

**The
Standard
Bearer**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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The King As The Mock King

“How To Let The Bible Confuse You”

(see: All Around Us)

The Pilgrim And The Church

(see: In His Fear)

Confession Of Faith

(see: The Strength of Youth)

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Meditation

The King As The Mock King

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

John 19:2-5

The moment of the devil's spite!
Behold the man!
He holds Himself forth to be a king, but He is no king at all!

It is very plain that the trial of the Lord Jesus before the Roman governor centered on the issue of Jesus' kingship. Before the Sanhedrin it was especially His deity, His being the Son of God, that was at stake in

His trial. Before the governor, however, it was definitely His kingship, in which His Messiahship culminated, that was the issue. The Jews accused Him before Pilate that He made Himself a king. Pilate is evidently fearfully concerned about this, as is plain from his question, "Art thou a king then?" And Jesus, Himself, confirms that this is the issue when He answers the question of Pilate affirmatively. This is also the idea in this moment of Jesus' maltreatment by the soldiers: they made Him a mock king. And thus the Roman governor presents Jesus to the people in this scene.

The moment of Jesus' royalty!

It is very plain that when Pilate takes Jesus from the soldiers and presents Him to the people, Jesus bears the aspect of a king. This is evident from the crown on His head, from the royal robe on His shoulders, from the scepter in His hand, and from the obeisance of the soldiers.

But it is the moment of the soldiers' mockery!

There is a cutting sarcasm in all this. The soldiers, evidently acting on the accusation that He made Himself a king, now mocked at such a hopeless king. The crown of thorns which they plait and put on His head is a mock-crown: it causes the blood to run down His sacred brow. It causes suffering. The royal garb with which they clothe Him is a mock-garb. Its purpose is to testify that He is not a king whatsoever. The scepter which is placed in His hand is a mock-scepter: for Matthew informs us that this scepter was a reed. Moreover, the subjects of this king are mocking and therefore mock-subjects. They spit on Him. They smite Him with their hands. They strike Him on His thorn-crowned head with His own reed-scepter.

And is not the language of all this graphically clear? Behold the man!

Look at Him, a king! Helpless, powerless, in the hands of His enemies! Surely, there is no reason to fear such a man! Surely, there is no semblance of royalty in Him! He may call Himself a king, but a king He is least of all!

Such is the idea of the soldiers' action. They act upon the accusation that Jesus made Himself a king. But a king, in their opinion, must have power. And Jesus stood before Pilate and before His accusers as a silent sufferer. There was no one to defend Him. He did not even defend Himself. And such a king the soldiers could not understand. There was no room in their conception for a king who would not fight. For such a king they were filled with contempt. They despised Him. They hated Him. And they expressed all this by presenting Jesus as a mock-king.

The devil's spiteful vengeance! Oh, the soldiers surely were not innocent. They were responsible. Indeed, throughout the trial and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus it is by wicked men that He is delivered.

This is true also of Jesus' suffering at the hands of the soldiers. Not without responsibility were they. True, if they had been merely *executors* of the sentence imposed by the judge, they would have been innocent. Then the responsibility would have been that of the judge alone. But now they testified that they joined in the judgment of wicked men concerning Jesus Christ. They knew that Jesus was innocent, even as Pilate had declared. But they did far more than was required of them in their capacity as soldiers and servants of Pilate. They gathered together the whole band of soldiers, and they made Jesus the object of their mockery and their cruel maltreatment. Surely, here is an instance of terrible lack of discipline on the part of these Roman soldiers. And when, even before Jesus had been finally sentenced, they engage in this cruel sport and make Jesus the innocent victim of their ribald mockery, they testify thereby that they, as well as Pilate, assume responsibility for what here takes place.

Indeed, when Pilate brings Jesus before the multitude with the words, "Behold the man!" he acts as the representative of the *whole world*. At the cross of Jesus Christ the entire world manifested itself as wicked, and stands condemned before the Judge of heaven and earth.

But do not forget: this moment of the cross is the moment of the devil's spiteful vengeance!

Behind the *seen* in this entire history is the *unseen*.

Seen are Judas, the Sanhedrin, the wicked Jews, Pilate, the mocking soldiers — the whole world!

Unseen — and behind them all — is the devil, the prince of darkness, the serpent, who is here heaping vengeance upon the Seed of the woman.

It is he, the prince of darkness himself, who here makes Jesus the mock-king!

Jesus, the Christ of God!

And the Evil One, the Prince of darkness!

Had not the battle between these two been joined from the very outset of Jesus' public ministry? Had not the devil offered Him all the kingdoms of this world if He would but bow down and worship him, that is, if He would but be king under the devil? Was it not the same prince of darkness who was still tempting Him at Capernaum when the bread-eating multitudes would make Him king? Had not the same ruler of this world tempted Him when His disciples were willing and ready in His behalf to take up the sword and fight? For did not the Lord Himself testify that if His kingdom were of this world, then His servants would fight?

And had not the devil's temptation of a throne and a kingdom always been on the condition that Jesus, Who came as the Servant of Jehovah, would become *his* servant? Had not the offer of kingship always been connected with the temptation that Jesus should depart from the way of suffering, the way of obedience, the way of the Father's will, should become

disobedient to the Father, and should bow down and obey the prince of darkness? He, the devil, must remain the prince of this world: and Jesus must become his servant!

And had not the Lord Jesus steadfastly despised this offer of the devil and chosen the path of obedience? Was it not this very fact that accounted for His presence before Pilate, that cynical, proud, self-seeking, thoroughly wicked and hypocritical representative of the kingdom of this world?

And does the prince of darkness not now have Jesus in his power? Is he not in a position — through the soldiers and through Pilate — to demonstrate the folly of Jesus' divine royalty, the folly of One Who would be king in the way of obedience to the Lord of heaven and earth?

Yes, it is the devil who here makes mockery of Jesus' kingship!

It is the hour of the world, and of the prince of darkness!

"See," he says, "what becomes of your kingship if you despise the kingship which I offer!"

Behold the man!

The moment of the devil's spite!

* * *

But the devil was a fool!

The moment of the devil's spite is nevertheless God's moment!

And God's moment is the moment of grim reality!

For God made man a king. He made him in His own image; and He gave him royal dominion, dominion over all things. Man was created and destined to reign. And in Paradise the First that man stood for a brief moment in royal power and glory. But he was king under God. And that means that he was king and could be king only as the servant of God, so that he ruled not according to his own fancy, but according to the will of God his Creator and Lord. And it was only in that living relation of servant-king under God that man could ever really be king and could experience the blessing of His favor.

But the adversary of God seduced man. As servant-king under God man was to be enemy of the devil. But he listened to the devil's lie, "Ye shall be as God." He rebelled and became a servant and friend of Satan, the slave of sin, a slave-king, a usurper, a mock-king!

For the Lord God always maintains Himself!

He strikes down that rebellious servant. The devil had promised higher glory and power: "Ye shall be like God!" But God maintains His own Word. And under the devil man becomes a mock-king!

Mighty Word of the cross!

Behold the man! Behold the mock-king!

No, the devil does not intend it that way. But this Word of the cross can properly be read in this way

nevertheless. There is a Word of God in this event — a Word of God concerning man, concerning you and me! Jesus stands there before the howling mob as the devil had made Him to appear through his instruments, wicked Pilate and the wicked soldiers. And surely, Satan does not intend to have it understood in this way. But is it not grim reality nevertheless, when we read this word of Pilate in the light of the Word of the cross?

Behold the man after the devil has finished with him!

That crown of thorns is ours! That mock robe and that mock scepter are ours! Behold man! There is still the trace of his royalty, portrayed in crown and robe and scepter. But in the service of the devil it has all become — in the most real sense of the word possible — mockery!

Man, in the service of the devil, has become a mock-king!

Behold man!

Is it not a Word of God calculated to bring us on our knees in repentance?

A Word of grim reality?

* * *

But there is more.

The moment of the devil's spite is also God's moment of the cross of reconciliation.

The moment of vicarious suffering!

For the Man Whom the devil spitefully mocks is nevertheless God's Anointed!

Anointed was He from before the foundation of the world, and that, too, as our Head and Mediator. And in the fulness of time He assumed our state, and also our condition as far as our death is concerned. Personally He is not that mock-king. He Himself did not become disobedient to the Father. *He* did not surrender the kingdom and Himself to the service of the devil. But *we* did! His appearance is the true representation of our appearance. And He assumes it voluntarily because He has entered into the state of our sin and guilt! For this He has come in the fulness of time — to wrestle with the prince of darkness, to wrest His rightful kingdom from the power of the devil, to deliver His people from that power, the power of sin and death, the very power which has subverted them and perverted them so that they became rebel-kings, usurper-kings, mock-kings, and to deliver them from the wrath of God which can only come upon such usurpers.

As such He takes our place, the place of the mock-king. He takes all our rebellion upon Himself — not, indeed, so that He became personally rebellious, for this could not possibly be. But He does so thus, that He suffers the wrath of God over us as mock-kings in perfect obedience to the Father — bears our suffering and the mockery of our kingship under Satan.

Behold the Man!

In Him we see ourselves. That cruel crown of thorns is our mock-crown, voluntarily assumed by Him. That mock-robe is our robe, cast about His shoulders in order that we might never wear it again. That mock-reed is our scepter, after we had cast away wilfully the royal power and dignity that we had in God's service. That mockery, that maltreatment, that suffering, those blows — it is all the chastisement of our peace that was upon Him!

Nay, it is not *His* proper appearance! How could it be? He is the glorious Son of God!

But it is *our* appearance, because of our rebellion and sin!

And He bears it all, that we may be redeemed and exalted as kings and priests unto God. He wears it all — crown, robe, scepter — in order that we should nevermore wear the devil's crown and garb and scepter.

Behold the Man — in faith!

And adore the infinite love displayed in that silent Sufferer Who answers nothing, Who restrains His divine power, in the garb of a mock-king!

Adore the infinite love of the God Who was in Christ reconciling us unto Himself!

Editorials

The P.R.C. and the R.E.S. (2)

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The RES Response To Our Letter

Last time, in introducing the subject of the invitation to our churches from the RES, we quoted in full the decision of our churches in 1968. This decision was forwarded to the RES Secretariat and to the convening church of the RES-Amsterdam prior to the meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1968.

What became of this letter? What response was there?

In the first place, the General Secretary of the RES, Dr. Paul Schrotenboer, informed the Synod of our letter, Art. 186, *Acts and Reports of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, Amsterdam 1968*: "The General Secretary reported receipt of a letter from the Protestant Reformed Churches of America asking if they could send to Synod an observer who would not be obliged to subscribe to the Basis of the Synod. It was agreed to refer the matter to the Interim Committee for reply."

In connection with the above article, it should be noted:

1) That there is no notice that our letter was actually presented to the Synod; nor does our letter appear among the Supplements in the 1968 *Acts and Reports*. To our knowledge, therefore, the letter was buried in the files and received no actual notice except from the Interim Committee.

2) A comparison of our letter with the statement of Article 186 will show the latter to be inaccurate. First of all, it omits any mention of the most important and largest part of our letter, namely: the statement of our objections to the Basis of the RES. And secondly, it is not accurate to say that we asked to send an observer who would not be obliged to subscribe to the Basis. We specifically asked "whether the RES is willing to grant

the Protestant Reformed Churches observer-status *with the understanding that they take exception to the above-mentioned elements of the Basis.*" (emphasis added) Moreover, we specifically stated that we "are in full agreement with the Doctrinal Basis of the RES in so far as it refers to Scripture and the Reformed Creeds." The differences are quite obvious, it seems to me.

But what did the Interim Committee, to whom this matter was referred, do?

Under date of January 15, 1969 they wrote the following letter, signed by Dr. Schrotenboer, the General Secretary:

Dear Brethren:

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letters of June 18, 1968 to the Reformed Church of Amsterdam and to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Your communication was read to the meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, Amsterdam, 1968.

In response to your letters, the Synod agreed to refer to the Interim Committee the matter of sending to the Synod a representative who would not be obligated to subscribe to the Basis (see Article 186, page 79, *Acts and Reports 1968*). The Interim Committee has authorized me to send you this reply.

In the *Acts and Reports* you will note certain proposed revisions of the Rules and Standing Orders (pages 79 to 82). Kindly note in particular that the proposals regarding advisory observers, non-advisory observers and guests have been referred to the Interim Committee for consideration. The Interim Committee has already begun to carry out its mandate of revising the Rules and Standing Orders further.

Because the Synod did not take final action in the matter of your request, it is not possible to give you a definite answer at this time. However, the Interim Committee would assure you that an answer can be sent to your church in ample time to allow your

church to consider sending an observer to the next meeting of Synod.

It is my sincere desire that your church will feel free to send a representative to the next meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The sentiments which have been expressed at the meetings of Synod and by members of the Interim Committee indicate that there is a considerable sympathy for making provision that a church such as yours could send a representative without being required to subscribe to the Basis.

Recently we sent your secretary, the Rev. Veldman, a copy of the *Acts and Reports of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, Amsterdam, 1968*.

Sincerely in Christ,

(was signed) Dr. Paul G. Shrotenboer

And thus matters have stood until very recently, when we received an invitation to send an observer to the forthcoming RES-Sydney.

It will be evident, too, that matters stand precisely as they did in 1968 when our Synod took the decision which we quoted last time.

Nothing has changed.

The RES itself took no action on our letter.

The Interim Committee has taken no action. We have assurances from said committee that "an answer can be sent . . . in ample time." We have assurances of sympathy for "making provision that a church such as yours could send a representative without being required to subscribe to the Basis," — something for which we did not even ask. The desire is expressed "that your church will feel free to send a representative to the next meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod."

But nothing has changed!

Our objections to various elements in the basis — objections which we spelled out rather in detail and which we grounded in Scripture and the confessions — were never so much as mentioned, much less treated and answered. One would think that the RES would have at least attempted to answer these objections, if out of no other motive than that of self-justification. And surely, if we are to take the interest of the RES in Biblical ecumenicity seriously, may we not expect that out of brotherly concern they would at least make the

attempt to enlighten us and to remove our difficulties?

But nothing is said about all this.

Nor is any provision made for us to take exception to the objectionable elements in the Basis. Oh, yes, an answer can be sent in ample time; but it is not sent. Indeed, there is considerable sympathy for making provision for observers who do not subscribe to the Basis. But for this we did not ask; and, besides, no provision was made.

For my part, I simply cannot take the RES seriously when it extends an invitation to our churches.

The simple fact is that our churches are confronted by the necessity, if they wish to send an observer, of subscribing to the Basis concerning which we have already declared that we must take serious exception. And this we cannot do.

Nor is this problem removed by the fact that at the RES-Sydney a new constitution will very likely be adopted. In this new constitution an observer will no longer be required to subscribe to what we find objectionable. However, in the first place, this does not remove the difficulty with respect to the coming meeting of the RES, which will convene under the old rules. In the second place, under the new constitution the status of observers is greatly reduced: they are not even guaranteed an opportunity to speak. And, in the third place, considering that the sending of an observer would be a first step toward eventual membership in the RES, the real difficulty (that of the same objectionable elements mentioned in our decision of 1968) would still remain.

If the RES or its Interim Committee had shown some inclination at least to discuss and to try to iron out our difficulties, I could see some light in the situation. Now I do not. And frankly, I am personally not of a mind to prolong the exchange of correspondence with the RES. I would propose that when the RES shows some genuine desire to have the Protestant Reformed Churches represented at its meetings, we can always see again.

Meanwhile, it should not be overlooked that by this time there are other considerations connected with the matter of possible attendance at the RES. To these we will call attention next time, the Lord willing.

Developments in the Gereformeerde Kerken

The General Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* has been busy for some months already in another one of its protracted sessions. This time, ironically, it is called the Synod of Dordrecht! The reader should bear in mind that in recent years the synod has fallen into the evil habit of functioning as a kind of super-church, or super-consistory. It meets for a few weeks, then

recesses, then meets again; and thus one synod is hardly finished for the year before another must begin to meet.

But one could almost overlook this evil if the General Synod would make some sound and salutary decisions and would make some real effort to put a stop to the corruption-process which has been going on

in the Dutch churches for some years already.

But this, it seems, is too much to expect. On the contrary, by its actions the General Synod is aiding this corruption-process, sheltering and playing into the hands of the adherents of the so-called "new theology" in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, and thus, I fear, leading those churches inevitably toward that sad and dreadful point in history when Christ shall remove the light from the candlestick. This is dreadful to contemplate. In fact, it is almost unbelievable to think that this could ever happen in the Dutch churches, which have been recognized for centuries as the stronghold — if not the cradle — of Reformed theology. But with ever-increasing speed and boldness those churches are being taken down the broad road of apostasy.

Some time ago Prof. Hanko reported that they were tampering with the Formula of Subscription. In a way it is the honest thing to change that Formula: for it is merely legalizing what is already reality in the Dutch churches. There are many professors and ministers who pay absolutely no attention to the solemn vow they have made in the Formula of Subscription. Moreover, it has become virtually impossible in the Netherlands to get an ecclesiastical assembly to do anything about these blatant violations.

A clear example of this was the Synod of Sneek-Lunten. This Synod itself declared that Dr. Kuitert was in conflict with decisions of the Synod which involved the confessional position of the church after Assen-1926 was retracted. Yet, recognizing that there were many more than Kuitert who were guilty of the same thing and who were present at the Synod, they declined to take any disciplinary measures. Instead, the Synod decided to send out a pious pastoral letter to the churches, the try to pour oil on the ecclesiastical waters and to smooth some ruffled feathers — and to lull Zion to sleep.

But as long as there are some conservatives in the churches, the same problems continue to crop up. And thus it is that the Synod of Dordrecht-Lunten is also confronted by some of the same problems which have been plaguing the Dutch churches for several years. And apparently this Synod is busy at the same old strategy.

Here are some samples which I have gleaned from various Dutch papers and news clippings which have been sent to me.

On the table of the Synod was a protest by Rev. H. J. Hegger against a lecturer in New Testament at the Free University, Drs. Tj. Baarda. I do not know the exact content and form of the protest. From news reports it appears that the protest was sharply worded; and knowing Rev. Hegger (a converted priest and editor of *In De Rechte Straat*) from his writings, I can well believe this. And I can also understand it. And I can also believe that his sharp language was not out of place. In the Netherlands nowadays they are

forevermore complaining — and the theological professors of Kampen and Amsterdam are foremost in this — that the "atmosphere" for theological discussion is being spoiled. Translated into plain English, this means that someone has had the courage to call heresy by its right name, to expose it, and to demand that discipline be exercised. This the leaders do not want. They want discussion. They want dialogue. Preferably they do not want the discussion on the floor of synod. It must really not take the form of debate. There must be "trust" of one another. There must be no sharp words spoken. There must be no accusations of heresy. Translated, this all means that the adherents of the "new theology" must be given free rein. And if anyone dares to say or to write anything which in any way can be interpreted as disturbing this wonderful theological atmosphere of "trust," then he becomes a black sheep who is not even worthy of being admitted to the discussion.

But let me return to my report. The protest of Rev. Hegger concerned Drs. Baarda's view of Scripture, particularly of the gospel-narratives. Drs. Baarda has in writing questioned the trustworthiness of the gospel-narratives. For one thing, Rev. Hegger accused Baarda, according to a report in *Trouw*, Jan. 12, '72, of "'monkeying' (*knoeierij*) in the words of God's Son." And even the deputies for contact with the Free University questioned whether in his intensive attention to the "humanness" of Scripture and to the historical-cultural limitations of the time in which the gospels came into existence, Drs. Baarda had in his writings sometimes too little taken into account the concern of others for the indispensable stress of the preaching upon the "Thus saith the Lord" which Scripture repeatedly vindicates. (The latter is a free translation of a statement by the deputies.) Hence, while we do not have the exact contents of the protest, we can readily guess what it was all about. It concerned the views of Drs. Baarda to which he also gave expression in his book about the trustworthiness of the gospels.

But what did the Synod decide? First, they decided that there was no reason to hold that on the points on which Rev. Hegger had attacked him Drs. Baarda had gone beyond the bounds of the confessions. Well, that is the end of the protest. At the same time, however, — for, after all, there is something to discuss — the Synod decided to refer the questions at stake to the deputies for contact with the theological faculty of the Free University for further discussion. The Dutch have an expression for it: *Op de lange baan geschoven!* Meanwhile, according to the report of *Trouw* which quoted much of the discussion on this matter, Rev. Hegger is the goat. There were voices of accusation raised against him that he "had made fruitful discussion of this matter impossible." There were even voices to the effect that he should be pastorally

admonished. One lady-deacon (yes, they have these at the Synod!) expressed displeasure that a protest of a minister against the publication of a Lector could grow into a “Baarda Case.” But Baarda goes scot-free; and Rev. Hegger’s name is blackened because he had the courage to protest.

Also the Kuitert-problem was before the Synod again. This is becoming perennial. And Kuitert himself seems to be like Gallio, who “cared for none of these things.” It seems he goes his brazen way and continues to make his shocking pronouncements — all very deliberately, by the way — no matter what anyone says or thinks. But the Synod had a long discussion about what to do about the Kuitert matter. They really did not discuss the views of Kuitert very much. They discussed rather the question what to do about it. Moreover, the question really did not center much on the advisability of exercising any discipline. Yes, there was discussion of this. But the possibility of discipline was not really in the running. The question was rather how long the discussion should continue between the deputies for contact with the Free University and Dr. Kuitert. Again there were many incensed remarks — especially by theological professors — about how the atmosphere for discussion was being spoiled by

anti-Kuitert forces. In fact, it was even proposed that putting any kind of deadline on the discussion would also spoil the atmosphere. What was the outcome? The discussion will be continued. True, the deputies must bring a report before the end of Synod in November; but Synod did not decide that November would end the discussion. In the discussion the entire theological faculty must participate. And what must they discuss? In plain language, Kuitert’s social-gospel concept of the Kingdom of God and his horizontalism. Yes, the Synod couched all this in polite language. For after all, the atmosphere must be kept pure for healthy discussion. But that is what it comes down to.

There is more coming. The Synod must still decide on the case of Dr. Wiersinga; and at this writing, I have no further report on that case. I do, however, have a protest against Wiersinga; and from it I will reveal the kind of blatant heresy taught by him. But I have little hope that the Synod will do anything definitive. How can they measure Wiersinga with a different measure than that with which they measure Kuitert and Baarda? And if they condemn Wiersinga, what must they say about his teacher and promoter, Dr. Berkouwer? But more about this next time, the Lord willing.

Question Box

As To The Well-meant Offer

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From a part-time Floridian I received the following question, sent to me already about the first of the year:

“The Christian Reformed Church since 1924 has stressed the so-called well-meant offer of the gospel. Did our forefathers also believe this? Was it ever an issue before this time? What does church history show?”

Reply

First of all, I must correct what is undoubtedly an unintentional inaccuracy. My questioner states that the Christian Reformed Church “has stressed” the well-meant offer of the gospel. While this is, of course, true, it is not wholly accurate. We should not forget that in 1924 the Christian Reformed Church elevated common grace, and along with it the general, well-meant offer, to the status of official church doctrine, binding upon officebearers and members. This is very plain from the fact that refusal to subscribe to these doctrines resulted in being cast out of the denomination. This is a little more than a matter

of *stress*, therefore, although I freely admit that the Christian Reformed Church has indeed stressed this false doctrine.

Now the first question: did our forefathers also believe this? I will not deny that some individual forefathers at times taught things similar to the well-meant offer idea. After all, even at the Synod of Dordrecht there were men like Martinius, who wanted general atonement of the crassest sort; and one of the British theologians at that same Great Synod later became an avowed Arminian. But it seems to me that if you want to lump “our forefathers” together, and then inquire as to what they believed, then you must turn to the confessions. And you must turn especially to the Canons of Dordrecht to find out what our forefathers believed on this subject. And then it is abundantly plain — in spite of the fact that the Synod of 1924 foolishly tried to quote the Canons in support of their position — that “our forefathers” had no room for the idea of the general, well-meant offer. Promiscuous preaching? Yes, indeed! The gospel must be proclaimed — along with the demand of faith and

repentance — to all, reprobate and elect, to whom God in His good pleasure sends it. General, well-meant offer? No; but the general preaching of a particular gospel. This is the faith of our fathers set forth in the Canons.

And, by the way, even the great Abraham Kuyper, the champion of the common grace theory, wanted nothing of the general grace theory of the well-meant offer. He was very strong on the particularity of the gospel of grace. Shall we say he was happily inconsistent on this?

The second question is: was it ever an issue before this time? My answer is that in this particular form it was not. As to its real nature and principle, the issue in 1924 was the same as the issue in 1618-'19 at the Synod of Dordrecht: Arminianism. Now, however, there was the narrower focus of the gospel-preaching; and there was the further complication of the *Janus-kop* stance of the Christian Reformed Church: the attempt to show a Reformed face and an Arminian face on the same ecclesiastical head.

Taking off on your question, "What does church history show?" let me remind you that in 1962-1967

(the period of the so-called Dekker Case) you have the proof of the pudding. Prof. Dekker's teachings on the atonement and the love of God were the outgrowth of the First Point of 1924. All the literary polemics of the time demonstrate this abundantly; and the discussion, such as it was, at the synodical meetings showed this, too. Whenever there was a little doctrinal discussion of the issues, 1924 was inevitably mentioned. Moreover, the deepest reason why 1967 was unable to condemn the 17th century Arminianism of Prof. Dekker was the fact that in 1924 the Christian Reformed Church had principally adopted that same Arminianism. Harold Dekker only carried it a step farther. That is why you could almost hear the sighs of relief when the Dekker Case was finished, "Whew! At least we all still hold to the well-meant offer!" Editor Haverkamp of *De Wachter* did not put it quite that way. He wrote (remember?): "One thing became indeed very plain from the entire history, namely, that among the participants in the discussion and in the reports about the case there was never any disagreement about the question whether Scripture teaches the well-meant offer of grace."

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

Rev. H. Veldman

Art. III of the second Head of the Canons reads: "The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin; and is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world."

The expression, "abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world," occurs repeatedly, we have noted in preceding articles, in the opinions of various delegates to the Great Synod of Dordt, which these delegates submitted to the synod for its consideration. This expression must not be misunderstood. It certainly does not mean that Christ actually died for the sins of every man, head for head. This was the heresy of the Arminians, and this heresy is refuted by the fathers in this second head of the Canons. Neither does this expression mean that, inasmuch as the sacrifice of Christ was sufficiently abundant to expiate the sins of the whole world, He therefore suffered more than was necessary, inasmuch as His sacrifice expiates only the sins of the elect. We do not understand the necessity of this expression in the Canons. One thing is sure: the extreme character of the death of Christ, as suffered and endured by the Saviour upon the cross of Calvary, would have been

necessary had there been fewer elect for whom He poured out His life's blood.

This article speaks of the worth and value of the sacrifice of Christ. It is of eternal and infinite value. This lies in the nature of the case. Fact is, it must bear the wrath of God, and this wrath of God is eternal and infinite. The bearing of this infinite wrath of God is the penalty upon sin, inasmuch as sin has been committed against the most high majesty of God. That this sacrifice is of such infinite value, blotting out all our guilt and meriting for the elect life everlasting and immortal, lies in the fact that it is the death of the Son of God. The article does not say that Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, but that it was abundantly sufficient to expiate, blot out, all the sins of the whole world. We immediately understand the difference.

This article reads as follows:

This death derives its infinite value and dignity from these considerations, because the person who submitted to it was not only really man, and perfectly holy, but also the only begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost, which qualifications were

necessary to constitute Him a Savior for us; and because it was attended with a sense of the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin.

In this fourth article the fathers explain the value and dignity of the sacrifice and death of Christ. How must we account for the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ could atone for all the sins of all the elect by one sacrifice upon the cross? Did God simply consider this sacrifice to be of such great value or is it true that the death of the Lamb of God was really that valuable? These questions are answered by this article. The truth as set forth in this fourth article of Head II of the Canons is also treated in Lord's Day V of our Heidelberg Catechism.

First of all, the Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ, is really man and perfectly holy. In the Old Dispensation the Son of God appeared to men, as to Abraham, recorded in Gen. 18. We also read of angels that they appeared to men, took upon themselves the appearance of a man. Jesus did not simply appear as a man. He was no ghost or spirit. But He actually became man, actually became like unto us in all things, sin excepted. And He is a perfectly holy man. He was perfectly holy in the judicial sense of the word. He was, therefore, without guilt. Because He is the eternal Son of God, standing personally outside of the human race, the guilt of Adam was not imputed to Him. He had no sins of His own to expiate. And He is also perfectly holy, as man, in the ethical, spiritual sense. He was born without corruption. He became like unto us in all things, sin excepted. All this was necessary if a sacrifice is to be brought which would expiate the sins of the elect of God. Man sinned and man must pay for sin. For this reason our Mediator must become man and be perfectly holy. He must be able to pay for others, not for His own sin, and, as the perfectly Holy One, He must be able to bear the wrath of God in perfect obedience.

Secondly, however, the Mediator was also the Son of God. This is emphasized in this article. He is also the only begotten Son of God, of the same eternal and infinite essence with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Hence, according to His Divine nature, He is essentially one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And He was a Divine, not a human, Person. The article speaks of Him as the only begotten Son of God. He was therefore the Person of the Son of God, in divine and human nature. And it is the Person of the Son of God Who suffers for us, not in the divine nature, but in the human nature. His sacrifice has infinite value exactly because it was the sacrifice of the eternal and infinite Son of God. This is the language of our confessions. And this, of course, is also the language of the infallible Scriptures. Many passages could be quoted from the Word of God. We will quote a passage from the gospel of Matthew, chapter 16. When the Lord asks His disciples what the people say of Him, and then confronts them with the

question: "But whom say ye that I am?", the apostle Peter, answering for the disciples, answers: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the expression, "Son of God," has but one meaning in the Word of God, namely that the Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal and infinite Son of God, one in essence with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

ARTICLE V

This article reads as follows:

Moreover, the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel.

This, we readily understand, is an article often quoted, particularly in the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches. It is an article rather well known. However, this does not mean that it is, therefore, an article generally well understood. On the contrary, it is a very controversial article, an article that is often quoted by those who believe in a universal love of God, universal atonement, and in the preaching of the gospel as an offer of salvation on God's part to all who hear that gospel. How strange this is! Is it not a very striking thing that an article of the Canons should be quoted by those who believe in a general and universal love of God, when the truth of the matter is that it is these fathers of Dordrecht who are fighting here these very Arminian heresies!

This article, we understand, treats the subject of the preaching or proclamation of the gospel. The remonstrants contended that the reformed view of the Scriptures hinders or renders impossible a general preaching of the gospel. How, for example, can the gospel be preached to all men if Christ died only for the elect? Isn't the "gospel" good news? "Good news" is the literal meaning of the word, "gospel." How can the gospel of the suffering and death of Christ be preached to all, be a gospel proclaimed to all if He died only for some? In fact, the Reformed man cannot really preach the gospel. What he should do is confine his preaching of the gospel to the elect. But this, we understand, he cannot do. And inasmuch as we do not know who the elect are, we, who are truly Reformed, cannot really proclaim the gospel. This objection of the Remonstrants or Arminians against the Reformed conception of the cross and death of our Lord Jesus Christ is also heard today. O, it is not a new accusation! The fathers of Dordt were thoroughly familiar with it. And our Protestant Reformed Churches are also thoroughly familiar with it. It is this accusation, charge of the Arminians, that is answered by the fathers in this fifth article of Head II of the Canons. Incidentally, this is one of the articles of the

Canons that is quoted by the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924 in its support of the Three Points adopted at that synod in Kalamazoo. That synod declared that the preaching of the gospel is grace to all who hear it, declared that the preaching of the gospel is a general, well meant offer of grace on God's part to all men. We again refer our readers to the thorough treatment of the Canons, also of this article, by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema in past Standard Bearers.

This first article speaks of the preaching of the promise of the gospel. The expression, "promise of the gospel," we interpret in this article as referring to the promise proclaimed by the gospel. Now we should notice, in the first place, that the fathers here declare that the promises of the gospel, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel. The Arminians declared that the advocates of the Reformed view, maintaining an eternal, unconditional love of God (Head I), and a particular atonement, really could not preach the gospel. Notice that the fathers here maintain this particular and unconditional love of God. They declare that also the preaching of this gospel is sovereignly determined by the Lord. They declare that this gospel ought to be preached to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel.

How true! Paul, upon his second missionary journey, never intended to go into Europe. It was his intention to go to the right. But the vision of the man of Macedonia revealed to him that he must go to the left, into Europe. God also sovereignly determines the course of the preaching of the gospel. He also determines who shall hear this preaching. He has not only determined who shall be saved, but also to whom the gospel will be proclaimed. This is extremely important. The fathers here immediately establish and maintain the sovereignly particular love of God. Does the Lord love all men? Does He desire the salvation of all men? Does He attempt to save all men? If He loves all men, why is it then that He does not have His gospel preached to all men? Of course, He does have His gospel preached to the elect. But why does He not have His gospel preached to all the reprobates? Fact is, not all men hear the preaching of the gospel. Most men do not hear this preaching. And, mind you, it is the good pleasure that the Lord does not have the gospel preached to all men. Sovereignly, therefore, He withholds this gospel from men. And He would save all men? And then He sovereignly withholds His gospel from many? The fathers here, therefore, immediately maintain the sovereignly particular love of God. The Lord willing, we will return to this article in our following article.

In His Fear

The Pilgrim and the Church

Rev. D. H. Kuiper

The pilgrim is a church member. Since the Church is the creation of God, since she is precious in the sight of the Lord, and since Christ gave His life for her, we ought to be very clear as to what the Church of Jesus Christ is essentially. The Scriptures present us with a rich variety of names for this spiritual entity: church, bride, building, temple, plant, vine, tree. Perhaps the most beautiful and highly revelatory name is *the body of Christ*. According to Colossians one, Christ is the Head of the body, the Church. From this follows that the Church is alive, enjoying the resurrection life of Christ, and bringing forth the Church by His power. The Church is a unity, possessing one faith, one doctrine, one life and hope and love. It is a perfect whole whose perfection is never marred by the haphazard addition or subtraction of members; nor is it possible to speak of the Church in indefinite terms, as if the size or number of her members were not known or determined. And yet, within the fellowship

of the Church there is variation and diversity, so that each pilgrim, with his peculiar gifts and abilities, occupies a place and office in the Church which edifies mutually the members and glorifies the Head.

Further, that Christ is the Head of the Church sends us back to the eternal decrees of God, for we read in Colossians I that Christ is before all things, He is the beginning. We are to understand, therefore, that in the counsel of God, Christ was before the Church. God determined to reconcile all things *in Him*; having elected Him to be the Mediator of the Covenant, God then chose His people in Christ and gave them to Christ. Hence, the name *body of Christ* stresses the importance of Christ to the Church! He is the origin, the life, the victory, the surety, the glory of the Church. The Church, then, is composed of all those chosen unto eternal life in Christ, before the world was, and is gathered by Him from every nation through His Spirit and Word. Outside of that Church there is no

salvation and life. For that Church, Christ has made peace through the blood of His Cross.

Church as Institution

On earth, that one, holy, universal Church, which embraces all of time and every people, reveals itself as an *institution*. In both dispensations, the Church of God has definite offices, ceremonies, and practices. The result is that this spiritual creation called Church may be recognized and found. She has offices and functioning officers: today there are the elders, and deacons, and ministers, gifts of Christ to the Church through which He governs, is merciful, and speaks. As far as membership is concerned, the Church is composed of believers and their seed. This latter implies that in the church on earth there are more individuals than the elect of God. There are also hypocrites, there is chaff among the wheat, there are superficial hangers-on. In this world the church as institute is a mixed multitude, as was Israel of old.

The picture, therefore, is a complicated one. As time marches on there is a two-fold flowering or development. As the true Church is being gathered by Christ out of the line of continued generations, the carnal, false church continues to arise from the same generations. As the true Church reveals herself in this world, living out of Christ and developing the truth as it is in Him, there is also a malignant growth away from the truth in the direction of the lie and human philosophy. The history of the church is not a static one. There is constant movement, among churches and denominations, from the camp of the truth into the camp of the lie, from the sphere of the true Church into the sphere of the false. It is the case that for a time one denomination carries the torch of truth, and then it is passed to another by the way of reformation. Or as John puts it in Revelation 2, the candlesticks, representing the presence of Jesus Christ, are removed from one church and given to another. This is not an event of a moment. Let it be emphasized that the development of the false church is a process. Discernably and gradually, the pure milk of the Word is adulterated, the influence of false doctrines increases, the word of man questions, contradicts, then replaces the Word of God. Then, sadly but inexorably, a church becomes false.

A Complicated Picture

The situation that faces the serious pilgrim is not simply one of two churches, a completely true and a completely false. But there is a true Church and a false church, and "in between" there are many gradations, many degrees of relative purity and falseness. Yet, the Christian must conduct himself according to the Biblical principle of there being an absolute cleavage between light and darkness, truth and lie. He must be aware of the presence of a true and a false church, and he must be aware of the relentless movement from the

one to the other. He has been elected and regenerated. He is saved as a member of Christ's Body. But how must he view the scene of hundreds and hundreds of Protestant denominations?

In the first place, the pilgrim joins himself to an instituted church and attends that church! He does not forsake the assembling of believers together as the manner of some is, but it is his sacred duty to join himself and his family to the true Church. This needs to be emphasized today, because growing numbers scorn church membership and activity, and claim to have a more direct operation of the Holy Spirit which makes conventional membership unnecessary. Some few others claim that they and a few friends are the only ones worthy of the name "True Church"; so they gather in their living rooms and read the Bible together. Or, as I heard one intellectual say, "There are other ways of getting to heaven than by going to church." The 28th Article of the Belgic Confession, however, has the answer for all time: "We believe, since this holy congregation is an assembly of those who are saved, and that out of it there is no salvation, that no person, of whatsoever state or condition he may be, ought to withdraw himself, to live in a separate state from it; but that all men are in duty bound to join and unite themselves with it."

Clearly, the question is not; shall I join a church, but it is, *which* church do I join? We are assured by the next article of the same confession that this question can be easily resolved. Prof. Hoeksema, in a little booklet on the church, suggests some answers that have been given here. He writes of the ecumenist, the traditionalist, and the indifferentist. The first has the neat solution of getting rid of all denominations and doctrinal distinctions; just have one church and everyone go to that church. The second insists that the church of his birth and baptism is the right one; I will trust my leaders, let them do my thinking, and follow, come what may. The third yawns and says what is the difference? We are all going to the same place anyway. Hopefully, none of these answers is yours. I would like to suggest a fourth type that may fit more of us, one whom I would call the *selfish-saved*. He makes his shibboleth the question of his own salvation. If I am saved, what else is there to be concerned about? Now, truly that is an important question! But what about the more pressing question concerning the glory of God? Are not our church membership, our confession, and worship, and life connected directly to that? And what about the truth of God as it is contained in His precious revelation? What about the welfare of His cause in future generations? John Calvin once wrote in a letter to a friend that the person "who is everlastingly concerned with his own salvation cannot serve God." Our personal salvation must be seen in the greater context of God's purpose to glorify Himself. To see things persistently in terms of one's salvation is

basically *selfishness*! So we ought not to see what we can “get away with” as far as our church membership is concerned. If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, gracious in saving you and bringing you to faith in Jesus Christ, you will desire the *pure milk of the Word*. Not skimmed Milk, not adulterated milk, not the poisons of a false-gospel, but *pure milk*!

Positively the Belgic Confession states that the Christian must join himself to that church which reveals herself to be true by easily recognizable marks: “the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel (How startling that the gospel is put here in terms of *doctrine*! DHK), the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ, and the exercise of church discipline in punishing of sin.” The Confession, in giving us this aid, lays it upon us to *use* these marks! No matter where your church membership is at present, your calling is to apply these marks constantly. Do you hear the true doctrine of the gospel? Not just some simplistic, sentimentalized gospel, but the systematic, logical, confessional, Scriptural presentation of the full counsel of God? Are the sacraments added to that preaching periodically as signs and seals of the righteousness that is by faith, and are unrepentant sinners kept from use of the sacraments? Is discipline exercised in love, both love for the brother involved as well as love for the cause and name of God? Are false teachers put out? Or does everything go, in doctrine and walk, under the guise of tolerance? Oh, you can know these things. The pilgrim has the Bible, as we saw last time, and that Bible is clear! Let nothing come between the Word of God and the understanding of your conscience.

A Difficult Calling

When the Confession tells us that the distinction between the true and false church can be easily known, it is not saying that doing the right thing is an easy matter. The calling of the pilgrim can be extremely difficult. For example, what if you become convinced that your present church does not measure up favorably to the marks of the true church, so that not only do you know something is wrong intellectually, but you know this spiritually and experientially: you are not being fed with the true Bread from heaven, and your children are not being instructed in the truth of Scripture? And what if every attempt to remedy this sad situation fails, and results in the entrenchment of error? What must you do? One widely observable reaction is that a person sees the problem, abhors the situation, decries the apostasy, and *does nothing*! He keeps his membership where it is and thinks he is really a little above the rest of his church! Truth is, because of the principle of corporate or federal responsibility, before God and man he is responsible for all the decisions and stands of his church. Your church and mine have taken stands over the years on such things as

divorce and re-marriage, union membership, the authority of Scripture, the atonement, worldly amusements, and so on. No matter what we believe in our hearts you and I are accountable for these decisions. We may be confronted on the street by a stranger, and because of our church affiliations, be charged with what our denomination holds to be true. In this respect, we are no better than our church. And if you cannot live with that, then because of the discernment God has given you, you must do something!

That something is very serious and very hard; it may involve the losing of friends and the splitting of families. But hear the word of Christ: “Whosoever loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of the kingdom of heaven.” He came into this world to set members of the same families at odds with one another. Further, the word of Christ, according to Revelation 3:14-22 is that we must leave a church when it goes wayward and refuses to change its course. Christ leaves such a church, and so must we. But also hear this: when such a decision is made for principle’s sake, when the comfort of one’s church and friendships are left behind for love of the Gospel, then *Christ* will be with them who have so left, and He will commune with them and feed them!

Rich Benefits

Thus, when the pilgrim settles the question of his church correctly, there are rich rewards for him and his family. First, the Sabbath Days becomes for him *rest stops* on his journey. We have all driven the interstate highway system and have discovered how tiring those long stretches can be. How refreshing the periodic rest stops! The pilgrim is on a journey through a strange land, filled with those who hate him and his God, who would destroy him, and prevent the reaching of the destination. He needs, periodically, to have rest and nourishment. He must be assured that he is on the right way, and very likely, he will stand some correction. Especially he needs a view of heaven to inspire him and excite the hope that is in him! Christ does all these things. Christ feeds and strengthens and corrects and gives hope! He does so especially on Sunday through the preaching of His Word!

Also, a rich benefit is derived from fellowshiping with other pilgrims. Pilgrims *need* each other. They have all things in common, and therefore, can talk about their goal, compare notes on the enemy, give loving correction. Thirdly, he has the assurance, then, that his children will come into contact with the truth. That’s important, isn’t it? You believe that God takes His seed from your seed? That heaven will be populated with the children of believers, according to God’s promise? How important then that our children have and enjoy the means of grace! Then they in turn can transmit this heritage to their children. The pilgrim

has joy when he sees his children walk in the truth!

Finally, by standing for the truth in the midst of an evil world, the pilgrim stranger may know that he is pleasing to God. He has been called out of darkness for the sole purpose of being to the praise of the glory of

God's grace! He is that only when he believes, confesses, and stands for the truth of Scripture! He sees himself as a vessel of God's honor, and in that high purpose he loses himself. And his soul is at rest! He has the answer of a good conscience towards God.

From Holy Writ

Exposition of the Book of Hebrews

*Rev. G. Lubbers
(continued)*

THE BLESSING OF JACOB (Hebrews 11:20; Gen. 27:27-29)

In this blessing of Jacob nothing is said concerning the two nations, of the elder having dominion over the younger. Esau is not said here to have dominion over Jacob. This is avoided by Isaac. The terms are such that in the wisdom and overruling providence of God we see in dim outline what is expressly stated by the Spirit in the prophecy of Malachi. We would state here that the terms are generally global and Messianic. But if Isaac hesitated here to express the blessing upon Esau, God expressed here the blessing upon Jacob, as the Seed of Abraham will be gathered in the generations of the Old Testament people of God, as well as in those of the New Testament Church. And when this comes to pass "Edom will be the border of wickedness, the people against whom the LORD hath indignation forever." In a sense, what Isaac meant for evil, God turned it to good. And when Isaac sees this he trembles exceedingly, and says "Yea, and he shall be blessed." And that was *by faith!*

THE BLESSING OF ESAU (Hebrews 11:20, Gen. 27:39, 40)

There are those with a dogmatical bent of mind and who are given to rigid definition who will ask: how can the Bible speak of Isaac "blessing" Esau. Particularly this may be asked when it is obvious from Gen. 27:39, 40 that Isaac by this time was wholly satisfied that Esau was standing before him, and that the latter "with tears" seeks for "one blessing." (Gen. 27:38) The question persists, therefore, how Isaac could bless Esau. Now, this is a matter which can only be resolved if we remove the "Isaac blessed" from the strict implication of "spiritual blessing" as this is opposite to the "curse" upon God's enemies. When the Bible speaks here of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau it ought to be evident that there is in the very terminology in which Jacob is placed before Esau already a difference in the "blessing," that is, in the contents of the prophetic utterance concerning the future of two nations which were already wrestling in Rebecca's

womb. It is especially in the "blessing" upon Esau that we see the blessing of Jacob come to stand in proper Christological perspective. For in the "blessing" upon Esau Isaac placed him *under* his brother Jacob. The people of Edom will serve Israel.

Indeed, Esau sought for the preeminency. But he found no place of repentance on the part of his father Isaac. Yes, he sought it with tears. And herein we see the faith of Isaac shine forth. He will submit to the divine will of God and place the elder under the younger. He sees the purpose of God according to election, that the Seed which would be "called in Isaac" would come out of Jacob and not out of Esau.

Listen to this blessing upon Esau. This is clear language, which is consciously submissive to the divine will and revelation given some seventy years ago! Yes, Esau will have the fat of the earth. He will be a warlike nation, living by his sword. He will go and dwell in Mount Seir. And his nation shall dwell there for more than eighteen centuries. But it will not be a nation which has a king David, even though it has its kings and dukes long before there was a king in Israel. (Gen. 36:31) It will be subject to David's house. Esau will serve his brother in the time when Israel lays all its enemies low and subjects them under her feet. We read in II Samuel 8:14 "And (David) he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all the Edomites became servants of David."

Yes, Esau will cast off the yoke for a little. In II Chronicles 21:8-10 we read "In his (Jehoram) days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves . . . So Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day . . ." Thus was the blessing of Isaac fulfilled which predicted "And it shall come to pass when thou shalt break loose, that thou shalt shake his yoke from off thy neck." (Gen. 27:40)

Thus Isaac spoke by faith!

HEBREWS 11:21B.

"By faith Jacob . . . worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff (bed)" *THE DYING JACOB* (Vs 216)

When a Christian dies, he dies clinging to the promise of God in the hope of eternal life. Thus it was with Jacob, the dying patriarch in the land of Egypt. Abraham and Isaac might die in the land of Canaan somewhere in the vicinity of the cave of Machpelah. They might there bury their dead. It was here that Jacob, during the forty years of sojourn, after returning from Haran, had buried his wife Leah. Jacob had stood weeping at that grave. It was a sad and poignant moment. The Spirit had triumphed over the flesh; he was to be buried next to Leah, the hated one. Now would he be joined to her and Leah's prayer would be answered. Rachel had been buried by the way a short distance from Ephrath. Jacob had buried Leah here, clinging to the promise and hope of the fathers, the hope of the blessed resurrection in the last day. Somewhere in that day he saw, through the mists of his tears, fulfillment of the promise "so shall thy seed be."

O, the blessed and hallowed memories of the promises of God. Jacob could not forget them. Fact is, that is what buoyed his spirits even when he spoke of "going down with sorrow to the grave," and when he laments that all these things "are against me." Now Jacob resides in Egyptland with the twelve tribes of Israel. God led him into this "land not theirs." (Gen. 15:13) He gave dreams to Joseph and had him sold into Egypt to prepare the way to "keep a great people alive." He sent his mighty judgments of famine after seven years of plenty. He changed the land of Egypt from a land of private property to a land which was owned by the government. (Gen. 47:20-21) "...so the land became Pharaoh's, and as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders to the other end thereof." Truly, this was earth shaking and it was a drastic demonstration that God divides the land and nations "according to the number of the children of Israel." (Deut. 32:7, 8)

It was not upon private initiative that Jacob and all of Israel left the land, when beckoned away by famine, and when Joseph sent wagons to fetch Jacob from the land of Canaan into Egypt. It was at Beersheba that the LORD had appeared unto Jacob and had said to him "...fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes..." (Gen. 46:3, 4) And thus Jacob came to dwell in Egypt according to the prophetic word to Abraham and according to the expressed sanction of the Lord at Beersheba. Thus Jacob came to dwell in Egypt with his seventy souls.

Israel dwells in the land of Egypt, a land which is not theirs!

But now the aged Jacob is a dying man. He is evidently bed-ridden, although he will live yet a little while. He makes his testamentary arrangements with

Joseph who is both ruler and also has the right of the firstborn, according to the flesh. (I Chron. 5:1) He summons Joseph to his bed. He does this in faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. It is the first act of faith on the part of Jacob in claiming the promise of God's powerfully delivering Israel from Egypt some four hundred years hence. He reaches out to the promise in hope and faith!

He requires Joseph to swear an oath. Joseph must put his hand under Jacob's thigh as a symbolic act of swearing. He must give Jacob his pledge of assurance that he will not bury him in Egypt, but that he will bury him in the land of Canaan in the cave of Machpelah. He will be the first-fruits of them that return to Canaan, be it then in a coffin. It is hope through death. Joseph solemnly promises and says, "I will do as thou hast said."

And now Jacob worships God. He thanks God, commends this promise to the God of Israel, who had promised him at Beersheba that he would bring Israel again from the land of Egypt as a great nation. Jacob's faith is a sermon to Israel in their generations. Now Jacob's soul can rest in peace. He had seen Israel become established in Egypt during these seventeen years that they had lived there. Another generation had been born, and there were many children. The increase had been prodigious. God was fulfilling His promise in making him a mighty nation in Egypt; but Jacob scans the future in the eye of faith and worships!

He will be buried in the land next to Leah! For Judah, thou art he. . . .

Whether the reading of the Hebrew or of the Septuagint translation is correct makes very little difference. It is of no consequence. The Hebrew has the word "bed" and the Septuagint translation which is here given in Hebrews 11:21 has the term "staff." It is simply the difference of one vowel sign. The point is that Jacob deliberately got out of his position of lying down, sat up in bed and worshipped in deep reverence and thanksgiving to God.

He did this in faith!

And the writer to the Hebrews calls attention to this worshipping of Jacob here in connection with Jacob's prophetic eye and his hope concerning the final salvation. What a suffering this aged Jacob had to endure. He is not simply waxing rhetorical before Pharaoh when he speaks of the "days of the years of his pilgrimage!" Presently these days of the years of the pilgrimage will be over. Then all the weary night shall be past. He will open his eyes in the eternal morning of the glorious and unfading day.

Thus it must be with the churches which receive this letter of the Hebrews. They must not fall back into perdition and unbelief, but must be of those who persevere to the saving of the soul. They must live and

die like Christians. They must look at the sure recompense of the reward. If we suffer with Christ we shall also be glorified together. Let us then bow our head upon the top of our pilgrims staff and worship in the hope of our burial with thanksgiving. Israel is long

delivered from Egypt. The better Passover is slain. God has called His Son out of Egypt, through his death and resurrection. His word of promise stands, for he is faithful who hath promised. That is what we say "by faith."

The Signs of the Times

Impending Disasters

Rev. G. Van Baren

Often we have read in Scripture those passages which speak of disasters — especially the "disasters" near the end of time. At times we read such sections a bit fearfully. These things which occur appear to affect the whole earth — will we not also then be affected as well? After hearing of some of these things, young children of the church have been known to have nightmares. Children of God, of course, ought not to read and study these things in such a way that generates fear. Our God, according to His promise, will provide for His people for Jesus' sake. But we must know of those things which must take place, that we may properly watch.

The prophecy of Scripture

I have in earlier articles called attention to passages of Scripture which speak of the signs of the end. Concerning disasters which fall upon the earth, we read in Matthew 24:7, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places."

There are several passages in the book of Revelation which speak in a similar vein. One example is Revelation 8, which presents the first four of the seven trumpets. These trumpets came out of the seventh seal and present a destruction of one-third of the earth (in distinction from the one-fourth destruction of the seals — that average or normal destruction that we see about us at any one time). Rev. 8:7-12 states:

The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the

fountains of waters; and the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

Now we have often read these passages. We confess that these shall be fulfilled. But we do often seek to convince ourselves that these do not occur within our lifetimes — that perhaps they shall happen many, many years from now. We too have been affected by that thinking which implies that man has creation rather well under control. We see how that man, in his inventiveness, provides increasingly the means for ease and pleasure on the earth. Man promises that, should some sources of energy and raw materials be depleted, he shall find others to replace them. In past years, there appears to be continual improvement and progress. Man increases his material goods. He speaks of his rising standard of living. He speaks of the future when he will have vacation homes, private planes, four or three-day work-weeks, etc. The time for the fulfillment of the Scriptural prophecies concerning disasters seems far removed from our own age.

But, is it?

Confirming evidence

The testimony of Scripture is sufficient. We need nothing more than this for our faith. Yet when even worldly scientists point to the inevitability of this same thing, one sits back and takes note.

An article appeared recently in *Time*, January 24, 1972, entitled, "The Worst is Yet to Be?" It stated:

"The furnaces of Pittsburgh are cold; the assembly lines of Detroit are still. In Los Angeles, a few gaunt survivors of a plague desperately till freeway center strips, backyards and outlying fields, hoping to raise a subsistence crop. London's offices are dark, its docks deserted. In the farm lands of the Ukraine, abandoned tractors litter the fields: there is no fuel

for them. The waters of the Rhine, Nile, and Yellow rivers reek with pollutants."

Fantastic? No, only grim inevitability if society continues its present dedication to growth and "progress." At least that is the vision conjured by an elaborate study entitled *The Limits to Growth*. Its sponsors are no latter-day Jeremiahs, but the 70 eminently respectable members of the prestigious Club of Rome....

This particular report points out why it comes with its forboding conclusions. It insists that man's present progress can only lead to disaster. It explains it as follows:

... As industrialization grows, it voraciously consumes enormous amounts of resources. Resources become scarcer, forcing more and more capital to be spent on procuring raw materials, which leaves less and less money for investment in new plants and facilities. At this stage, which might be about 2020, the computer's curves begin to converge and cross. Population outstrips food and industrial supplies. Investment in new equipment falls behind the rate of obsolescence, and the industrial base begins to collapse, carrying along with it the service and agricultural activities that have become dependent on industrial products (like medical equipment and fertilizers). Because of the lack of health services and food, the world's population dwindles rapidly.

In an attempt to find a way out of this basic dilemma, Meadows postulated other scenarios. He assumed that there are still huge, undiscovered reserves of natural resources, say, under the oceans. Testing that possibility, Meadows' computer shows that industrialization will accelerate — and the resulting runaway pollution will overwhelm the biosphere. Might not new technological devices control pollution? Sure, says the computer, but then population would sour and outstrip the ability of land to produce food. Every advance in technology consumes scarce natural resources, throws off more pollutants and often has unwanted social side effects, like creating huge and unmanageable unemployment. What if pollution was abated, the birthrate halved and food production doubled? The readouts are no less glum. There would still be some pollution from every farm and factory, and cumulatively it would still

trigger catastrophe. After running thousands of such hypotheses through the computer, Meadows sums up his conclusion tersely: "All growth projections end in collapse."

The report continues by emphasizing that the only way to prevent this catastrophe is to maintain a zero-growth rate: in population, in industrialization, in use of material things. To avoid catastrophe, there can be no more "rise in the living standards." *Time* points out that there is one glaring weakness in this report. "It lacks a description of how a society dedicated to upward and onward growth can change its ways."

Significance for the saints

Perhaps we shrug off this study as another foolish endeavor of man to analyze his future and come up with solutions which resolve his problems and establish his desired Utopia. And it is true that man seeks to study many different problems, especially concerning the future, and arrives at all manner of conclusions. Often, his conclusions are contradictory. However, the point of interest is that man is becoming increasingly aware of the probability of disasters in the near future. No longer does he insist that such disasters are unthinkable in our civilized and scientific society. He is, rather, deeply concerned and is seeking to convey that concern to the "man on the street."

I am in no position to verify the conclusions of the computer quoted above. I would not conclude that the disasters prophesied by this computer *are* the disasters foretold in Rev. 8, though there are obvious similarities. I *would* suggest that through studies as these, man is already providing for himself answers to possible future disasters — "scientific" answers which will refuse to recognize the fact that Scripture has told of these very things as signs of the end of time. Be not deceived by that.

When the child of God reads reports as the above, he must be struck by the fact that the fulfillment of passages such as Rev. 8 is at hand. Let us not, then, live as though the end is far off. Know rather that "the Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5).

The Strength of Youth

Confession of Faith(3)

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

Matthew 10:32, 33

Rev. Robert D. Decker

We introduced our last article by pointing out that confessing our faith is a fruit of the grace of God. It is God finishing the good work of salvation in us which

He began. (Phil. 1:6) We continued by examining the actual contents of our confession. In this connection we discussed at some length the first question asked

those who confess their faith publicly before the Church. Confession of faith means: "we acknowledge the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Articles of the Christian faith and taught here in this Christian Church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation." Confessing our faith implies that we know the doctrines of the Scriptures, the objective, timeless, always relevant truth of the infallibly inspired Word of God. That doctrine is the doctrine summed up and set forth in systematic fashion in the Articles of the Christian faith, i.e. the Three Forms of Unity: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic or Netherlands Confession of Faith, and the Canons of Dordt. Still more, we confess before the Church that the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures as set forth in the Confessions is taught "here in this Christian Church." In other words, most emphatically that means we are confessing that the Protestant Reformed Churches teach the true and complete doctrine of salvation! A knowledge of that doctrine and a commitment to that doctrine are absolutely necessary before one may confess his faith in Jesus Christ.

But that is not all there is to confessing our faith. Correct doctrine and a commitment to the same — that is first, and that cannot be emphasized enough in our day of apathy, insensitivity, and downright dislike of doctrine. We live in the day of which Paul warned Timothy when he spoke of people having itching ears and not enduring sound doctrine. The popular preacher is not the "doctrinal preacher," sometimes we fear not even in Protestant Reformed circles. That is too bad! That will yield a bitter fruit in days to come! Without being firmly rooted and grounded in the doctrines of the Bible we will be tossed to and fro by every wind of false doctrine that blows (Eph. 4). And how many of those destructive winds are not blowing today?! But doctrine is not all. There must also be godly living.

There is of course an inseparable connection between doctrine and godly living. The connection is this: doctrine must be the foundation of our Christian life. It must be the principle that motivates and guides us in our daily living. To put it still another way, the true and complete doctrine we acknowledge must be expressed in our daily life.

This is precisely why our wise church fathers formulated question number two for Public Confession of Faith which reads: "Have you resolved by the grace of God to adhere to this doctrine; to reject all heresies repugnant thereto and to lead a new, godly life?" (Psalter, p. 59). To appreciate the seriousness of this godly life take your Bibles and turn to the second chapter of James. Here the Bible speaks of the relationship between faith and works and makes the point that faith without works is dead. In verses 14 to the end of the chapter James asks the question: "What

doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" Suppose you say you have faith; you make confession of your faith in the Church of Jesus Christ. You acknowledge the doctrine of the Bible as set forth in the Creeds and taught in the Church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation; but as a matter of fact the new and godly life is not there. Your faith is not expressed in your everyday life. Your doctrine is not put into practice. Can that kind of faith, a faith without the works of faith, save you? Obviously not! James illustrates the point when he writes: "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone." (vss. 15-17). You say you have faith, but when a brother or sister comes to you for clothing and daily food you simply say to him or her, "Be warmed and filled," but you give them neither clothing nor food; what good is that? Does your word, "Be warmed and filled," put clothes on your brother's back and food in his hungry stomach? Of course not! Your words are profitless, empty, meaningless. And that's the way it is with faith without works. That kind of faith is dead; it's alone.

So it is with confessing our faith. We acknowledge the truth of Holy Scripture. The new and godly life must follow. If it does not, it only means that our confession of faith is profitless. You believe the doctrines of the Bible? That's fine and that's necessary. But you fail to live the new and godly life? James would say to you: "The devils also believe, and tremble." (vs. 19)! James concludes the chapter by citing two examples of living faith out of the Old Testament. That Abraham's faith was living is evident from the fact that "he offered Isaac, his son, upon the altar." And, that Rahab the harlot had living faith is evident from her "receiving the messengers and sending them out another way."

Thus confession of faith involves a resolving to adhere to the doctrine of Scripture, to reject all heresies repugnant to the same, and to lead a new, godly life. By the grace of God we resolve to do that! By the grace of God, because we cannot do it in our own strength, we resolve to do that. To make that confession means we acknowledge our own inability and sinful weaknesses and commit ourselves totally to the care of God. That certainly implies a resolve to attend the worship services of the Church faithfully. The faithful pulpit is the fountain out of which that grace of God flows, enabling us to lead the new, godly life. It pleases God by the means of the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe! (I Cor. 1) By preaching, God puts to nothing the wisdom of the world. Preaching is Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. To confess a resolve to lead a new,

godly life by God's grace and then to despise God's means of grace, the preaching of the Word is to put the lie to our confession! And, you understand, this is the ONLY way! Of course God *can* save by other means; but the point is, the Bible teaches God will not save by other means! God chooses to save by THIS means and this means alone.

It is precisely for this reason that young people who confess their faith and declare agreement with and commitment to the doctrine of the Scriptures as "taught in this Christian Church" and then who leave that Christian Church commit serious sin. How is it possible to "adhere to this doctrine and reject all heresies repugnant thereto" in a church that does not preach it? Perhaps it is true that one who leaves the church for another will never forget the Protestant Reformed truth and always believe it (this is invariably the rationalization of such a move) but his or her children will not. There are grieving parents who once left and now have returned whose children are to this day in other churches, who will be the first to warn against exactly this. Confessing our faith, then, means a firm resolution to use faithfully the means of grace in order to be enabled to grow in the truth and in the Christian way of life.

Once more the question: do you know and love the truth? Are you resolved to lead the new, godly life? Then, confess that! Perhaps you refrain because you are afraid of not being able to lead a new, godly life. Personally, this pastor has encountered young people who say that they cannot make confession of faith because they know they will not lead a new, godly life. Somehow they seem to think they have no sacred obligation to lead Christian lives until they have confessed their faith! That's bad thinking! Read the Baptism Form! When we were but infants the water of baptism was sprinkled upon our foreheads, marking us for Christian living as the children of God's gracious

covenant! "Holy baptism witnesseth and sealeth unto us the washing away of our sins *and the daily renewing of our lives!*" And, through baptism, we are "by God admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love him with all our hearts . . . that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." That's the Bible's teaching too. Paul says in Romans 6 that we are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (vss. 4). Baptism signifies and it seals this to us. Baptism means that we are dead to sin, no longer the slaves of sin. The admonition of baptism then is in terms of Romans 6: "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." (vs. 12).

That then is our calling! Whether we have confessed our faith or not, our calling is to lead the new, godly life. And that, very simply, means that the truth of the Word of God is expressed by us in all of our living. Our lives are characterized by true piety and godliness. In our homes, at school, in our daily work, as husbands and wives, parents or children, in our recreation, always and everywhere we live as those bought with the precious blood of Christ, born again to newness of life, elect strangers in the earth who are inspired and moved by a living hope of everlasting glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Then we seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and do not even worry about what we are going to eat, drink, or put on (Matt. 6). We lay up treasures in heaven and not on the earth; serve God and not mammon; pray, preach, worship, eat, drink, sleep, work, and play in a godly manner looking for the city which has the foundations! That is the new, godly life! Is it your resolve to lead that kind of life by the grace of God?

All Around Us

How To Let The Bible Confuse You

Prof. H. Hanko

We have, from time to time, in these pages criticized the A.A.C.S. (Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship) which has its chief center in Toronto. We have also, in the *Book Review* department criticized some of the publications of this organization. Among those books which we have criticized is the book "Understanding The Scriptures" written by A. H. Degraaff and C. G. Seerveld.

Recently, Dr. Robert K. Rudolph, rector of the

Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia and no friend of the A.A.C.S., sent to the *Standard Bearer* a copy of an article first printed in the *Episcopal Recorder* in February, 1972 and written by Prof. Gordon Haddon Clark, Chairman of the Philosophy Department at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana. This article is also a criticism of the book "Understanding the Scripture." We think this article is particularly important because it demonstrates lucidly

how flatly contradictory and how confusing the book is. Under the title which appears at the head of this article, Prof. Clark writes:

Peter says that some of Paul's paragraphs are hard to understand; but this is not the type of difficulty discussed here. Peter may have had Romans 5:12-21 in mind. It is an intricate passage. But here is how to confuse yourself with perfectly plain verses like "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and "Thou shalt not steal."

First, let us not be confused with what confusion means. If a man thinks that Tallahassee is in Maine, he is not really confused; he is simply wrong. But if he thinks that Tallahassee is both in Maine and in Florida, he is confused. He is confused because he holds two contrary opinions at the same time. One of his opinions is correct; the other is false.

There is a booklet entitled, *Understanding the Scriptures*, by A. H. Degraaff and C. G. Seerveld. Dr. Degraaff is confused. Some things he says about the Bible are true and good; some are false. Since he minimizes the true part and puts great emphasis on the false part, he will confuse you, if you let him.

Here are some of the good and true parts. He says, the Bible's "purpose is to proclaim, to preach, in this instance by telling us the *true stories* (ital. his) of God's mighty acts" (p. 10). This is good and true. But in the same paragraph he also says, "To ask therefore whether or not these stories actually happened in every detail and in the order in which they are presented is to ask the wrong question." This is false and bad. Barth, Bultmann, and other present-day dialectical theologians constantly tell us that the preaching and message of the Bible are just as valuable even if the events never happened. There was no Adam, but the story is a true message about sin. Since so many contemporary theologians deny the events, it is not the wrong question. It is the right question: Did these events occur, or is the Bible on the level with Aesop's fables?

Dr. Degraaff also speaks the truth when he criticizes some Sunday School and Vacation Bible School material as being dull, trivial, and even stupid. He tells the unfortunate truth when he says that some Bible School teachers do not know how to interest children. But then he slips away from the charge of stupidity and gives the impression that the content of the material is theologically wrong. He even casts aspersions on Louis Berkhof, whose great work on theology is neither stupid nor trivial, even though it is on a higher level than Vacation Bible School material. It is clear that Dr. Degraaff dislikes Berkhof and Sunday School lessons, not because they are dull, but because they are "intellectual." He says, "The Bible is not to be read as a collection of propositional statements about God and man that we can memorize and master," (p. 21). Now, if the word "collection" implies some sort of random aggregate, then of course the Bible is not that. But aside from the idea of being disjointed and haphazard, the Bible is most certainly a collection of propositional statements about God. One such statement is, "In the beginning God created

the heavens and the earth." Furthermore, this statement can be memorized — and I hope all who read this have memorized it. Whether it can be "mastered" is hard to say, for Dr. DeGraaff does not tell us what he means by mastering a sentence.

One thing is clear, however. The sentence "God created the heavens" tells us something about God. But Dr. DeGraaff says, No. "You distort the Scriptures when you read them as a collection of objective statements about God and man . . . They do not contain any rational, general, theological statements about God and his creation (p. 2) . . . The Scriptures know nothing about God's essence or about his incommunicable and communicable attributes . . . It is not the purpose of the Bible to inform us about the nature of God's being or his attributes" (p. 9). Then, pray tell, why does the Bible say, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . .?" Is this not a rational statement? Does it give us no information about the nature of God? No rational information at all?

Dr. DeGraaff asserts that there are no rational, general, theological statements in the Bible, "not even in Paul" (p. 2). "The Bible wants to proclaim, not to explain. It is only in his actions that God's being and his attributes are revealed to us" (p. 10). So he says. But could anything be farther from the truth? The Bible does indeed relate (in rational sentences) many of God's acts. But usually it then gives an explanation of these acts. The crucifixion was an act, or an event. But the Bible wants very much to explain it. Romans 3:25 explains that Christ's death was a propitiatory sacrifice offered to God for our sins, so that God could be both just and justifier. Genesis tells us of Adam's first disobedience. Romans 5:12-21 is a rational, though intricate and lengthy explanation. Remove from the Bible what is rational and what is explanatory and what is theological, and not much is left.

Dr. DeGraaff says, "The Scriptures are neither rational nor irrational in character." Here is confusion. Everyone knows that the statement, 'Today is Monday' or 'Wellington defeated Napoleon' is rational. We can understand it. On the other hand, it is irrational to say, 'Three equals two,' or 'onts skom bubbits.' But what example is there of a sentence that is neither rational nor irrational? Looking in a book to find a sentence that is neither rational nor irrational is like going to the Zoo to find an animal that is neither vertebrate nor invertebrate. To say that the Bible is neither rational nor irrational is one of the best examples of irrationality that one can find.

Once more, "Nor does it (The Bible) contain moral applications that tell us how to live the good life — virtues that we share with the humanist." Here again is confusion. It is true that a Christian does not share any virtue with a humanist, because a humanist or atheist just cannot have any Christian virtue. But it is false to say that the Bible gives no moral rules. "A rationalistic and moralistic interpretation of the Scriptures always go hand in hand." Well, they

should; and this is good and not bad. But Dr. DeGraaff objects to teaching boys and girls in Vacation Bible School moral lessons about purity, chastity, and Victorian, middle-class American standards. Instead of warning them against the prevalent loose view of sex, we should tell them about irresponsible de-forestation, yellow smog, dirty water – and we should tell them these things in “a non-moralistic manner” (p. 26). Apparently dirty water is worse than a dirty mind.

In answer to the objections from many Christians, Dr. DeGraaff repeats, “The Bible does not teach us how to be good and how to avoid being bad” (p. 29). Speaking of the Ten Commandments (which he strangely says are not commandments at all – even though they are in the imperative mood) he says, “None of them can be literally followed or applied today, for we live in a different period of history in a different culture” (p. 35).

Imagine! It is impossible to follow or apply the command, Thou shalt not steal, because we live in a different culture. Thou shalt not commit adultery cannot be literally obeyed today because God commanded it in 1500 B.C. This line of argument is incredible. But check the reference, page 35, *Understanding the Scriptures*, DeGraaff and Seerveld, Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship, Toronto, Canada. Since none of the Ten Commandments can be literally applied today, Dr. DeGraaff suggests that we substitute for them agitation against police brutality (p. 36). Love your

neighbor's wife – you cannot avoid it; but hate the police.

Not everything this author says is so atrocious. There are several paragraphs and even several pages where he endorses and emphasizes God's covenant with Abraham. The covenant included Joseph so that God was with him in Potiphar's home. (Of course we should not use the story to teach resistance to temptation.) The important thing is that God was faithful to his promise.

A question arises, however. If God's commandment against adultery is not applicable today in our different culture, why should we suppose that God's covenant with Abraham can be applicable. It was as culturally conditioned as the Commandments. A clear thinker might in consistency reject both. A consistent Christian accepts both. But only confusion accepts one and rejects the other.

Personally I think Queen Victoria was superior to Hugh Hefner and his Playboy. I also believe that there are worse things than poorly planned lessons for Vacation Bible School. And I definitely prefer Louis Berkhof to Dr. DeGraaff.

While Dr. Clark makes logical mincemeat of DeGraaff's writings, it must be born in mind, too, that there is a very wicked attack on the integrity of God's Word lurking beneath DeGraaff's pious statements and a spiritually sinful and proud refusal to bow before the authority of the Scriptures.

Contribution

About Our Seminary

To the Editor:

Some time ago we read about the lethargic and lackadaisical attitude and response toward the drive for our Theological School.

As a “newcomer,” the matter of our seminary facilities has troubled me almost from the time we joined the Protestant Reformed Churches, some five years ago. To me there is something definitely wrong here. It can be proven from the Scripture that this situation is displeasing to the Lord. It would take too much space to go into detail, but one has only to read the book of the prophet, Haggai. We read in Chapter 1:2, 4, where the Lord speaks, “This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Is it the time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? speaketh the Lord.”

Today we live about 2,500 years later, but the circumstances are somewhat similar. We are living in times of affluence and abundance such as the world

has never seen before; and the church people as a whole are keeping up pretty well with the world insofar as their luxury homes, automobiles, etc., are concerned. Are the facilities of our seminary adequate in comparison to these luxuries?

We see many in the church who are more lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Too many speak the words of Ashdod (Neh. 13:24). We are living in times of great apostasy, and the Scriptures have become encumbered with all kinds of philosophical interpretations. We read in II Tim. 4:3, “They will not endure sound doctrine.” Did we not read recently in our *Standard Bearer* that a well known minister of Reformed persuasion called our churches “demonic?”

We don't know how long it will be before the faithful preaching of the Word will be put to silence. We are rushing towards the end. A well known statesman once said that today mankind is living on top of an atomic volcano. Taking into consideration the international world situation, we may look for big

changes in the near future.

In this world full of uncertainties, our Covenant God in His infinite love for the remnant of his people, who like all mankind live in the midst of death, has left us a Theological School where is still being taught "the truth once delivered to the saints." The truth that the Lord saves His people in absolute sovereignty and that it does not depend on men to accept or reject the offer of salvation. If this seminary is suffering because of the lack of adequate facilities, then the Word of God still comes to us, "Is it the time for us to live in our comfortable houses?" Twice the prophet Haggai uses the warning words, "Consider your ways." In conclusion, What is really at stake in the faithful

preaching of the Word? The glory of the Lord. As the Old Testament temple was filled with the glory of the Lord (2 Chron. 7:2), so likewise must be the New Testament temple, the church of Jesus Christ.

I know there is some skepticism regarding this project, but let us not forget at the same time that Satan is laughing.

The Lord has given us an abundance of material things; therefore, let us then go forward in royal fashion. For "Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Hag. 2:8).

Herman Woltjer
Zeeland, Mich.

Book Reviews

The God Of Science Until You Bless Me

Prof. H. Hanko

THE GOD OF SCIENCE, by Frederick E. Trinklein; W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 192 pp., \$3.45 (paper).

Trinklein is more the editor of this book than the author. He made it his business to talk with thirty-eight leading scientists in the Western world to gain their views on the relation of science and religion. The book is almost entirely direct quotes from the scientists, only occasionally interspersed with remarks of the author. He discussed with these scientists almost every subject that concerns the relation of science and religion: What is the proper role of science? Can science and religion be harmonized? What do scientists believe concerning God, creation, Christ, miracles, salvation, etc.? What is the attitude of scientists towards the Church? What role does the Church play in this modern scientific age? Etc.

The fact that direct quotes are given makes this book a very interesting and enlightening one. Sometimes some of the scientists come through in all their arrogance and speak openly of their agnosticism, of their distrust of religion and of their

scorn of the Church. Sometimes their attitude towards the Scriptures and the truth of God is shown in stark clarity. There are some scientists however, who are more religious and some who could perhaps be called evangelical. There are some who see a role for the Church, although generally it is quite far removed from the role which Scripture gives.

If one wants to hear from the mouth of scientists themselves what is current thinking in these areas, one should read this book. It is easy reading on the whole, and can be read with profit by teachers and laymen alike. It is recommended reading to all who are interested in hearing from the lips of scientists themselves how far they have strayed from the truth of the Word of God. It is helpful to understand the "mind" of science in this "scientific age."

UNTIL YOU BLESS ME, by David Redding; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 96 pp., \$1.50 (paper).

The book contains a number of prayers written in free verse. The poetry is, in this reviewer's opinion, bad and the prayers are unscriptural in many parts.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Free Christian School of Edgerton, Minnesota will be in need of a Principal (Grades 4-9) and a Teacher (Grades 1-4) for the 1972-'73 school term. Any of our Protestant Reformed teachers or teachers-to-be who are interested should address inquiries to:

Mr. Allen Brummel
Edgerton, Minnesota 56128

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis East will meet in regular session on April 5, 1972 at Hudsonville. Material to be treated in this session must be in the hands of the stated clerk at least ten days prior to the above date. Consistories will please consider this to be an official announcement.

Jon Huiskens, Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On March 21, 1972, the Lord willing, our beloved parents,

MR. AND MRS. NEIL DYKSTRA,
will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

We thank our covenant God for preserving them these many years for each other, and for us, and pray for His continued blessing on them the remainder of their earthly pilgrimage.

Their children,
Mr. and Mrs. Rex Clawson
Mr. and Mrs. John Voss
Mr. and Mrs. James Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. John Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Dempsey
and 20 grandchildren.

ANNIVERSARY

On March 19, 1972, D.V., our beloved parents and grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Lotterman, will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. We thank our Heavenly Father for His protecting care over them, and we wish His blessing upon them as they continue their earthly pilgrimage together.

Mr. and Mrs. Clare Kuiper
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Lotterman
Mary
Michael
Marcia
Steven
And four grandchildren

ANNOUNCEMENT

All Consistory Treasurers please note:!!!

Please send the monies from collections received for the "Jamaican Poor Fund" to: Mr. Richard Dykstra, 2727 Hope St., Hudsonville, Mi. 49426.

Consistory of Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to elder Henry Boer, in the sudden death of his father,

MR. JACOB BOER.

May our God abundantly comfort the bereaved by

His Word and Spirit and strengthen him in the hope of the saints.

Rev. C. Hanco, President
Gerald J. Bouwkamp, Vice Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church extends sincere sympathy to our fellow office-bearer, deacon Milo DeWald and family, in the death of his father,

REINHOLD DEWALD.

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

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psalm 55:22).

David Meulenberg, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, wishes to express christian sympathy to the family of Elder Charles Van Meeteren in the loss of his mother,

MRS. ANNE VAN MEETEREN.

It is our prayer that they may find comfort in God's Word.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psalm 55:22).

L. Huiskens, Vice-all.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary-Martha Society of the Redlands Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to two of our members, Mrs. Beverly Feenstra and Mrs. Betty Van Meeteren, in the recent loss of their mother and mother-in-law,

MRS. ANNE VAN MEETEREN.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. 5:1).

Sue Porte, Pres.
Audrey Van Voorthuysen, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

Office Bearers Conference will be held Tuesday, April 4, 1972, at Hudsonville Church, at 8 P.M. Rev. G. Van Baren will speak on the subject "Are young people expected to attend Catechism as long as they do not make confession of faith?"

P. Knott, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

The call from Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California has gone to Rev. Schipper.

The Consistory of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids has formed two trios: for minister — Rev. R. Harbach, Rev. D. Kuiper, and Rev. M. Schipper; for missionary — Rev. R. Decker, Rev. D. Engelsma, Rev. B. Woudenberg.

Mr. Vander Wal has again provided some very interesting news for this column. This time it concerns work not directly connected with the *Standard Bearer*, but, nevertheless, work in which our active business manager has had a leading role.

A nice feature about Mr. Vander Wal's contributions, as far as the News Editor is concerned, is that the information is presented in well-written, journalistic style, so it can be simply passed on to the reader, without any effort on the editor's part. Here it is:

"Our dictionary defines the term 'cooperation' as 'a working together toward a common goal: a joint action.'

"At the present time, such 'cooperation' is being demonstrated by the following 'joint action': Rev. G. Van Baren, pastor of First Church (Grand Rapids), recently began a series of Lenten sermons. This series was initiated Sunday evening, Feb. 20, and will continue through March 26. The theme of Rev. Van Baren's messages is 'The Calvinistic Concept of the Cross.' All six of these sermons will be tape recorded (by the Young Peoples Society). But that is not all! Copies of these tapes will be reproduced (through the cooperation of the Radio Committee of our Reformed Witness Hour). Then on each Monday (through the cooperation of our Mission Committee) these copies will be Air Mailed to New Zealand, and replayed the following Lord's Day, by Mr. Wm. van Rij, to a group residing in Christchurch, New Zealand. Indeed a — CO-OPERATION!"

The rest of the items chosen for this issue of the *Standard Bearer* could well be said to relate, in varying degrees, to that same concept of "cooperation."

Take this short one from Hull's February 20 bulletin, for example: "The next pamphlet of the Reformed Witness Committee is to be prepared for mailing by our congregation on Thursday evening at 8 P.M. Any help from young and old will be appreciated by the committee."

Or this one from Holland's February 6 bulletin:

"Ladies Aid Society meets Tuesday evening at the home of Mrs. Yonker in Muskegon, with a view to her 95th birthday, D.V., this coming Saturday."

And perhaps even this one from First Church's February 27 bulletin: "The pastor expects to meet in conference with our ministers of Classis West and with most of the ministers of Classis East, the professors, and the seminary students, at Pella, Iowa, this week Tuesday, D.V. The meeting was arranged by the ministers of Classis West to provide closer fellowship and communion of our clergy. Prof. H. Hanko and Rev. C. Hanko will present papers which treat the subject of pastoral counseling."

Then there's this one from Southeast's often instructive bulletin: "Your pastor, along with our other ministers and students, had the privilege of visiting with Rev. Sang Chan Lee, a representative of the Hapdong Presbyterian Church of Korea, this past week. This church is very much interested in us because of our stand against the World Council of Churches, the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, and the McIntire segment of the Presbyterian Church. Rev. Lee made a plea for the help of our churches in giving his churches doctrinal and church political leadership, as the church of Christ forms battle lines against the forces of Antichrist incipient in the ecclesiastical movements of our time."

We could interject, at this point, that Rev. Lee is currently working on his doctorate at Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina; that he was a guest, for a couple of days, at the home of Professor Hoeksema; and that his schedule, while in Grand Rapids, included a visit to our Adams Street School, where he talked to some of the students about his experiences as a Christian in communist North Korea, and where he also, to the students' delight, demonstrated on the chalkboard the complexities of the Korean and Chinese written languages.

But there's more to be learned from Southeast's bulletin:

"It will also interest you to know that recently the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia has requested correspondence with our churches.

"Wonderful, indeed, it is that in the last two years we have had correspondence with people in Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, England, and numerous other contacts in the States. Is the Lord telling us something which we ought to hear?"

D.D.