the inclination of our sinful nature to do the very opposite of what this passage teaches. It is our inclination to revile when we are reviled, to do evil when evil is done us. It is our inclination to take matters into our own hands, to take the sword, to strike back when we are struck. In all this there is neither judgment, nor justice, nor recompense, but only a giving place to the devil. In the second place, we are inclined to take matters into our own hands and to avenge ourselves because it seems to us very often as though God's vengeance tarries and is delayed. We become impatient. But all such vengeance on our part is wrong because vengeance is not our right, nor is it within our ability, nor can we exercise vengeance in any way except sinfully. On the contrary, it is our calling always to do well, a calling which is concretely pictured in the words of verse 20, "if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink."

Positively the apostle admonishes the people of God, "but give place unto wrath." This expression has been given several interpretations. According to some, the apostle means that we should give place to our own wrath. Then the meaning would be that we become filled with wrath because of injustice that is done us. But we must give place to this wrath: we must not act in wrath, but wait until our wrath has cooled off. This, however, is not in harmony with the meaning of the term. To "give place" means "to make room for the full working out." Besides, sinful wrath is already itself sin. Others have explained this admonition as meaning that we must give place to the wrath of our enemies. We must not fight against the wrath of our enemies by taking vengeance against them, but we must give place to their wrath, in order to let it work itself out upon us fully. This also is impossible: for then the text would mean that we must simply offer ourselves as the objects of the wrath of our enemies.

When the text admonishes us to give place unto wrath, the idea is that we must give place unto the wrath of God. God loves us. And He is terribly angry over the injustice and the reproach and the injury done to His people. He who touches His people touches the apple of God's eye. And the point of the text is that we must make room for the wrath of God to wreak vengeance upon our enemies. We must not stand in the same place of the execution of God's wrath with them. This is exactly what we would be doing if we would recompense evil for evil. If we do that, then we become the just object of the wrath of God ourselves. Hence, the point of the text is that we must not go and stand in the way of the full working out of that wrath of God by being ourselves evil and by assuming the prerogative of vengeance which belongs to God only.

Then we are trying to do God's work, and then we become ourselves the objects of that wrath. On the contrary, we must always do well. We must bless them that curse us. We must do good to them that hate us. We must feed our hungry enemy, and give drink to our thirsty enemy. We must conduct ourselves so that in the day of judgment no one can say of us that we also did evil. Hence, we must give place to wrath, and not stand in the same place of the working out of the wrath of God as that in which our enemies stand. A concrete illustration of this idea of giving place unto wrath you have in the history of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. God's wrath struck them, so that the earth swallowed them up. But before this took place, the people were exhorted to depart from that spot, lest they also be swallowed up by the wrath of God: they had to give place to the wrath of God.

Finally, we ought to notice that the text does not merely emphasize that the execution of vengeance is an exclusively divine prerogative. But it purposes to emphasize that God also will certainly avenge His people, and that this is a ground for the exhortation not to avenge ourselves. This is emphasized not only in the last part of the quotation from Deuteronomy, "I will recompense." But it is also emphasized in the first part of the quotation, "Vengeance belongeth unto me." Literally the text is: "There is vengeance with me." That this is the emphasis is very plain from the context in Deut. 32:35. There you read very briefly and literally: "To me vengeance, and recompense." But notice the context in the very same verse: "Their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. For the Lord shall judge His people, and repent Himself for his servants." You find the same emphasis in Hebrews 10:30: "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people."

Hence, there is a ground here for the admonition. Give place to wrath. Do not stand at the place of the ungodly. Principally, turn to and stay with Christ, His cross, His resurrection. For there the thunderbolts of God's wrath will not strike. And there you find Him Who when He was reviled, reviled not again, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Let His mind be in you. For the Lord will recompense. You need not avenge yourself. You need not fear that you will not be avenged. Because the Lord will certainly and quickly and completely take vengeance, will dispossess all His and our enemies, and punish them for all their wicked oppression, we may safely leave the matter of vengeance to Him. And we may be assured that He will surely make His people in Christ Jesus heirs of all things in the new creation forever.

Now it is in the context of this very serious admonition that we find the expression about which

my questioner asks. Because vengeance belongs to the Lord, because the Lord will certainly repay, because, therefore, we must not avenge ourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, *therefore*, according to verse 20, we must do good to our enemy. We must not only not take vengeance; but we must do the very opposite: if thine enemy hunger, feed him; and if he thirst, give him to drink. And the apostle adds as a reason that in so doing "thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." This verse is also a quotation from the Old Testament, Prov. 25:21, 22: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty give him water to drink. For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee."

As to the meaning of the expression "thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head," it is evident that we have to do here with a figure of speech. And while the precise origin of this figure may not be clear, so that commentators differ about this, the meaning of the figure as such, it seems to me, is very plain. To heap coals of fire on one's head is a very graphic and concrete expression for inflicting vehement, burning pain, so that one reels and bows his head in order to escape it. But the question is: what is the meaning and the application of this figure in this particular context? What does this have to do, in the first place, with doing good to our enemies? For we must notice that the text says explicitly: "for in so doing," that is, in showing kindness to your enemy, in feeding him when he is hungry, and in giving him to drink when he is thirsty. This very action, therefore, is a heaping of coals of fire upon his head, that is, the inflicting of a vehement, burning pain. The showing of kindness is at the same time the inflicting of a burning pain. And, in the second place, the question is: how is this to be harmonized with not taking vengeance?

Some have explained this expression to mean that our enemies will be much more severely punished if we leave them in the hands of God, than if we undertake to avenge ourselves. According to them, the text is an encouragement to heap kindness and benefits on the head of the evil doer in order to aggravate the punishment with which God shall visit him. There are, I think, more reasons than one why this cannot be the correct interpretation. In the first place, this is hardly in harmony with the idea of heaping burning coals on one's head. For under this interpretation the vengeance of God which one brings down upon the enemy can be no other than the *future* vengeance. In the second place, it seems to me that this explanation is exactly contrary to the admonition not to avenge ourselves: for in this case we are doing kindness to our enemy exactly out of the motive and desire of vengeance, that is, to bring down the divine wrath upon him. And this certainly is not in harmony with the idea of doing kindness; it certainly is not true kindness when one shows this kindness out of the motive of bringing down the wrath

of God upon someone. In the third place, we must not overlook the fact that this kindness, in the light of Scripture, must not be mere outward kindness, or beneficence, but must be the manifestation of the love of Christ. For thus we are enjoined in Matthew 5 and other passages, "Love your enemies." And in the fourth place, it seems to me that this is contrary to the admonition of giving place to wrath: for in this case we ourselves by such action exactly stand where the enemy stands, that is, in the place of God's wrath by our wrong behavior and seeking of vengeance.

A second, closely related, explanation is that by heaping undeserved kindness upon an enemy "thou wilt thus bring on him the greatest pain, and appease thy vengeance, while at the same time Jehovah will reward thy generosity." This explains the text somewhat in the sense of slaying one's enemy with kindness. The commentator Delitzsch, in his commentary on the passage in Proverbs 25, writes concerning this: "Now we say, indeed, that he who rewards evil with good takes the noblest revenge; but if this doing of good proceed from a revengeful aim, and is intended sensibly to humble an adversary, then it loses all its moral worth, and is changed into selfish, malicious wickedness. Must the proverb then be understood in this ignoble sense?" We therefore reject this suggestion also as being contrary to the injunction against taking vengeance, as well as contrary to the injunction of Scripture to love our enemies.

It seems to me that the heaping of kindness upon

one's enemy, and that, too, as a one-sided manifestation of the love of God toward one who manifests hatred toward us, is like unto the heaping of burning coals on one's head, in the first place, in that it is a wholesome action, proceeding not from the desire of any vengeance, but from love. In the second place, it is an action which in its very nature, as being the very opposite of the action of the enemy and as being the opposite of what anyone would expect is something that produces burning pain in the consciousness and the conscience of that enemy. For in its very nature it completely puts to shame the hatred and the wrong doing of that enemy. As such it produces pain, just as burning coals laid on the head. It produces the wholesome consequence of the burning pain of self-accusation, and thus, either of remorse or eventually of repentance. If this action on our part is accompanied also by the grace of God, then it will lead to repentance on the part of the enemy and of his salvation. If, on the other hand, it is not accompanied by the grace of God operating in that enemy, it will lead to nothing more than self-accusation and remorse, and thus to his hardening and damnation. What the ultimate effect may be, however, is not our responsibility. Our only responsibility is that we do not avenge ourselves, but rather give place to wrath, and that therefore we show kindness to our enemies, and leave all vengeance and recompense to the Lord our God. Only thus are we not conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

Signs of the Times

"Increasing Worldliness Within the Church"

Rev. G. Van Baren

One of the signs of the end of time, says Jesus, is that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24:12). And the Word declares in I Tim. 4:1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." And we read in II Thess. 2:3, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. . . ."

I would suggest that obviously this sign also is seen today. Many instances could be pointed out. There is an increasing worldliness enveloping the church. One instance of this has caught my attention repeatedly in recent years: movie attendance — and that, too, as it was officially condoned by the Christian Reformed Synod of 1966. For years, in fact since the beginning of the movie era, the Christian Reformed Church had

condemned movie attendance. And that was during the period when movies were relatively "tame." Now, during the time that these have rapidly degenerated, the position of that church has changed. This has been tragic for the church. It has become impossible within that church to discipline one who obviously seeks the worst of this worldly amusement. Reviews of the worst sort of movie have appeared in some of the magazines and papers closely associated with that church. Nothing can now be done about it. Worldliness has simply overwhelmed many of the members. And all of this has been condoned on the basis of their decision on "common grace" and the basis of the so-called "cultural mandate" of Genesis 1:28.

The report on "Film Arts" presented to the Synod of 1966 is very lengthy. It does present some good examples of reasoning which makes the bad to appear

good. I would quote only part of the adopted recommendations on "Film Arts" to show some of this. With respect to the relationship of the Christian to the world, the decision states:

1) God created man in His image and mandated him "to have dominion over all the earth." (Genesis 1:28). This includes the cultural mandate to develop all the potentials of creation and to dedicate them to the glory of God.

2) Because sin entered the world, even the best works of man are defiled with sin, (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, Question 62), but sin is being restrained by God's common grace.

3) By God's particular grace sinners are, in principle, renewed and are restored in their three-fold office as Christians in order that they may acknowledge the Kingship of Christ and may serve Him in all their activities (Heidelberg Catechism, Question 32)

4) The difference between believers and unbelievers cannot always be detected in the products of their cultural activities, but it becomes evident in their motivation, direction, and purpose. (Romans 1:1, 2)... .

After further statements of a similar nature as the above, the decision then treats the question of the exercise of Christian liberty and points out that the "Film Arts" is a "cultural medium." Then there follows an interesting statement on the Christian evaluation of the "Film Arts." The following is set forth as guide to the church:

1) In keeping with the directives enunciated above, it is incumbent upon the mature Christian to exercise a responsible personal freedom in the use of the film arts.

2) Recognizing that the film arts are largely under the control and administration of non-Christian agencies, the Christian must exercise a Spirit-guided and enlightened discrimination in the use of the film arts.

3) The Christian should reject and condemn the message of those film arts products which sanction sin and subvert the Christian interpretation of life. (Ephesians 5:3, 11, 12)

4) A Christian may witness a dramatic presentation of the realities of life which portrays a redemptive struggle between good and evil when such a portrayal helps him in his struggle to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21) and thus makes a contribution to a more fully oriented citizenship in the Kingdom of God.

5) Responsible discrimination should also be exercised in the use of the film arts products from broadly Christian sources.

The decision condones in pious language that which in previous years it strongly condemned. Does this pious language now prove that movie attendance is good? And does the decision have its desired results: that members of the Christian Reformed community are now directed to the "good" movies by spiritual experts in the church?

"The proof," it is said, "of the pudding is in the eating." One can evaluate the "movie reviews" which are presented in papers published by institutions of this church or by men who are members of it. In the light of this, one can soon find out whether indeed "good" movies are reviewed and recommended. One can soon find out whether the membership of this denomination is guided in properly evaluating and judging the movie.

I would direct your attention to only one recent movie review in the *Reformed Journal* of February, 1972 on the movie, *Billy Jack*. I take only this one review, not because it is an isolated instance of a "bad" movie review, but because it is an example of what I have repeatedly read in the *Reformed Journal* as well as in the *Calvin College Chimes*.

The reviewed movie has been shown for a lengthy time in Grand Rapids. The reviewer points out some of these things concerning that movie:

The plot is set in motion when the fifteen-year-old daughter of the deputy sheriff (a particularly despicable tool of Posner) returns from Haight-Ashbury, where she has contracted hepatitis and pregnancy, both from unknown sources. Beaten up by her father, she flees to the reservation. Billy finds her there and brings her to the school, where she relates to other people for the first time in her life. The townspeople soon suspect where she is. They try unsuccessfully to get her back, especially after they find evidence that she is running around with one of the Freedom School students, a mystical Indian boy. After a series of confrontations, during which the schoolteacher is raped by Bernie while sunning herself after a skinny dip, the Indian boy is kidnaped, held for ransom, escapes, and is murdered by Bernie and his oafish friend Dinosaur, and the deputy sheriff is shot through the head by Billy Jack, the deputy's daughter and Billy take refuge in an abandoned church, where they are soon surrounded by dozens of state and local law enforcement officials with tear gas, bull horns, grenade launchers, and, for all we know, low-yield nuclear weapons. . . ."

The review further states:

Despite its being flawed — largely because the filmmakers try to do far too much — *Billy Jack* makes for an entertaining two hours of viewing. . . .

There are a number of four-letter words in the screenplay, but these are scattered discreetly enough so as to give the aura of realism without being offensive enough to jeopardize the GP rating. . . .

The review is concluded thus:

By raising these issues, the film serves a useful purpose only if it spurs the viewers to a more profound contemplation of them. One would not, of course, maintain that a movie ought to present us with rigorously argued treatises in ethics. Still, the danger of films like *Billy Jack*, with their intentionally wide — and successful — appeal to a youthful audience, is that viewers may go away thinking that they have gotten more than they

actually have. If high school students come away from *Billy Jack* with the idea that they have seen answers instead of questions — serious questions — the movie will have served only to advance a sort of self-indulgent notion of turned-on kids as noble savages. The trouble with that is that the emphasis usually falls on their nobility. Further reflection on the questions *Billy Jack* raises is required in order to show that naive acceptance of oversimplified moralizing can lead to savagery as well. Some of the kids who applauded the moralizing cheered the violence as well.

Perhaps the popularity of *Billy Jack* is an index of the progress of platitudinous liberalism. Quite clearly, its ideas are ideas whose time has come. That the film does not delve very far into them, then, is a criticism of it only if its "message" is being taken at face value. May I point out several things?

- 1) The review does not even once mention the name of God. Why not?
- 2) The review does not compare at all the presentation of the film with the Word of God and its requirements. There is not even the attempt to evaluate the film in any sort of spiritual manner.
- 3) Though the decision of the Synod of 1966 couches its recommendations in very pious language, the review (a fruit of that decision) does not even bother about that.
- 4) There is not one whit of evidence of that exercising of "a Spirit-guided and enlightened discrimination in the use of the film arts."
- 5) The reviewer condones sin provided it is "discreetly" done ("There are a number of four-letter words in the screenplay, but these are scattered

discreetly enough so as to give the aura of realism without being offensive enough to jeopardize the GP rating.") Do you even wonder what God would say of that? Are these "four-letter words" scattered enough so that they are not offensive to God? What has become of true Christianity?

6) After the decision of the Synod of 1966, it is evident that there can no longer be discipline of members of that denomination for worldliness in attending even the worst sort of the films of the world.

7) If this film indeed, as described by the reviewer, is the fruit of the so-called "cultural mandate," if it is indeed an evidence of the "good that the wicked do" as the third point of "common grace" suggests — then it is high time that faithful children of God arise and express their holy horror against these anti-Scriptural claims.

This is one instance of rapidly increasing worldliness which is openly welcomed within the church. Nor ought we to assume a holier-than-thou attitude in condemning the above. We confront that same worldliness. There is the temptation for our own members also to attend the movies of the world — and I have heard the charge that some have fallen into this temptation. And we face the question: what is our attitude toward television programming? Are we perhaps also guilty of that same sort of worldliness which we condemn in others? We must remember the Scriptural admonition to keep one's self unspotted from this world.

In the light of this developing worldliness, within even the church, how thankful we can be that "the Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5).

The Day of Shadows

A Shadow of Good Things To Come

Rev. John A. Heys

A shadow implies an object between that shadow and a source of light.

One approaching you from behind, when you have the sun at your back, will cast a shadow in front of you before that one catches up with you and is revealed to you.

A shadow, therefore, also declares a reality, a real object. That which does not exist cannot cast a shadow. The tree that is not there casts no shadow on the ground. But the tree in the field full of foliage produces a large and often enjoyable shade.

The shadow may be long, or it may be short, depending not only on the size of the object, but also upon the angle of the light. In the treeless and grassless

desert the pebbles and rocks will cast very short shadows even just before the sun is at its lowest point on the horizon. But the skyscrapers of man's construction skills that tower up some hundred and more stories, will cast a very long shadow as the sun sinks in the west.

Consider that the day of shadows began at the very dawn of history. Of course there were natural, physical shadows cast when the sun shone upon the trees and the creatures in the land of Eden. But figuratively speaking, as we take note of the events that happened in the day of shadows from a spiritual point of view, we find that there were shadows from the very beginning. Paradise itself was a shadow of the paradise

to come. The tree of life in the garden was a shadow of the tree of life which John sees in the new Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from God. And the cross of Christ casts its shadow down the ages from Calvary to the very feet of Adam and Eve before they were cast out of the garden. Looking in the direction of the source of the light they could see that cross, be it then dimly and without all its detail.

This means, of course, that by faith as Adam and Eve looked into the face of God, Who is Light, they saw the cross of Christ as their only hope of salvation. Christ was not yet there, and many generations would rise up and pass away before He would appear in our flesh. But His coming in Bethlehem, and particularly His cross on Calvary were evident in their shadows there in paradise. From that moment on, God's people had a Saviour towards which by faith to walk and unto Whom they could look. Even before they were cast out into the curse outside the garden and away from the tree of life, Adam and Eve had a way pointed out that would bring them to the better tree of life. They had a shadow which assured them of a reality between them and God, the Light, which would bring them and guide them back to covenant fellowship with God in the better paradise.

It also means that it is the grace of God that Adam and Eve — and we with them — had this shadow for their comfort. You have no shadow when there is no object between you and the light. But you have no shadow either when you have no light. In the dark cave all is blackness. You can be surrounded by objects and even stumble over them or walk into them. But you have no shadows until a light of some kind is produced; and then some very grotesque shadows may suddenly appear to strike terror into you. Adam and Eve had — and we with them — entered into the night of sin and death. They at first saw no shadows but only felt the cold, clammy hand of death. But God came. What a tremendously rich truth that is! God came! The Light appeared; and then it first produced grotesque and terror-producing shadows. Adam and Eve were filled with the most awful fear. Their blood pressure soared — a thing so unknown to them before. Their hearts pounded in their breasts as though their ribs would crack. God came! They heard His voice walking in the garden in the cool of the day. Their hands were icy cold with fear and tension. What would He say? What would He do? The shadows of that death which He had already predicted to them were all around them reaching out to take hold of them. Every little sound was terrifying. They who only knew peace and tranquility, who knew no tension or nervousness, were suddenly in stark terror! Suddenly they found themselves in the valley where the shadow of death is cast. They saw death coming at them with all its horrors.

But God came in His grace, and that they did not

expect. How could they? They deserved that death which cast such an awful shadow in their beautiful garden. How could they expect the holy God to come with words of peace and comfort? They could not, and they might not. Yet He came, He Who is Light and in Whom is no darkness; and He cast a shadow of the cross of Christ, and gave them eyes to see that shadow in the valley of the shadow of death.

We said that the cross cast its shadow at the very feet of Adam and Eve. It did as a very long shadow. And it is that long shadow not only because the cross is such a tremendously great reality, and one of such tremendous significance, but also because of the angle of the light: for the reality is some four thousand years away. The Light of the work of God on that accursed tree is not directly over head for Adam and Eve. It is centuries and generations away. But it is there in God's grace to assure Adam and Eve and the whole church of salvation.

In Genesis 3:21 we read, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." In that act the grace of God cast the shadow of the coming reality of that cross of Christ. In that deed the grace of God cast into a new light man's situation after his fall from righteousness and into death and the curse. God clothed them with the robes of the righteousness of Christ in a symbolic way by those skins. Therein by faith they saw the shadow of the coming cross.

There are several elements here to consider. God taught Adam and Eve that there was salvation only in the way of the shedding of blood. Coats of skin cannot be made without shedding of blood. And Adam and Eve witnessed the procedure. They must witness it, because they must seek God's face themselves by way of that cross of Christ in this symbolic act of shedding the blood of animals. They must take hold of the cross by that shadow every day by faith. You cannot with the physical hand take hold of any shadow. In faith they had a spiritual hand that took hold of the cross that cast its shadow.

Further, the shedding of blood signifies the giving up of life. It means that there must be a life taken for them to escape having their lives taken. One must suffer the punishment, if they are to escape the punishment. By faith they must begin to look for the Lamb of God Who will lay down His life for the sheep. They could only see His shadow, but by faith they must take hold of the reality, believing that this shadow speaks of such a reality and aware of the fact that God sends forth the light to bring that shadow across all the ages to their very feet.

And again, it indicates to fallen man that GOD must clothe us or we are not properly dressed so that we can stand and live before Him. Man's fig-leaf aprons must be discarded. Our works will only cover us with guilt and leave us with awful tensions and fears. God makes

our coats, our robes of righteousness in Christ by His cross. The shadow cast at Adam's feet is a shadow of grace and of divine wisdom and power. Adam and Eve were taught that the only way that they could come and stand before God in prayer was the way of being clothed with the righteousness of Christ. Hence, from then on they always built an altar and sacrificed a lamb in connection with their prayers. They came to God by way of the cross, yea, rather, by way of the shadow of that cross — still better, by that cross as they saw it in its shadow. We on this side of the cross do the same thing when we utter our, "For Jesus' sake. Amen."

But let us learn a lesson from all this, a lesson that needs to be learned and relearned every day because of our sinful flesh. It comes with such force today because of the verses that precede these words in Genesis 3:21. God in broad lines sketched out the curse that would come upon fallen mankind. He spoke of the pains of childbirth for the woman, and of the fact that her desire would be to her husband with a multiplication of her conceptions. He spoke of the hardships of man's toil among the thorns and thistles of an accursed soil, with the sweat of his face mingling with the bread he would eat. He spoke of a return to the dust in the way of suffering, pain, disease and miseries. And then we read that the shadow of Christ's cross was caused to fall at Adam and Eve's feet.

Let it be stated with all the force possible, and let it be seized by faith and held with a hand that refuses to let it go: *There is no escape from the curse without the cross!*

The unbeliever, and so often the believer in his moments of spiritual weakness, behaves as though Genesis 3:21 were not there. The way out of the pains of childbirth and the "inconveniences" and "the dangers of a population explosion" are the pill and abortion. Men see the shadows of the curse which was cast already in paradise, but they do not see the shadow of the cross. Science and invention, education and research, new medical and surgical techniques,

money and labor saving(?) devices are the natural man's way of fighting the shadows. And that is exactly what he does. He fights the shadow and not the reality that casts the shadow. He attacks thorns and thistles, sickness and disease, weariness and pain, but not SIN and guilt which must and do cast the shadow of the coming reality, which is not simply physical death but the pains and woes of the lake of fire!

But listen, as the shadows become sharper and more in focus some generations and centuries later, the psalmist writes in Psalm 103:3, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who *healeth all thy diseases.*" And somewhat later in Isaiah 53:5, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes *we are healed.*" Only in the way of God covering us with the robes of Christ's righteousness through the shedding of His blood and the laying down of His life is there any hope for the healing of any of our diseases and the removal of any part of the curse.

There is a healing of our diseases. There is victory over the grave and death. There is a sure removal of all the curse to leave no trace, no scar and no evidence of it. There are good things to come. But it all is in the way of the cross of Christ, because by it He satisfies God's justice and removes our guilt, to clothe us with the robes of His righteousness. The psalmist puts it all together so beautifully and in the right order. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who *healeth thy diseases.*" The latter cannot come without the former. And the shadow of the cross of Christ in paradise spoke of the former and was therefore a shadow of the good things to come in the paradise of which that first one was a shadow, and wherein there shall be the tree of life that cast its shadow in that first paradise. And these, paradise and that tree of life, could be shadows of an undeniable and blessed reality exactly because that cross is a reality that brings us these good things of salvation.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

Rev. H. Veldman

Calling attention to Article VIII of the Second Head of our Canons, we concluded our last article with the observation that the Arminian, too, was compelled to concede the limited or particular character of the atonement of the cross of Calvary. One may make the same observation in connection with the preaching of the promise of the gospel. The statement that "God promises salvation to everyone of you, if you believe,"

will be heartily endorsed by every Arminian or Remonstrant. The Arminian does not believe that God promises salvation to every hearer of the gospel. He believes that it is God's desire to bestow His promise of salvation upon every hearer, but he does not believe that the Lord promises salvation to every sinner. The Lord surely does not promise salvation to a sinner whether he repents or not. The Lord only promises to

save a sinner if he repents. The same also applies to the cross of Calvary. The Arminian also realizes that all sinners are not saved. This means that the blood of the cross does not blot out the sins of every sinner. The sins are blotted out only of those sinners who accept the offer of salvation which comes to every hearer of the gospel. It is true that, according to the Remonstrant, Christ died for all men and every man head for head. This means that the death of the Son of God is universal only as far as God's intention is concerned. But it is not universal as far as its efficacy is concerned. And the reason why it is not universal as far as its efficacy is concerned, why the blood of the cross does not actually blot out the sins of all sinners is simply because the saving efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ is dependent upon the will of the sinner. This is the position of the Arminian, and it is also the position of Prof. Harold Dekker of Calvin Seminary. And when the fathers of Dordt speak of the limited or particular character of the sacrifice of Christ, we must clearly understand that they are speaking of the divine intention of the living God. The cross of Calvary is particular as far as God's will is concerned. God never intended that the cross of Golgotha should extend, as far as its saving efficacy is concerned, to all men. Christ never intended to die for all men. He came into this world to save His people, and His people alone.

It is also of importance to call attention to the fact that the fathers, in this eighth article of Head II of our Canons, speak of the "quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son." Of course, also the Remonstrant will speak of the quickening and saving efficacy of the death of the Son of God. But the difference between these fathers and the Remonstrants is obvious. The Remonstrant, speaking of the quickening and saving death of the Son of God, means, of course, that the death of the Son of God quickens and saves the sinner only when he believes, and is dependent upon his faith. The Arminian, we understand, does not believe that the death of God's Son is quickening and saving in itself. He believes that Christ died for all men and for every man head for head, and that he, therefore, also died for those who perish. And this means that there is no efficacy and saving power in that death as such, because, if that death were saving in itself, none could possibly perish. But the fathers certainly do not mean this. When they speak of the efficacy and quickening of the death of God's Son they surely mean that this death possesses this quickening and saving efficacy in itself. This also explains why the fathers here speak of the most precious death of the Son of God. As far as the Arminian is concerned, this can hardly be true. According to his interpretation of the cross, the death of the Son of God is not "most precious." According to him, Christ really accomplished nothing upon the cross. But the fathers of Dordt speak of the saving

efficacy and quickening of the most precious death of the Son of God. There is indeed power, power, power in that blood! That sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ has paid for all the sins of all the elect throughout all the ages. That sacrifice has merited everlasting life and glory. That sacrifice does not depend for its quickening and saving efficacy upon the will of the sinner. The blood of Calvary does not redeem and save the sinner because he believes. The sinner believes because Christ redeemed him upon the cross of Calvary. Our faith is never a condition for our salvation, but it ever remains the fruit of Christ's wonderful work upon the cross of Golgotha. And this is the teaching of the Word of God, as in I Pet. 1:18-20: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." And may our church continue to cling tenaciously also to this wonderful truth.

Notice, too, the distinctively particular character of this eighth article on Head II of our Canons. Permit me to quote this article once more, and the undersigned will underscore the pertinent parts:

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 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.

What a beautifully concise and distinctive statement of faith, statement of the truth. This article certainly warms the heart of everyone who loves the truth of the Word of God. The fathers here speak of the sovereign counsel and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father. And they speak very intentionally of God's sovereign counsel, and this means that this counsel of God is strictly unconditional, never dependent upon the will of any sinner. They also speak of God's most gracious will and purpose, and this means that this election is free, wholly free, an unconditional gift of the living God. In this article they also speak of the elect: that the

efficacy and quickening power of the sacrifice of Christ should extend to all the elect. Besides this, notice, please, the use of the word "alone" in this article, and also the word "only." God willed to extend the benefits of the sacrifice of Christ to the elect alone, and to redeem, effectually, out of every people, tribe, etc., all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given Him by the Father. Indeed, the fathers here give expression to the truth in a very concise, distinctive manner, and this is surely the calling of the Church of God throughout the ages. May we, too, ever remain faithful in our distinctive preaching and teaching of the Word of God!

It is also well and proper to call attention to the fact that the fathers in this eighth article speak of the certain perseverance of the saints. Notice, please, that the fathers in this article do not confine and restrict the work of God in Christ to Christ's sacrifice upon the cross. They include in this article the entire saving work of God even unto the end, concluding with the words: "Should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever." This, indeed, is very striking and instructive. We must bear in mind that the fathers, when speaking here in this eighth article of the perseverance of the saints, are discussing the atonement of Christ upon the cross of Calvary. The subject of perseverance is not treated by them until the Fifth Head of Doctrine. That this subject of the perseverance of the saints is mentioned here in connection with the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is of very great importance. How different is the conception of the Remonstrant also in this respect. He, as far as the work of God is concerned, really ends at the cross. On the cross God did for us and for all mankind what He could. He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. And now man's role in the work of salvation begins. Upon the cross God realized for all men the possibility of salvation. And now that salvation is offered unto all who hear the preaching of the gospel. The sinner must accept this offer of salvation. He must will to be saved. And the Lord will save him provided that he desires and wills to be saved.

The cross becomes a quickening and saving power only when the sinner wills to be saved through it. This, of course, is flatly in contradiction with the Word of God. In Ps. 138:8 the inspired psalmist declares: "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me; Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of Thine own hands." And this is repeated by the apostle Paul in Phil. 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." And in Phil. 2:12-13 we read: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." And this truth is also emphatically set forth by the fathers in their eighth article. It is God Who confers upon His people faith and all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit which He purchased for them by His death, faithfully preserves them even to the end, until they at last are brought free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever.

Mind you, in this eighth article all this is stated in connection with the one and perfect sacrifice upon the cross of Calvary. This means that this entire work of salvation, wholly divine, is guaranteed by that one perfect sacrifice. This is the thrust of this wonderful article. And this is rooted in the redeeming character of this sacrifice of the Son of God. Upon that cross Christ redeemed us, purchased us out of all the power of sin and of the devil, paid for all our sins, merited for us everlasting life and glory. Upon that cross all our salvation became a fact as rooted in the unchangeable righteousness of the Lord. Because of that sacrifice, also eternally, there is now no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. Because of that most precious death of God's Son, we can now say with the apostle Paul, as in Rom. 8:32: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Indeed, in the cross of Christ we glory. May that, too, ever remain the confession of our churches.

Book Review

ABORTION: THE PERSONAL DILEMMA

ABORTION: THE PERSONAL DILEMMA, by R. F. R. Gardner; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 288 pp., \$5.95. [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

The author of this book is a practicing gynecologist as well as an ordained minister of the United Free Church of Scotland. His credentials for discussing this

subject from a Christian point of view are, therefore, impressive.

The book is divided into three main sections. The first section deals with "The Abortion Scene Before And After Liberalizing Legislation." Legislation liberalizing abortion was passed in Great Britain in

1967, and the author discusses what effect this legislation has had on the situation in Great Britain. While this section is particularly of value for those living in the British Isles, it does offer some insights into what one may expect when such legislation is passed in our own country. And the prognosis is not good.

The second section deals with "The Ethical Question: Is Abortion Ever Justified?" It is, of course, this section which is of particular interest to us. And the author has some interesting and valuable material presented. Going out from the viewpoint that the Scriptures are authored by the Holy Spirit and are normative for life, as the objective standard of God's will, the author condemns all situation ethics and the role this has played in the abortion controversy. He also approaches the problem of abortion from the viewpoint of whether the fetus is a soul from the moment of conception. This he answers negatively; and, as a result, condones abortion in some cases on grounds other than saving a mother's life.

The third section deals with "The Medical And Social Question: Is Abortion Justified In This Case?" In this section such questions are discussed as whether abortion is justified in the case of an unwanted child, an illegitimate pregnancy, the possibility of a deformed or retarded child, etc. He also looks at the problem from the viewpoint of the effects of abortion upon the mother or others who may be involved. In these cases too Gardner condones abortion in some circumstances.

We cannot agree with the author's conclusions in this book by any means. Perhaps at especially three points the book falls short: 1) It fails to reckon sufficiently with sin, which enters into the whole subject. That is, it fails to reckon with the fact that sin creates insoluble problems in life, especially outside the sphere of the Church, and that sin must be reckoned with in the whole treatment of unwanted pregnancies. 2) It fails to consider the fetus as a person from the moment of conception and fails to deal with the problem of the killing of a person. 3) It fails to apply the objective standard of the Word of God throughout, permitting social and economic grounds for abortion in some cases.

However, the book is a valuable one. Its value is due to several features. 1) It is written by a doctor who comes face to face with this problem in all its ramifications every day of the week. It is not a book written by a theoretician far removed from the problem. 2) It is crammed full of extremely valuable information on every aspect of the problem. 3) It cites many case histories which help to put the problem in the glaring light of every day life.

The book is recommended therefore. It is valuable reading for anyone who wishes to make a thorough study of the problem. But its conclusions are not always correct.

The Annual Young People's Society Convention will be held, the Lord willing, July 24 through July 27 at the YMCA Camp, near Estes Park, Colorado. The theme of the Convention is "BEHOLD HE COMETH!" Speeches concerning this topic will be given by Rev. R. Decker, Rev. D. Kuiper, and Rev. R. Moore. Business meetings, discussion groups, and athletic activities are being arranged. Those planning to attend should inform the Host Society as soon as possible through the local Young People's Society or individually. The Young People of Loveland encourage you to attend.

The Host Society
Loveland Protestant Reformed Church
Loveland, Colorado, 80537

25TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On the 23rd of May, 1972, the Lord privileged our beloved parents, MR. & MRS. ANTHONY DE YOUNG to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

With them, we thank God for His grace toward them in the years past, and are thankful for the covenant love and instruction which they have given to us. We pray that the blessing of the Lord may continue to be with them in the future.

Their children:
Mr. & Mrs. Jozef Postma
Mr. & Mrs. Meindert Joostens

South Holland, Ill.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 27, 1972 our dear parents
MR. & MRS. CHARLES E. KREGEL
celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary.

We thank our covenant God for preserving them for each other and for us these past years. We pray that they may continue to experience God's blessing in their future years together.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Velthouse (Mary)
Ellen
Charles
David
Laura
and one grandchild



News From Our Churches

Many of the bulletins of our churches include, when space allows, quotations from the confessions or from the works of various church fathers, or, perhaps, a short poem. I have, on several occasions, used some of that for this column. On one such occasion I made the mistake of referring to the quotations as fillers. One of our western ministers suggested to me that "we use quotes from the fathers, reformers, other ministers, which make a particular point in connection with one of the sermons." I have before me a number of not very recent Kalamazoo bulletins which illustrate the truth of that. Let me quote from a few.

"Temporal things are as the mirage of the desert," in connection with a sermon entitled, "Not by Bread Only." "Peace and rest are two names for a flower which buds on earth but is only found full blown in heaven," in connection with a sermon entitled, "Peace, a Position and a Condition." "Not a particle of boasting can be admitted, because not a particle of work is admitted into the covenant of Grace," with a sermon entitled, "Boasting Denied - Faith Exalted." "The New Creation in the crown of all the works of God," with a sermon, "Raised to a New Life." "Take Christ to be the sole Savior of your soul," with a sermon, "Grace Overflowing Great Sin."

Those were a few of the shorter ones. The point is obvious - these bulletins were designed, not to be read through, but to be meditated on. "Fillers" they most decidedly do not contain.

The following interesting item comes from the bulletin of our Doon Protestant Reformed Church: "Rev. Moore was asked by our Reformed Witness Committee to write articles for the Doon Press, to be printed every other week for a trial period of six months."

In a similar vein, there's the following, from the bulletin of our Holland congregation, of which Rev. Heys is the pastor:

"Beginning June 4, D.V., our Church Publication Committee will sponsor a 15 minute radio broadcast over WZND-FM, Zeeland (99.2 on the FM dial). The program will at first be at 4 P.M., and one Sunday a month will be set aside for answering questions that will be requested and sent in. The program will be called The Reformed Heritage Hour and will set forth the rich heritage of truth of the Reformed Faith. It will be the radio voice of our congregation and the meditations are designed to set forth in clear and simple way the truth that now sets our denomination apart from what is commonly preached today as the gospel."

End-of-the-season league meetings and mass

meetings included some of the following topics: "The Trend to Use Modern English in Prayer and Bible Translation," by Rev. C. Hanko, for the Eastern Ladies League; "The Authority of Scripture," by Rev. Van Baren, for the Mr. and Mrs. League; "True Peace," by Rev. Moore, for the Western Ladies League; "Tongue Speaking," by Rev. Decker, for the League Meeting of Men's Societies.

On April 28 the Senior Society of First Church presented a Talent Program in the Hope School gymnasium. Featured in the program were, among other numbers, vocal solos, saxophone solos, readings, quartets, a flute duet, a piano solo, a guitar-harmonica solo, and a collection to help defray Young People's Convention expenses.

The students of our Edgerton school traveled to Doon for a combined chapel exercise at which Rev. Kortering spoke, and to which the Doon congregation was invited.

I have, yet, a couple of items of interest which have been submitted by our Business Manager. One of them was accompanied with the suggestion that the information "could be included in your column whenever you are hard-pressed for news." Well, "hard-pressed for news" is one thing I haven't been, lately, thanks to the faithfulness of those sending bulletins. This news from Mr. Vander Wal, therefore, has remained in my little box for something like, I'm sorry to say, three months. It's not the kind of news that is hurt by age, though, so here it is:

"Our *Standard Bearer* is really 'getting around' lately. How's this for geographical coverage? During the month of January, 1972, seventeen new subscribers have been added to the mailing list. These new additions, and other recipients recently added, are comprised of readers residing in the following areas: Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Arizona, South Dakota, California, Colorado, Washington, Montana and Florida.

"Other recent additions include residents in Canada, Switzerland, Belgium, The Netherlands, England, Korea, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and one of our Protestant Reformed Service-men stationed in Germany.

"The Business Manager of our magazine is still looking forward to sending *The Standard Bearer* to someone residing in the state of Alaska. Can the readers of this column suggest any prospective subscriber residing in that area? He will be most happy to send a 3 month's free subscription to any person in that outlying state."

D.D.