

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## Editorials

## Editor's Notes

In this issue we welcome back to our columns the Rev. B. Woudenberg. His department is a new one. In it he will reflect on some of the practical implications of the precious truth of God's covenant of friendship with His people in Christ Jesus. Follow this department from the very beginning!

\*\*\*\*\*

Two new publications will soon come from the presses. The paperback reprint of Rev. Herman Hoeksema's *Whosoever Will*, originally published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, but long out of print, is scheduled to appear about April 1. It will sell for \$1.95. This will be a limited printing; so make

it a point to get your copy promptly. Volume III of *The Triple Knowledge, An Exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism* has been promised by the end of April. This, like the other volumes, will sell for \$8.95. The three-volume set will sell for \$24.95. We are sorry for the unavoidable delay in publication, but happy that at long last this set will be complete.

\*\*\*\*\*

Speaking of publication news, Mr. H. Vander Wal has consented to act as Sales Manager for our R.F.P.A. publications. Anyone who has had experience with Mr. Vander Wal in his other capacities, as, for example, Business Manager of the *Standard Bearer*, will know of



his efficient, prompt, and cheerful service. You may, without doubt, expect the same kind of service from him when you purchase our books.

\* \* \* \* \*

For those who can read Dutch and who are interested in reading about the situation in the

*Gereformeerde Kerken*, we still have available a few copies of the two brochures by Dr. Ph. Huyser, *Het Verwordingsproces in de Gereformeerde Kerken, I & II*. You can obtain them for \$1.00 each by writing to the business office.

## TEN for TWO

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

### What Is It?

Very simply put, the "TEN" refers to ten issues of the *Standard Bearer*; and the "TWO" refers to \$2.00, the special, introductory, trial-subscription price for TEN issues, or, roughly a half year's subscription.

This introductory offer is available to anyone who is not now a subscriber to our magazine.

To make it easy to take advantage of this special offer, we have enclosed a postage free business reply envelope. All you need do is to fill in your name and address, add a \$2.00 check or money order, and drop it in the mail box; you will receive the next TEN issues of our magazine.

[A special note to our foreign readers: You will not find a postage free reply envelope enclosed, since this is not practical in our overseas mailings. You will, however, find an envelope to which you should add air-mail postage. And our trial offer is open to readers in foreign countries on the same basis: TEN issues for TWO dollars. We would especially like to encourage overseas subscriptions. You will find that our *Standard Bearer* has material of interest to people of God all over the world.]

### Why Is It?

Obviously, the purpose of this trial-subscription campaign is to gain new subscribers. Our immediate purpose is to gain *trial* subscribers. And our ultimate goal is, of course, to gain new *permanent* subscribers; in other words, we hope that once a person *tries* the *Standard Bearer* for ten issues, he will want to have the *Standard Bearer* visit his address *regularly*.

But why, you ask, do you want to get new subscribers?

The answer is: we are interested in *growth*. Our readership has been growing steadily; but we would like it to grow more rapidly.

But why?

Although it is true that as our readership grows, our cost per subscriber decreases, this is not our chief reason. Besides, we would have to *triple* our present readership in order to make the *Standard Bearer* self-sustaining. And while this would be wonderful, we are too realistic even to hope for this kind of result

from this campaign. Besides that, our financial interest is strictly secondary.

Our chief reason is that it has always been the purpose of the *Standard Bearer* and its parent organization, the R.F.P.A., to send forth a *Reformed witness*. And we are convinced that the contents of our magazine constitute such a Reformed witness — clear, distinctive, consistent, dependable, forthright, Scriptural, confessional, and with a widely varied scope, with a broad appeal to Reformed people the world over, and pertinent with respect to the crucial issues of the day. In other words, we are convinced that we have something good and worthwhile to say to God's people.

But if a magazine is to be at all an effective witness, it must have *readers*; it must reach people. It must reach as many people as possible. And this is the purpose of this campaign. We want to reach more people, also and especially people outside our Protestant Reformed circles. And we want to induce them to become regular readers of our magazine. For this purpose we are offering our magazine at a greatly reduced rate, in the hope that new readers will evaluate the *Standard Bearer* and its clear Reformed witness in these ten trial issues favorably and will then become regular subscribers. For this reason we want new readers to have the opportunity to judge and evaluate the *Standard Bearer* not on the recommendation of someone else, but on its own merits. We feel that many who become acquainted will like it so well that they will not want to miss it.

### Ten for Two — Who Can Help? And How?

But why, you ask, do you enclose these reply envelopes with the copies to all regular subscribers?

Well, this is exactly where you get a part in the campaign!

Yes, the Board of the R.F.P.A. is also advertising this trial offer through other channels.

But it was felt that if we could enlist the help of all our subscribers and get, let us say, one thousand salesmen, this would be the most effective method.

No, I should not use the word "salesmen."

The word should be "witnesses." For this is a very



real opportunity for each one of you to witness and to help in extending the Reformed witness of our magazine.

What can you do?

In the first place, you can take this issue of the *Standard Bearer* and the enclosed envelope — after you have read it, but don't wait too long — and offer it to a friend or neighbor whom you think should be a reader. Urge him to read this issue. Call his attention to the trial subscription offer. Urge him to make the test!

In the second place — and this is the easiest method — you yourself can send in one or more trial subscriptions for some other person(s). All you need to

do is to enclose payment and enclose the names and addresses of those to whom you want us to send trial subscriptions. This will be a gift subscription on your part. But it will certainly serve the purpose of this campaign.

In the third place, this is a golden opportunity for consistories and church extension committees. Send in a list of fifty names and addresses of those whom you want to reach with our Reformed witness, and send a check for \$100. Our Business Manager will take care of the rest.

JOIN THE TEN-for-TWO CAMPAIGN!

## Developments in the Gereformeerde Kerken

We have already reported that the Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands has refused to take action against two representatives of the new theology at the Free University of Amsterdam. Neither against the notorious Dr. Kuitert nor against Drs. Baarda would the Synod take action. Instead, while allowing these men to continue in good standing, and thus to continue to do their evil work in the churches, the Synod has chosen the course of referring these matters for discussion.

We may also report that the Synod rejected objections against Prof. Dr. G. T. Hartvelt, of Kampen. More than one complaint was registered against him in connection with his view of the alleged human factors in Holy Scripture. But the Synod judged, according to a report in *Friesch Dagblad*, Jan. 14, 1972, that Dr. Hartvelt had not gone beyond the confessions.

There is still another case before the Synod. This is probably the most crucial case and the most blatant case of heresy before the Synod — if, at least, one may speak of bad, worse, and worst cases in this connection. I refer to the case of Dr. H. Wiersinga, who in a doctoral dissertation has denied the vicarious atonement of Christ.

At this writing we have received no report of Synod's action in the case, although by this time the case must have been treated by Synod and a decision reached. But we wish to give the reader some idea of the seriousness of this case. Much has been written about it in various Dutch papers, and many a sound criticism has been made. The question is, however, whether any ecclesiastical action will be taken against Dr. Wiersinga. That ecclesiastical action *should* be taken is, it seems to me, hardly debatable. For one thing, Dr. Wiersinga published his dissertation, in which he flagrantly contradicts the confessions, without having filed a *gravamen*. This in itself is sufficient ground for *de facto* suspension from office,

under the Formula of Subscription. But if this were not enough, the material of Dr. Wiersinga's doctoral thesis offers plainly sufficient grounds for the charge of heresy. To give the reader some idea of the nature and the blatant character of this heresy we will refer to a few items that are mentioned in a protest addressed to the consistory of Amsterdam, the Classis of Amsterdam, and the General Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* by representatives of three conservative organizations in the Netherlands. This protest was published in the paper *Waarheid en Eenheid*. The document is too long to quote in its entirety; but it is a well-written protest, with ample proof from Scripture and the Confessions of the fact that Dr. Wiersinga is guilty of a plain, forthright, conscious denial of the important and central truth of satisfaction and of the heart of the biblical doctrine of atonement. So clear is this protest that it is amazing that the case ever had to reach the Synod and was not immediately disposed of at the consistorial level.

One instance of Dr. Wiersinga's denial of Christ's vicarious satisfaction for sin concerns Galatians 3:13, one of the classic passages of Scripture used to prove this doctrine. There we read: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." You might ask: how is it possible for anyone to deny that this passage teaches vicarious atonement? According to the protest, Dr. Wiersinga writes as follows concerning this text on page 35 of his book: "Christ has redeemed from the curse of the law, but is that, without anything more, the curse of God? Yes, indeed, Christ suffered under the curse of the law. He was made a curse. But by whom was Christ cursed? The authorities, the defenders of the law, cursed Him. Paul does not say here that *God* cursed him." And a little later Dr. Wiersinga writes in the same connection explicitly that Paul does not venture to say here



that the crucified Jesus is One Who is accursed of God.

On page 87 of Dr. Wiersinga's dissertation, according to this protest, he explicitly denies that the biblical history of the passion of Jesus ever speaks of a satisfying of the righteousness of God by Christ. And he makes the point that "also of an actual bearing of the punishment (of sin) by Christ there is nowhere explicit mention."

On page 158, according to this protest, Dr. Wiersinga discusses Isaiah 53. This is, of course, another classic passage of Scripture concerning the atoning suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. There you read language such as the following, in verses 4 and 5: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 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." Yet Dr. Wiersinga is of the opinion that in Isaiah 53 there is no mention of a transfer of guilt from us to Christ. He maintains that, like a sacrificial animal, the Servant of Jehovah bears the burden of many: sicknesses and griefs, the punishment, the iniquities and the sins; but this bearing does not have to be understood in the strict substitutional sense. The Servant of Jehovah, according to him does not take over our burden, does not take away our burden from us, but bears it with us. According to Wiersinga, there is reference in Isaiah 53 only to a "solidarity" of the Servant of Jehovah with us, but no reference to a substitutionary bearing of guilt.

Examples of this kind could be multiplied. Passages of Scripture which have always been understood in Reformed Churches and in our Reformed Confessions as teaching Christ's vicarious satisfaction for sin are simply twisted and corrupted by Wiersinga in such a way that they do not teach atonement through satisfaction for sin at all. And examples of Wiersinga's denial of the atonement similar to these can be multiplied. Moreover, according to published reports in the Dutch papers, Wiersinga admits that his views are not those of our Confessions; and he maintains that the Confessions are wrong.

But I say again: it is simply amazing that one who so blatantly denies Christ's atonement through satisfaction for sin could even survive as long as this in a church which calls itself Reformed. This only goes to show how far the *Gereformeerde Kerken* have already fallen.

It is also amazing that the Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* has taken so much time with the Wiersinga case. Perhaps our readers will recall that when the present Synod first began to meet, it issued a

testimony to the churches concerning this case, trying to assure the churches that the Synod still held to the Confessional position, but at the same time saying that this case required careful and extensive study before any pronouncement could be made. This I simply cannot understand. After having read various published criticisms of Wiersinga's position, I can only come to the conclusion that the case is so simple that it could be decided almost immediately by anyone who is at all acquainted with the position of our Confessions. Moreover, in the very protest from which I quoted the above examples, there is extensive proof from the Confessions and careful and extensive proof from Scripture that Dr. Wiersinga is altogether wrong. I do not have the space to quote this part of the protest. But my own opinion is that any decision concerning the doctrinal position of Dr. Wiersinga could be taken almost literally from this protest.

As I said at this writing the decision of the Synod is not yet known. But I do not have high expectations. In the first place, the Synod has given no evidence of doctrinal steadfastness up to this point; and it has not had the courage to condemn any of the representatives of the new theology. If they would now condemn Wiersinga, they would certainly be guilty of measuring with two measures. And, in the second place, behind Dr. Wiersinga stands the Theological Faculty of the Free University, which conferred on him a degree on the basis of this heretical dissertation. Condemnation of Dr. Wiersinga, therefore, would automatically render the orthodoxy of the theological professors suspect also. And it would seem to call for ecclesiastical action against them as well as against Wiersinga.

In the light of past performances, therefore, and in the light of the ramifications of the Wiersinga case, and in the light of the general decadence prevalent in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, it is almost too much to expect that the General Synod will take any forthright and condemnatory action. At this point in time, it would almost be a shock calculated to rock the entire denomination if the Synod would begin to exercise any real doctrinal discipline.

This does not change the fact, however, that this is a crucial case. For it is plain to any right-thinking child of God that the denial of atonement through vicarious satisfaction constitutes a denial of the very essence of the gospel. When this happens in a denomination, that denomination must without any debate be classified as in the camp of the false church. For where there is no atonement, there is no salvation! Where there is no atonement, there is no Christ! And where Christ is not, there the church is not!



## Question Box

# As To Genesis 3:22

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From a Grand Rapids area reader I received the following question:

"Pertaining to Genesis 3:22, how must it be understood? Various remarks and comments were made at a recent Men's Society meeting as to its meaning; yet I find myself not satisfied with the answers.

"A related question is this: does that same verse (Genesis 3:22) become the reason, or ground, for verse 23?"

### Reply

First of all, let us get the verses in question before us. Genesis 3:22 reads: "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever." Genesis 3:23, which is involved in the related question, reads: "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."

My questioner does not state his specific problem; nor does he state what the remarks and comments were with which he was not satisfied. Hence, without addressing ourselves to any specific problems which may have arisen in the discussion mentioned by my questioner, let us try to understand the meaning of the verses.

In the first place, we may remind ourselves of the setting. The time is not only after Adam and Eve have eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and not only after their sin has been exposed by the Lord God, but also — and I deem this significant — after the announcement of the promise of Genesis 3:15. This is significant because it means that we must view this part of the chapter against the background of God's gracious dealings with Adam and Eve.

In the second place, we are confronted in verse 22 by the question, what does it mean that the Lord God says, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil"? Perhaps we may answer this question best by a process of elimination.

1) These words cannot mean that man had actually become like God. This is obviously contrary to fact.

2) They cannot refer to the fact that even as before the fall man knew the good experientially, that is, to love it, so after the fall man knew the evil experientially, that is, to love it. For while this fact is in itself true, and closely connected with the significance of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,

the text says that man now knows *good and evil*, while after the fall man knew only the evil experientially. Besides, this could not be a ground for what is stated in the rest of the text and in verse 23.

3) The suggestion has been made that there is irony or sarcasm in the words, "Man is become like one of us." This I consider highly unlikely. For, first of all, it is at least questionable whether irony, and certainly sarcasm, are in harmony with the holiness and truth of God's being. And, secondly, this surely would not fit here. We would not expect God to use such a mode of expression in this context with a view to the life-and-death seriousness of the sin and fall and misery of man. Neither would we expect the use of either irony or sarcasm in the light of the fact that the Lord God has revealed His grace and His promise to Adam and Eve.

4) It seems to me, therefore, that this divine speech points to the fact that man had *sinfully assumed* such a likeness with God as to determine for himself what is good and what is evil. First of all, I find this to be a statement of exactly what had taken place in the fall. This is precisely what man had done: while it is God's prerogative alone to determine for the creature what is good and what is evil, man had presumed, in defiance of God, to determine this for himself. While God had said that it was sin to eat of the forbidden tree, Adam and Eve decided for themselves that it was good and desirable to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This is exactly the pride and the arrogance of sin. Man exalts himself to be God. Secondly, this understanding of the first part of verse 22 also makes it possible to understand, and to see the connection with, the last part of verse 22, where God says, "and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever."

In the third place, there is the question as to the meaning of the last part of verse 22. Briefly stated, this is an emphatic way of saying that man must by all means not be allowed to partake of the fruit of the tree of life, the other special tree in the garden. Sometimes this part of verse 22 has been explained as meaning that up to this time man had not yet partaken of the tree of life at all. This, however, is not likely in view of the nature of the tree of life. First of all, without going into a detailed explanation of the tree of life, we may point out that the tree of life had a kind of sacramental significance, symbolizing the higher life of man in communion with God. Secondly, God had



given Adam and Eve the right to eat of all the trees in the garden, with the exception of the one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thirdly, it is not probable (in comparison with the nature of other trees, and of the tree of life in the heavenly paradise) that by eating of the tree of life only once man's life would have been perpetuated. We must rather understand that man would have to eat of the tree of life continually in order to reap its benefit.

The implication of verse 22 cannot be that Adam and Eve at this time could have lived in the true sense of the word after the fall. Rather the words signify that by continued contact with and eating of the tree of life, the earthly existence of Adam and Eve would have been perpetuated even in their fallen state.

In the fourth place in the light of the foregoing, my questioner is correct in his suggestion that verse 22 becomes the reason for the statement in verse 23

according to which Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden. I would add, however, that not only is there an act of judgment in man's expulsion from paradise. But in the light of the promise, we must view this as an act of salvation. Eating of the tree would have resulted in a perpetuation of the state of death. Hence, God expels Adam and Eve from the garden and from access to the tree of life. In Christ, however, Who is the resurrection and the life, temporal death is become the servant of the elect, to open for them a passage into eternal life and glory, and to the heavenly tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

I do not know, now, whether I have satisfied my questioner any more than did his fellow prophets in the Men's Society meeting. But I have tried. And to my questioner I say: if you still have problems, call again.

## Meditation

# And Jesus In The Midst

Rev. M. Schipper

*"And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst."*

How simple is the gospel record concerning the crucifixion of our Saviour!

No description is given of the cross to which He was nailed. Nor are we told how they nailed Him to the cross. Nor is anything said of His physical reaction to the torture He must have endured as the nails were driven into His blessed hands and feet.

Very simply the Word of God informs us that, having borne His cross to the place of the skull, there they crucified Him with the two others, and Jesus in the midst.

Yet from these three crosses set on the hill of the skull, and especially from the one in the midst, proceeds a Word of God that is laden with saving truth to which we do well to listen, and to embrace with a true and living faith.

This Word of God speaks to us, first of all, of the common curse!

Notably, the very place where the crucifixion was accomplished spoke of the curse. We refer not so much to the name of the place, as to the place itself. The site was called the place of the skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha. Several are the explanations given which are intended to interpret the meaning of the expression, the most acceptable of which to us is that

which informs us that the place was an elevation, which from a distance appeared to the passers-by in the shape of a human cranium. Slightly off the beaten road going north of the city of Jerusalem, there the crucifixion took place. Significant here, however, is not the name of the place, but the fact that the place was without the city. Reflecting on this fact, the writer to the Hebrews in his epistle tells us, "For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." (Hebr. 13:11, 12). The reference is, of course, to the law of the sin offering, which stipulated that the blood of the sacrificial beast should be sprinkled on the horns of the altar in the sanctuary, but the body of the beast should be taken outside the camp and burned. That it was considered an accursed thing is indicated in the fact that those engaged in getting rid of the body of the beast were considered unclean until the evening. Jesus, therefore, that He might be the fulfillment of the type, suffered without the gate. He is cast out of the city as an unholy and accursed thing. Consequently, the hill of the skull became the place of the curse.



Moreover, also the crucifixion, the form of execution, speaks of the curse. Of this we read in Deuteronomy 21:22, 23, "And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." On this the apostle Paul reflects when he writes in Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Nor can we in this connection neglect to mention what this same apostle writes in II Corinthians 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

There can be no question then that all this tells us plainly that the very form of execution speaks of the curse. This is truth to which Christ also later gave expression when actually He passed under the vials of God's holy wrath, and He cries out that awful fourth word of the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the reconciling hour He became the very accursed of God, and at the same time accursed of men. Lifted up, as it were, between heaven and the earth, men cried: "Away with Him, crucify Him," while God also says unto Him: "Accursed art Thou, as the sin-bearer of my people."

But there is more . . . !

There are three crosses on Calvary, and the cross of Jesus is in the midst!

In the midst of the malefactors who were dying for their misdeeds, and making separation between them; but also noticeably numbered among them!

It is Mark in his gospel who gives special significance to this, for he writes: "And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left: And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors." We are aware that the Revised Version omits this verse, but we can see no reason for its omission. It reminds us of those Scriptures He came to fulfill, and this was one of them, that He must be numbered among the transgressors. No more plainly was this demonstrated than when He was crucified in the midst of the thieves. Indeed, the cross of Christ speaks of the common curse.

Notice, in the second place, that Jesus in the midst speaks of the mighty cursebearer!

This is plain from the distinction between Christ and the malefactors in the superscriptions that appeared above their heads. Customary it was that those who were sentenced to be crucified bore a sign which signified who they were, and the crime for which they were to die. And when they had been affixed to their crosses the signs were tacked to the upright which extended above the cross-beam, so that all present at

the crucifixion could read them. Though we are not told in so many words how the sign read above the heads of the malefactors, we may conjecture that it told in no uncertain language that these men were thieves and murderers who were paying the penalty of their crimes.

As to the superscription above Jesus' head, John tells us in the verse that follows our text, "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews."

Shall we hear the Word of God here, which unwittingly was intended by the Roman authority, Pilate, to be a slanderous and defaming designation, we must hear God speak in this sign of the curse-bearer. Every word in that superscription is most significant.

Jesus! That is, Jehovah is salvation, or, Jehovah saves!

This is the name given Him through the angel of God even before His birth. And when that name was given from heaven, it was also explained. "For He shall save His people from their sins." He is Jesus, Jehovah-God, Who will save His people from their sins. But to save them from their sins, He must become accursed in their stead. He must bear the curse for them, and bear it all away. That is the speech of God in respect to Him Who hangs in the midst.

Of Nazareth!

Matthew in his gospel, (2:23), tells us that when Jesus as a child was brought from Egypt to the land of Israel, He was taken to the city of Nazareth: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." Now one looks in vain in the writings of the prophets to determine precisely who prophesied this. In fact the term Nazareth or Nazarene does not even appear in the Old Testament to our best knowledge. So the question arises, What can possibly be the explanation for this notice in Matthew's gospel? And at the same time, What is the significance of the term Nazareth in the superscription? And how does this term serve to designate Jesus as the curse-bearer?

As far as the text in Matthew is concerned, two possibilities present themselves. The one is that the term Nazareth comes from the Hebrew NAZAR, meaning: off-shoot, root, rod, branch. And concerning the promised Messiah the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah all speak of Him as the rod, the shoot out of the dry ground, and as the Branch. (See Isa. 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 6:12). Significantly Isaiah (53:2) says, "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." The entire chapter in which this notice is found describes in detail the suffering Servant of Jehovah, Who, bearing our griefs, and carrying our sorrows, is stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. In this light, He is seen as the curse-bearer. The other possibility is, that



the term Nazareth, or Nazarene, among the Jews was a reproach. Even one of the disciples, Nathaniel by name, when told by Philip "we have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," retorted, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" In one word, among the Jews, anyone or anything that came out of Nazareth was to be rejected and despised as an accursed thing. And of this rejection of the Messiah who comes out of Nazareth, all the prophets did write. (See Psalm 22:6; Isa. 53:3; and many other places). Seen in this light, it is not difficult to see how Matthew could write that He was taken to Nazareth "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."

But if you ask: What is the significance of the term Nazareth in the superscription? Then we answer, first of all, that Pilate and the Jews would certainly designate Jesus thus, because they hated, despised, and totally rejected Him. Later the disciples of Jesus were also despised as belonging to "the sect of the Nazarene." (Acts 24:5). So that from the point of view of men, the title "Jesus of Nazareth" was intended to be a slanderous name, and Jesus was considered a man of ill-fame. However, if you would hear the Word of God at Calvary, and understand that God speaks through that little Bible above Jesus' head, then you must hear Him say: Jesus, Jehovah is salvation, is My NAZAR. He is come unto you as a root out of a dry ground, in Whom there appears no outward comeliness, because I have laid upon Him all my curse that was due to you.

Thus He appears also on the cross as the curse-bearer!

King of the Jews! That is, the eternally fore-ordained King, Who is born of the Jews, for the royal seed of the covenant of God ran through that people,

and none other. He is the one Who shall come to His kingdom through the way of suffering and death, Who shall battle with all the powers of sin and darkness, and overcome them, thus leading the subjects of that kingdom on to everlasting glory. God's King, born out of the Jews, establishing in His own blood the foundations of righteousness upon which His everlasting kingdom shall rest. This is the speech of God, spoken loudly from the cross, and from Jesus in the midst!

In the third place, Jesus in the midst speaks of sovereign predestination!

O, indeed, He is the mighty curse-bearer, but He bears not the curse for all!

Jesus in the midst makes also separation. On either side of Him were sinners, but not for both does He bear their sin and curse. To the one, the Word of the cross which God is speaking, is pure foolishness, and he goes on to his eternal desolation in the way of his sin. To the other, who was being saved, that central Word of the cross was the power of God. That very day he would enter with the King into the kingdom.

And Jesus crucified in the midst is the cause whereby the thoughts of many hearts are revealed, thoughts of sin and grace, unbelief and faith. And this distinction and separation flows from the eternal, sovereign good pleasure of God, according to which He has chosen some unto eternal life in Christ, and reprobated others to their everlasting desolation in the way of their sin.

And Jesus in the midst speaks of this power and wisdom of God!

Hear it, and believe!

This is the Word of God that saves, and gives unto you the only comfort in life and in death!

## *Studies in Election*

# **Its Supralapsarian Character**

(Continued)

## **Its Purpose**

*Rev. Robert C. Harbach*

### **9. Its Supralapsarian Character (concluded)**

Election takes us back to the beginning of things, to the beginning of God's counsel, since it has to do with what has priority in the divine mind. We have been dealing with the divine order of God's eternal purpose as that order is revealed in and may be deduced from Scripture. This, of course, means that we have been

setting forth supralapsarianism, for that, we believe, is the predestinarian view to be found in Scripture. While still on the subject, it is highly recommended that you read the articles in *The Standard Bearer*, Vol. 26, which may yet be obtainable, on "Supralapsarianism and Infralapsarianism." We now propose a brief look at the order of the decree of God as held by various



theological systems, beginning with one of the lowest of them.

First, there is Semi-Pelagianism, the motto of which is, "God can foreknow without foreordaining." This view makes the decree of God one "to save individuals." The order is: 1. Decree to create, including man, as a free moral agent, fallible, with his will contingent (unpredictable). 2. Foreseeing the Fall of man, God decreed through Christ to provide free salvation for all. 3. Foreseeing that certain individuals would accept the provision of salvation, while others would continue to reject it to the last, God from eternity chose those He foresaw would accept it. The individuals He foresaw would not believe He decreed to punish eternally.

Second, there is Arminianism, the motto of which is, "Ability is the measure of responsibility." This view makes the decree one "to save believers." The order is: 1. The decree to create. 2. The decree to permit the Fall. 3. The decree to send Christ to die for the sins of everyone in the world. 4. The decree to give grace and light to all men sufficient to enable them to obtain eternal life. 5. The decree to save those foreseen as using the light they have, and as persevering in faith and holy living. 6. The decree to condemn those foreseen as not accepting the provision of salvation.

Third, there is Amyraldianism, the motto of which is, "God has a general love to all men." This view supposes a decree "theoretically to save all." The order is: 1. The decree of possible universal salvation. 2. The decree to offer salvation to all men *if* they believe in Christ. 3. The decree to give all men a natural ability to repent and believe. 4. The decree to permit the moral inability (Fall) of all men. 5. The decree to save those willing to believe. — Note: According to Amyraldianism there is salvation for the heathen who never come to hear the Gospel, if they accept the general grace of providence.

Fourth, there is Infralapsarianism. Its motto is, "God cannot love a non-entity." Involved is a "decree to save sinners." The Infra-order has a decree: 1. to create in perfection for God's glory. (A decree in general). 2. to permit the Fall. 3. to elect from the mass of fallen men the "vessels of mercy." 4. to pass by the rest of mankind and ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin. 5. to send Christ for the redemption of the elect. 6. to leave the rest of mankind in their sins and to their just punishment.

Fifth, there is Supralapsarianism. Its motto is, "The last thing in execution is the first thing in purpose." Or, "What is first in design is the last in accomplishment." It views the decree as one "to save the elect." This is a decree of predestination. The Supra-order has a decree: 1. that God's glory be revealed in Christ and His Church. 2. the election of Christ as Head of the Church. 3. that from all creatable men (men to be created), a definite number be the

elect church in Christ, and a definite number of men be "vessels of wrath." 4. of justification for the elect, and of damnation for the reprobate. 5. of the Fall of those elected and reprobated men. 6. to create these men.

Sixth, there is Supralapsarianism as held in the Protestant Reformed point of view. Our motto is, "God is God." "God is always first." The decree is regarded as one "to reveal God's covenant." Our supralapsarianism is especially concerned with the question, "What in the decree is the main object? and what is subservient to that main object?" What we believe to be the most scriptural order of the decree is: 1. God's decree to reveal His own glory in the establishment of His covenant. 2. Decree to realize this purpose in the Son of God becoming Christ, the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature, the Beginning of the New Creation of God, which He became as the Firstbegotten of the dead, that in Him all the fulness of God might dwell. 3. Decree for Christ, and for the revelation of His fulness, the Church and all the elect. (1) In this decree, Christ is not ordained for the Church, but the Church for Christ. (b) The Church is His Body, and serves the purpose of revealing the fulness in Him. 4. To realize this Church, and thus the glory of Christ, the reprobate are predetermined as vessels of wrath. (a) Reprobation serves the purpose of election, as chaff serves the ripening and harvesting of the wheat. Isa. 43:3, 4. (b) All sin and evil are ordained of God as subservient to the good. Gen. 50:20. 5. In the Counsel of God, everything else in heaven and on earth are purposed as means to the realization of both election and reprobation, and therefore of the glory of God's mercy and justice in Christ. Therefore, all things must work together for the good of them that love God, to them who are the called according to His eternal purpose.

It is to be noted that neither in the Infra- nor Supralapsarian order is there to be found any "common grace," but that this error is either expressed or implied in the order of Pelagianism, Arminianism and Amyraldianism.

## 10. Its Purpose

What did God plan and purpose for us in His decree of election? He purposed that we should be holy. "He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before Him" (Eph. 1:4). We have already pointed out that this is not the imperfect inner holiness which we have by grace in this life, but the perfect holiness of glory ordained for us in the world to come. The Lord has indeed ordained both for us, but the latter is especially intended, because it is absolutely perfect. It is "without blame" before God. He finds not a flaw in it.

That holiness lies ahead of us. We do not have it yet.



But personal, subjective holiness we do have, or we would not get to heaven. It is one "without which no man shall see the Lord." Though it is a gradual grace working in us, and one which constantly reminds us of our indwelling sin, yet it is a down payment on the perfect holiness coming in glory.

A purpose God had for us even prior to being chosen to holiness was that of adoption. Eph. 1:5. We owe our adoption as sons ultimately to God's decree of the end He purposed, not to the decree of the means. Then we owe the foundation of our adoption to our relation to Christ's person, rather than to His atoning work. We were predestinated to the adoption of sons not on the basis of redemption (*infra*), but, going farther back, on Christ's natural sonship. Our justification is owed to the decree of the means. "In whom we have redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of sin." (1:7). Our adoption is, however, through Christ as God's natural Son and we His brethren in relation to His person. "Ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son." (I Cor. 1:9).

Still, it must be understood that because of our fall in Adam, adoption can be *bestowed* on us no other way than through His merits. So the Son became incarnate "to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4:5). For sin had created an obstacle to the bestowal of adoption. But Christ's redemption was not realized to *procure* our adoption, but only "that we might *receive*" it. What procured it was the decree of the covenant.

God's purpose also was that we be saved, a design He had subservient to His main object to bring many sons to glory. This is expressed in II Tim. 1:9, "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before eternal ages." (Gk.) This grace that God gave

only His elect from all eternity was a preredemptive grace, a super-creation grace, before the foundation of the world! God by that eternal particular purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus did ordain us to and in a super-creation union with Himself, our highest and ultimate destiny. Grace is the source and fountain of it all, including redemption, and all the rest comprehended under the term "salvation." Salvation ("hath saved us") is the end of it all, and effectual calling through the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Gospel is the stream which flows from that source to that end. His determining, exclusive purpose contains the answer to why the chosen ones rather than the others were thus saved and called.

It was God's purpose according to election to have His people *for Himself*, i.e., for Christ. He is the ultimate end of the decree of predestination: "having predestinated us to the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to Himself," (Eph. 1:5). These last two words are very well translated "for Him," i.e., for Jesus Christ. We have been chosen to holiness *in Him*, predestinated to adoption *through Him*, and were so ordained *for Him*; as the great end, aim, Alpha and Omega of all things. Then, since we were predestinated *for Him*, the predestination was not on the foresight of man's fall or man's conversion. We were predestinated on the foresight of Christ as Head of a glorified race. Christ was not set in the decree nor brought into the world chiefly on account of sin and for the work of redemption. But Christ through redemption makes an end of sin, so becoming the Head over all things to the Church. Christ was not ultimately given for us; He was not subject to us. We were given to Him. Christ is not ordained for the Church. The Church was "for Him!" Christ is the grand end of all things (Eph. 1:10). Redemption itself is for His own glory before it is for our need (1:6a, 12a).

(To be continued, D.V.)

## All Around Us

### Anglican and Catholic Agreement "Word of God" or "Words of God"

Prof. H. Hanko

#### ANGLICAN AND CATHOLIC AGREEMENT

One of the burning issues at the time of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century was the question of the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper — particularly in the elements of the

bread and wine, and the corollary question of the repeated sacrifice of Christ in the mass. As most children of the Reformation know, the Lutherans rejected the doctrine of the mass but retained some elements of Roman Catholic thought in their doctrine



of consubstantiation. The Romish Church maintained that, through the activity of the presiding clergy, the bread and wine of the eucharist were actually changed into the body and blood of Christ; that, therefore, on the altar was offered the sacrifice of Christ once again. Lutheranism, in its doctrine of consubstantiation, taught rather that Christ's real body and blood were present in, with, and under the elements of bread and wine.

The Reformed and Calvinistic branch of the Reformation repudiated both these positions and maintained that the presence of Christ in the elements was a *spiritual* presence; that the believer, by faith, appropriated Christ's body and blood. The mass was strongly condemned even to the extent that it was called in our Heidelberg Catechism, "an accursed idolatry." All branches of the Calvinistic Reformation adopted this position and incorporated it into their creeds. The issue was a vital one and a large amount of study was devoted to the subject. Even between Lutheran and Reformed it was a point of no little dispute, and the issue caused a great deal of trouble even in the days when Luther and Calvin were yet living.

As the present day ecumenical movement grew stronger and more inclusive, various attempts have been made from time to time to include the Roman Catholic Church in Protestant ecumenical organizations. But one of the points of difference between Protestants and Roman Catholics which prevented closer union was the doctrine of the presence of Christ in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. It seemed that this bridge was too difficult to build and the chasm which it had to span too wide. For one thing, the very idea of Roman Catholicism in this question of the presence of Christ was usually abhorrent to Protestantism. For another thing, on this key point Rome seemed immovable. It could hardly be anything else, because an elaborate structure of doctrine was built around this key point that the bread and wine of the eucharist very truly became the body and blood of Christ.

Imagine the surprise in the Church world, then, when Anglicans and Roman Catholics did reach such agreement. An official Anglican-Catholic study commission published a report in which a statement of the doctrine was set forth upon which both Arthur Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Pope Paul placed their seal of approval. The concessions, however, seem to be almost entirely on the side of the Anglicans; and it appears from the report as if the Roman Catholic Church did not budge a fraction. A few quotes from the report will make this plain.

Communion with Christ in the eucharist presupposes his true presence, effectually signified by the bread and wine which, in this mystery, become his body and blood.

Christ is present and active, in various ways, in the entire eucharist celebration. It is the same Lord who through the proclaimed word invites his people to his table, who through his minister presides at that table, and who gives himself sacramentally in body and blood of his paschal sacrifice.

The sacramental body and blood of the Savior are present as an offering to the believer awaiting his welcome.

The elements are not mere signs; Christ's body and blood become really present and are really given.

The bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ by the action of the Holy Spirit, so that in communion we eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood.

On the question of the mass it is perhaps possible that the Romish Church made some slight concession. The statement claims that "Christ's redemptive death and resurrection took place once and for all in history." Thus: "There can be no repetition or addition to what was then accomplished once and for all by Christ."

What strikes us especially about this agreement is the fact that those churches who are pressing forward in the cause of ecumenism are willing to twist themselves into almost any shape in order to attain their goal of unity. If unity demands a total abandonment of doctrine, this is not too great a price to pay for unity. If the requirement is a watering down of doctrine to the point of inane generalities, this too the ecumenists are willing to do. If, on the other hand, the ecumenical leaders come face to face with a church which holds to heresy and if, in the course of the discussion it is found that that church will not budge even a fraction from its heresy, they are willing to swallow the heresy in one huge gulp for the sake of union. No price is too great to pay. No obstacle is too great to surmount. But the truth of Scripture matters not a bit. Union must be attained at all costs.

If this is finally adopted by the Anglican Church, this denomination has abandoned its historical heritage and sold its soul to Satan for an ecumenical mess of pottage.

#### "WORD OF GOD" OR "WORDS OF GOD"

We have, from time to time, referred in these columns to the Association for the Advancement of Christian Studies (AACS). This organization which has its headquarters in Toronto is, under the influence of Neo-Dooyeweerdianism, establishing a new system of thought especially within the Christian Reformed Church — although its influence extends far beyond the bounds of that denomination. We have called attention to the erroneous views of this organization in their doctrine of Scripture, of the Church, and of the Christian's calling in life.

However, we are increasingly convinced that at the very bottom of this whole movement lies an error far more serious and far more basic than any of the above



errors. This error has to do with the generally accepted view of this organization of the "Word of God."

Generally speaking, those who are involved in this movement consider it to be a serious mistake to speak of *one* Word of God; they prefer to speak of a three-fold Word of God; and, even, of a four-fold Word of God. They insist that God speaks His Word in three or four different ways: 1) in the Scriptures; 2) in the creation, preservation and government of the universe; 3) in Jesus Christ; 4) in the proclamation of the gospel.

Now this may, off-hand, seem to some to be a rather insignificant point of doctrine which really has no important consequences for the faith of the Church. And it may seem to others to be a correct statement of the doctrine of the Word of God. But both conclusions are wrong. This view of the Word of God has had broad and sweeping consequences in the thinking of the AACS. Some of these consequences are these. Those who hold such a position have taken a view of Scripture which in some measure denies its infallibility. Cf. e.g., our last article in the *Standard Bearer* in which we quoted an article by Dr. Clark who criticizes severely the views of Scripture held by Arnold De Graff, a member of this AACS movement. Generally speaking, the Scriptures are considered to be something different from "propositional revelation"; they are said to contain no objective statements of truth concerning God; they are characterized as being a confession of the early Church concerning its faith in God.

Again, those who adopt this three or four-fold Word of God maintain that the Word of God in creation is revelatory and authoritative for large segments of our life. Some of the consequences of this position are: 1) that the moral and ethical standards of Scripture are relative; 2) that the creeds of the Church which embody the truth of Scripture are limited in their value and use to the life of the believer as member of the church; 3) that the Word of God *in creation* can be formulated in creeds for other areas of life; 4) that therefore we need a special creed for educational purposes, for political activity, for united christian labor activity, etc. And all these creeds must contain the Word of God as found in the creation, government, and preservation of the world as distinct from the Word of God in the Scriptures.

Further, this same position has led to an idea which describes revelation as a process, by which is apparently meant that revelation is a dynamic concept which has continuous and real power. However, one wonders whether those who maintain this do not also mean to say that, because revelation is a process, there is continuous revelation in the sense that the *content* of revelation is constantly being increased.

These are only some of the consequences of this position. But they are sufficient to demonstrate that this whole concept is very broad in scope and

far-reaching in its implications.

Increasingly this idea of the Word of God has come under attack in various church periodicals. And this whole concept has been the subject of lengthy discussion and debate. One recent instance of this is a conference which took place in January, 1972 at Trinity College where this whole subject was discussed.

But we get the general feeling from reading all this material that many who are opposed to the three or four-fold concept of the Word of God do not always know just exactly how to attack this error. They seem, in some instances, to be at a loss in their efforts to pinpoint what is really wrong. There has been, so far as we know, no extensive and thorough-going analysis of this position and no sharp and Scriptural critique of the serious error involved.

And this is not good, for the error is very basic and deadly; and if it is not weighed in the balances of Scripture and condemned on Scriptural grounds by means of a thorough analysis of the problem, those who defend this position are going to run away with the field.

We make these comments not because we intend to take up this task in our columns. This rubric is not intended to be a column on Apologetics; nor is there the space to accomplish this here. But we make these remarks to alert our readers to the deadly danger of this position and to stimulate discussion among us on this question.

It seems that if the problem is to be faced four-square and the position properly condemned, the following Scriptural truths will have to be taken into account.

1) It is true that the concept "Word of God" is used in different senses in Scripture. We make a point of this because some critics of the AACS position have denied this. Dr. Norman Shepherd, e.g., is quoted in the *Outlook* as saying: "there appears to be no place in Scripture where the expression *word of God* or something like it is used for the creation." We wonder what Dr. Shepherd does with a passage such as John 1:1-5.

2) But, while this is true, it is also true that Scripture teaches that the Word of God in creation can no more be heard by the sinful and depraved man. He cannot hear this Word of God both because that Word is, objectively, silenced by the word of the curse; and because, subjectively, the sinner is spiritually and ethically blind and deaf. While, according to Romans 1, God's power and divinity may still be known through the things that are made, this is the revelation of God's wrath upon the heathen and is only for the purpose of leaving the ungodly without excuse.

3) All this brings up the question of *revelation*. And we think it high time, also for the men of the AACS, to pay some close attention to this very important Scriptural concept. It would be well for them and for



all concerned to study carefully the Scriptural teaching on this point and define precisely what Scripture has to say. We believe that, if this is done, it will be proved that also revelation is a particularistic concept in Scripture; i.e., that it too is discussed in Scripture along the lines of election and reprobation.

4. The doctrine of Scripture itself must be maintained in this connection as Scripture sets forth that doctrine. That is, while it is true that Scripture is the *record* of the revelation of God, nevertheless, Scripture is the infallibly inspired record. And, because it is the record of *revelation*, it tells us, above all else, Who and What God is and does. It is thus the record of God Himself. It is not a confession of the faith of the early Church. It is not a mere collection of beliefs of former saints. It is not some sort of *Gemeindetheologie*. It is God's record of His revelation.

5) Central to that revelation and therefore central to the Scriptures is Christ. For Christ is the fulness of the revelation of God: for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

6) It needs to be proved that Scripture calls the preaching of the Word "revelation." It is true that this question can only be answered after a careful definition of "revelation." But the fact remains that it is doubtful whether this is Scriptural terminology.

Scripture is intent on pointing out that the preaching is "the power of God unto salvation"; that it is "to them that are called both the power and wisdom of God." But it must be remembered that this is true only insofar as and because of the fact that the preaching is Scriptural. This is lost sight of constantly by the supporters of the AACS. In fact, these men tend to slight the preaching and consider the preaching as less than of crucial importance. It is only because preaching is the proclamation of an infallibly inspired and written record of the revelation of God that it is the one and only power of God unto salvation, and that it is of absolute importance for the whole of the life of the child of God in the world.

7) Finally, therefore, while we admit that the concept "Word of God" is used in different senses in Scripture, the crucial question is — a question which has not been answered by all who have written on this subject so far as we know — what is the relationship as defined by Scripture between these various uses of the concept? And what is the relation between these various uses of the concept and the concept "revelation"? The thinking of the leaders of the AACS is so fuzzy on this point that we are inclined to believe that they mean to establish no relation at all; that they mean to teach that all are independent of each other.

## Friendship With God

# The Covenant Life of God

Rev. B. Woudenberg

## A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

*Anyone who sat with any regularity under the preaching of the Reverend Herman Hoeksema knows that there were few subjects that gave to him greater satisfaction than the subject of the Covenant of Grace. Anyone who took part in the pleasantly informal study classes which he so fondly conducted in church and school also knows that one of his great regrets in life was, especially in his latter years, that he had never been able to find the opportunity to bring to development the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace in its interrelation with all of the rest of theological thought. It has often seemed to me that the responsibility to remember and to pursue this goal remains as a kind of legacy upon the Protestant Reformed Churches.*

*The present series of articles does not presume to be a fulfillment of that purpose. The author lacks both the theological and literary abilities for that. But what is hoped is that these articles may serve to remind us of the need and to provoke some thoughts in that direction; and, if they so do, the efforts will be satisfied.*

Strikingly beautiful in Genesis 1:26, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

Imagine what it would mean if we read here, "And God said, I will make man..." Something would be

missing; something would be wrong. The picture that would be left us would be of a God who was all alone in eternity, a God speaking to Himself, creating man, as it were, because He needed someone with whom to



speak and share His life. It would be hard to escape the feeling that God was creating man because of a lack in His own nature that needed to be filled. But could such a God even be a real God at all?

Allah, the god of the Moslems, is really like that. Mohammed, in setting forth his concept of god, borrowed a great deal from our Scriptures, with the result that there is much in his concept of god which is similar to ours. But one thing he missed was the doctrine of the Trinity, and with that he missed the heart of the whole matter. The result is that his Allah is a lonely figure, who in spite of all of the greatness ascribed to him dwells all by himself in a cold and distant eternity. Even the most devout of Moslems feels no closeness to Allah on a personal level. All one can ever do is to bow fatalistically before eternal whim. Allah is not one who can share life, and therefore not one who can be looked to for compassion and understanding. A person can only submit himself in cold legalism before his impersonal demands. And so Islam is a cold and fatalistic religion, functioning through legalistic systems of reward and merit, because of the nature of the god before which it bows.

But Christianity is not that way — because our God is not that kind of god. He does not just exist; He lives a full personal life in a fullness of personal love and fellowship within Himself throughout all of eternity. Here is the wonder of the doctrine of the Trinity. Our minds may not be able to grasp it in full, rational understanding, but through it we know that there is a personal fellowship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit within the eternal oneness of the divine Being.

Loneliness is a terrible thing. We all know it instinctively. It is one of the sorest pains a person can know. Those who are lonely die their own kind of death.

We learn to hide it when we get older, but look in on any group of children and you can soon see it. That which counts to them most is to have friends, others with whom to play, others by whom they are accepted, someone with whom they can feel together.

I have often asked groups of young people what, in their day-to-day living seemed to concern them more than anything else. It usually takes a little while to get through to them that one is not asking for what they think they should answer or even what their peers might expect them to say, but in the end it will almost always come out that they are mostly concerned with having friends, someone with whom they can talk freely and be accepted for what they are, someone with whom they can freely share.

And this is not all so superficial as it might at first seem. It reflects something basic in the nature of man, according to which he was made to be an image-bearer of the Creator God, as Genesis 1:26 says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

Accordingly Solomon, blessed with a sage power of observation by God, made note of it thus in Proverbs 15:17, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." And again in Proverbs 17:1, "Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifice with strife."

In a much more profound way David brought out the importance of friendship to life when he reflected so often in the Psalms upon the suffering which was his when this was denied to him. So we read in Psalm 31:11, "I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and a fear to mine acquaintance: they that did see me without fled from me." Psalm 38:11, "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off." Psalm 55:12, 13, "For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and my acquaintance." But it is the next two that strike us with a special force. Psalm 22:6, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach to men, and despised of the people." And Psalm 41:9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." These are important because we know that especially these latter two Psalms do not represent the mere weakness of a sinful and troubled man; they are Messianic Psalms which anticipate the nature of the suffering of our Lord and Saviour, when he would come to take the anguish of our sin upon Himself. This was His suffering, too.

And what does it all mean? Actually we are touching very closely here to one of the deepest principles of Scriptural thought — the truth of the covenant of grace.

Not infrequently it has been recognized in both Reformed and Baptist traditions that there is something basic about the truth of the covenant, which runs through the whole of the Scriptures and serves as a unifying principle. Moreover, especially in light of recent archeological and linguistic findings, it is increasingly apparent that the historical Reformed objection to the idea that the covenant could be a sort of two-sided agreement between God and man is quite correct. Very apparently, the whole idea of a covenant, even in secular practice, was that of a relationship imposed by a sovereign ruler upon his subjects, and so the covenant of God in Scripture must be a unilateral covenant too.

When, however, effort is made to give some substantial content to the concept of the covenant, so as to give meaning to its unifying function in Scripture and theology, efforts seem to flounder. Almost invariably what comes out is another sort of legalistic relationship which simply cannot do justice to the



organic nature of the relationship between God and His people.

There is, however, one striking exception to this. The Rev. Herman Hoeksema, when writing about the essence of the covenant in *Believers and Their Seed*, p. 62, puts it this way, "That life of God is a covenant life, a life of the most intimate communion of love and friendship, resting in the unity of God's Being, and living through the personal distinction. The Lord God is a covenant God."

There are particularly two things that we should note about this statement.

In the first place, it designates the essence of the covenant life to be "a life of the most intimate communion of love and friendship." This is much more than a mere legalistic arrangement by which various persons come under obligation to each other, such as various treatments of the covenant concept purely in terms of oaths, promises, testaments, pacts, etc., would seem to intimate. It is true that some of

these things do relate closely to the covenant in the presentation of Scripture; but the essence and importance of the covenant goes much deeper than that. It touches the communion of spiritual life, whereby the inner realities of spiritual experience are shared together in the living fellowship of the covenant. It is this which reaches out through the history of covenant development to give new meaning and content to the whole of theological conceptions.

And in the second place, it is to be noted that the source of this covenant is to be found in the very nature of God Himself — the triune nature, wherein Father, Son and Holy Spirit dwell together in a perfect and eternal covenant communion of life. Here is where all spiritual realities begin. They were not created. The spiritual realities belong to the nature of God in eternity. It is only our privilege of grace to be able to see them through the wonder of divine revelation, and to be able to live in them through the wonder of the covenant which this God has established with man.

## *The Strength of Youth*

# "Fathers, Provoke Not To Wrath"

*Rev. J. Kortering*

The attitude of parents toward their children determines in a large measure the way they treat them. In those homes where children are not wanted, parents sometimes treat their own flesh worse than the beast. When children are desired and enjoyed, the whole atmosphere of the home breathes with a spirit of love and happiness. All of this is a mere natural and human relationship within the home.

When however, we apply the same principle to the spiritual response of parents toward their children, we see the same thing amplified many fold. If parents consider their children to be "chips off the old block," their response is one of pride. O, how they like to see their children succeed in whatever they do, because after all, it is a reflection upon the parents that brought them into the world. If however, parents consider their children to be conceived and born in sin, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and precious in God's sight, their response is one of humble supplication to God that He may cause this faith to develop in their children and come to full expression to God's glory.

It is the unique privilege of covenant parents to consider their children to be God's heritage and therefore needing instruction in the way of the Lord.

## FATHERS EXHORTED

The words of Eph. 6:4 can't help but make every father sit up and think, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." There are two things that strike home. First, the duty of instruction is directed to *fathers*; we might be inclined to dispute this and say that mothers have more to do with bringing up children. Secondly, Paul warns that *fathers* must not provoke their children to wrath: are they more inclined to do this than mothers?

In dealing with the first aspect, it will help us to understand that Paul advises concerning parental responsibilities on the basis of the divinely appointed relationship between husband and wife. In the preceding chapter, he has carefully laid out the important truth that the husband is the head of the wife and the wife must be subject to her husband. In this text, he continues to articulate this relationship as it applies to the instruction of children. The calling to instruct children rests foursquare upon the shoulders of the father as head of the house. This is part of the authority which God gives to him. It is his responsibility to see to it that the children whom God has given unto him are properly instructed. Hence the



exhortation comes to the father, "Ye fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The father has to see to it before God that this is done. This same idea is expressed in connection with baptism; the father is the one who secures a baptismal slip from the consistory in those churches where this is required. The father presents the child for baptism at the time of the sacrament.

A father, however, cannot smugly sit back and say that he heeds the admonition of this text if he sees to it that his children are properly instructed. Not only must he see to it that his children are instructed; he must also be involved in the instructing! Here many fathers fall short. It is a shame upon our homes, that many men are content to let their wives see to it that the children learn catechism properly, get their school work finished, study the Sunday school lesson, etc. Though it is true that mother is peculiarly adapted to being more intimately involved in this work, just because she is mother, and no father can possibly usurp that from her, this doesn't mean that father has nothing to do with the instructing except seeing to it that someone else is doing it and his children are receiving it. As a father, he must also be involved. Mother and father are both parents, and this means they share the work of instructing their children.

It might be well also to remind ourselves that principally the work of instructing cannot be passed on to anyone else either. Without the involvement of parents, any instruction on the part of someone else is superfluous. This is made obvious in so many ways. A preacher can work hard on sermons and carefully spell out the Word of God as it deals with life's problems, the whole family can sit under that preaching and receive it, but if father and mother do not implement that word in the sphere of the home, it profits nothing. For example, the preacher can warn about the dangers of television, which are very real, but if father and mother do not control the TV in the home and the children are permitted to watch almost any program and almost any time, the Word of God that has been preached is denied in that home. Similarly in connection with catechism instruction: if parents do not supervise the study of their children, the children will learn their lesson the last minute (and it might even be the wrong lesson) and the whole business is an empty show of piety which produces little if any fruit. School teachers confirm that the homes that have parents which are vitally interested and involved in the things their children are learning at school produce the best students. No one, and let me underline it, *no one*, be it preacher, teacher, Sunday school teacher, can take the place of parents when it comes to instructing the children. The parents determine the success of any means that may be used to instruct children. This determination is under the blessing of God upon their efforts.

## PROVOKE NOT TO WRATH

It can't be that Paul would imply that fathers are more inclined to provoke their children to wrath than mothers. In some instances this may be true. It is conceivable that mothers, who deal more with the children than fathers, are guilty of provocation to a greater degree than fathers. Here, too, it is directed to fathers by virtue of their divinely appointed role as head of the wife and home. All dealings that parents have with their children must be according to the Word of God, and every father must see to it that this takes place. If there is a provoking to wrath either by the father or mother, the father must deal with this problem so that it is overcome.

To provoke to wrath means literally to irritate, to cause adverse reaction. We think of the terrible effect of rubbing salt on an open wound: the result is only too well known. In applying this to the reaction of children to parents' dealing with them, we should point out that the idea is not that a parent must always deal with his children so that the child will respond favorably. One could be a perfect parent and still get unfavorable responses from children. Rather, the idea is that parents must not deal with their children in such a way that they irritate their children wrongfully. This, too, is possible, for parents are sinners, and as our Heidelberg Catechism expresses it, children are to "patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand," Lord's Day 39. We find this same reference made in Heb. 12:9, 10, "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us . . . For they verily for a few days chastened us *after their own pleasure*; but he for our profit."

We suggest five ways that parents can provoke their children to wrath.

First, by making unjust demands upon their children. This can be done either by expecting more from a child than that individual child can produce, or by treating a child as if he were our slave, simply ordering him around and expecting that he will jump at our every beck and call. How careful we have to be to recognize that God doesn't give the same gifts to every child, and consequently we have to require of our children in the measure that they themselves have received. This also must be done with love and understanding; our homes are not fortresses in which father is the sergeant and everyone has to salute upon command.

Secondly, we can be guilty of unjust punishment. Wisdom in punishing our disobedient children requires of us a determination of a punishment that somehow measures up to the degree of offense. For greater offenses there must be a more decisive degree of punishment. Here, too, one cannot compose a chart and say that this will be our guide. Discipline of children isn't that easy. Each child is an individual and



has to be treated as such. An excellent guide in discipline is our own reaction to it; if we get some kind of personal satisfaction in getting even with our wayward child, we can be sure that the motive is not love, but revenge which is a motive of murder. Listen to Ps. 103:13, "As a father *pitieth* his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." What is pity? "For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men," Lam. 3:33. Our discipline has to reflect God's dealing with us, and that is that God groans, grieves, and feels pity when He finds it necessary to deal adversely with us. If we discipline in any other way, we provoke our children to wrath.

Thirdly, if we deal inconsistently with our children, we deal wrongfully. This can be done by varying our demands one day from the next. This confuses a child to no end. It can also be done by having a different standard of conduct for our children than we do for ourselves. For example we can forbid our young people to attend movies and chew them out if they get caught, but watch movies over television ourselves. This provokes our teen-aged children to wrath.

Fourthly, we can be guilty of favoritism. This, too, didn't die with Jacob. Some of our children have more pleasing personalities, some have more gifts, some seem to be able to do most things right, while others can't seem to do anything right. How tempting it is for us to favor the one with the pleasing qualities and neglect or aggravate the other. This must be avoided.

Finally, we can also provoke our children to wrath by neglecting our duty over against them. Teen-agers know what they may expect from their parents; when their parents fail them this aggravates and often hurts

deeply. Permissiveness on the part of parents may seem to make young people happy, but covenant young people desire parents to lay down the law to them and stick with it. If parents become willy-nilly, young people lose their confidence in them and feel terribly alone and uncertain. This leads to many harsh words and often times the parent is himself the cause. How easy it is for us to provoke our children to wrath.

#### A DOUBLE RESPONSIBILITY

Recognizing the fact that this warning of the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul is no empty sound, but an urgent message to fathers and mothers, we do well as parents to examine ourselves in this connection. Just because we are the parents doesn't make everything we do right; it could be that we are the cause of friction between ourselves and our growing children. Wherever we fail, we have to repent of this and change and seek God's direction, that we may in turn remove all obstacles that would interfere with instructing our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

At that same time we must caution young people that the weaknesses and frailties of parents may not give license to trample under foot the authority of parents. The raucous band of teen agers that call for their rights in the home, that spew forth their venom in claiming that all injustice and ill treatment must be resisted and every young person must have the right to determine his own life is surely not the attitude of covenant young people. Shall we quote it again, "patiently bear with their (your parents') infirmities and weaknesses since it pleases God to govern us by their hand."

Our strength is in the Lord.

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### *From Holy Writ*

## Exposition of Ephesians 5:15-21

In our preaching on the island of Jamaica we are confronted with a somewhat different rejection of errors from those which we must constantly reject in the midst of our churches in the States. I say rather advisedly that this difference is "somewhat"; it is merely a matter of degree. Because of these errors we also must have a somewhat careful selection of texts for our preaching. Without making this preaching a riding of certain pet notions and a one-sided emphasis, it is necessary to pin-point these errors and to refute them with the Word of God.

It occurred to me during the study of Ephesians 5:15-21 how very erroneous the notion is that to be "filled with the Spirit" simply means that one has a

new or renewed influx of the power of the Spirit which manifests itself then in emotional outburst, in the preaching and worship-service, with a resounding: praise the Lord!!

It is our purpose in these essays to allow the Word of God to speak, to interpret Scripture in the light of Scripture, and not to formulate various premises which we will then prove from the Scriptures. Our method will be inductive, exegetical and not dogmatical! We did not look for any particular points of refutation, but we found them in the very clear and lucid teaching of Scripture, when we compared Ephesians 5:18 with Colossians 3:16. Although we will not concentrate solely on these two Scripture passages, we will,



nonetheless, quote these two passages here, so that the readers may, at the outset, know the crux of the Biblical teaching on this point of being filled with the Spirit.

In Ephesians 5:18 Paul admonishes "But be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. . ."

And now notice what Paul writes in Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing each other, in Psalms, hymns and spiritual odes. . ."

We cannot here enter into the exegesis of these passages in this introduction. Nevertheless, we do wish here to point out that very obviously one cannot be "filled with the Spirit" without at the same time being such that the "word of Christ dwells in us richly." He who does not possess the indwelling word of Christ richly does not have the Spirit richly. Such a one is not filled with the Spirit of Christ, but somehow is intoxicated by some enthusiasm of the flesh, a mere hysteria which is not miles removed from the heathen incantation. In a word that is pure paganism.

To hold the line in these evil days we must not separate what God in His good-pleasure has bound together: *filled with the Spirit of Christ*, who causes His Word to *dwell richly* in our hearts by His Spirit.

By their fruits ye shall know them, and be able to distinguish the true prophets from the false. Yes, we also know these two by their true or false theology, or lack of theology in the good, Biblical sense of the term!

Meanwhile we shall not forget that Paul's vision is broader than the error which we have signalled above.

Let us listen to him and seek to exegete his writings.

#### A NOTE OF WARNING TO THE EPHESIANS (Ephesians 5:15)

This warning reads as follows: "*See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, etc.*" (5:15)

This is a note of warning, admonition and correction. It is a warning to take the Christian life seriously, not to quail before the enemy, nor to sell the seriousness of the days short. It calls to a halt: beware. Do not be spiritually asleep. For this warning is introduced by the cogent conjunction "Wherefore." This warning follows with stringent necessity from the foregoing teaching. The Ephesians were once darkness but now they are light in the Lord Jesus, who is the light of the world. And now they must walk in the light even as he is light! They must not walk as those who are spiritually dead, but they must awaken from their sinful stupor, their spiritual listlessness, their languid spirits, and become alert to the dangers which surround them from without and which deceive from within! Had not Isaiah thus also cried in his day, "Awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead?"

(Isaiah 26:19) There must be a freshness of the morning, the hope of the new day in their lives, a waiting for the hope of the blessed resurrection! Wherefore Isaiah said again "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Such must be the manifestation of the lives of these Ephesians who are created unto good works by Jesus Christ, saved by grace through faith. Were they not elected and foreordained unto good works, to be holy and without blame before God? (Ephesians 1:3-5; 2:10)

This warning deals with the walk, the outward manifestation of the inward life of the Spirit. If they live by the Spirit, let them walk by the Spirit. (Galatians 5:25) That is the force of the "wherefore" in the text. This is the precept of the Gospel built upon the fact of the reality of the grace of Christ through the Spirit.

Paul speaks in this passage of the "walk" of the saints. In this letter there is a sharp demarcation between the "former walk" and the "walk which is worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called." (Ephesians 2:2, 3; 4:17, and Ephesians 2:10, 4:1, 5:2) In each case it refers to the total circumference of man's life. It refers to his relationship to God, to his fellow-man and to all of creation, as this proceeds from the heart, whence are the issues of life. Now in the total circumference of their life, from the very center of it to the outer periphery, they are to walk as Christians ought to walk. They must be very careful in their walk, their thoughts, words and deeds. It is especially in the words of their mouth and in the meditation of their heart that they must be acceptable in God's sight. For from the fulness of the heart the mouth overfloweth. They must know time and season in an evil world!

#### NOT AS FOOLS BUT AS WISE (Ephesians 5:15 b)

Paul speaks here of "fools" and of "wise" as two classes of people and not simply as two states of mind in the Christian, the flesh and the spirit. Basically, God's people are not those devoid of heaven's wisdom. They have received the "wisdom which is from above." They are therefore not *fools*. They fear God. The fool says in his heart: there is no God. That saying cannot arise in the reborn heart of the saint! They are wise, these saints of the Most High God.

Paul now makes an appeal to their new "wisdom" which is the wisdom of the Cross.

As such they will be "buying out" the time. (exagorazomenoi). This is present middle participle. This means that the wise saints are like a merchant seeking goodly pearls, and that each time, they seek for the pearl of great price. Each day they buy it out for themselves. They buy the truth and sell it not! Yes, they buy even wisdom, and instruction and understanding. (Proverbs 23:23) This is the kingdom of heaven's glories.



And what do these saints in heaven's wisdom buy out? They are told to buy out time. No, they cannot buy out all of time. There is so much in time that is not gold, but the mere tinsel of sin, such as, being drunk with wine. That, too, is in time, in the "days" in which we live. These you must not purchase to yourself, saints. We must buy out all and everything which belongs to the "good works in which we are to walk." God has before prepared for every day a certain amount of good works in which we should walk, in the entire circumference of our life: church, home and school, in the shop and factory, in the day and in the night. These we must buy out to ourselves in heaven's wisdom! When we attend the church we must use all our talents and every opportunity. When we attend school we must make the most of these studies as a preparation for life. When we are rearing a family we must make the most of bringing up our children "to the utmost of our ability according to the aforesaid doctrines." Parents must have no regrets when they grow old that they failed to buy out the time.

#### THE DAYS ARE EVIL (Ephesians 5:16)

No, there are not just some "bad days" as we speak of them in our every day parlance. This we sometimes do. Things have been going contrary to expectation; it has been a rather fatiguing and frustrating experience, and we say "I've had a bad day." Paul has something far more profoundly serious in mind when he says "the days are evil." When Paul says that the days are evil he is referring to every day that the sun rises in the East.

They are all evil, that is, they are inherently days in which we are surrounded by our threefold enemy: Flesh, world and Satan, which do not cease to assault us, tempt us, and seek to affect our eternal ruin in hell.

It is well to bear this in mind so that we may be aware of the sins that so easily beset us! (Hebrews 12:1) Then will we be in the spiritual state of awareness of the mortal conflict which is ours.

The days are evil. Be wise with the wisdom wherewith God has graced you; ye were darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord! Wherefore know your times, know it three-hundred-sixty-five days of each year, and know it every minute of each day. Know that tribulation is the lot of the saints, and that we must enter the kingdom through much tribulation. Know also as wise that we can be of good cheer because Christ said "I have completely up to the present moment overcome the world." (John 16:33)

Hence, we must not be indolent, senseless christians, without holy insights and penetrating understanding. We must have a guiding rule in the midst of this evil world and these evil days: the will of the Lord. We must know the Word of Christ. We must listen to Him. We must follow the Lamb slain from the foundations of the world. No shiftless, unthinking, trifling, frivolous, lazy christian can stand in these evil days. We must study the Scriptures, and ask after the will of our Lord who bought us with His blood. Nothing less will do than to have a penetrating understanding of the will of the Lord, as a rule and guide of all our walk!

## *The Day of Shadows*

# Where Are You?

*Rev. John A. Heys*

The first words which the devil spoke to man in his state of righteousness were a series of questions.

The first words which God spoke to man after he fell from his state of righteousness likewise were a series of questions.

Neither the devil nor God asked these questions to gain some information. The devil asked Eve, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" But he knew very well what God told Adam; and rather than being an act of seeking information, this question of the devil was designed and served to take away man's righteousness. When God came to Adam and called, "Where art thou?" He knew exactly where Adam was; and instead of being an attempt to gain some information from Adam, this question,

together with the one that followed, was designed and served to bring Adam to the knowledge of a righteousness which is restored in Christ.

In Satan's series of questions we may, therefore, see an implied, unexpressed question. That question is, "Why are you here as God's servant, when you can become like Him? Why are you satisfied with your lot when you can improve it immeasurably?" Implied in God's questions is the question, "Why are you here under the trees instead of by the tree of life where we formerly met and had sweet communion together?"

Satan came to preach the lie and went with Adam under the trees, gloating over his victory, and waiting to lead man further in the development of sin and the lie. God came to man under the trees of the garden to



preach to him the gospel, and to give him the comfort and joy of that gospel in Christ.

By the question, "Where art thou?" God brought into sharp focus Adam's sin, in order that he might know his hopelessness and be made ready to enjoy the good news of salvation in Christ; might deeply know his guilt and from the beginning understand that we are saved by grace.

Adam knew his sin as soon as he committed it. But he had no way at all of knowing at that moment that there was any way out, that there was any salvation possible. He knew the penalty that God had predicted: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." He knew absolutely nothing of a way of escape. He could not run to God for forgiveness, and not simply because his mind now was darkened by sin. There simply was nothing God had ever said to him, there was nothing anywhere in God's creation that would show him that there could be salvation and forgiveness by this holy and righteous God! He knew nothing of grace and mercy. He could not know of the love of God for the world, according to which He would send His only begotten Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. How could he know any of this?

In that light God's question also means, "Where did your sin get you, Adam? Where are you now? Are you where Satan promised you that you would be, or are you in a state of guilt before Me?" And Adam's answer to the question, "Where art thou?" would have to be, "I am on the way to hell! That is why, when I heard Thy voice, I was afraid and went and hid myself, for I knew myself to be naked." How fully Adam would have agreed with Solomon, who in Proverbs 14:12 wrote, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." But in His grace God came to teach Adam his misery, in order that He might teach him his redemption, and how to express gratitude to God for that salvation.

We do well today to set ourselves squarely before God's question, "Where art thou?" Hence our title above these lines. Let us begin with the first day of the week. Where are you on the Sabbath? The services for divine worship are a few blocks away and have already begun. Where are you? There are, of course, those who cannot be there bodily, because God has made it impossible. Yes, we wrote impossible, not inconvenient or difficult. We do have to come often with difficulty. But if tomorrow, still experiencing that difficulty or affliction, we are at our desk in the office, at our bench in the shop, behind our counter in the store, out in our field, or wherever our daily toils require our presence, then again God's question is there, "Where art THOU?" And the emphasis may fall there. When we were at home the day before, His question was there. It is there with equal force the next day, when, all circumstances and conditions of the flesh being the

same, we are at work. The question, unspoken in an audible way, not to be heard as Adam heard it, is still there, "How come you are here today, and were not in the sanctuary yesterday, where formerly we had sweet communion together? Is this earthly work of yours more important than the spiritual work My Son finished to prepare a rest that remaineth for the children of God?"

Where were you, as you sat in the pew, and the collection plate was passed in front of you? Or, rather, where was your heart when the cause of God's kingdom was before you, and His servants, the deacons, presented that cause to you? And remember that God does not ask that question to gain information anymore than when He asked Adam where he was. He knows what your hand does, and what your heart told the hand to do. He asks this question in order to cause you to search your own soul.

Where were you during the long hours between the services? In bed taking a long nap? Before the television set enjoying the world with the world? Curled up in a chair with a book written to excite and satisfy the flesh? Cramming for an exam or test tomorrow in school, or doing an assignment you would not take time to do, because you wanted to spend the time of other days satisfying the flesh? Adam was hiding from God. But are we not hiding from Him as well, when on this day He has provided for us such an abundance of ways to meet Him in spiritual activities? Today we have such an abundance of spiritual literature to read, so many books to use to increase our knowledge of the salvation we have in Christ, and to refer to in order to prepare for the discussion of God's Word in the society organized for our age group. Actually we should find the day all too short for what we could not do during the week, because six days of the week we are called to labour for our material needs.

Where are you when these society meetings are held? Shall we ask, "Where are you hiding? To what have you run, and from Whom have you run?" Satan's unspoken question is certainly there, "Why be there dealing with those dry, doctrinal things, when you can be out enjoying God's wonderful creation? That, too, is your calling." God's question, unspoken in an audible way, yet there before us is, "Why are you not searching the Word of life, why not gathered by that water and bread of life, this fountain of spiritual good and blessedness, My Word, which is 'More to be desired than gold, yea than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb?'" Or is it that you do not agree with the psalmist — and with God Himself — who wrote these lines?

Where are you when a helping hand is needed? Where are you when men (or women) are needed to serve on a committee, when a specific work must be done, and the call is made for volunteers? Where are



you when the sick, the widows, the shut-ins wait all day for a knock on the door, or for the telephone to ring?

But why go on? It is well for us to place ourselves squarely before God's question, "Where art thou?" It is not for Adam alone. It is not simply for the particular situation in which Adam found himself when God came in the cool of the day. Parents at night — and in the day — often wonder where their children are. Do they very often ask themselves where they themselves are, and where their children see them?

We can easily speak a word of condemnation in regard to Adam's hiding under the trees, and call it foolish. We can view our own running away from the right way, and from things spiritual, as some brilliant work of wisdom on our parts, and, perhaps, boast about it to others at a later date.

Better it is that we face the question, for in that way God gives us the assurance of a restored righteousness in Christ. He never gives that to us under the trees where we are hiding without bringing us to the knowledge of our awful guilt before Him. And He teaches us to know our misery by calling our attention to our sinfulness. However it is not simply a matter of exposing our guilt. Judas had that knowledge and admitted that he had shed innocent blood. He never came to the knowledge of redemption, because his knowledge of his guilt was not a knowledge of misery. He had fear. He had self pity. But he was not spiritually miserable. Adam and Eve were because God gave it to them. And as we pointed out, God's questions were directed exactly at bringing Adam and Eve to that knowledge, that spiritual miserableness which was essential for them to be able to receive the gospel with joy.

We are reminded of the New Testament light which is shed upon this approach of God. Jesus said it, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." In that light we must consider those words of Genesis 3:8, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Yes, it was "the Lord God," which in the Hebrew is Jehovah Elohim, Whom they heard. Therefore it was

the Son of Man, Jesus our Saviour Who came to them, the very same Person Who came some four thousand years later in our flesh. For the name Jesus, as the New Testament or Greek form of Joshua, or Jehoshua, means Jehovah saves, or Jehovah is salvation. *God* came to seek and to save that which was lost. God came though in the mercy of Christ, not to destroy but to save. And in our experiences this salvation always begins with a consciousness of our guilt and of the hopelessness of our state and condition before Him.

There was no question as to where Adam and Eve were from a judicial and from an ethical point of view. But they had to be brought to a full realization of it in order to enjoy the knowledge of being saved from it. God's approach to fallen man with the gospel is first to make crystal clear his guilt and corruption. He has no social gospel for man except one that speaks of a solution of all man's problems and woes through the forgiveness of sins and in the new Jerusalem. His approach to fallen man always is to make him know his sin before God. God does not at once — as on many a "mission" field is done — assure of His love. Instead He makes known to fallen man his guilt. He does not tell man at once where He is going to bring him, but where he is. A man who is lost must first know where he is, before he can proceed to where he wants to be. And let us not pretend to be wiser than God, so that we gloss over sin and rush in to assure of God's love, before a man even knows his sin before God.

Let all missionary activity, let all preaching, and let all approach to the unsaved be that of bringing to them the question, "Where are you in the eyes of the holy God?" Let us show them that they are naked and have eaten of the forbidden fruit. Then we can show them the Cross as the love of God for His people in Christ. Otherwise we bring them to the Antichrist, who will be hailed as the saviour of the world (not the Church) because of his social, economic, educational, surgical, medical, therapeutic achievement, and promises of a kingdom of heaven on this earth, an escape from poverty, social injustice and war, without the Cross or Spirit of Christ.

### ATTENTION!!!

All Standing Synodical Committees are reminded that their reports for the Synodical Agenda must be sent to undersigned on or before April 15. Supplemental reports may be submitted later, but all material for the Agenda must be submitted by April 15.

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

### STUDENT AID

Notice is hereby given that students who qualify are eligible for financial assistance during the final three years of their studies at our Seminary.

Please contact the secretary of our Student Aid Committee.

Gerrit Pipe, Sec'y  
1463 Ardmore St., S.E.  
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507



**NOTICE!!!**

According to the decision of the Synod of 1971, the Consistory of First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan, was appointed the calling church for the 1972 Synod. The Consistory of First Church hereby notifies the Churches that the 1972 Synod of The Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Wednesday, June 7, 1972, at 9 A.M. in First Church. The pre-Synodical service will be held Tuesday evening, June 6, at 8 P.M. in First Church. Rev. G. Van Baren, president of the 1971 Synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service. Delegates in need of lodging should contact James Heys, 1432 Giddings Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507.

James Heys, clerk

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

The address of the new parsonage of South Holland Prot. Ref. Church (Rev. Robert Decker) is 16515 South Park Ave., South Holland, Illinois 60473. The telephone number remains unchanged: EDison 3-1314.

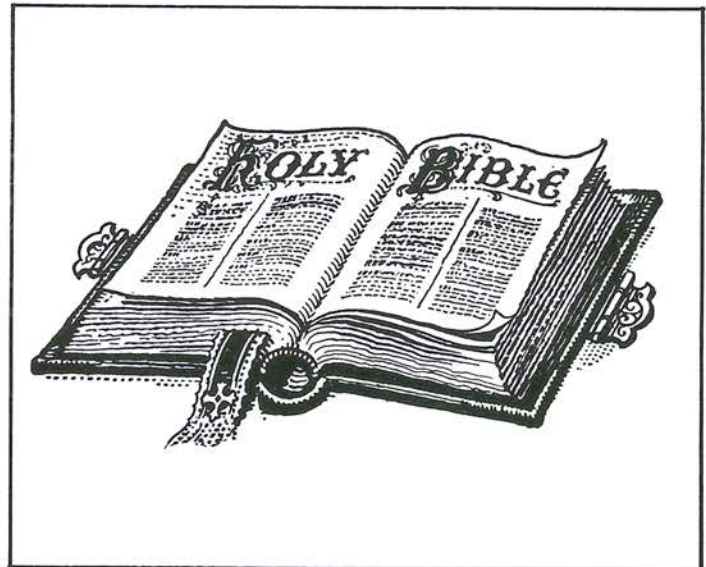
**IN MEMORIAM**

On January 27, 1972, it behooved our Lord to take home our husband, father and grandfather

**MR. GERRIT J. GUNNINK,**  
at the age of 64 years, 5 months, and 15 days.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." (Rev. 21:4).

Mrs. Gerrit J. Gunnink  
Mr. and Mrs. Jerold Gunnink  
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Gunnink  
Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Ross (Betty Jean)  
Mr. John Gunnink  
Mr. and Mrs. Duane Gunnink  
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Gunnink  
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Hanson (Julia Ann)  
Mr. Darwin Gunnink  
and 14 grandchildren



## News From Our Churches

At a Congregational Meeting held in Grand Rapids' Hope Church on March 3, a call was extended to Rev. D. Kuiper for minister, and to Rev. B. Woudenberg for home missionary of our churches.

For the news editor ... another unscheduled respite, courtesy of Classis West.

D.D.

Report of Classis West of the Prot. Ref'd. Churches  
Pella, Iowa  
March 1, 1972

Classis West met in Pella, Iowa on March 1. Seven ministers and fourteen elders represented the churches of Classis West.

Rev. R. Decker, president of the previous Classis, led

the Classis in opening devotions. He read from Ephesians 4 and addressed the delegates on verses 1-3.

Rev. J. Kortering presided over the Classis, and Rev. R. Decker served as secretary.

The Taped Sermon Committee, consisting of Mr. Garret Flikkema and Mrs. John Flikkema from the South Holland congregation, reported that it will soon have a complete series on the Heidelberg Catechism and that it now has "a good supply of special sermons on hand." This committee made the following requests of those who borrow tapes: "We would request that upon using a tape, the particular consistory using it please mark either the tape or the box as to the date used and the name of the church that used it ... It would also be nice if those returning tapes would send either a card or a letter telling when they are sending them, since we feel that we have lost a few tapes in the



mail."

The Church Visitors of Classis West, Rev. C. Hanko and Rev. G. Lanting, gave their report. Included in this report were these remarks: "Gratefully we can also report that there is abundant evidence that the blessings of our covenant God are upon our churches. Peace, unity and spiritual growth are manifest and the office-bearers testify to diligence in the exercise of the duties of the offices in the church ... One thing especially impressed us during the visits made to the churches during the past year. All the churches, though in varying degrees perhaps, are, nevertheless, zealous about and active in church extension and missionary labors. By means of either printed material, radio programs or lectures, or a combination of two or more of these means, each congregation labors to make the truth of God's Word known outside its own immediate circle. Moreover, in most of our visits we spent more time in discussing this aspect of the calling of the church than we did regarding any other particular labor. And these discussions were prompted by the consistories themselves. A sure testimony that the Spirit of Truth is active in the churches. For this we as churches should be exceedingly thankful."

The Council of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church presented an "Overture *Re* Future Seminary Building." The overture follows: "Much as we are in favor of building our own seminary, we nevertheless come to you with the overture that Classis urge Synod to rescind their decision to purchase the two lots at the proposed Cambridge site for this purpose. GROUNDS: A. This site is in a potential 'problem area', subject to the threat of racial takeover in the (not too distant) future, resulting in an inevitable devaluation of all real estate involved. B. To spend in excess of \$70,000.00 under such conditions could well lead to financial disaster, and is not in the best interest of our churches. C. At this time, the Cambridge property can still be sold, at ANY PRICE, and the proceeds used for a downpayment on property (lots) at the right location, away from 'problem areas.' Better to lose one, three, or even five, thousand dollars now, than to jeopardize \$70,000.00 or more. D. Monies required for the new project can be raised the same way as proposed for the original project, namely by funds and donations from all of our churches." Classis decided to forward the overture to Synod "without prejudice" on the ground that "Classis lacks objective information to decide on the overture."

The Consistory of the Oak Lawn Church informed Classis that Oak Lawn has decided to disband and that the congregation stopped holding worship services at

the end of August, 1971. The Consistory asked Classis' approval of Oak Lawn's decision to disband. Classis gave its approval.

A Consistory asked Classis' advice on its decision to erase a baptized member. In executive session, Classis heard details of the case and advised the Consistory to proceed with erasure.

Classis adopted the following schedule for Classical Appointments.

**Forbes:** March 12 - J. Kortering; March 26 - R. Miersma; April 9 - J. Kortering; April 16 - R. Moore; April 30 - R. Miersma; May 7 - J. Kortering; May 21 - R. Miersma; September 3 - B. Woudenberg.

**Randolph:** March 26 - R. Decker; April 9, 16 - D. Kuiper; May 7 - R. Decker; May 21 - D. Kuiper; September 10 - B. Woudenberg.

**Redlands:** March 19, 26 - R. Moore; April 9, 16 - G. Lanting; May 7, 14 - D. Engelsma. This schedule assumes that the vacant churches will request, and receive, supply in the summer months from the Seminary.

Seven Churches, Edgerton, Forbes, Isabel, Loveland, Lynden, Pella, and Randolph, requested subsidy for 1973. Classis granted these requests and sent them on to Synod.

Classis conducted the necessary elections with the following results:

Stated Clerk of Classis - Rev. D. Engelsma

Ass't. Stated Clerk - Rev. J. Kortering

Classical Committee - Rev. R. Moore

Delegates ad examina

Primus - Rev. D. Engelsma

Secundus - Rev. D. Kuiper

Church Visitors - Rev. J. Kortering and Rev. G. Lanting

Delegates to Synod:

#### Ministers

<u>Primi</u>	<u>Secundi</u>
R. Decker	
D. Engelsma	R. Miersma
J. Kortering	R. Moore
G. Lanting	B. Woudenberg

#### Elders

<u>Primi</u>	<u>Secundi</u>
J. Den Hartog	(Lynden) E. Bruinsma (Loveland)
T. Feenstra	(Redlands) E. Gritters (Hull)
W. Griess	(Loveland) J. Hoekstra (Hull)
H. Huiskens	(Edgerton) B. Menninga (Pella)

Classis will meet next in Hull, Iowa on September 6, 1972, the Lord willing.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk  
Classis West