

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation:

Following in Christ's Steps

Attempted Robbery

(see: The Day of Shadows)

"Reaching For The Infinite"

(see: Signs of the Times)

The Pilgrim and the Bible

(see: In His Fear)

CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
Following In Christ's Steps	218
The Signs of the Times —	
"Reaching For The Infinite"	220
The Strength of Youth —	
Confession of Faith (2)	222
All Around Us —	
A New Formula of Subscription	225
Editorial —	
Developments in New Zealand (5)	227
Question Box —	
As To The Sign of Jonah	229
As To Job 19:26 and I Corinthians 15:50	230
Education Feature —	
Discipline in the Christian	
Home and School (1)	231
In His Fear —	
The Pilgrim and the Bible (2)	233
The Day of Shadows —	
Attempted Robbery	235
Book Review —	
The Science and Creation Series	238
News From Our Churches	240

THE STANDARD BEARER

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

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Editor-in-Chief: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Mr. John M. Faber, Rev. Cornelius Hanks, Prof. Herman Hanks, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Kortering, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Church News Editor: Mr. John M. Faber

1123 Cooper Ave., S.E.

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

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

Business Office: The Standard Bearer,

Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.

P.O. Box 6064

Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

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

Advertising Policy: The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$2.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$2.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 5th or the 20th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

Bound Volumes: The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

Meditation

Following In Christ's Steps

Rev. M. Schipper

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow in his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

I Peter 2:21-25.

For even hereunto were ye called!

The reference is evidently twofold. In the first place, the apostle has in mind the preceding context, in

which he gave exhortation to Christian servants to be in subjection to their masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. All that

the apostle writes in our text is related to that. It is especially thankworthy, and we conduct ourselves beautifully when, walking consciously before the face of God, we endure grief, suffering wrongfully. But, in the second place, the reference is also to what the apostle is now about to say, namely, that when we suffer wrongfully, having a good conscience toward God, we are to emulate Christ, — to follow in Christ's steps. Christ also suffered wrongfully. Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; and when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.

Christ is the unique example!

O, let us be careful not to conceive of Him as an example in the modern sense of that term!

Surely we must have nothing of the philosophy of those who would have Christ be an example for every man, including the natural man, to follow. These philosophers assume that Christ wishes to be an example for every man, and they assume that every man is capable of following Him as an example. Not only is this philosophy absurd and impossible, but it is at the same time also very wicked. Absurd it is, because, very plainly, Christ never intended to be an example to all men. Impossible it is, because no man can, nor can he will to follow Him as he is by nature. And wicked is this philosophy, because it exalts man, leaving us with the conclusion that Christ ought to be very pleased when men consent to follow Him.

It must be clearly established that Christ cannot be our example unless He is first our Mediator!

No one has the right to follow Christ except he is first justified by His atoning sacrifice. And no one has the ability to follow Christ, unless Christ first enables him by His grace and Spirit to do so.

That is why the apostle in the text emphasizes, first of all, that the suffering of Christ was in our behalf. He suffered for us. Not, we must understand, merely to be our example, but to be our Saviour.

Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree of the cross!

Our sin and guilt was heaped upon Him. God laid on Him the iniquity of us all, by Whose stripes we were healed.

He is Jesus, Who would save His people from their sins! Because of our sin and guilt, we were wholly unrighteous. We stood in a wrong relationship to God, contrary to His will, and according to His judgment. Because of our sin and guilt, we were worthy only of eternal condemnation, worthy to experience forever the outpouring of His holy wrath.

And here is the good news of salvation, — God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world, assuming our nature, taking upon Himself the burden of God's wrath over our sins in His own body, and bringing it to Calvary and the tree of the Cross. There on that tree, He became a curse for us. There God poured over Him

all the vials of His wrath due to our sin, and He bore that wrath in our stead until it was completely burned out. There He satisfied God's justice for us, and so completely was this satisfaction made, that henceforth God could look upon Him, and us in Him, as being perfectly righteous. So perfect is the salvation He wrought, that henceforth we should live unto righteousness. Consequently, too, we are also dead to sins.

Don't you see, then beloved reader, how that only when Christ is first your Mediator and Saviour, *that only then* is it possible for you to follow in His steps? Don't you also see how utterly absurd and wicked is that modern philosophy which denies the vicarious atonement, which has no room in it for the satisfaction for our sins in the blood of the cross of Christ; which proudly boasts that mere natural, carnal, guilty, damnable, hell-bound sinners can of themselves choose to follow in the footsteps of the Saviour? Unless you first stand under Him at the Cross, where His atoning blood covers you, you cannot follow Him anywhere.

Only after He bears our sins in His own body on the tree, and only after by His atoning death He makes us dead unto sins, and alive unto righteousness; only after He heals us by His stripes, is it possible to walk in His steps.

Only the redeemed can come after Him, no one else!

And to them, and to them only, is He the unique example!

And unto them He is the most worthy example!

He did no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth!

That He did no sin evidently refers to His outward walk while He was in the flesh. He did not commit any evil before God or before men. He never missed the mark of the high calling of God. He always, from the manger to the tomb, acted from the love of God and from the love of the neighbor for God's sake, so that He never, in all His life and walk, did anything in respect to which men could lay a finger of accusation upon Him. He could, indeed, stand before men, as once He actually did, and say unto them: "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?"

That makes Him unique, doesn't it? He is the exception among all men. No matter how holily they have walked, or how far advanced the saints may be in the way of sanctification, they still are all defiled with sin, and must continually pray for forgiveness and exclaim from the heart: "O God, be merciful unto me, the sinner." But Christ did no sin, and is therefore the perfect example in Whose light we must walk.

Nor was there guile found in His mouth!

Never in all His speech was there found any deceit, falseness, hypocrisy. If anywhere sin is apt to be found, it is in the speech of man. But nothing of sin could be found in the mouth of Christ. He spoke only the truth. That the text says: "there was no guile found in His mouth, is much stronger than if it had

said: "He had no guile in His mouth." It stresses the point that men thoroughly examined His speech; they analyzed His teachings, His doctrine, and they could never detect in Him a lie, deceit, or falsehood.

And when He was reviled, He reviled not again!

It means that when men said evil things about Him, or called Him evil names to His face, He remained perfectly silent. He did not reciprocate. O, that cannot mean, that when wicked men confronted Him that He always remained silent. The contrary is true. Openly He charged His wicked adversaries with being hypocrites, white-washed sepulchres, full of dead men's bones. He told them in no uncertain terms that they were of their father, the devil. Many more such condemnations He pronounced upon them, for He could judge them righteously, because He knew their hearts. But none of this was said in self-defense. Meekness was the attribute He demonstrated, when His person or His work was attacked.

When He suffered, He threatened not!

Watch Him in the halls of the praetorium, when Pilate and his men of war opened furrows on His back, when the whip-lashes of cruelty beat down upon Him. Behold Him as He is stretched out to be nailed by wicked hands with hands and feet to the accursed tree. Never did He threaten to retaliate. Only He prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Always He lived out of the doctrine He had taught His disciples: "When they smite thee on the one cheek, turn to them the other also."

But He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously!

Always He was aware of the truth of God: "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

What a most beautiful example then is given unto you who have been made to live unto righteousness through the atonement He has made!

That you should follow in His steps!

For even unto this were ye called!

For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls!

Tenderly the apostle informs the elect strangers to whom he is writing of what they were, and of what

they are now by the grace of the Good Shepherd, Who is the Bishop Who has the oversight of their souls. Once they had no inclination to follow that Shepherd, but were like dumb sheep which are always bent on going astray. But now so it is no longer. That Shepherd has atoned for their sins, and has made them alive unto righteousness. He has brought them by His Spirit and grace under His control. And it is He Who calls them to follow in His steps.

When you by His grace respond to this efficacious calling, then you walk where He walked, and as He showed you how to walk.

What precisely, then, is that calling?

It is to walk honestly in the midst of the world, always revealing what we essentially are by the grace of Christ, namely, that we are the children of light. It is to let our light shine before men.

Moreover, when men shall hate us, because they cannot endure the light; and when they shall speak all manner of evil against us falsely; and when they shall revile and persecute us and cause us to suffer perhaps even unto death; then we shall walk precisely as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls taught us.

Our outward conversation will be the manifestation of our new man in Christ. Out of the love of God we shall keep His commandments. In our walk among men we will not sin so that they can rightly condemn us, nor shall falsehood or deceit ever be found in our mouth. As we live by the truth, so we shall speak it.

And when, in spite of this good conduct, we are nevertheless falsely accused, shamefully mistreated, we shall commit our case unto God, Who judgeth righteously.

And we shall be faithful unto death!

Such faithfulness shall also be rewarded. For the Good Shepherd and Bishop of our souls shall not leave our souls in death, but He shall lead us on to a life of righteousness, which shall be realized perfectly in the city which has foundations, where righteousness shall dwell.

Unto this were ye called, my brethren, in order that He may lead you and all the redeemed unto everlasting glory!

The Signs of the Times

"Reaching For The Infinite"

Rev. G. Van Baren

I have often wondered, as have others, what the ancients would have said or done, were they restored to life on this earth in our day. How they would have exclaimed at the diffusion of light from wall or ceiling

at the pressing of a switch! How they would have wondered at beholding machines washing dishes and clothes! What would they have said upon hearing music or the spoken word from a little box within a

room, or seeing pictures, colored at that, coming from a larger box? What would their remarks have been upon stepping into a vehicle with no visible power for mobility? How they would stare at airplanes streaking through the skies! And I doubt if it would be possible to convince them that men had travelled to and walked upon the moon.

Fact is, that though we take many things simply for granted, we live in a time of fantastic development and "progress." Some have considered this simply as a normal process — unrelated to the prophecy of Scripture or to the signs of the end of time which are mentioned in God's Word. I am convinced otherwise.

Man's amazing "progress"

Man has developed much in the realm of the sciences. An itemized list of all of his development in the past century is both needless (for we repeatedly hear of it) and impossible in limited amount of space. A striking recent development, however, is the awareness of man that his "progress" is not in all respects to his liking. This "progress" has resulted in extensive pollution of this globe. Increasingly, evidence is produced showing the ill effects of recent "progress." Besides, man is becoming aware of the fact that he is depleting available resources at a shocking rate. Even in present-day abundance, man understands that shortages are going to develop in the future. Nor has recent development satisfied all of mankind. The division between the "haves" and the "have-nots" grows. Material prosperity has generated greater lusts within mankind — creating the very situations man wants to avoid: war, crime, etc.

I read an interesting statement from a certain M. J. Kami, president of Corporate Planning Associates. I am not in a position to verify its accuracy, yet it points out what I believe is an obvious fact: the rapid development of man in the realm of the sciences in recent years. The statement claimed:

It took man thousands of years to reach the speed of 100 miles per hour. It took him a hundred years after that to reach a 1000 miles per hour. It took him ten years to reach 25,000 miles per hour.

The statement goes on to explain how this came to be:

If you take the amount of knowledge man had at the birth of Christ, and double that knowledge, and keep doubling it, you come up with these figures:

The first doubling of knowledge took 1750 years. It took man from the time of Christ until the year 1750 to double his knowledge.

The second doubling took only 150 years and happened in 1900.

The third doubling took only 50 years and occurred in 1950; this is now eight times that which man knew in 1 A.D.

The fourth doubling (which is 16 times that which man knew in 1 A.D.) took only ten years and occurred in 1960.

The fifth doubling (which is thirty-two times that which man knew in 1 A.D.) took only six years and occurred in 1966.

The sixth doubling is occurring now in 1970 and has taken only four years since 1966. Today's knowledge is 64 times the amount known to man in 1 A.D. and all this in the last four years!

These figures would suggest a certain geometric progression in man's development in various fields of knowledge. On the one hand, man constantly increases the sum-total of his knowledge. That is a self-evident fact. But on the other hand, this increase in knowledge continues at an accelerating rate. According to the above quote, man learned as much in four years (1966-1970) as he did the preceding two thousand years. By now, two years later, he has likely doubled that amount of knowledge again. By now, mankind supposedly knows one hundred twenty-eight times more than he did at the time of Christ.

The point I would emphasize is that this accelerating rate of increase of knowledge has a limit — for man is finite. Man reaches for the infinite — he would be God. But there are bounds which no creature can cross. The continuing doubling of man's knowledge over an increasingly brief period of time indicates to my mind another clear indication that man has about reached the limits which God sets for him. This I would consider to be another of the signs that the end of time is at hand. How many more years can go by in which man continues to double knowledge over ever shorter periods of time?

Scripture speaks of man's "progress"

One finds in the Word of God mention made of some of the development of mankind. Already before the great flood, Scripture notes the inventions of Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain. After the flood, there was the erection of the tower of Babel — a mighty endeavor designed to keep men united and to encourage development of a Utopia below.

The ultimate development of mankind is presented finally in Revelation, especially the 13th chapter. There is seen in that chapter some of the marvels revealed by the beasts which proceed out of the sea and of the land.

But of special importance is the idea presented in Scripture of the full cup as well as that of the fulness of time. The latter is mentioned in connection with the coming of Christ (Gal. 4:4). There is that proper time, ordained by the Father, that Christ does come. That fulness suggests that all things would be accomplished according to God's plan — then Christ can come. Christ could not come before that time in which He was born.

The "full cup" likewise suggests that specific things must happen. Just as Christ can only come in the "fulness of time," so also the end of the world will arrive and the wicked shall be destroyed, when their

cup of iniquity is full. We read of "Babylon the great" in Rev. 17:4 "... having a golden cup in her hand *full* of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." There is a definite measure of wickedness which must be filled — then final punishment takes place. Even so, there is the measure of man's development which must be full. This goes together with the fulness of iniquity of the end-time. Man must develop scientifically to a full extent, in order that with these means, man will reveal his utter wickedness and corruption. And I would suggest that one with spiritual eyes to see will also recognize that man's cup today is well-nigh full.

"Progress" and Antichrist

I see a definite relationship between man's rapid advances in scientific fields, and the coming of the antichrist and his kingdom. Man, who refuses to subdue the earth in harmony with God's mandate, will subdue it in the service of man — and ultimately in the service of antichrist. Man's present-day advances reminds one that the kingdom of antichrist must be at hand.

Several presuppositions can be mentioned in connection with the antichrist. In the first place, he must have at his disposal the means to prevent war and the means to establish a measure of prosperity and health to all men. He will have the means to prevent men from warring with each other (cf. Rev. 13:4). He will be able to perform many wonderful works ("he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men," Rev. 13:13). He has the ability to give life to the image of the beast so that it both speaks and compels all men to worship it (Rev. 13:15). One can recognize that today we have reached that state of development in the various scientific fields where the above is already possible.

Secondly, the wound of the beast must be healed (Rev. 13:14). That wound, probably occurring at the

tower of Babel when the languages were confused, will no longer be a hindrance. The result of confusion of tongues was division of nations. The anti-christian kingdom can not be established as long as such confusion continues. However, through scientific achievements, the means are now available to heal that "wound." By means of modern and mass communications (radio, television, telephone, telegraph, etc.) the confusion of tongues has been minimized, and the nations of this world have been brought closer together than ever before. There are already such scientific inventions available that when antichrist comes, he will be able to communicate instantaneously to all nations. Differences in languages are no longer barriers. Added refinements in the field of communications in the years ahead will further contribute to the "healing of the wound of the beast" and contribute to the coming of the antichrist.

Finally, the antichrist, if his rule is to be effective as well as universal, must be able to control all men. He must be able to enforce his rule: that without the mark of the beast, men will be unable to buy or sell (Rev. 13:16, 17). Already now, with the computers presently in use, information can be stored concerning all peoples of the earth. Inventions in the field of computers are already available, that one man could have the means available to him to know about and to regulate all men. He can know, through these inventions, who we are, where we go to church, what work we do, how much property we own, who our friends are. There are already available the means whereby the antichrist could demand that all receive his mark — and to know whether that command was being obeyed.

Therefore, when we read of the rapid advances of man in our day, children of God can not but be reminded that "the Lord is at hand." (Phil.4:5)

The Strength of Youth

Confession of Faith (2)

Rev. Robert D. Decker

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also 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

In our previous article on this subject we treated in general the idea or meaning of Confession of Faith. When the covenant child of God arrives at years of discretion he stands before God and His Church to express with his mouth that which he believes in his heart; namely, that he belongs by grace through faith in life and in death to his faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. We stressed that this is our calling before God. God

calls us to confess our faith. Not to confess our faith, then, is to be disobedient to the will of God as expressed in His Word. This is precisely what Jesus meant in the words quoted above this article: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father . . . but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" Matt. 10:32, 33.

This means, we saw, that we not only formally confess our faith before the consistory and publicly before the congregation assembled for worship; but also, that we confess our faith in all of life. By our whole being; with heart and mind and soul and strength; in word, thought, and deed; in every sphere of life; always and everywhere we say before all the world: "I belong to Jesus!"

Finally we understood that this confession of our faith is a fruit of the grace of God. "No man can say (notice that, CAN say, this means no one is able to say or has the ability to say) that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." I Cor. 12:3b. That we are able to say and have the right to say that Jesus is the Lord, our Lord, is of the Holy Spirit! Unless, therefore, the Holy Spirit of God and of His Christ works within our hearts we will never confess our faith. Having been chosen by grace in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world, having been born into the church of covenant parents, baptized into the death of Jesus Christ and raised with Him unto newness of life, instructed in the doctrine of the Word of God in our covenant homes and schools, in the church through the means of grace (catechism and preaching); the Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are the children of God (Romans 8:16). Then and only then we say with the church of all the ages; "Jesus is my Lord!" And because that is the fruit of the grace of God we have an unfailing comfort and an unashamed hope. For by that same irresistible grace we are preserved in the faith to the very end, when we inherit perfectly life with God and share in the glory of Christ. Of this we may be absolutely sure, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Phil. 1:6). Having begun the good work of salvation within us (regeneration), God, through the Spirit of adoption, continues to work powerfully in us to preserve us to everlasting life!

In our present article we wish to continue our study by considering the actual contents of our confession of faith. "What do we confess?" is the question we deal with now.

Take your Psalter and turn with me to page 59 in the Liturgical section. Here we find in the three questions for "Public Confession of Faith" the sum of what we are saying when we confess our faith. As we examine each of these it will become obvious that confession of faith is a *most* serious matter with radical implications for our daily living *coram Deo*, "before the face of God."

The first question put to confessors of faith by Christ through the Church is: "Do you 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?" There are several elements that demand our attention in this question. The first of

these is that we acknowledge the DOCTRINE of the Holy Scriptures. The churches of the Reformation and particularly the churches of Calvinistic origin have always placed a high priority on the knowledge of the doctrine of the Bible. The Protestant Reformed Churches continue in that tradition today. Among the main characteristics of churches truly Reformed or Calvinistic are precise doctrinal formulations and keen doctrinal sensitivity. This is correct and our fervent prayer is that God will graciously preserve that emphasis among our churches and people. The point is simply this, that in order to confess our faith we have to KNOW that faith. Though that knowledge be more than a mere intellectual knowledge of facts it is a knowledge of objective, propositional truth (contrary to the pernicious notion of some would be "reformational" thinkers in the Reformed community)! It is not difficult to demonstrate this Biblically. The Scriptures themselves declare in II Timothy 3:16, 17 that because all Scripture is "God-breathed" it is "profitable for *doctrine*, for reproof, for correction, for *instruction* in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Notice in this connection that doctrine (literally translated "teaching" – in other words that which we apprehend with our minds) is first! God inspired the Scriptures exactly so that we may know the teaching of Himself first of all. This is further emphasized by the text when it speaks of "instruction in righteousness." Besides, the context of these verses underscore the same truth. In verses 14 and 15 the inspired Apostle Paul admonishes his spiritual son Timothy to: "Continue in the things which thou hast *learned* and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast *known* the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." For this same reason Timothy and every minister of the gospel must: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Tim. 2:15. Thus, too, our consistories painstakingly examine candidates for confession of faith in their knowledge of the doctrines of the Scriptures, and prepare these candidates for this examination by providing detailed instruction in the doctrine of Scripture in the catechism classes.

But consider what we are confessing when we answer this first question affirmatively. The doctrine we acknowledge to be true and perfect is the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments, i.e., the teaching of the infallibly inspired Bible. The entire doctrine of the Bible, you understand! The doctrine of Genesis chapters 1 through 3 as well as the teachings of Jesus recorded in the Gospel narratives! The two belong together! There is no such thing as non-redemptive teaching in distinction from redemptive teaching in the

Scriptures! The whole teaching of the Bible from beginning to end and in every detail is redemptive teaching! The first Adam is a picture of the last Adam. The first paradise a picture of the heavenly paradise. Creation is by and for Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God, the only begotten God, Who was made flesh and dwelt among us (cf. John 1 and Col. 1 and parallels). In this connection I suggest you read or re-read the recent articles on Genesis 1 & 2 by the Rev. J. A. Heys in this magazine. We must know the dogma of Scripture.

Still more we acknowledge the Scriptural teaching which is contained in the Articles of the Christian Faith. This means very emphatically that we acknowledge the truth of Scripture as summed, systematically set forth and preserved in the Three Forms of Unity; The Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic or Netherlands Confession of Faith, and the Canons of the Synod of Dordrecht of 1618, 1619! There, under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, the Church was led to express the teaching of the Word of God. Inasmuch as our confessions are faithful expositions of the Word of God they must be retained intact. The Truth of the Bible as expressed in the three forms is as relevant today in our 20th century world as it was in the Reformation days of the 16th and 17th centuries. This is what we say when we confess our faith . . . we acknowledge, that is, believe and confess that the doctrine of the Bible as interpreted by the Reformed Confessions is the true and perfect doctrine of salvation.

There is more, however, to this first question! We acknowledge in our confession the doctrine of the Bible, contained in the Confessions, and taught *here in this Christian Church*, to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation! This is crucial! This means when we confess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we vow before God Himself that we believe and walk in the doctrine of Scripture and the Confessions as that doctrine is taught in the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. **THAT** is the true doctrine. The genuine teaching of the Bible. And **THAT** is the complete doctrine, the perfect doctrine of salvation. Nothing may be taken away from that doctrine, neither may anything be added to it. It is complete, and therefore all we need to know in order to be saved!

This is a bold claim, I know. It means we are saying that the Protestant Reformed Churches are the purest manifestation of the Body of Jesus Christ in the world. Furthermore we are claiming that these churches are

faithful to the Word of God. And, we are saying that other churches as we know them do not teach the true and complete doctrine of the Word of God. This does not mean that the Protestant Reformed Churches are **THE** true Church while all other churches in our communities and in the world at large are **THE** false church! That is not Biblical, neither have the Protestant Reformed Churches ever taught this as some unjustly allege. To that we say with all the emphasis we can muster: **GOD FORBID!** At the same time we **DO** mean to assert with the same emphasis that the Protestant Reformed Churches are standing in the line of the Church of Jesus Christ, upon the foundation of the doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets, with Christ as the chief cornerstone. These churches reveal unmistakably (and I cordially urge you to make the comparison prayerfully, if you are not Protestant Reformed) the marks of the true church. They are still preaching the truth of the Word, administering the holy sacraments in obedience to the institution of Christ, and administering christian discipline in the love of Christ according to the Word of God! We do not boast in ourselves. This is not of our doing or our faithfulness. It is **ALL** of God Who chooses the foolish things to confound the wise of this world that no flesh should glory in His presence (I Cor. 1). With Paul we say: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (Gal. 6:14)

This certainly implies that to confess this before God and His church and then for the sake of a boy friend, or girl friend, or job, to leave the church and become member elsewhere is to sin grievously! And let no one say as some have said to this pastor; "I still believe the truth as taught in our church, and though I am leaving the church I will never leave the truth!" That is impossible. God is not mocked by us! Without the means of the pure preaching of the Word we simply cannot remain faithful to the truth either in doctrine or in life! My fervent prayer for the youth of our churches is that God will grant them grace to see this and be faithful to this. **THIS** and nothing less is what we say when we confess the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments, of the Articles of the Christian faith, as taught here in this christian church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation! Let us strive together for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1) and continue in the things we've learned (II Tim. 3:14) to the glory of God, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things! (Romans 11:36) . . .

(to be continued)

Gift Idea? A gift subscription to *The Standard Bearer*

All Around Us

A New Formula of Subscription

Prof. H. Hanko

Apostasy in the Church always must contend sooner or later with the Confessions. Apostasy is possible, of course, only when the Confessions are forgotten and unknown documents, filed away in church archives; and corrupters of the truth are tolerated in the Church only when the Confessions have ceased to be the living confession of the members of the Church. But sooner or later the problem of these Confessions must be faced. Though they may be forgotten for the most part, they still stand as silent sentinels of the truth which retain their power to prick the consciences of those who have once sworn to abide by them. Ministers, quite obviously, along with other officebearers are the ones who have the greatest problems because they are the ones who must make a written vow to uphold the Creeds. When this vow is required of them, they may make it with tongue in cheek or as an empty, formal gesture; but the fact remains that the vow has been made. And, unless the whole of church life is reduced to hypocritical game-playing, that vow comes back to haunt them.

In the Reformed Churches, such a vow is made by signing the Formula of Subscription. In years gone by this was considered a very solemn and important promise to which an officebearer bound himself. Today, to those who no longer wish to bind themselves to the Confessions, the Formula of Subscription has become an intolerable evil. And so efforts are made to alter it.

One such effort is being made at present in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (*Gereformeerde Kerken*). Because of its importance, we quote a news item appearing in the *RES News Exchange* in its entirety.

REFORMED CHURCHES OF THE NETHERLANDS DECIDE TO REFORMULATE ORDINATION VOWS

The General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands decided recently at its meeting in Lunten to reformulate the "form of subscription" (ordination vows) for the office bearers of the church. This decision was taken during the second week of October on the basis of a report submitted by a study committee appointed by the previous Synod. It has been felt for a number of years that the present form now in effect is too strict and needs to be changed.

That the report was not written by men who think lightly of the Reformed heritage, but was rather drafted by an unmistakably 'Reformed hand' appears

from the following excerpts from the report.

"A commitment to the Confession is essential for the Reformed Churches. The Synod is thoroughly convinced that the unity of our church life can not be preserved in the long run if we do not heartily agree on this starting point. To say it in other words: faithfulness to the Confession has always been an essential unifying factor in the Reformed Churches. This resulted in another pattern of church life than for instance the hierarchical-episcopal pattern of the Roman Catholic Church, or the more historical-sociologically determined alliance of the Netherlands Reformed Church. The people of the Reformed Churches want to be unified in an essential way ... they want to be united in the essential matter in their confession in the world of Christ who was delivered for our sins and was raised for our justification (Romans 4:25). This reformational starting point may neither be taken away by an ecclesiastical hierarchy nor may it be undermined by a far reaching toleration. In their resistance at these points the Reformed Churches derived their existence (sic), their place — one could say their identity — in the churches as a whole (Catholica).

"Here is also the 'strategic position' of the form of subscription. The commitment to the ecclesiastical confession which is herein expressed intended first of all to underscore the commitment to the Scriptures.

"It is no wonder therefore that the mutual spiritual trust in our churches is determined by the carefulness with which action is taken in these matters. For here the 'accord of the church communion' is at stake."

The committee expressed its objections to the current form of subscription as follows. "In summary then we are of the opinion that the present form of subscription — taken literally with its heavy-as-lead stipulations — had a rigidifying effect through its lack of nuances, upon the spiritual development of our churches. Every 'movement' threatened either to be suppressed or to lead necessarily to a new system. It looks as if *all* office bearers in *all* branches of service must think alike in *all* minor points of the *entire* confession. That in practice it has actually usually gone so well in our churches — except for a few dark periods in recent church history — was possible because of a somewhat broader interpretation of the very stringent letter, for instance: 'We promise further that if we later should have objections against any teaching or *any minor part thereof* or entertain

diverging sentiments, we will neither express this openly *nor in secret* . . .’

“However, one would do injustice to this classic Reformed pattern of commitment by accusing it of the thirst for a dictatorially imposed spiritual uniformity. The real incursion out of which they came to this form of subscription was of another kind, namely the conviction that to be a member of the church means to be incorporated in the Body of Christ and this meant the end of individualism.”

Two members of the Synod submitted a substitute motion in which any reference to complete agreement with the confessional standards is eliminated. They proposed that office bearers be asked to “declare that they recognize Jesus Christ our crucified and resurrected Lord and Saviour as He is proclaimed in the witness of the Holy Scriptures, the only norm, source and content of preaching and life, to follow Him faithfully, and to persevere humbly in the unity of faith with the catholic church.” After a lively discussion the decision was taken in agreement with the proposals of the Study Committee.

The Synod decided that the new Form of Subscription should contain i.a., the following elements:

- 1) The recognition of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God, the authoritative revelation of the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ and as such the only rule and guide for faith and life;

- 2) The promise to hold faithfully to the teaching of the church in unity of faith with the three catholic symbols and the three forms of unity;

- 3) The readiness on the one hand, if one considers any part of the church confession to be in conflict with God’s Word, to bear witness hereof under the constraint of brotherly love, at the ecclesiastical gatherings, and on the other hand to submit to the judgment of the church when it would find in a clear and acceptable way that any significant point of doctrine, the obedience to Scripture and the unity of faith and confession would be attacked or contradicted.

The Synod submitted a number of suggestions to the committee which will draft the new ordination vows according to the following guide lines:

- 1) there should be a greater degree of qualification in the censure of pastors and professors of theology; 2) there must be a more active involvement of the Classes (regional group of churches) in the confessional supervision of office bearers; 3) they should study the relationship between juridical discipline in doctrine and judicial discipline. Prof. N. H. Ridderbos explained judicial discipline as an ecclesiastical declaration in which a certain idea is condemned without involving any direct ecclesiastical consequences.

The committee will submit a draft of the revised

ordination vows to the General Synod at a later session.

We do not have a lot of space left to comment on this. But a few remarks ought to be made.

The *RES News Exchange* speaks of the fact that the report was drafted by “an unmistakably ‘Reformed hand’.” We fail to see this. It is true that commitment to the Confession is spoken of as an essential unifying factor in the Reformed Churches. But the point which needs clarification is the question of what is meant by “commitment” to the confessions. The committee gives reason to conclude that this must be interpreted in a very broad way. This becomes especially plain in their objections against the present form of subscription. One gets the idea that they mean little more than a general agreement with the general thrust of the confessions as a whole, and not specific agreement with specific doctrines. This is substantiated by the recent doctrinal departures in the Reformed Churches which have been tolerated.

The objections which the committee has against the present form of subscription are really summed up in one criticism: that the form prevents any “spiritual development of our churches.” And the committee presses home the point that there has been some spiritual development only because the rigid restrictions of the form have been loosely defined. Apart from the fact that a very strange expression is used in this objection (one would almost expect “theological development” instead of “Spiritual development”), the point the committee makes here is simply not true. Since the time of the Synod of Dort, when this form was first put into use, the most flourishing periods of development of the truth of Scripture have been those times when the officebearers of the Church bound themselves in all their life to the confessions of the Church. It is only in recent years, when doctrines of the confessions have been openly repudiated, when ignorance of the confessions is at an all-time high, that doctrinal development has deteriorated into rampant heresy. And we are afraid that the committee means the latter by “spiritual development.”

There is good reason for this, of course. And the one reason is that the Confessions contain the truth of Scripture. One who is not afraid to be bound by the Scriptures will not be alarmed at being bound by the Confessions. But one who is of a mind to depart from the Scriptures will find the Confessions an intolerable strait-jacket.

While the new Form of Subscription is not yet drawn up, the guidelines given the committee by Synod are sufficiently broad that we predict that the new form which is ultimately adopted will do away with any real binding power of the Confessions. This has, in reality, already happened in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. To draw up a form which expresses this will be a recognition of the reality.

Editorial

Developments in New Zealand (5)

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In the February 1 issue we pointed out that the doctrinal controversy in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand was accompanied by personal cases involving some of those who had brought the doctrinal issues to the fore. These personal cases involved grave charges of wrong-doing against these brethren, charges which, if true and if upheld, certainly would make them worthy of suspension from office. We contended, however, in the first place, that in dealing with these personal cases the churches made themselves guilty of persecution and of a perversion of one of the marks of the church: the proper administration of Christian discipline. In the second place, we contended that this corruption of discipline is at the same time proof that even though some of the doctrinal decisions may have somewhat of a sound of orthodoxy, nevertheless these doctrinal decisions were basically unsound and constituted a failure to exercise doctrinal discipline. For, so we reasoned, if the Synod and the churches had been truly of a mind to maintain doctrinal purity, they would certainly have done justice in the related personal cases of the very brethren who had championed the cause of doctrinal purity in the churches. But justice they surely failed to do, as we shall now see.

What Happened In the Personal Cases?

In the case of the Session of Christchurch versus Elder W. van Rij, charges were preferred against Mr. van Rij and an abortive attempt was made to discipline him while he was still in office. In December of 1970, however, his term expired with the Session's case against him unfinished.

What then happened? The Session sought the advice of the neighboring Session of Dunedin (which, by the way, itself had a gravamen pending against the Westminster Confession on the sabbath).

Together these two sessions (consistories) came up with a decision which is, to say the least, highly unusual and altogether unknown to the Church Order. Here follows what Mr. van Rij received under date of March 23, 1971:

Beloved Brother,

The Session asks you to carefully consider the following, as it is our mutual responsibility to seek the will of the Lord and by His grace and Spirit to perform it.

With the consent of Session Dunedin, which advised that "Whereas brother van Rij as an elder did not choose to act within the accepted structure of our churches, we recommend that

br. van Rij be not suspended but, be officially reprimanded and subsequently discharged."

this Session advises you that it considers you have erred in:

1. failing to lodge your objections against the decisions of Synod 1969 with your own session before making them public.
2. judging the courts of the church without lodging proper appeal through the appropriate channels.
3. adopting the attitude of "I am right and doing God's will" without providing scriptural grounds for your strong statements. We believe that you as the plaintiff have the obligation to present the evidence.

We strongly urge you to reconsider your actions.

We also remind you that it is your obligation to respect the courts of the church until you can clearly prove from the Word of God that their actions are contrary to God's will.

With this you are discharged from the office of elder in the Church of the Lord Jesus (the term of which office terminated for you at the end of 1970).

May the Lord grant you true insight and humility as you seek His will, the glory of His Name and the edification of His Church.

On behalf of the Session

As I said, this was a very strange action. It is not any kind of disciplinary action found in the Church Order. It might be classified as a kind of verbal spanking and unnecessary discharge from an office which a man had in actual fact left three months earlier, when his term expired. From this point of view, this letter is a kind of "nothing." Yet, because of its heavy charges and disorderly character, it was far too serious to be ignored. Besides, there had been no final resolution of this case, nor any final adjudication of the charges of slander which had been laid against Mr. van Rij by others, outside of the congregation and session of Christchurch. Hence, this could not be the end of the matter; that would have been injustice compounded, let alone the fact that at this point there was no reconciliation of those involved.

Hence, there was a further exchange of letters. First of all, Mr. van Rij asked four things of his Session: 1) He asked the Session to specify his alleged sin. 2) He asked for an explanation of that strange discharge from office: was it a disciplinary action, or was it merely a statement of the fact that he retired from active eldership at the end of 1970? 3) He called attention to the clear Scriptural support of his statements and asked if Session had considered this. 4) He inquired

whether this letter of admonition is also Session's answer to the accusations and charges made against him by others.

In reply the Session sent a lengthy communication which was unsatisfactory, which largely repeated previous positions, and which also dealt with a van Rij communication of March 8 which was intended for Synod and which dealt with the doctrinal issues. In connection with the latter, Session not only expressed its disagreement, but also charged that van Rij had falsely accused Dr. Runia, and further required of him to retract and apologize for "all such writings as infer that: 1) Dr. Runia denies the sovereignty of God with respect to reprobation. 2) Dr. Runia denies the historicity of Genesis 1, 2, 3. 3) Dr. Runia is an unbeliever." The last, of course, Mr. van Rij had never stated and had never implied. The Session simply pulled this one out of thin air!

And thus matters went to the Synod of 1971 in August. They were sent directly to Synod, partly because the last communication of the Session was not received by the appellant van Rij until July 9, too late for him to go first to Presbytery (classis); besides, Mr. van Rij informs me that the meeting of Presbytery was not even made known to the congregation, and even that he was erroneously informed by an elder that there would be no meeting of Presbytery. However this may be, Synod dealt with his appeal in a way, as we shall see presently.

First, however, we must backtrack and see what happened in the personal cases of Messrs. Koppe and van Herk, whose suspension the Session of Silverstream-Wainuiomata had decided upon and announced to the congregation. We may be brief in this account. In the first place, the Session sought, but failed to get, the support of a neighboring session for this suspension. In the second place, when this attempt failed, the Session sought to get the support of the Presbytery of Wellington. But this also failed! At this point one would think that the Session was duty-bound to retract its serious charges and announcement and to apologize to the brethren concerned. If they at all wanted to maintain the charges, they would have to appeal the matter to Synod. Mind you, they did neither! Messrs. Koppe and van Herk were left in a kind of limbo. To get the matter resolved they themselves had to bring a personal appeal to the Synod.

This appeal is very clear; and it presents a case in which there was only one proper decision for Synod to make. Let me quote a couple of paragraphs to make this plain:

The Church of Silverstream/Wainuiomata has *PUBLICLY STATED* the fact, that they have decided to have us removed from this holy office in the church of Jesus Christ, both in the Silverstream/Wainuiomata bulletins of 21-2-'71, and

11-4-'71, and in PUBLIC in the Congregational meeting at Silverstream, on 19-7-'71.

According to the Church Order, and the whole teaching of Scripture, such removal from office in the Church of Jesus Christ, must be made *ONLY* upon the ground that the persons so suspended, have been found and adjudged guilty of committing *GROSS SIN*. This is clearly taught in Art. 79 and 80 of the Church Order. By thus *PUBLICLY ANNOUNCING* that they consider us worthy of such suspension, they have thereby inferred that we are guilty of some *GROSS SIN*, and that we have been adjudged guilty of such *GROSS SIN*.

Here, therefore, is the fundamental issue.

The grievance is stated as follows:

This is casting aspersions on our names, as is evident from the fact that we have never, according to those directions given in the Church Order to safeguard the persons of officebearers, been adjudged guilty of committing *GROSS SIN*.

The following facts indicate this without question:

a) The Church of Wellington, (being the neighbouring Church of Silverstream/Wainuiomata) has on two occasions refused to accede to the request of the Session of Silverstream/Wainuiomata to agree to our suspension;

b) The Presbytery of Wellington, having received the same request from the Church of Silverstream/Wainuiomata, passed no judgment, but returned the matter to Silverstream/Wainuiomata;

c) The Church of Silverstream/Wainuiomata has never advised us of disciplinary action being decided upon, that would restrain us from the Lord's Table, but to the contrary, has permitted us to sit at the Lord's Table, and has agreed that we may thus partake.

This appeal concludes with a petition to Synod to direct the Session of Silverstream/Wainuiomata to do one of two things:

1) Either specify the gross sin with which they have by implication publicly charged the brethren, and then act according to the requirements of Scripture and the Church Order;

2) Or publicly retract and apologize, and reaffirm the standing of the brethren as officebearers.

This, I say, is very clear. It might be termed as open-and-shut case.

Thus matters stood at the time when Synod convened.

What Happened At Synod?

The actual decision of Synod is very brief. After treating these personal appeals in closed session, Synod passed an identical decision on the appeal of Mr. van Rij and on that of Messrs. Koppe and van Herk. It is as follows: "Synod pleaded with all concerned to seek reconciliation on the basis of Scripture and confessions as also reaffirmed by this Synod." (Articles 113, 115, Acts of Synod, 1971)

We should notice that this can by no stretch of the imagination be termed a *treatment* of the appeals and an *answer* thereto. On the contrary, this is a *trampling* of the Church Order, which guarantees of the right of appeal to any member or officebearer. And it is a case of *gross injustice*. Synod was called to make a judgment in these cases; it made no judgment. Synod was called to enforce the provisions of the Church Order concerning the suspension of elders; it completely failed to do so. Synod was called to uphold righteousness in two cases in which brethren-elders had clearly been wronged by their consistories (sessions). The issues could not have been more clearly and correctly stated than in the appeal of Koppe and van Herk. The wrong was entirely and obviously on the part of the session, which had persisted in its attempt to suspend in spite of the fact that neither a neighboring consistory nor classis (presbytery) would agree with them, and which had then compelled the brethren to take the initiative in seeking to have their names cleared. The way of the Church Order was surely followed by the brethren. Their appeal was evident: either prove their charge of sin and follow the Church Order in disciplining, or retract and apologize!

Yet Synod took what sounds like a neutral decision and urged "all concerned" to seek reconciliation. This may sound pious, but in actual fact it is a trampling of truth and justice.

The Outcome

Obviously, the brethren concerned had failed completely to get justice done at either the local level or the broadest level. After Synod's decision, they were right back where they had begun.

What is worse, their sessions showed no inclination to reconcile in the sense of retracting and apologizing for their heavy charges of gross sin. To this day the

charges have not been removed. And in the case of W. van Rij, the session even continued to maintain its charges and to insist that the apologizing had to be done by Mr. van Rij!

And there is only one possible course in such cases – after the ecclesiastical way has been followed all the way to Synod. It is the way of separation. The churches have not given satisfaction in the doctrinal issues. On the contrary, they have perverted justice in the case of the very men who called them to doctrinal purity and to doctrinal discipline. They have used discipline to persecute those who sought to maintain the confessions. The Synod itself has done nothing to help the brethren even though it called for reconciliation. It did not point the obviously erring sessions to the *right way* of reconciliation. By its failure it became co-responsible for the injustices committed.

Separation has been the course followed.

It is to be hoped that some in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand will still see the light in these matters, and that they will have the courage to take a stand.

Meanwhile, let us remember the few brethren who have had the courage to fight this battle and who now stand alone; and let us also do what we can to help them!

I would also warn the Reformed Churches of New Zealand that though they may have gotten rid of the *cases* under discussion, they have not really solved any *problems* by their failure to exercise the necessary doctrinal discipline and to take a clear stand over against false doctrine. In fact, the very same issues may face them sooner than they think! To this I will call attention – with evidence – next time, D.V.

Question Box

As To The Sign of Jonah

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From a Wisconsin reader I received the following question: "If Jesus was crucified on Friday afternoon, and arose very early on Sunday morning, how must we explain that He was three days and three nights in the heart of the earth? Matt. 12:40."

Reply

To the specific question here my answer can be very brief. First of all, I believe that we must accept as a fact that Jesus (not: was crucified) died on Friday afternoon. This, it would appear, is plain from the fact that, according to Scripture, the next day was the

Sabbath, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, 56, John 19:31, 42. In the second place, this necessarily means that Jesus was not in the grave for an exact and entire period of three days and three nights, that is, seventy-two hours, but only for *part* of Friday, *all* of Saturday, and *part* of Sunday. In other words, what we have in this expression is an instance of the part for the whole; and this is very common usage with respect to time, even among us. Thus, for example, I might say that I was out of town for a preaching engagement for three days, while actually I was out of town for only

part of Saturday, all of Sunday, and part of Monday. This, by the way, is plainly the meaning in the light of Scripture itself. The Bible does not only say that Jesus arose from the dead *after* three days; strictly speaking, this would mean that He arose *on* the *fourth* day. But Scripture says — as we also confess in the Apostles' Creed, that He arose *on the third day*: "And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures," I Cor. 15:4.

I am aware of the fact that there are some who think to solve this imaginary problem by placing the death of Jesus earlier. But even this attempt would not solve the alleged problem. For in view of the time-of-day of Jesus' death and the time-of-day of Jesus' resurrection, it can never be reckoned that Jesus was literally and exactly in the grave three days and three nights, and that, too, in such a way that He arose on the third day.

In conclusion, I would caution that we should not become so preoccupied with this rather technical

question that we lose sight of the thrust of the passage in which the verse in question is found. The "sign of the prophet Jonas" does not hinge on an exact three days and three nights whatsoever. I have neither time nor space to explain this "sign" at present; perhaps at a future date I can do so. But let me at least call the readers' attention to the very significant and pointed passage in which this sign is mentioned: "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." Matt. 12:38-41.

As To Job 19:26 and I Corinthians 15:50

Another question from a Wisconsin reader is as follows: "We read in Job 19:26, 'And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.' In I Cor. 15:50 we read, 'Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.' What does Job mean when he says that he will see God in his flesh?"

Reply

The problem in this question centers on the expression "in my flesh shall I see God," in comparison with the statement in I Corinthians 15:50 that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." The correct assumption is that "flesh" (Job) and "flesh and blood" (Corinthians) mean substantially the same thing. Hence, if it is true that in our present earthly, corruptible bodies (flesh and blood) we cannot inherit the kingdom of God, how is it possible that Job says that he will see God in his flesh (that same earthly, corruptible, natural body)?

The problem is complicated, perhaps, by the fact that this passage from Job, as translated in our King James Version, has become a much loved expression of personal faith with respect to our bodily resurrection. For those who love sacred music, such as the oratorio *Messiah*, this complication is probably strengthened by the fact that we would not like to give up that inspiring solo based on this passage. For myself, at any rate, I know that for some time after having heard the solo referred to I can carry that song about in my heart and thoughts.

Was Job mistaken? I think not.

Does Job contradict I Corinthians 15? Not at all.

Does Job indeed express the hope of his bodily resurrection in this passage? I am convinced that he does. I surely cannot go along with the suggestion of some that Job only expresses the hope of a future bodily restoration on earth. And while the interpretation is at least more plausible, and also more acceptable, that Job is here referring to the so-called intermediate state, in which he shall spiritually behold God, but not in the body, I nevertheless believe that the passage says more than this.

What, then, is the explanation? As I see it, it lies along the following lines:

1) We must discard the rendering of the King James Version. It is not in harmony with the original on some important points, especially the one concerning Job's "flesh." Nor can I see how one can escape a contradiction between Job and Corinthians on the basis of the KJV without improperly stretching the meaning of "in my flesh."

2) What Job says in this verse is, indeed, quite the opposite of what the King James Version conveys. He actually says: "*from* (in the sense of: separate from, free from, outside of) my flesh shall I see God." This translation is fully in harmony with the Hebrew preposition used in the text. This translation occurs in various forms in other versions. The American Revised Version has: "... Then without my flesh shall I see God." And in the margin this same version has: "And after my skin hath been thus destroyed, Yet from my

flesh shall I see God." For those who can read Dutch, the *Statenvertaling* has: "En als zij na mijne huid dit doorknaagd zullen hebben, zal ik *uit mijn vleesch* God aanschouwen." (italics added) Personally, I like the rendering by the commentator Delitzsch: "And after my skin, thus torn to pieces, And without my flesh shall I behold Eloah." Thus translated, Job says here not that he shall see God in his present, earthly, corruptible body, or "flesh." But he says the opposite: that he shall see God out of the flesh, when he has put off and been stripped of his present flesh.

3) But should we then understand Job as saying that he shall see God in the intermediate glory of the disembodied state immediately after death? If we take verse 26 all by itself, this would seem to be the case. If,

however, we look at verse 27, it is rather plain, I think, that by implication Job expresses here the hope of the bodily resurrection. For in this verse Job speaks emphatically of beholding God with his eyes: "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." This is, I believe, too strong an expression to refer only to the bliss of the intermediate state, but presupposes that Job shall be raised in the body and in that body (the new, heavenly, glorified body of the resurrection) shall see God with his eyes.

Thus, briefly, I would interpret the passage in question and solve the problem posed by my questioner.

Education Feature

Discipline In The Christian Home And School (1)

Mr. T. De Vries

[Editor's Note: This is the first of two articles on this subject. The two articles together constitute a paper delivered by Mr. De Vries, of the Free Christian School of Edgerton, Minnesota, at a convention of teachers from the schools of Doon, Iowa, Edgerton, and Loveland, Colorado. We welcome this contribution from one of our Protestant Reformed teachers.]

Just what does the word discipline mean to you?

Sadly enough, the word discipline leaves a bad taste in the mouths of many people. This is something that is becoming more and more apparent in today's permissive society. Even to some Christians the word has to do with a distasteful task which is brought about by the natural perversity of children. To other people the word conjures up such thoughts as punishment or severity, or even hatred.

Another view of discipline is that it is an essential element of childrearing, but that it has little to do with the teachings of Scripture. In this view, discipline means punishment, brought about, however, as nothing more than a chance to get even with children for their faults. Others even use children as objects for getting rid of their own frustrations.

The goal of discipline is often perverted also. Why does the Christian want to have so called "disciplined" children? Do we desire peace and quiet at home or an atmosphere of learning at school? Do we discipline because we want to appear to be a good parent or teacher, as a craftsman is identified with his product? I am afraid that all of us have fallen into these false goals at one time or another. This evening we ought to take the chance to view what God has to say about discipline in His Word.

To offer a contrast to Christian discipline, and also

to show that there is a need on our part to understand that discipline, I would like to tell you of a few ideas of modern educators and psychologists. After seeing these ideas we have little difficulty understanding the breakdown of law and order today, the new morality, unrest on college campuses, and the general attitude of rebelliousness.

Some two hundred years ago the French philosopher, Rousseau, reflected the spirit of his times in his writings. He told the world that man is born good, and that his unhappiness came not because of sin, but because of an unsuitable social environment. Man, he said, could be free and happy when he took a full share in his own government. That is to say, man was to be his own authority. His ideas are still in force today and are the basis of our own political documents. Some of Rousseau's ideas applied to children are: never command a child; leave children alone as much as possible; allow children to grow and develop according to their own minds and wills. This is the kind of child that will grow into a happy adult.

In modern America, John Dewey taught how we could achieve this social equality and therefore individual happiness. Man's problems should be scientifically analyzed, and the solution should be applied to the school system. This would mean that all children and, therefore, in later years, all adults would

be happy, well-adjusted persons.

Modern psychologists carry these ideas a little farther when they tell us that our sinless children ought to go through a process of socialization. That is to say, children must be trained by the school system to be well adjusted individuals who can live happily with others. Children rebel, not against God, but only to preserve their own personal identity. All challenges of parental authority ought to be met with tolerance and kindly understanding. Punishment, it is said, will only deepen frustration or cause resentment.

These ideas are carried to the extreme by an English educator named A. S. Neill. He will have nothing to do with authority, claiming that adults are power hungry tyrants in their demand for obedience. Children should be made the equals of adults in all judgments. The object of a person's life is to find happiness, in nearly any way he pleases. Discipline will bring only guilt feelings, hostility, and hypocrisy, not happiness.

These are the sort of ideas which the Christian parent and teacher must be prepared to cope with and to resist. It is with these ideas surrounding them that Christian children must grow up.

In order for us to define discipline in the light of Scripture, we must look to God's purpose in placing His people on the earth. We cannot take an earthly definition such as Webster gives, that discipline is training that develops self-control and orderliness. God demands more of us than that we are orderly or have self-control. There is more of a goal in our lives.

Discipline is not a process which again partially or totally restores us in favor with God. This is impossible on the part of man. It is only by God's grace, and not through our works of discipline, that we or our children are saved.

Today's worldly definition of discipline cannot be ours. It is not a process whereby a child becomes a good citizen or a person who is free from emotional hangups. God's children are to be good citizens, but this is only a part of their fear of God.

Mark tells us that "to love the Lord our God with all our heart and mind and soul is the first commandment." I think all of us know what that means. God must be all-important in our lives. Our goal is to serve Him, and to subordinate our own desires to non-existence. It is for this reason that we are on this earth.

Because of sin, we find this goal impossible to meet. Because of sin we must have discipline, not as a restorative process or to better ourselves in this world, but because God has commanded us to hate sin. God instituted positions of authority before He created the world. Discipline by these authorities became necessary because sin came into the world.

We as authorities, parents or teachers, are to train our children to love the Lord their God. This, then, is discipline: the act of training our children to love God.

Only those who love God can discipline, and discipline comes only because of the love of God. Discipline involves instruction in God's ways and correction for those acts which are not pleasing to God.

I would like to divide the body of this speech into two parts: first, the person disciplining, and second, the person being disciplined.

In order for a person to discipline he must be in a position of authority. Just what is this authority, and where does it come from?

Webster tells us that authority is "the power or right to give commands, and force obedience, take action, or make final decisions." Scripture tells us that God is the final authority. He is authority by His very nature. God's authority does not come because He is all-powerful or all-wise, but because He is Lord and Creator of all. He is the Author or Originator. There is no authority apart from God. We must go farther than Webster's definition and see what God says of His own authority.

When God led His people from Egypt, He said to Moses: Tell the people that *I Am That I Am* hath sent you. When God gave his commandments to Moses, He established His authority by saying, "I am the Lord thy God." In these simple statements we understand the profound knowledge that is given in Psalm 103:19, "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." We can understand Webster's definition in relationship to God by giving capital letters to all the nouns. God gives not just a command, but the Command, takes not just action, but is Himself Action.

God confers His authority to Christ and then to man. God has highly exalted Christ and has commanded that every knee should bow before Him. It is through Christ that the authority of God is bestowed on parents, and from parents to teachers. God has established all positions of authority, and that of parent is most important of all.

It is important that we understand that the authority of the parent is not his own but that he uses God's authority. A person in authority has no right to demand obedience or respect simply because of superior wisdom or strength. A parent may not make demands because of natural ties between himself and his children or because he is their procreator. These things may go along with authority but are not reasons why a person must be obeyed.

The parent or teacher must establish himself confidently in his God-given position of authority. We may not say, "Child, it is time to go to bed because my experience has told me that if you do not, you will be tired tomorrow." Rather we say, "Child, go to bed because your parent has said to go." The teacher may not say to his students, "Obey because I am your physical superior and can punish you." Rather he must say, "Obey because God has given me the authority

over you." This is not to say, of course, that there is not to be punishment through superior strength, or judgments because of greater experience. These are only earthly reasons why children must obey. The parent or teacher is answerable to Christ for the nurture of children in the fear of the Lord. We must

also discipline out of the fear of the Lord. We will see later that it is also the love of Christ which will bring about obedience on the part of children as a result of our discipline.

(to be continued)

In His Fear

The Pilgrim Life

Rev. D. H. Kuiper

A Double Reason

That the Bible is the Word of God and not simply the word of man is so clear that every pilgrim, even pilgrim *children*, can understand it. There is, first of all, a negative reason. . . . "it came not in old time by the will of man." Scripture did not have its origin in the will of man. Man's will had nothing to do with the Scriptures. Whether there would be a Bible, when it would be written, by whom it would be written, what form it would take, what its contents would be . . . man's will had nothing to do with these things! Let that be impressed upon us in such a way that it never be forgotten. The truth is that *God* determined there would be a Bible; God determined to reveal Himself as the God of salvation in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures came by the will of God, and, therefore, His will decided the matter from every point of view! So important is the will of God in this matter that if He had not graciously decided to reveal Himself to us, we could never, never know Him. Oh, we would have a certain knowledge of Him that works fear, but we would never know Him as Father, and as the God of covenant friendship and life! But God be praised, He was pleased to uncover Himself in human language, and that revelation we have in the Bible.

This blessed fact implies, first of all, that the Bible is the Word of God from beginning to end. Oh, it was written by man in human language, but that does not make it less Divine. They contain no word of man at all. The Scriptures in their entirety are the revelation of the mighty God of our salvation! Secondly, this means that the Bible is the inspired, infallible Word. The original manuscripts, which are now lost, contained no errors, no contradictions, no untruths. And what about the Bibles we use today? Are they to be trusted? I know there are a lot of versions being pressed upon us today, and I am aware of many differences in translations, some of which are deliberate perversions of the clear meaning of the text. But as God's people we ought to be impressed by this fact: if we concern ourselves with the best version

(which I am convinced is the King James or Authorized Version) and if we understand that variations in this translation according to the best manuscripts are very minor and do not touch a single doctrinal issue or an article of the Christian faith, we can be sure that what we have in our homes and churches and schools is the inspired, infallible Word of God. Because the Spirit poured out on the church not only gave the Word, but also preserves it, our copies today partake of the infallibility that the original manuscripts enjoyed. The Holy Spirit sees to it, and will see to it, that the Pilgrim stranger in this world always has a guide-book that does not err!

All this is being denied by many, by the instigation of the Devil. It has become fashionable to say that the Bible *contains* the Word of God. The idea is that if you want to discover the Word of God in the Bible, you must first strip away the trivia and the myth. Get rid of the human framework and figures. In this way, much of God's precious revelation to usward is discarded at the whim of man. He will judge what is God's Word and what is not. Others say that since the Bible is the revelation of salvation and contains covenant history, it is infallible only in matters of faith and doctrine. But in matters scientific and historical it obviously errs and cannot be trusted. Thus, God's own Word concerning creation is thrown out, and evolution or theistic evolution with its period theory is introduced. (The reasons for this will not be discussed here, but one cannot escape the feeling that the desire of many theologians to be accepted by academe is prominent here.) It is said that there are errors in the genealogies, historical accounts that do not harmonize, misconceptions concerning the solar system, inconsistencies in the gospel accounts. It is no coincidence that those who deny the infallibility of the Bible continue to chip away, and imagine they find more and more errors. If the child of God is aghast thus far by the attacks upon the Scripture, let him be warned that he has seen only the beginning. The point is, if you deny one part of the Bible as God's Truth,

you have denied the whole Bible. The Word stands *in toto* or it falls *in toto*. Is it not clear that if you cannot trust God's Word in respect to creation, you cannot trust His Word regarding recreation in Jesus Christ (confer Rom. 4:17)? If you deny the existence of Adam, you deny the Last Adam, the Lord from Heaven? If you deny Paradise, you deny Heaven? If you deny that all men died in Adam, you deny that the elect are made alive in Christ? But the Bible does not err! It contains no mistakes and no word of man because it came not in old time by the will of man.

The positive reason why the Bible is in all its parts the Word of God is given us by Peter in the words: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." To show how little man had to do with the coming of the Scriptures, we are instructed here that even that small part that God allowed man to play in the production of the Bible is actually thoroughly God-determined and God-controlled. Before the foundations of the world, He set apart and qualified each writer of the Scripture. He gave, in His counsel, to each one certain gifts and abilities, a certain position and circumstance in life. David, whom God determined should write the Psalms, grew up as a shepherd of his father's sheep on the hills of Judah. Moses had to be educated in the palace schools of Pharaoh. Paul was taught at the feet of Gamaliel. These circumstances and preparation exactly enabled each sacred writer to write a certain, fore-ordained, part of the Bible. Thus, the Spirit did not *find* men in this world that He would use, but these men were raised up and prepared by God for that work!

Secondly, these men spoke and wrote in a very special way . . . "being moved by the Holy Ghost." The idea is that they were carried by, borne along by the Holy Spirit. The sacred writers were caught up in the Spirit! So inspiration is that act of God whereby he breathed His Word into the hearts and minds of chosen men, so that, under the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit, they were guided and directed to record that Word. It follows that this implies a verbal, or graphic inspiration. God did not simply convey to his chosen writers the general idea or broad outline of revelation, and then trust they could carry on from there. No, every line, every word, every letter, is *God breathed!* Consistency demands of us, that with such a view, we do not engage in debates about the human and Divine factor in the Bible. The Bible is not the product of God and man. It is not necessary to speak of a human and Divine author. The Holy Scriptures are *all* Divine. The Bible as it presents us with the living Word of God, which is Jesus Christ, is fully inspired in all its parts. It comes to us directly from the mouth of God, Who cannot lie and Who cannot err. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment. A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He." (Deut. 32:4).

Hence, concerning the doctrine of inspiration, the child of God *may* and *must* believe, first, that God's Word was given in such a way that it is infallible and inerrant: it cannot err because it is the Word of God, don't you see? That means that any attack on the Word of God is an attack on God Himself! When you say something about the Bible, you are saying something about the living God! And, therefore, modern attempts to derogate the Bible are an attack on Theism itself, for a God Who errs is no God at all. With Jesus we must say, "Father, Thy Word is Truth!" And if that invites persecution and ridicule, let it be so! Secondly, such a Word of God is authoritative, of course! That's so important for the pilgrim. In future issues we hope to consider various aspects of the pilgrim's calling, and we will discover that the calling is often contrary to the flesh. How important for us to understand, then, that the authority of the Sovereign God of heaven and earth is embodied in His Word. The ring of its authority must be heard and recognized in every area of life. To it we must bow! And, thirdly, such an infallibly inspired Record is completely trustworthy. The pilgrim may give himself over to its promises without fear of disappointment! The Word will not lead astray, will not cause unnecessary suffering; rather, it will guide him to Heaven and Home.

The Result of Knowing This

The apostle Peter assumes that these things may be known by the church, and that this knowledge lives in the consciousness of the believer. How may we know concerning the Divine origin of Scripture and wonderful truths of inerrancy, authority, and trustworthiness? As the late Dr. E. J. Young of Westminster Seminary puts it in his excellent book, *Thy Word Is Truth* (Eerdmans, 1957, p. 18), "If a foreigner comes to our shores, and we should desire to know his nationality and something about his background and history, there are many ways we might proceed to obtain this information. We might call in a number of people and engage in a guessing game on a large scale. We might ask different individuals to make a thorough study of the man's appearance and clothes, and then give us their 'unbiased' judgment as a result of such 'scientific' study. There is also another way in which we might proceed. We might ask the man himself to tell us the answers to our question." Dr. Young's point is that the Bible itself tells us all we need to know about the doctrine of Scripture. We ought not ask the scientist or the philosopher to formulate this doctrine. God Himself is the only One to be trusted in making statements about the Word of God. Go to the Bible believing that! What a wide range of proof you will then find. The text we have been considering belongs at the heart of this body of proof. What beautiful evidence that every word of the Bible comes to us

from the mouth of our loving, caring Father! There is II Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Countless times we read, "Thus saith the Lord," or, "The word of the Lord came unto me saying..." We pass over this lightly, but these phrases hammer home the fact that *God* is speaking!

From a slightly different point of view, consider the amazing unity and harmony that the Bible displays: sixty-six books written over a period of hundreds of years by scores of different men. Yet, there is not one conflict, or discrepancy, or loose end! This objective proof no man is able to gainsay! The Belgic Confession, Art. 5, states that the Scriptures carry the evidence in themselves that they are the Word of God. That evidence is simply overwhelming!

And yet, all that proof means nothing to you and me personally, unless the same Spirit Who gave it testifies in our hearts that these things be true! God works faith in His Word; God engraves them upon the tablets of our heart! Thus, the pilgrim child of God, living out of faith, is not shaken by the so-called discoveries of science and modern theologians. He *knows* the Bible is the Word of God. He *knows* it is without error. Therefore, nothing can shake his confidence in the Word, not even the gates of hell.

The importance of all this cannot be over-emphasized, for the church as a whole, nor for the individual believer. Notice that Peter places the truth of this text in the category of a *basic principle* by insisting that we know this *first*. The truth that the Bible is God-breathed is fundamental to Christianity, to pure and undefiled religion, and to a faithful pilgrimage! Establish this, by God's grace, as an immovable fact in your lives. Hold on to it, teach it to your children, and never let it go: for if this is allowed to slip away from us, then we have nothing left. If you wonder if the Word of God be true, then you will wonder if you are a pilgrim, and even if being a pilgrim is all that important. You will not be inclined to bow

before the Word when it comes to you and says, "Pilgrim, this is your calling. This is how I would have you walk in the midst of the world." You will begin to wonder if Christ is really going to return, to receive unto Himself His redeemed Church, and to give her the eternal inheritance, the new heavens and earth in which dwelleth righteousness. Let no man say that the doctrine of inspiration with all its implications is something cold and hard, or perhaps out of date. It is vibrant and warm. It is a matter of life and death. If the gospel is to have *power*, if it is to give *consolation*, if it is to *save*, then it must be the Word of God! *And it is!*

It is sad and it is inexcusable that in the nineteen-seventies the church on earth dares to take a new look at this doctrine. As one of the first principles of religion, it may not be questioned or even investigated. It may only be believed; and if an attack is launched against the Bible, this doctrine must be *applied*. Before this Word of God Satan will flee.

What a treasure, then, the Bible is for the often-weary pilgrim. He may trust it with all his soul. In a world of change, of darkness and the lie, he has Light and Truth for every possible situation. He cleaves to its promises as they all center in Christ. He is willing to suffer loss of all earthly things, he is willing to endure affliction and even die, he will go where that Guide-book sends him ... all because that Word cannot be broken!

For this reason pilgrimage is a matter of joy! I am afraid we are inclined to view the pilgrim life as a negative type of thing. As if it is all deprivation, denial, and sadness. Sometimes our children react that way when we instruct them in the ways of the covenant: "Why can't a Christian have fun?" How can we fail to see that being a pilgrim is a privilege, and thus a matter of great joy? Because he can trust in the Word of God, the psalmist sings: "Thy statutes are my song in the house of my pilgrimage!" That joy may be ours, because Father's Word is Truth!

The Day of Shadows

Attempted Robbery

Rev. John A. Heys

That first sin of Adam and Eve injured neither one of them bodily.

There was no violence of the one upon the other in that deed. No painful blow was struck to injure each other's flesh. No cutting words were spoken that wounded their souls. The eating of that forbidden fruit

had no more painful effect upon their bodies than the eating of any piece of fruit from any other tree in the garden.

To any of us fallen children of Adam, could we have been there to witness that first sin, it would have been nothing more than the eating of a piece of fruit from a

tree that arbitrarily had been designated as one having forbidden fruit. The fruit of that tree was good for food. That tree did not bear poisonous fruit. Consider once what a weak poison that would have been. For then it did not kill Adam (though he ate of it only once) until nine hundred thirty years later! A piece of fruit that takes that long to bring to death can hardly be called poisonous.

Yet, though the deed brought no physical pain or grief to Adam and Eve, and though it seemed like a very arbitrary decision to single out this tree as one with forbidden fruit, it was a most vicious sin that Adam and Eve committed when they ate of that tree!

It was man's declaration of hatred against God, because of which he would set himself on a course of fighting Him in order to rob Him of His glory!

It was unbridled hatred!

It was bold rebellion!

It was attempted robbery!

That was Satan's goal, and it was also his very approach as well. He had turned in hatred against God. He had rebelled in heaven. And he had also sought to rob God of His glory. Paul tells us in I Timothy 3:6 that Satan was lifted up with pride, which means that he sought to exalt himself above God. It means that he died spiritually before man did, and being spiritually dead the only joy he could find was in spreading that hatred to God's image bearer. And he found the serpent to be a valuable tool for working hatred into the heart of man, and the scheme of robbing God of His glory into man's mind. Eat, he said, and you can rob God of His position in which He tells you what is good and what is evil! Eat, that you may be able to decide for yourself what is good for you and what you will consider to be evil!

Understand well, then, that this first deed of Adam touches the very sovereignty of God. For if He cannot decide anymore what is good for His creature and what is evil, if the creature does obtain this right and power, then God loses His sovereignty, must step aside, and that will be a God beside Him. And that simply means that God is dead! It is inherent in being God that one is God alone. Two gods would nullify and limit each other, and both would lose the very characteristic of being God. It is, therefore, as far as Satan's approach is concerned, Jehovah or Adam, and not both. When Satan suggested being like God, he lied, of course. But in his lie is the alternative to Adam and Eve: Let Jehovah continue to be God and control your life, or rob Him of this and take that place yourself! Adam and Eve did not eat in the thought that now they would be like God in the sense that they would be on His level. No, when they would know what is good and evil (after Satan's suggestion) they would be above God. They would rob Him of that which He now had. They would wrest from His hands the control He now had over them. They could go their own merry way

without being troubled by Him. They would rob Him of His glory as God!

That apparently harmless act of eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a root sin that has brought forth all the hatred against God that is in the world today and will develop to greater heights in the remaining years of this world. All the rebellion against God man has ever committed, or will commit, came out of this sin. You see, that tree was not arbitrarily chosen to be the tree of the knowledge of good and of evil. It was created by God to be His means of teaching man, made in His image, what was ethically good and what was ethically evil and would, therefore, bring him material good or material evil. Adam knew the good but had to know it as opposed to evil. He had to live antithetically. He had to serve God in love with a complete hatred of all that which did not serve Him and did not glorify Him. And eating of that tree would mean that man had begun to hate God, refused to serve Him, would declare, or indeed in that eating did already declare war on God, and that he was out to rob Him of His glory of being the sovereign ruler of heaven and earth!

We do well, then, to cast far from us all this silly talk about little and big sins. Look at that sin of Adam! It is in every sin we commit whether from our viewpoint it is called big or little. Every time that we sin we simply say, I will decide for myself what is good and what is evil. I want no God above me to tell me what I have to do! I want the forbidden, and I am going to get it!

The friend-servant relation in which we were created we have in Adam changed to one of enemy-rebel. And we have carried it on into every sphere and department of life. We are out to rob God of His glory. We want Him dead and are going to behave as though He is. But since we are quite sure that He is not, we are going to fight Him with everything that we have.

Of course we do not rob Him. We speak of attempted robbery, because it did not and could not succeed. It was all Satan's lie, and he knew that it was not true. He had not succeeded himself. He knew that God is God and God alone. The creature that depends upon God for every breath of his life cannot get God out of his way, cannot rob God of any of His glory. God is glorified in that very attempt of man to rob Him of His glory. His almighty power to maintain Himself as God shines all the more strongly through that very sin of Adam. That He still is God, and that He is God alone became so very plain in the punishment that at once came upon them for their sin. They robbed God of no glory. They robbed themselves of all their glory. They lost their life and all of their spiritual gifts to become enemies of the God Who still continued to determine for them what is good and what is evil. They lost all their ability to call the good good, and the evil evil, and to choose the good and to reject the evil.

They took nothing from God, but God took from them the excellent gifts which in their creation He had given to them.

Let us clearly understand that, whether we are speaking of spiritual death, by which we mean that man is completely unable to do what is spiritually good (and into this Adam did fall the day that he ate); or physical death, which is the separation of body and soul, with the body beginning to return to the dust; or the eternal death, which is the suffering of the everlasting wrath of God in hell, death is punishment! It is God's punishment upon the sinner, and not a natural consequence of eating forbidden fruit. The tree did not kill Adam, but God did. The wages, the payment of sin is death. That is saying much more than that death is the result of sin. And so, without minimizing that awfulness of their sin, the truth expressed in our title that it is *attempted* robbery declares the folly of man's deed, and the impossibility that God could be robbed of His sovereignty. Man meant to rob. With him it was not a mere attempt. He had been deceived into thinking that he would succeed. He ate because he was convinced that his sin would bring him advantage, not disadvantage. He rebelled because he was convinced that he could become like God to know good and evil. But the outcome of the deed is that it was only a foolish attempt that failed completely.

And the Saviour of this fallen man, and of mankind, will have to *earn* life before this God. He will have to obtain it from the same God Who took it from us. He will have to satisfy His, not the devil's, demands. He will have to buy us from His justice by suffering fully our punishment and by fulfilling completely God's demand to us of unswerving obedience and love. There is no tree whose fruit we can eat and thereby restore ourselves to the life we lost. There must be the tree of the cross that serves to inflict this punishment upon that Saviour and that serves as an altar where He may offer up a perfect life to God.

Very beautifully Paul writes of Him in Philippians 2:6 that He thought not the robbery to be equal with God. That is a better translation than the one which declares that, "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." In His pure mind and holy will the thought and desire of taking from God His sovereignty was never entertained. Satan spoke also to Him, and that on many occasions. But he never succeeded in getting the Son of God in our flesh to entertain in His thoughts or harbour in His heart the robbery of God. Always when Satan suggested it, He spewed it out of

His mouth, and condemned the very thought as a loathsome, evil thing. He always maintained and manifested a love for God as the Sovereign One. And because He did, the world robbed Him of His life at Calvary.

Let the fact of Adam's sin then open our eyes to the holiness of God and the awfulness of our sin. We are so inclined to view God as less than holy. At least we like to consider Him to be less than holy. O yes, we do! We try to console ourselves and deceive ourselves into thinking that He will condone a little heresy and a little sin. He will overlook, we like to think, a few points of false doctrine. And we even dare to say that for one sin He will not cast us into hell. If we continue, and if the pile gets too big, then He will lose His temper and say, "Now, that is enough!" How often do we not hear those who despise the means of grace on the Sabbath and serve the flesh instead, who drop a word that takes His name in vain, that pull off a shady business deal, say, "The good Lord is not going to put me in hell for just one sin."

Better that we remember that He killed Adam and Eve for one sin. Better that we look at sin from His point of view and not from our sinful position. Better that we judge with His pure eyes rather than with our evil eyes. Do we not in Habakkuk 1:13 read? "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity."

Follow not the philosopher who declares that if you lead a good, clean life there is a certain place for you in God's kingdom, and then by a good, clean life means one of keeping the second table of the law, as though this were possible without keeping the first table. Adam and Eve broke not that second table in their first sin, and all hell broke loose upon them as far as what they deserved is concerned. Your hands may be ever so clean as far as that second table is concerned, that is, in man's opinion and according to his judgment, but are you denying God His sovereignty? Are you denying Him the right to tell you what is good and what is evil? Live in peace with men but fight God, and death is the wages for that sin, regardless of how nice you were to men.

Confess God to be sovereign both by your mouth and your deeds. And then run to the tree of the cross for healing, since so often we seek to rob Him of that honour and glory. Attempt not the robbery of God, but cast yourself in humility before Him and seek His sovereign grace.

"The excellent, infallible and sole preparation for grace is the eternal election and predestination of God."

Martin Luther

Book Review

The Science And Creation Series

THE SCIENCE AND CREATION SERIES, Creation Science Research Center; Editors: Henry M. Morris & Jimmy F. Phelps. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

The Creation Research Society, which has published a large amount of extremely valuable and worthwhile material in defense of the Biblical presentation of creation, has now come out with a series of books which are particularly designed for use in the classroom. The series contains a "Handbook For Teachers" plus a set of eight books for use in the classroom. Each of these eight books has a companion book which is for the teachers' use. While we cannot describe in detail the contents of all these books, we think the series is important enough to give some summary of each volume.

The teachers' handbook contains chapters on the following subjects:

- I. The Scientific Study of Origins.
- II. Creation and the Conceptual Systems of Science.
- III. Creation and the Scientific Disciplines.
- IV. Classical Arguments for Evolution: A Re-evaluation.
- V. The Origin of Life.
- VI. Creation and the Problem of Time.
- VII. The Creation of the Universe.

The series of books for use in the classroom plus their companion teachers' books contain the following material:

Book One: "This Wonderful World" (Order and Design in Nature). "Evidence of beauty and order in the natural world, demonstrating the necessity of a Designer and the impossibility of naturalistic origin."

Book Two: "Our Changing World" (The Nature of Physical Processes). "Introductory study of matter and energy, and the laws of energy conversion, demonstrating that the basic processes in nature are those of conservation and decay, rather than evolution."

Book Three: "The World of Long Ago" (The Testimony of the Fossils). "A survey of the fossil record and its significance, stressing the ecological communities in the former world and their catastrophic burial in the sediments, instead of the naturalistic concept of successive evolutionary ages."

Book Four: "The Living World" (Structure of Living Systems). "An elementary study of the nature of life and its many levels, from the cell to the ecosystem, indicating the impossibility of its origin and development by any process other than special creation."

Book Five: "Man and His World" (Origin and Nature of Man). "A study of the scientific method and

its application to the investigation of man and his cultures, showing the inadequacies of any evolutionary theory of human origins and development."

Book Six: "Worlds Without End" (The Origin and Structure of the Universe). "A study of the fundamental nature of the physical universe, from atom to galaxy, and the fallacies of all naturalistic theories of cosmic beginnings."

Book Seven: "Beginning of the World" (Creation, Evolution, and Modern Science). A comparative survey of the creationist and evolutionist models for the study of science, demonstrating that creation is at least as effective as evolution for the correlation and prediction of scientific phenomena."

Book Eight: "The World and Time" (Age and History of the Earth). "A critical study of the methods in current use for the estimation of dates in the pre-historic world, giving much evidence that the earth may be relatively young rather than billions of years in age as preferred by evolutionists."

All these individual books are \$1.75 each. The Teachers Handbook is \$3.50 per copy. But the Society also makes combination offers:

One copy of each student book: (8 books) . . \$12.95

One copy of each student book: (8 books) . . . 12.95

One copy of each student book + one copy of each teacher book + Handbook for teachers 28.00

The student books are well-organized, well-written and lavishly and beautifully illustrated. They are especially suited to the teaching of science in our grade schools and junior high schools. The teacher books are prepared in such a way that they are of a great deal of assistance in explaining the material and preparing lessons for the classroom. They contain suggestions for vocabulary development, extra projects, sample worksheets and quizzes and additional reading. The Teachers Handbook is a very worthwhile book in itself and can be recommended not only to our teachers for their own personal libraries, but also to all our readers who are at all interested in this matter of creationism vs. evolutionism.

There is, however, one aspect of the series which we mention by way of criticism. We are aware of the fact that the series was prepared for use in the public school system, and is, as a matter of fact, used in the San Diego City Schools. But because these books were not specially prepared for Christian Schools, their approach is deliberately scientific in distinction from Biblical. The authors explain why this is done in the Teachers Handbook. But the result of this approach leads to several undesirable features. The intent of the series is to present creationism as a *viable option* to

evolutionism. The intent of the series is to show that, even from a scientific viewpoint, creationism has as much "proof" as evolutionism and that it is in a position to explain the facts of creation as well as or better than evolutionism.

The approach is not, therefore, the approach of Scripture and the obligation to bow in submission to the authority of the Word of God. The series takes the position that, from an epistemological viewpoint, evolutionism must be accepted by "faith" without proof as well as creationism; that, therefore, it is only fair and intellectually honest to consider creationism as an explanation of the origin of the universe along with evolutionism. But the series uses the word "faith" here in two different senses. When the unbeliever accepts evolutionism by "faith," the word "faith" means "without scientific proof." But when the child of God accepts the Scriptural account of creation by faith, the word "faith" means "saving faith in Christ whereby the child of God puts his confidence in God's unchanging promises." The faith by which we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God so that things which are seen were not made from things which do appear (Heb. 11:3) is the faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1).

This approach is, of course, due to the fact that the books were specifically prepared for use in the public

school system.

Nevertheless, we want to take this opportunity to applaud the excellent work of the Creation Science Research Center. There has been a crying need for such books to be written as these. Now one organization is devoting its time and efforts to publishing such material. The many writers who have contributed to this series are to be commended for their excellent work. We hope that more such books will be forthcoming.

And so we highly recommend this series to our schools and teachers. Serious consideration should be given to introducing this series into our schools. The criticism which we have offered can, in our opinion, be overcome in the classroom; and the series is far preferable to anything which presupposes the whole heresy of evolutionism. If any of our teachers or administrators would like to look over the series, they are welcome to contact me and make use of the set I have.

As a footnote we add that the Creation Science Research Center has other material available which include: A biology textbook, film strips, other books of particular value to teachers and scientists and an abundance of pamphlets and brochures. A list of these can be obtained by writing to Creation Science Research Center, 2716 Madison Avenue, San Diego, California, 92116.

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on March 1, 1972 at the Protestant Reformed Church of Pella, Iowa, the Lord willing. Classis will begin at 8:30 A.M. Delegates in need of lodging should inform the clerk of Pella's consistory of their need.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary-Martha Society of the Redlands Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses their sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Jeanette Vander Veen, in the recent loss of her brother,

HENRY VAN DALFSEN.

May our covenant God comfort with His Word and Spirit in the assurance that — "All things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28).

Sue Porte, President

Audrey Van Voorthuysen, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society "Ruth" of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to our President and one of our members, Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Rau, in the loss of her father,

MR. REINHOLD DEWALD.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Ps. 16:15). Mrs. P. Zandstra, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On February 24, 1972, the Lord willing, our beloved parents

MR. AND MRS. JOHN HOEKSTRA
will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We, their grateful children, are thankful to our covenant God for the many years of love and instruction they have given us.

It is our prayer that they may continue to experience the Lord's blessings in their remaining years as in the past.

Their children,
Miss Beverly Hoekstra
Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Driesen
Mr. and Mrs. John J. Hoekstra
and 6 grandchildren

NOTICE!!!

The new Clerk of The Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Grand Rapids) is:

DAVID MEULENBERG

1743 MOELKER S.W.

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN 49504.

News From Our Churches

Rev. Decker has declined the call extended to him from Hope Church of Redlands, California.

* * * * *

Rev. Moore, pastor of our Doon congregation, was in Forbes, South Dakota, on classical appointment on January 16. On that Sunday a tape service was held in his own congregation. It was the hope of the consistory, according to the Sunday bulletin, "that the congregation will find this to be an improved means of receiving the edifying Word in the absence of our minister." An elder conducted the entire service, as usual, "with the tape replacing the reading."

* * * * *

Also from a Doon bulletin we learn that the Reformed Witness Committee of Doon, Edgerton, and Hull planned a series of lectures on "The Christian's Witness." The lectures were scheduled to be held in Doon on February 3, 10, and 17. We understand that each of the three ministers (Revs. Kortering, Lanting, and Moore) was to deliver one of the three lectures. The announcement read, further, "we ask that you begin talking up these lectures to your neighbors now. Tongue speaking, lay preaching, conversion experiences, and Jesus People are some of the things to be treated."

* * * * *

Amor. Veritas. Dice.

Strange looking words? Then how about the following:

*Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht!
Alles schlaft, einsam wacht,*

Perhaps you're now beginning to see *das licht* . . . I mean, the light. The first three words were used as subject headings for the three parts of a Christmas program entitled "*In Amori Veritatem Dice*" (In Love Witness the Truth). That's Latin, of course; but the verse, which you might have immediately recognized as the first two lines in the first stanza of Silent Night, is German — which fact probably betrays the source of this information as being the printed program of the Christmas presentation in our church in Loveland, Colorado.

It seems that the program was a sort of joint venture, consisting of the efforts of the Sunday School, the day school, and the Young People's Society. There were numbers by individual classes, as well as by various combinations of the different groups involved. And audience-participation included the

singing of English tunes, as well as, as we suggested, songs in the German tongue. "*Dies ist der Tag, den Gott gemacht!*" A well-planned program it was, in our opinion, and one well-calculated to be spiritually stimulating.

* * * * *

The *Standard Bearer* business manager receives, needless to say, countless letters from likewise countless readers of our magazine. We're happy to say that he has passed along to us excerpts from a few of those letters sent to the Business Office. Here they are:

From California — "Besides the *Standard Bearer* and the tapes, I have been able to obtain some of your Seminary Notes, and I must say that I know of no other organization that makes available material of such depth."

From England — "Literature received so far has been greatly appreciated, particularly the *Standard Bearer* magazine."

From New Zealand — "Your *Standard Bearer* is very much appreciated, mainly for its sound Reformed position."

From Belfast, Northern Ireland — "Do you publish a catalogue of your publications? We have at the moment works by Hoeksema (*Behold He Cometh*, *The Triple Knowledge*) which are excellent things, and should be pleased to know of any further of your publications."

From Australia — "I am a bookseller, specializing in Reformed literature, and have been asked for a set of *The Triple Knowledge* — Herman Hoeksema, by a customer. I have read a few copies of the *Standard Bearer* myself and enjoyed them, so I am happy to forward his request to you. If it is possible I should like a catalogue of all the books and booklets you print, with the published prices."

From Paris, France — "I have already read some of Rev. Hoeksema's books. A few months ago I bought the one — on the Book of Revelation. I am interested in almost every one of the books listed in your folder."

And, from another reader in California — "Through the kindness of a friend, we get to read the *Standard Bearer*, which I think is the best church paper in the U.S.A. All the articles are worth reading, but I find the issue of Nov. 15 (1971) outstanding."

Mr. Vander Wal adds, appropriately, that "the above lines are not to be taken as our boasting. God forbid! But, rather, as our calling, as God has so instructed us in His Word (II Cor., Chap. 11)." D.D.