

Standard



A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation:

Heavenly Gospel Chorus

Editorial:

Developments in New Zealand (2)

All Around Us:

On Separation

Introducing:

The Pilgrim Life Pages

Pages From The Past:

God, Who Quickens The Dead

CONTENTS:
Editorials – Editor's Notes
Meditation — Heavenly Gospel Chorus
All Around Us – On Separation
In His Fear – The Pilgrim Life: The Pilgrim Christian
Pages From The Past – God, Who Quickens The Dead (A Meditation)
The Signs of the Times – Wars and Rumors of Wars
From Holy Writ — Exposition of the Book of Hebrews
Contending for the Faith — The Doctrine of Atonement
Book Reviews — The Cure of Souls
Announcements
News From Our Churches
The Pilgrim Life: The Pilgrim Christian130 God, Who Quickens The Dead (A Meditation)133

THE STANDARD BEARER

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Editorials

Editor's Notes

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

We hope our readers are as happy as we are with the variety we have been able to present thus far in our new volume-year. This is due to the fact that we were able to enlist some new writers for our limited staff. In this issue we are pleased to introduce a new contributor to that variety, the Rev. Dale H. Kuiper, who presents the first of a series of articles on The Pilgrim Life. We will carry these articles under the rubric In His Fear. Rev. Kuiper, pastor of our Protestant Reformed Church in Pella, Iowa, is coordinating these articles with a series of public lectures on the same subject in Pella.

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In case you are wondering, *Question Box* is empty. And this is one department which is dependent on our readers. For without questions there can be no answers.

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The third volume of *The Triple Knowledge*, scheduled for late 1971 publication, will be a bit tardy, due to unavoidable delays in preparation for printing. As of now, it looks as though the publication date will be February or March of 1972.

Developments in New Zealand (2)

In the December 1 issue we began to discuss the developments in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand as they concerned the doctrinal issues brought to the fore especially by the writings and teachings of Dr. K. Runia (at that time Vice Principal of Geelong Theological College and now a professor at Kampen). The erroneous positions of Dr. Runia and those who sympathized with him were opposed, you will recall, by the brethren of the Reformed and Presbyterian Fellowship of Australasia both in their publication, the Reformed Guardian, and ecclesiastically by way of an Appeal directed to the New Zealand Synod of 1971. To gain an adequate picture of the issues, we quoted the entire Appeal. And we found that this Appeal placed Synod squarely before several either-or issues, and that these issues were of such a nature that the Synod was faced by the duty to exercise doctrinal discipline. What Did Synod Decide??

In the interest of fairness and accuracy we will quote the answer of Synod, as found on pp. 26 and 27 of Section 1 of the Acts of Synod, 1971, of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. This decision itself, however, will make no sense to the reader because of its references to several other decisions of Synod. And therefore at various points I will insert these other decisions or explanatory notes in brackets. The decision is as follows:

Art. 103 APPEAL BROS. J. KOPPE AND B. VAN HERK
See Communication 1. (This was the appeal. HCH)

It was agreed that Synod receive the Appeal.

It was moved, seconded and adopted that on Section 2d of the Appeal no action be taken in view of the pending departure of Dr. K. Runia to the Netherlands.

That in answer to other points raised in the Appeal Synod reply as follows: -

Dear Brother,

Having received your letter of Appeal, Synod decided to inform you of the decisions taken concerning the various questions of your Appeal. (Note: The following references are to the points of the Appeal as quoted in the previous issue. HCH)

1.a. It was decided not to sustain the Dunedin Gravamen. (Art. 54 of the Acts of Synod 1971)

[Editor's note: The reference is to the Gravamen against the Westminster Confession in connection with the Sabbath. This means, therefore, that Synod upheld the Westminster Confession on this point as binding. The decision in itself is a good one.]

b. Synod declared that Office bearers sign the form of subscription in the following way: — Refer to Art. 45 of the Acts of Synod 1971.

[Editor's note: This question was also before the Synod. Instead, however, of simply re-affirming the language of the Formula of Subscription, which, in our opinion, is clear enough and strong enough in itself, the Synod took a rather detailed decision. It would be rather confusing to insert the entire deci-

sion at this point; we will undoubtedly refer to it later in our discussion. Suffice it to say at this point that while the decision leaves the impression of being rather strong at first glance — perhaps even stronger than the Formula of Subscription — nevertheless it is not so strong, and is, in fact, a weakening of the Formula of Subscription.]

2.a & b. Synod unanimously re-affirmed, in spite of certain allegations, that . . . Refer to Art. 43 of the Acts of Synod 1971.

[Editor's note: The reference here is to a very strange motion which we shall discuss again later. But on the second full day of Synod's meetings, and apparently without any overture or concrete case, (and it appears in the minutes as having come completely "out of the blue"), the Synod passing the following: "The Reformed Churches of New Zealand hereby unanimously re-affirm, IN SPITE OF CERTAIN ALLEGATIONS, that they maintain the Doctrine of The Infallible Scripture as summarized in the Confessional Standards.

"This includes:

"a. That we maintain the historicity of the details AS THEY ARE RECORDED IN GENESIS 1-3, e.g. Creation, Adam and Eve as the first created man and woman, the Fall through disobedience, and the subsequent Promise of Divine Redemption in Christ.

"b. Furthermore we maintain that the WHOLE TEACHING of the Canons of Dort (including Divine Election and Reprobation) IS in complete agreement with the Infallible Word of God.

"Consequently we require ANYONE who speaks or writes, teaches, preaches, or counsels on behalf of these Churches to do so in accordance with this statement." This is followed in Article 44 by a notation of a prayer: "Moderator led meeting in a prayer of thanksgiving for the unanimity and brotherly spirit that prevailed in the discussion of above motion and asked the Lord to continue to bless and direct the churches in their work for His glory." All this, mind you, preceded the treatment of the Appeal. One cannot escape the impression that there was "politics" being played here. Nor, as we shall see later, is even this decision as strongly Reformed as it appears to be. If it were, the Runia sympathizers would never have agreed to it.]

c. Synod decided to appoint a Committee to study the relationship between our Churches and the Reformed Theological College. (Art. 100 of the Acts of Synod 1971.)

[Editor's note: This was a decision taken on an overture (without grounds) from the Wellington Church. But it is by no means an answer to the specific appeal against the Geelong College for doctrinal and confessional reasons.]

- d. In view of the pending departure of the Rev. Prof. K. Runia to the Netherlands, Synod decided to take no action. (Art. 103 of the Acts of Synod 1971)
- e. This we refer to Synod's decision to appoint a Committee. (Art. 100 of the Acts of Synod 1971)

[Editor's note: The point at issue here was the revised form of subscription required of faculty members at Geelong Theological College, to which the Appeal objected. Again, Synod's decision does not answer the point raised by the Appeal. Nor does Article 100 give any indication that this matter of the college's form of subscription is to be investigated. Besides, of course, the Appeal did not ask for an investigation, or study,

but for a declaration.]

We sincerely trust that by these actions Synod has done the utmost in endeavouring to clear away the misunderstanding or ambiguity that, according to your letter of appeal, now exists in the minds of many of the members of our denomination.

We pray that the Holy Spirit, Who guided us in our deliberations may guide you in your work for the well-being of the Churches in which it has pleased the Lord to give us a task.

With Christian Greetings,

H. L. Hoving – Moderator W. Wiersma – First Clerk

D. G. Vanderpyl - Stated Clerk.

Thus far the synodical reply to the Appeal. Significantly, in Article 104 there is again notice of a prayer of thanksgiving: "The Moderator led meeting in prayer of thanks to God for guidance and unanimity in the Synod." While one may hesitate to criticize prayers, nevertheless I do not like these special prayers, especially when the framers of this answer to the Appeal knew very well both that they were not dealing honestly with the Appeal and knew that as far as the appealing brethren were concerned they surely were not creating any unanimity.

A Break-down of Doctrinal Discipline

Thus I would characterize the reply to the Appeal quoted above.

Why?

Is it not true that Dr. Runia was leaving for the Netherlands? Besides, could it not be argued that Dr. Runia was not even subject to any decisions of the New Zealand churches, seeing that Geelong is not a denominational school and seeing that Runia himself belonged to the Australian church? Moreover, can it not be argued that in some of the decisions quoted above and referred to in the reply to the Appeal the Synod took a fairly strong, positive stand? Besides, in the Runia matters could it not be argued that the Synod took no stand whatsoever? And therefore, should not the appellants and the other brethren of the Fellowship acquiesce in the above decision, and even be somewhat satisfied with it?

I must confess that this was my first reaction when I read these decisions and certain other decisions in the Acts. I thought to myself, "Not so bad! There are surely less conservative decisions taken by Reformed church communions nowadays."

But when I began to examine the decision a little more carefully and to look at it in close conjunction not only with the Appeal but also in connection with the entire controversy "down under," and when I received the benefit of certain other data which give the lie to the above decision, I came to a different conclusion, namely, that there was and is a very serious break-down of doctrinal discipline in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, and that essentially the Synod rejected this appeal altogether.

Why did I reach that conclusion?

In the first place, let me make it plain that there was no issue of discipline of Dr. Runia in the narrower sense of the word. This, of course, would be out of the question now because Dr. Runia, I presume, is a member of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands. But even before his departure, he was not under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the New Zealand churches. Everyone understands that. As a professor he was under the jurisdiction of the Board of Governors of Geelong College. And as a church member he was under the jurisdiction of the Reformed Church of Australia. However:

- 1) The New Zealand churches very definitely, as supporting churches, have a stake in Geelong College and in what is taught there and in the orthodoxy of the faculty members there. No one can deny this.
- 2) The New Zealand churches have fraternal relations with both the churches in Australia and in the Netherlands. It surely is not very brotherly to take the attitude, as it were, "Well, we're rid of Runia and therefore rid of the problem; let the other churches wrestle with it if they want to." And, by the way, as we shall see later, they did not take this attitude; this was but an excuse for not facing the issues of the appeal. Actually they sent Runia away with their blessings!
- 3) The New Zealand churches had and have their students, i.e., future ministers, trained at Geelong. There was every reason also from this point of view to be concerned about what was taught at the college, therefore. For there is no more sure way to corrupt the churches than to send wrongly educated ministers into the churches.

In the second place, the Synod was confronted very definitely by a concrete case. And that concrete case involved serious doctrinal and confessional matters. The fact that Dr. Runia was departing for the Netherlands did not change that fact whatsoever. The fact was that these errors of Runia had been publicly taught in the churches. The fact was that there was a complaint before Synod about these errors, a complaint which, if you study it, was well-grounded. The fact was that the fundamental issue was not Dr. Runia's person, or even his office. No, the fundamental issue was the errors which Dr. Runia taught and which the Board of Governors of Geelong had refused to condemn. Those errors were a matter of record – also for the New Zealand churches. And Dr. Runia's departure did not change that record one iota. In fact, one stands rather amazed at the naivete of Synod's decision; or was it not so naive after all? Did they not ask the question which they might expect the appellants to ask, namely: how does Runia's departure free us from the responsibility to pass judgment on these important doctrinal matters which confront us? Or did they deliberately think that this was an easy way out of a

knotty problem?

In the third place, there is the fact that Dr. Runia was not the only one who held the errors mentioned in the appeal. It is a matter of record that there were also officebearers in the New Zealand churches who sympathized with Runia and who condemned the opposition of the brethren of the Fellowship and the Reformed Guardian. There was even controversy about some of these matters at the level of sessions (consistories) and presbyteries (classes). Moreover, the Dunedin Gravamen about the Sabbath was a direct result of Runia's propaganda about this same subject.

In the fourth place, I must point out that there very really was personal discipline at stake in this Appeal. We must not forget that the brethren Koppe and Van Herk and van Rij were under discipline as officebearers exactly because of their opposition to Runia. They were falsely accused of sins which would make them worthy of suspension and deposition; and the attempt was made to accomplish such suspension and deposition. They were accused of slandering Runia and of mutiny in the churches. And these accusations were brought against wilm not only by their own sessions but also by other sessions, and individuals, both in New Zealand and in Australia! This aspect of the case was also before Synod by way of personal appeals. But naturally, in the light of the above answer to the doctrinal Appeal, Synod did not adjudicate these personal cases specifically. But there was indeed discipline at stake here! If not Runia's discipline, then the discipline of Runia's opponents.

But what about those more positive decisions?

cially not in the light of Synod's failure to adjudicate case, the Synod says, "We will say nothing about it; the matters of doctrinal error. This is plain, is it not? It the man is leaving for the Netherlands." But when the is all well and good to re-affirm the confessions in concrete case is safely shunted aside, then turn around apparently strong language and to require everyone to and praise such a man publicly as a champion of the abide by them in general. And the same is true of the Reformed faith! Formula of Subscription. But what does it all mean when a Synod refuses to apply specifically what it as- Reformed!

serts in general? Actions speak louder than words in such a case.

More importantly, in the second place, the real test of doctrinal soundness lies exactly in the question whether churches are willing to condemn specific false teachings when they are confronted by these in a concrete case. This test the Reformed Churches of New Zealand faced – and failed wretchedly. This can only mean that the churches did not have the courage of their claimed convictions. It can only mean that Runia's sympathizers in the churches will feel themselves safe, are allowed to continue to teach as Runia taught, will eventually grow stronger and bolder, and will finally take over completely in the churches.

This is why I call this a break-down of doctrinal discipline.

And in the light of the fact that fundamental Reformed truths are at stake and the fact that these brethren carried their case to the broadest ecclesiastical gathering, I can fully understand that they cannot continue under the ecclesiastical roof of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, but feel that they are called to reformation by separation.

One concluding fact. The New Zealand churches gave the lie to their own decision. After declaring that they would take no action about the errors of Dr. Runia, they nevertheless did take action - in another way. They sent Runia a very commendatory farewell letter in which, among other things, they called him a "champion for the Reformed faith."

There you have it!

A man may deny reprobation. He may openly con-First of all, careful analysis will show that they are tradict the confessions. He may contradict the doctrine not as good as they seem to be at first glance, espe- of Holy Scripture. When confronted by a concrete

This is anything but honest; and it is anything but

Meditation

Heavenly Gospel Chorus

Rev. M. Schipper

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Luke 2:13, 14.

Night it was!

Darkness had settled over the fields of Bethlehem! And in the stillness of the night shepherds, those children of Israel and of the city of David, lay huddled

on the slopes of the Judean hills, surrounded by their sheep, whose care demanded a wakeful ear and a watchful eye lest carnivorous, predatory animals should suddenly appear to destroy one or more of

their precious flock.

The only light afforded them was the starry canopy above them. Those harbingers of the day that was to follow must often have spoken to them of much more than the change of night to day. Were they not of the children of Abraham unto whom the Lord had said: "As many as the stars of heaven, so great shall be thy covenant seed"? And were they not fully aware that the Seed, promised to the ancient patriarch, had not yet come? How often, as they gazed up into the star-studded firmament above, as they watched their flocks by night, must the question have troubled their soul: When shall He appear?

Though the night which had settled over the land of Judah seemed silent and serene, so that the hymn writer, musing on the events about to occur on this eventful night, could write, "Silent Night, Holy Night!" yet not so was it in reality. The darkness also spoke of the terrible night of sin and death, the spiritual darkness that had settled on the world immediately after the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden. Really it was awfully dark; and surely it was not calm and serene. Sin had indeed battled hard, and the light of prophecy had for nigh unto four hundred years ceased to shine. And the world was groping in the throes of sin, corruption, and rebellion against God. How often these true sons of Abraham, with the Word of God spoken by the ancients burning in their hearts, must have prayed for the day when the Light would come!

Indeed, it was night!

Night in the world! Not only on the fields of Ephrathah!

Then suddenly the darkness seemed to split in two! A shaft of light shone through the riven darkness!

The glory of the Lord shone round about them! And they were sore afraid!

Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, exclaiming: "Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord! And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger!"

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!"

Heavenly gospel chorus!

Beautiful anthem!

And, O what a night for singing!

Bethlehem's Babe signals the victory of God's Word and Satan's defeat!

What centuries of bitter struggle had preceded this night of joy! Had not God spoken at the very dawn of history: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise

thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel?" And the Devil had heard and understood this announcement. It was the announcement of his utter and final defeat. But he from that very moment on entered upon a life-and-death struggle to crush the woman's seed. In that struggle Abel lost his life-blood. Pursued by the powers of darkness, Enoch had to be translated to heaven. So great was the dominion of darkness in the antedeluvian world, that only Noah was left to find grace in the eyes of the Lord. And after the deluge the struggle goes on. In Egypt, the house of bondage, it seemed as though the very light of the promise would be extinguished. When the kingdom of Israel is dispersed, and the kingdom of Judah is removed to Babylon, it seemed that the sting of the Dragon's tail had injected a deadly wound. And in the four hundred years before this wonderful night, it seemed truly that the sceptre had departed from Judah and the law-giver from between his feet. The cause of God seemed hopeless, and a darkness, darker than night, had fallen upon the history of God's covenant. Verily, it seemed that out of the darkness of the abyss, the head of the Dragon would appear and that he would roar out unto all the world that not God, but he was worthy to receive all the praises of men and of angels.

But now, as a root out of a dry ground, the Lion of Judah's tribe appears!

The Seed of the woman has come!

Jesus, the Saviour, is born!

God has done whatsoever it hath pleased Him!

How often it seemed as though He had forgotten His promise! Often the saints of old could be heard in mournful tunes expressing: "Has God forgotten to be kind? Shall His promise fail forever?" And we may suppose that the angels of heaven just as eagerly had inquired into the promise. To them God's scheme of redemption must have appeared as an infinite riddle. Anxiously they peered into the works of God to find an answer.

But now at long last the glorious revelation of His good pleasure has taken place. Eagerly the holy angels, those ministers of God's elect, had looked into the face of Him Who sits upon the throne, awaiting the signal that would send them on a mission of good news. And now the command came: Descend ye holy ones, unto them, my people, who dwell on the earth, and announce unto them glad tidings of great joy! Tell them that unto them is born this day in the manger of Bethlehem a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And be sure to show unto them how that the glory is to be ascribed unto Me, when I send peace unto them who are the objects of my good pleasure!

Glory to God in the highest!

Indeed, a most beautiful, heavenly anthem!

Glory to God Who is the all glorious One! Not so, however, is this to be understood as though something can be added unto Him which he does not already have. For all glory is His. And nothing can be added unto Him that will make Him greater than He is. Rather, His glory is the radiation, the shining forth of all His infinite perfections. He is the all-wise, righteous, holy, gracious, merciful, omnipresent, omniscient, eternal God. When He displays all His virtues, you see His glory. This is precisely what God was doing now when He sent His Only Begotten Son into the world as a Babe in the manger of Bethlehem. Here He clearly reveals His faithfulness and truth in the keeping of His promise. Here He shows forth His grace and mercy in the sending to us a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And in that Son shall be manifested the very God of our salvation in all His glorious attributes.

In one word, the theme of the angelic anthem is: God is the all glorious One!

It must be clearly seen that the Saviour, born of a virgin, and lying in a manger, is not of us, but of God. Presently when this Child shall grow up and utter His voice, only the gracious words of God shall He speak. When also He gives His soul as a ransom for many, and shall pass away under the vials of Divine wrath as penalty for our guilt; and when He shall be raised from the dead unto the highest heavens, — all this shall be the revelation of the glory of God. When He shall send forth His Spirit into our hearts and fill us with the blessings of His covenant, and when He shall come again in judgment to destroy all that is of darkness, and to usher us into His eternal and heavenly kingdom, — all this is the revelation of His glory.

Small wonder, then, that the angelic chorus sings, "Glory in the highest heavens to God!"

And mark well, to Him be the glory also when peace comes on earth!

Peace also is from Him! Peace through the Prince of Peace, Who is all of God! Peace which the world does not, nor can it know, or produce. Peace which passes all understanding, but which fills our hearts and minds!

O, do not misunderstand the angelic anthem! Not so is their song to be interpreted, that glory is to be attributed to God in the highest heavens, while peace is to be attributed to men of good will. God is jealous of His glory!

Also when peace comes on earth the glory is to be ascribed to God. Peace of God, peace with God, peace through God, peace in God; — it is all of Him and through Him and unto Him; in order that His alone may be all the glory.

That that peace is on earth, must be seen in that

Child in the cattle stall of Bethlehem. In Him God and man are united, for He is God with us, Immanuel. And through Him God will establish and realize an everlasting bond of friendship between Himself and His people. And He makes peace through His cross, for God was in Him reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us. And by His Spirit and grace He causes His peace to dwell in our hearts, and in our deepest consciousness.

His be the glory also when He makes us partakers of this everlasting peace!

In men of His good pleasure!

And that means that this peace is particular!

Not so should the angel's song be interpreted, as though it were up to men to determine who shall be partakers of this peace. It is not a peace which men have because they are of good will, and have a delight in peace. If this were the case, then that which belongs to the glory of God would turn into the praise of men. Believe it, beloved reader, the angels are not singing the praises of men, but of God!

How contrary to all the history of man in the world, and to all that is ever seen of the natural man; that they are ever of good will, and bringers of peace! The very opposite is true. "Their feet are swift to shed blood, and the way of peace they have not known." Such is the Scriptural analysis of man as he is by nature. At enmity against God, and at war with his fellow man, such is the nature of every man that is born of a woman, and coming into the world. How, then, could the angel's song ever be understood to imply that men of good will make peace on earth? From the very beginning the truth persists, there shall be wars and rumor of war, as far as man is concerned.

But in the midst of warfaring men, God has His people who are of His good pleasure!

And those unto whom this peace of God comes, are the objects of His good pleasure. Out of His counsel, which always seemed good unto Him, He has chosen those unto whom He brings this peace that is everlasting. No longer do they strive in enmity against God; nor do they delight in striving against men; but in their deepest heart dwells that heavenly grace that unites them in a bond of living fellowship to the God of their salvation, in Christ Jesus. And this peace they enjoy in common with all the redeemed.

And they exclaim from the depths of their hearts, along with the holy angels:

Glory to God in the highest!

All Around Us

On Separation

Prof. H. Hanko

There are several denominations in this country which are in the midst of bitter struggles between "liberals" and "conservatives." In several of these denominations, the conservatives have given up hope that their denominations will return again to the truth of the Scriptures and their confessions. The result is that organizations have been formed in these denominations by conservatives to prepare for eventual separation so that the cause of the truth may be continued. One such denomination is the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, A Federation For Authentic Lutheranism (FAL) has been organized by means of which conservative Lutherans hope to continue confessional Lutheranism and seek fellowship with other conservative Lutheran bodies. The same is true in the Southern Presbyterian Church. Four conservative organizations have joined forces to defend and continue a confessional presbyterianism. In this organization, the *Presbyterian* Journal has taken a leading role. Because of this position of the *Presbyterian Journal*, one of its editors has resigned. L. Nelson Bell wrote that he resigned from this position because he could not support the efforts being made to bring about separation.

In a recent issue of *Christianity Today*, in the rubric "A Layman and His Faith," he defends his position and discusses the whole subject of separation. Among other things he writes:

There seem to be two indisputable causes for separation. If those who control the church to which I belong should demand that I not teach, preach, or witness according to the plain teachings of Scripture, then I would have no choice but to renounce such leadership and seek an environment in which I could continue to witness.

In the second place, should my church, by official action of its governing body, renounce the Christian faith in favor of some syncretistic religion that denies the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as God's Son together with his atoning death and actual resurrection, I would be forced to renounce and denounce such apostasy.

But in the question of separation there are many gray areas where, if we are not careful, we may let personalities, prejudices, defeats, and extraneous activities become determinative factors while we fail to look at the basic issue that should determine our decision.

For one thing, the "doctrine of separation" can lead people to abandon the opportunity for witness where it is most greatly needed. The Bible teaches that we should be separated from sin, but not from the sinner. Surely we should not remove ourselves

from the scene where we are needed most. . . .

Had I children who were being spiritually starved — or poisoned — by the teaching, preaching, and programs of my local church, I would try my best to remedy the situation; and if this proved impossible, I would take these children elsewhere.

But at the adult level, my own reaction would be to stay in and witness with love and conviction, praying that the Holy Spirit will use this witness to help those who need to be changed.

There is a temptation against which we must guard: frustration because of failure to gain our own way in the church courts — that is, defeat in these courts on positions that we are convinced are right. We need to remember that our risen Lord commissioned his disciples to witness for him. He did not say that our witness would always be effective. In fact, we are not responsible for the effectiveness of our witness (unless, on the negative side, we violate Christian principles in what we say or do), for the fruit of an effective witness is produced by the Holy Spirit and not by us or any ecclesiastical organization....

This whole subject of separation is a very difficult one. It is difficult from an objective viewpoint because it is not always easy to know when the call to separation comes to us. But it is, above all, difficult subjectively, for there is nothing quite so heart-rending than to have to leave the denomination where one has been nourished from childhood with spiritual food — especially when that denomination has gone the way of apostasy. We have nothing but sympathy for those who are faced with this agonizing decision.

But is Dr. Bell correct in the position which he takes? We think not. There are several weak points in his argument which we believe will not stand. In the first place, Dr. Bell writes: "Our decision to stay or to separate should follow very definite prayer for God's leading, with the request that we be kept from allowing personalities and prejudice to dictate our decision." With the last of this we, of course, agree. And we agree, too, that the decision to separate should come only after much prayer. But what is missing from this quote and what is so essential is that God's leading comes only through the Scriptures. So many times when we read expressions like the above we are left with the impression that those who write this way expect some inner light and mystical leading which the Lord will provide which is apart from the Scriptures. Also in this important decision, the Scriptures alone must be our guide.

In the second place, we do not agree entirely with Dr. Bell's reasons for separation. That is, we do not agree that these are the only reasons. Dr. Bell speaks of "gray areas"; and he seems to mean that there are gray areas with respect to the truth. This surely is not the case if the Scriptures are our guide. In the third place, we do not believe that the Bible teaches that "we should be separated from sin, but not from the sinner." There are just too many passages in Scripture which teach the contrary to accept this statement. We may not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. The faithful remnant in Laodicea is called out of the congregation if it does not repent.

In the fourth place, Dr. Bell's remarks concerning witnessing are not very much to the point. The Scriptures indeed call us to be witnesses of Christ. And this witness must be made continuously. But it must be a witness by the believer in fellowship with his church to those outside who walk in sin. It surely is a sad day when this witness must be made within the church to those who are, as far as the visible church is concerned, one with us in the household of faith.

There are several considerations which must be taken into account in this matter of separation.

In the first place, in a general way, it is true that one ought to stay within a denomination as long as possible — even if he does not agree with all that goes on. If he is faithful to his calling and maintains the truth of the Scriptures and if he is permitted to do this, he should very seriously consider remaining. This does not always (or even usually) happen, however. As often as not when liberals take over the denomination they, at best, harrass and, at worst, put out those who oppose their liberalism. Or they make it impossible by one means or another for a faithful child of God to remain faithful in all his life.

But this is not quite the whole story. For one thing, there is the strange tendency in many denominations today to ignore the protests of conservatives. They are not put out — although they may be harrassed in one way or other. They are ignored. The liberals, firmly in control and convinced of ultimate success, simply go their own sweet way regardless of what conservatives say. How long must this continue?

For another thing, if a conservative is faithful, in his protest against the evils in his denomination, he is obligated to protest these matters. This brings these matters to the higher ecclesiastical courts. If the higher ecclesiastical assemblies decide these matters contrary to his conviction, he has some very hard decisions to make. It is not sufficient for him to say: I will continue on my way regardless of what has been decided. He is morally bound to submit to the decisions taken because the Church functions corporately through its major assemblies. He speaks to those outside through these assemblies whether he agrees or not. This is the whole concept of church federation and the whole importance of denominational life. He is witnessing through these decisions as long as he remains a member

of that denomination. Furthermore, he is obligated before God and the Church to support these decisions with his work, his life, his prayers. He is under moral necessity to support morally his denomination in which he finds his church home. The work of a denomination in the cause of God is too important a part of the Christian's calling to do anything less.

And that brings me to the second point. There is a corporate responsibility that is very real and concrete in denominational life. To ignore this or to deny it is tantamount to saying that a denomination is no longer an organization in which congregations which manifest the body of Christ upon earth do the work of Christ's kingdom in cooperation with each other.

So true is this that Dr. Bell rightly talks about the responsibility of children's parents and the consequences for children in this whole matter. If one thing is certain (and many parents give testimony to this with grief and sorrow) it is this: if a denomination has set itself upon the path of apostasy by official decisions of the highest ecclesiastical assemblies, to remain in that church means, finally, to go lost in one's generations. Parents may disagree, even violently, with decisions. They may be able to withstand the pressures exerted upon them and maintain the cause of the truth during their life time. But their children will be unable to do this. Not because their children have not been clearly shown the right way. Not because their children are weaker than their parents from a spiritual point of view. But because God is not mocked; and the Church is not something to make a game of. Children are members of the denomination and bear the responsibility of that denomination's decisions and commitment to the truth. Children must and shall assume that denomination's position with respect to the truth. And if that position is wrong, the children will be wrong. And, as the church continues down the road of apostasy (for no denomination can stand still), the children and children's children go along. There is something inevitable about this.

Does this mean then that separation should come for anything — for any reason? Indeed, it does not. Separation must come when a church has departed from the truth in matters of the confessions — as long as those confessions contain the truth of the Word of God. Just as confessions are, most emphatically, Forms of *Unity*, violations of them are causes of disunity. When doctrines of the confessions are openly denied and officially repudiated, then disunity and schism exist — whether an individual wants to admit that or not. The unity is then broken. It is a kind of farce to retain an outward form of unity when no spiritual and doctrinal unity, in fact, exists.

But all this is true because the truth of the Scriptures is the truth of God. Dr. Bell may argue that, in his denomination, no official decisions have been taken which deny "the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as God's

Son together with his atoning death and actual resurrection"; but the fact remains that this has been denied when one denies any confessional truth of the Scriptures. For the truth is one. And denial at one point leads inevitably to denial in all points. And the truth is God's truth. It does not really matter what may or may not happen to an individual person, or even to a congregation or denomination. The truth is God's truth. And heresy does something terrible to the almighty God of heaven and earth. Heresy is a slander of Him, a subtraction from His glory, an insult hurled in His face, a dastardly attempt on the part of man to raise himself above Scripture and above God to impose upon the Most High his own wild inventions. That truth is more important than anything else.

It is true that Luther did not leave the Roman Cath-

olic Church although it is an unproved (and, perhaps, unprovable) assumption that he never *intended* to leave. The pope took matters into his own hands. The pope excommunicated Luther before he had exhausted the channels of protest and before Luther was able to prove that the Church was beyond repentance. It took Luther's excommunication to prove that this was true.

This has then become the charter of liberty since the protestant reformation: that the child of God, in the defense of the faith, must preserve that truth at all costs; by separation when necessary. This is also a solemn obligation to which he must give heed for his soul's sake and for the sake of the children who are his responsibility. May God grant that His people, in every place, do this.

In His Fear

The Pilgrim Life

A series of articles which examine the calling of true disciples of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Dale H. Kuiper

I. THE PILGRIM CHRISTIAN

Every Christian is a pilgrim. We are all sojourners as our fathers were, a fact little emphasized today and rarely understood. To the degree this truth lives in our consciousness are we Christian and do we share in the anointing of Jesus Christ.

The church today has destroyed her distinctiveness, mistaken her mission, and traded her true treasure. That last is the root error. In the sixty-second of his ninetyfive theses, Martin Luther perceptively and accurately defined the true treasure of the church to be the most holy gospel of the grace and glory of God. Not real estate holdings, not magnificent churches, not elaborate educational institutions, not money in various funds; but the living revelation of the mighty God of salvation! The Bible, the infallible, sacred Scriptures ... that is the treasure of the church. If that be understood and appreciated, the mission of the church will be seen to be enveloped with that treasure so that the church is thoroughly preoccupied with the Gospel. In and through the various offices, the church will study, develop, defend, and proclaim its message. In all her membership the church will recieve that message with gladness, and with whetted appetite will search those Scriptures as one that findeth great spoil. In that way she is a distinctive institution. She is not the handmaid of government social programs, nor a political tool. She is the creation of God in Jesus Christ; she is both

the repository and the reflector of the glory and virtues of God! In distinction from all other entities, the church is a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, which is equipped to demonstrate the praises of her Architect and Builder.

A glance over the present-day church scene does not reveal such a unique creation. Generally, the church is loose from her moorings, has lost sight of the basics, and is not getting her task done. Whether this is the fault of the clergy or the membership is a moot point which we will let aside. Likely both must share in the blame. One reason, however, may be suggested, and that is, the individuals in the Body of Christ have not taken their pilgrim calling seriously.

It will be profitable, therefore, to spend some time with the important truth of the pilgrim life. There are especially three reasons for this. First, what does our subject mean as far as our daily calling is concerned? If we are to be more than Sunday-Christians, what is involved with pilgrimage? Increasingly, witness and evangelical outreach is being emphasized as integral to true discipleship. And so it is: but may we again suggest that if a person or a communion of persons is serious about being the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and really wants to witness to the power of divine grace, he must above all else live as a pilgrim! Also, it is well that the stand of our churches on the problem-areas of life be understood by many others.

We have a stand, a stand we believe to be Scriptural. We invite you to consider that stand and test it by the Scriptures. Finally, we hope these articles will be instructive not only, but also encouraging unto faithfulness. Being a pilgrim is seldom easy; it involves a calling which leads us through hardship and affliction. More and more, pilgrims need each other. Perhaps the only true ecumenism this world will ever see is the aid and succor that tiny groups of pilgrims give to each other.

The Scriptural Data

Our subject is not one that is suspended upon a slender thread in the Scriptures, nor one that can be discovered only in a few passages of the Bible. That would be enough, of course; God only needs to say something once to make it forever true. Yet, if God had spoken but once concerning pilgrimage, we might not be able to understand it, nor see it for the many-dimensioned truth that it is. God has wisely revealed it to us in various places and in different connections, so that by bringing together and comparing we may discover the full meaning of the Spirit. We find then in both Testaments a rather wide variety of terms: so-journ, alien, stranger, foreigner, pilgrim, and pilgrimage. Altogether they occur in the Bible, in the sense in which we write, between forty and fifty times.

The word pilgrim stresses the idea that a person is passing through a land as a wayfarer. For a time he is in a land that is not his, and his abode in that land is affected by that fact. He is on a journey, so that from the moment of his birth until the moment of death he finds himself in a land in which he has no permanent place. The term stranger brings out his actual experience as he goes through his pilgrimage. From his point of view, he feels strange and out of place; he is not comfortable, and he experiences a certain tension. And from the point of view of those round about him, the non-pilgrims, he is accounted as strange and marked as different. Also inherent in this term is something disturbing and threatening. A certain amount of distrust and skepticism is implied; indeed, the word in the original is related to the word for fear. Alien and foreigner are legal terms involving matters of allegiance and citizenship. The Christian passes through a land in which he does not have citizenship and its rights, and to which he does not give his highest allegiance. His citizenship is in another country, the land towards which he is journeying. This, too, brings about tension. And finally, the word sojourn adds the idea of temporality. He will not have to journey forever, he will not always be a stranger and a pilgrim, but there will come an end to the journey. And when the homeland is reached, the pilgrimage will seem not to have been long.

From these terms emerges a definite picture of the Christian Pilgrim, in fact, the picture of Abraham, the father of the faithful, is called to mind. The reader is urged to read from the Bible Hebrews eleven, verses

nine through fifteen. You will have noticed the striking language: sojourned, strange country, tabernacles or tents, strangers and pilgrims, a better country . . . it's all brought together in one passage! A little analysis will show two countries, the earth or the present kingdom of this world under the dominion of Satan and under the curse, and the better country, the heavenly Canaan with the New Jerusalem as its capital. While Abraham was on this earth, he did not set down roots nor did he form entangling alliances, but he and his sons lived as pilgrims in tents. The inhabitants of the land looked at him as an outsider who was not to be trusted. And he viewed the Canaanites as people with whom he might not mix nor inter-marry. He was not ashamed of being a pilgrim either, but he plainly declared and confessed the fact. He let it be clearly understood that he sought another country where he had his citizenship. And when later his sons came into actual possession of Canaan, after their stay in the land of pilgrimage called Egypt, they were given to understand that even Canaan was not the better country, but only a picture of it. Even when Israel dwelled in the land of promise, the land spoke to them of another land. Lastly, this passage makes clear that there was a certain cutting off, rejection and separation involved when Abraham left a land behind him. He was not mindful of it, that is, he did not muse upon it or desire it, or have second thoughts about having left it; if that were true, he might have been tempted to return to Ur. That did not happen, for the power of faith kept his eyes on the destination. He did not look back because the prospect of the heavenly country was so bright! There God would not be ashamed to be called his God, but would welcome him as a son into His covenant

In summary, there are two lands, two kings, two sets of laws and constitutions, two lives: the one mortal and corrupt, the other immortal and glorious.

The Cause of Being a Pilgrim

Since the above implies a distinction between all men who ever lived, an important question is: why are some pilgrims and not others? Why Abraham and you, but not others in Ur or even today? The apostle Peter, when he penned his First Epistle, addressed pilgrim strangers as we have spoken of them and answers the question concerning origin and cause exhaustively. In 1:3 he speaks of having been begotten again. He tells the saints they are pilgrims due to regeneration. He couches that truth within a doxology: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Let that anthem be in the forefront as we notice this re-birth. In order to be a pilgrim, in order to live as an Abraham, an individual must undergo an amazing, gracious, transforming experience called in the Scriptures regeneration, or a being born again and from above. Without entering a detailed discussion on the differences between natural and spiritual birth, let it suffice

to notice that in regeneration a seed or a principle of the resurrection life of Christ is planted within the heart of a man. In that seed is contained the potential for all spiritual abilities and powers. Now the point here is that one of the potential abilities given in regeneration, and that will become an actual, usable gift, is spiritual vision. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." In distinction from all the blindness that characterizes natural man, the bornagain pilgrim sees and loves the city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God! The power of regeneration puts him on the pilgrim road, gives him to see glorious vistas of heaven, keeps his face toward the destination unmindful of that which lies behind. For that, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

That is not the whole answer. If only "some" are regenerated, who belong to that "some"? It ought to be clear that such a matter cannot be determined by a man. All men by reason of their natural birth have been born unto death. Besides, birth and therefore rebirth, lie outside of human initiation and decision. This matter is in the hands of God entirely and safely. He has chosen us out of the world! Peter, in verse two of his first chapter, calls that choice election; in fact, the original places the word elect next to strangers, so that it is clear that election lies behind pilgrimage. How can it be explained that some have been called out of this destruction-bound world? Why are there pilgrims and non-pilgrims, sheep and goats, elect and reprobate, church and world, naturally born and spiritually born? Let it be understood that the answer rests in God. Election is sovereign, eternal, and unconditional. God always purposed that there would be in the midst of the world a little pilgrim band, seeking the heavenly city. God determined who would be pilgrims and who would not. This choice did not revolve about foreseen faith and good works, did not depend upon some pilgrim qualities in man . . . man did not influence God in any way! He chose His pilgrims according to His own good pleasure. If you are one of those, then acknowledge that election is of grace! And again sing: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Election is the fountain of every saving good (Canons I:9): of regeneration, of our calling out of the kingdom of death, of the vision of faith, of walking hand in hand with Abraham.

This Distinction Revealed

Although the specific way in which the pilgrim calling is revealed will be the subject of future articles, we may notice a few things in general at this point. In the first place, because true religion means we keep unspotted from the world, the pilgrim reveals himself antithetically in this life. He is called to live as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven as he sojourns in an alien land, to serve God and not Mammon, to be *for* one thing and *against* another. He is constantly required to make sanctified choices, to view life as an either-or proposition. This will involve him in problems: he is crucified to the world and the world to him.

Thus secondly, a pilgrim reveals a willingness to suffer at the hands of wicked men. He knows that it has been given to him not only to believe on Jesus Christ, but also to suffer for His sake. He arms himself for this suffering with a tremendous thought: the way of pilgrim suffering leads to glory! That is the way it was for our Lord, and if I follow my Lord in His suffering, I shall follow Him into His glory! And therefore, he sings in the house of his pilgrimage!

Finally, he has hope. The pilgrim lives each day out of the power of hope. Nations may rise and fall, leaders may come and go, heaven and earth shall pass away, but the object of his hope can never fail. He is certain that Christ shall come to vindicate the pilgrim, and prepare the heavenly Canaan as the everlasting abode. For that he longs with a desire that borders on impatience. He stretches out unto the grace to be revealed in the coming of Christ. He hopes unto the end.

And when Christ comes, all hope is fulfilled. The Christian's suffering is replaced with unspeakable glory, instead of being a stranger he is welcomed into covenant fellowship with God in the heavenly mansions, and with the saints of every age he exchanges his tent for a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Are you really a pilgrim? Am I? Does that name fit us? Let us be asking that question of ourselves as we continue to examine our pilgrim calling in the months ahead.



A book that belongs in your library:

Believers And Their Seed. Order it!

Pages from the Past

God, Who Quickens The Dead

A Meditation by Rev. Herman Hoeksema (Translated from the Dutch)

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram.

Matthew 1:1-3

The becoming flesh of the Word!

How in the generations which go back to Abraham, the flesh which the Son of God presently shall assume from Mary *became* — that is pictured to us here in the book of the generation of Jesus Christ.

This it is that is indicated in the meaning of the original word which is here translated "generation." The word is literally *genesis*; and *genesis* means *becoming*, *origin*, so that we may translate: "the book of the becoming of Jesus Christ." And this "becoming" does not refer to His birth: for this is described in verses 18 to 25 of this chapter, while the heading with which this chapter begins covers only the first 17 verses. In these verses, therefore, we have description of the *becoming of Jesus Christ* in the generations of the forefathers.

But therefore it must also be an established fact that we have here the genealogy, not of Joseph, but of Mary.

Apparently this is not true.

At the end of this book of the generation we read: "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

Two things, however, are established. Mary was of the seed of David, for according to the flesh Christ is of David's generation. And Joseph, the husband of Mary, was not Jesus' father, for the Christ of God did not become flesh through the will of man. If, therefore, we have here the book of the origin and the becoming of Jesus Christ, that is, not the legal, but the organic line of the generations which end in Jesus Christ, then the line must continue to Christ, then it cannot be broken off with Joseph, then it runs through by way of Mary. Only when we have here the genealogical register of Mary can we do justice to the heading: The Book of the *Genesis* of Jesus Christ.

But what about Joseph then?

How then can he be inserted in this "book of the generation of Jesus Christ?"

If that line of David's generations, out of which the Christ should be born, ended in a virgin, in order that the human impossibility and hopelessness of the promise might become completely clear, then Jacob (verse 16) had no son, then Mary was his heiress, and

then her husband was incorporated in the generation of Jacob.

Moreover, then Joseph was enrolled in the register as the legal father of Jesus.

And thus also there was provided for the virgin who conceived and brought forth a son protection against the slander of evil tongues.

Merciful wisdom of God!

* * * * *

The becoming of Jesus Christ!

The son of David . . . the son of Abraham!

Jesus! That was His name among men. And with that name he disappeared among men. For, except now by those who hoped for the fulfillment of the promise and who knew and believed the Word of God which was given in connection with that name, there was at that time no longer any special significance attached to the name Jesus.

Who could not call his son Jesus?

And was not Jesus the son of Joseph, the carpenter? Did they not know his father, and his mother, and his brothers and sisters? Besides, was he not also the Nazarene? And would men expect anything special out of Nazareth?

No, as far as men were concerned, with respect to the flesh, there was also in that name neither form nor comeliness. It simply indicated that this Jesus, with many other Jesuses, assumed his place among men.

Jesus, thus he was called. And if now one said no more about it, and attached no special significance to it, no one would have any objections.

With the name Christ things stood somewhat differently. For Christ was not His Name, but His Title. And about the title there would first have to be a debate! For *Christ* is Messiah, Anointed, the Expected One, the One Who should come. And although the name Jesus could very well be born by a man among men, and men would neither deny Him nor begrudge Him that name, that *Jesus is the Christ* men would deny. *That* the flesh would oppose with all its might to the bitter end, the end of the cross.

And nevertheless, He is Jesus, the Christ! Jesus, not merely among other Jesuses, but as the One Who also indeed was what His name indicated: Jehovah Salva-

tion, the God of our complete salvation, Who shall save His people from their sins. And this Jesus, no matter how the flesh may murmur against it, is indeed the Christ, ordained and anointed by God from eternity, Who should raise up Israel's throne out of the mire, Who should sit upon the throne of David forever, and Who on that throne should reign over all peoples.

Therefore He is also Son of David and Son of Abraham.

That could not be otherwise.

Thus it was revealed centuries before to Abraham. when Jehovah God preached the gospel to him (Gal. 3:8): In thee shall all nations be blessed. Upon Abraham rested the promise, and upon his seed. And that seed was Christ. For "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Jesus, Who shall save His people from their sins, and in Whom all nations would be blessed, must therefore be the Son of Abraham.

But the Christ must also be born out of David's line. David was the God-appointed king of Israel, was he not? And his line was the royal line. Out of Abraham, through Judah, the line of the everlasting kingship ran over David. Thus it was revealed: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established forever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever." II Sam. 7:7-16.

Upon David's seed Israel's hope was fixed.

Of this the people of God loved to sing already in the old dispensation:

"With My own chosen one, e'en David," God affirmed, "I've made a covenant, with sacred oath confirmed; I've sworn in truth to him, My servant: 'I will surely Build up thy lustrous throne through every age se-

curely;

Forever will thy seed, in spite of degradation, Endure upon thy throne through every generation."

And that hope was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth! The book of the generation of Jesus Christ is open

for inspection!

Son of David . . . Son of Abraham!

Wonder of God!

The becoming and origin of Jesus Christ!

Or who, upon reading this book of the generation of Jesus Christ is not struck by the human impossibility of this becoming, and by the revelation therein of the

wonder of God, Who quickeneth the dead?

Indeed, it is life out of the dead! This it is that this Spirit inspired book would have us understand from the very outset through the arrangement in threetimes-fourteen generations, vs. 17.

You understand, do you not, that this symbolism was purposely chosen? In the reality of human history it was not thus. There were more generations. Purposely some generations are skipped over in order to arrive at the symbolism of three-times-fourteen.

And does, then, this symbolism not already speak loudly of the fact that God reveals His miraculous power precisely there where all human possibility has ceased, in order that He should reveal Himself as the God Who quickeneth the dead? Are there not indicated, then, by these three-times-fourteen three periods in the expectation of Israel of two-times-seven each? And is, then, not seven, as six-plus-one, as labor and rest, the symbol of the perfected work of God, of the coming of His kingdom, of the fulfillment of the promise? And does not this two-times-seven not point, then, to a double waiting of God's people in the old dispensation, so that it indeed had to appear as if God repeatedly delayed the promise? And did not God's people, then, in this period of two-times-seven not receive double for all their sins? And did then not this period end repeatedly, even thrice, in a human impossibility, so that one indeed had to become weary of waiting or had to believe in hope against hope?

From Abraham to David!

Two-times-seven! Long they had waited! The time was long past! But then in David at last the fulfillment of the promise seemed to have dawned! But then not! Again the promise is postponed. David shall not build an house for the Lord. Again there is mention of his seed! And from that point the direction is steadily downward. From David into . . . how dreadful! . . . the Babylonian Captivity: death, the grave. Now all is lost! But no! The promise continues to speak. Zerubbabel comes! The prince! But alas! also his splendor fades; and it becomes steadily darker, until finally nothing remains except a virgin from the house of David, while Esau sits on David's throne!...

Three-times-fourteen!

Human impossibility!

But even so the promise continued to speak. For a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and His name shall be Immanuel!

Human impossibility, but divine wonder! Life out of the dead! There in the manger of Bethlehem lies the end of the generations of Abraham and David, Jesus Christ. And there is the revelation of God, the God of our salvation, Who quickeneth the dead!...

Thrice fourteen!

From Abraham to David the king; from David to the carrying away; from the carrying away to the virMan perisheth! In the flesh there is no hope! The promise continues to work, is fulfilled! The becoming of Jesus Christ. . . Divine wonder!

* * * * *

Life out of death!

Ah, thus it was with this wonderful becoming of Jesus Christ. Again and again!

Abraham begat Isaac . . .?

Begat? Yes, but not otherwise than by faith in the promise; by a faith of hope against hope; by a faith, which, it is true, did not collapse, but which nevertheless in its long waiting almost perished. For Abraham had the promise. He would see seed! And for that seed he longed with all that was in him. Strongly he desired to see the day of Christ. But from the viewpoint of the flesh it soon appeared impossible that he should ever bring forth this seed. For though he might feel himself strong according to the flesh, capable of bringing forth seed, Sarah was barren! And alas! he and his mate attempted it indeed through the flesh, and wanted to put the flesh in the service of God's promise. And when he could not bring forth seed with Sarah, then he would see the fulfillment of the promise out of Hagar. And the flesh had success! But not with God. The plea, "oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!" found no favor with God. And it became steadily later and darker! Also Abraham's body became dead...

It had become humanly impossible!

And when the promise is repeated to Abraham and Sarah, they both laugh: who now expects children in the evening of life?

And then it is fulfilled! Divine wonder! Life out of the dead!

And Isaac begat Jacob!

Yes, but also here it was through the promise! While Ishmael breaks forth in a multitude, Rebekah is barren. And when God finally hears the prayer that Isaac and Rebekah send up to Him, everything is wrong; Esau is in Jacob's place, and Jacob's flesh, though he almost desperately holds his brother by the heel, is not able to capture the position of the promise. . .

But in the "becoming' of Jesus Christ, Who, remember, was in Jacob's loins, the promise is victorious! The elder serves the younger!

Human impossibility! Divine wonder!

And Jacob begat Judah! Oh, Jacob had much seed, with four wives, for he always wanted to help the promise of God along. But Rachel is barren. Reuben is guilty of scandal, Simeon and Levi are brutes, and in prophetic wonderment Jacob must at last find the seed in Judah, the fourth!

Judah! Thou art he!

And Judah? Alas, the situation becomes even more pitiful according to the flesh! He begat Phares and Zara ... by Tamar, his own daughter-in-law! For Judah had taken a Canaanitish woman to wife. And by her he intended to bring forth the seed of the promise through the flesh. And he seems to succeed. Three sons were born to him from her. God killed the first! And when Judah had given the first son's wife, Tamar, to the second, Onan, in order to obtain seed, the latter did even more scandalously than the first son: and God killed him too! And when Judah once again makes preparation to keep Tamar as the wife for his third son, Tamar fears that God will also kill him; and since she also desires to see the seed of the promise, she dresses herself as a harlot and seduces her own fatherin-law to incest!...

And behold! it succeeds!

Or rather: now the promise operates! Judah begat Phares!

When Judah purposed to bring forth the seed of the promise, then God slew it in His wrath! When Judah, at his going in unto the "harlot," certainly does not even think of the seed of the promise, he obtains it in spite of himself!

Where is now the flesh? It is put to shame!

Wonderful becoming of Jesus Christ! Life out of the dead! Also in the manger of Bethlehem! Born of a woman, yes, but without the will of man!

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God!

Who quickeneth the dead!

The Signs of the Times

Wars and Rumors of Wars

Rev. G. Van Baren

That there are wars yet today is a fact of which we are painfully aware. In spite of constant cries for peace, although many "prayer days for peace" have been observed — there is yet war. The United States agonizingly and slowly seeks to remove herself from Viet Nam. Tension continues and even grows in the

mid-east. Trouble continues in East Pakistan. Thousands die daily because of starvation — one of the sorry results of the war there. Many others, according to report, are cruelly killed. War threatens between India and Pakistan. "Civilized" mankind has, obviously, not rid itself yet of wars.

Wars as a sign of the end of time

There are several important passages in Scripture which speak of wars as part of the signs of the end of time. We read of this in Matthew 24:6-8 (and in the parallel passages of Mark 13:7 and Luke 21:9). Jesus says to His disciples, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."

We might notice a few significant points presented here. First, we must remember that Jesus is answering the question of His disciples, "When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" (vs. 3). Jesus presents wars as one of the clear indications of His return and of the end of the world.

Secondly, Christ reminds His disciples that although wars are a sign of the end, their existence does not mean that the end is immediately at hand. Jesus says, "The end is not yet." There have been wars throughout the history of the world. These all point to the approaching end. Wars are, as Jesus again declares, the "birth-pains" of the new creation (this is the idea of verse 8). Each new war serves as another reminder that the end comes.

Finally, Jesus emphasizes that "these things *must* come to pass." The idea of *necessity* is presented. Wars do not just happen to be. These are part of the eternal plan of God. How else could this "*must* come to pass" be understood? God has His purpose with these wars — and that purpose must be served.

The second important passage concerning the place of wars is to be found in Rev. 6:3-4, "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

Concerning this passage too, we can derive several truths pertaining to the subject of war. In the first place, this "second seal" is part of the seven seals presented in Revelation. These seals represent the "average" or "normal" happenings upon the earth. They represent not "consecutive" events in the history of the world (for obviously the first "horse" of Revelation continues to run even when the others are called forth), but present that which is always occurring in this present dispensation. War, then, is what one can also expect throughout this age.

Secondly, there can be no doubt but that the second horse of Revelation 6 does represent the fact of war. The color of the horse shows this (red — the color of wrath and blood). The power given to the rider was to "take peace from the earth and that they should kill one another." And also a great sword was given the rider.

In the third place, this second horse (war) comes forth when *Christ* opens the seal. Further, that horse is called forth by the second beast (representing part of the creation of God). We must not lose sight of this fact.

In the fourth place, the rider on the horse indicates plainly that the horse is regulated and controlled. He can not freely run indiscriminately over the earth. He is directed to go where Christ would have him to go.

Finally, we can not help but notice that the white horse (the cause of God's kingdom and the preaching of the Word) is first — and is followed by the remaining three horses. The second (and subsequent) horse serves the first. One might say: in some way wars must also serve the purpose of the salvation of the church and the final glorification of the saints.

History of wars

We can, too quickly, maintain that there were always wars. Yet there is no indication of wars before the time of the tower of Babel. I think there were not wars then. This accounts, in part, for the rapid development of the world till soon God destroyed it with the flood. There was bloodshed. Scripture records the first murder. But wars seemed unknown. The reason was that mankind was one. Before the flood there was a division between the descendants of Cain and those of Seth. The former grew in power and in numbers, the later decreased in size till but eight souls remained just before the flood. But there was no war. The wicked were united. They committed wickedness - but in unity. The same situation continued after the flood till the time of the tower of Babel. Men built Babel not to save them from some future flood, but to serve as a visible basis for their unity. These boasted in their unity. Then God intervened by confusing man's language. In this act, God made it impossible for man to interact and unite. The result was a division which gave rise to strife between tribes, races, and nations. Rev. 13:3 speaks of this: "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed." That head belonged to the beast arising from the sea - representing the political aspect of the kingdom of anti-christ. At Babel that head was wounded unto death – and is finally healed at the very end of time when nations again unite under the antichrist as one world-power.

From Babel till now, wars continue. Man strives to end wars. Mediators there are in abundance. Yet wars continue. Finally, the antichrist will, for a short time, cause wars to cease. For this reason he will be greatly admired by men. For we read again in Rev. 13, "And all the world wondered after the beast . . . and they worshipped the beast, saying, "Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

The cause of wars

Any who have studied history, know that historians

are very concerned about studying the causes of war. These will trace the various factors which led to any particular conflict. These will suggest, by way of hind-sight, what should have been done to prevent a particular war.

This, of itself, however, fails to recognize the basic cause of all wars. War is one of the consequences of man's disobedience in Paradise. God had spoken to Adam that he would die in the day he ate of the forbidden fruit. Adam ate — and died. Wars which arose later were part of that sentence of death. Man, in hating and rebelling against God, also reveals hatred and envy towards fellowman.

James states in 4:1-2, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." That lust, seen first at Paradise, continues to cause wars and rumors of wars. I could frankly also state that man, with all of his social philosophies directed toward the ending of all wars, can not basically succeed in his attempts. Until lust is rooted out of the heart, wars and hatred will continue. The necessary change which leads to true peace takes place not through social action but through regeneration.

The purpose of wars

Wars do not just happen. These are under the direction and control of the Sovereign God. God says concerning Babylon who warred against Judah, "Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms" (Jer. 51:20). Or again, it is God Who sends peace: "He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth..." (Ps. 46:9).

How do wars serve God's purpose? First, these serve as His tools to punish the wicked. Jer. 51 (above) shows that. The wicked will not "get away with" their

sins. The wrath of God is upon them.

Secondly, from the time of Babel, wars serve as the means to perpetuate divisions among mankind. Wars serve to prevent union which would be the realization of the kingdom of antichrist. Wars among nations delay, until the appointed time, the action of wicked nations which rise against Christ and His church to destroy it (Rev. 11:7; 17:14).

In the third place, during these times of wars, the church continues its unimpeded growth and labors. It is true that many within the church also suffer as a result of the wars among nations. The sons of the church must also take up arms, and some must die. Yet the glorious fact remains: while the world continues in its evil confrontations, the church is left relatively alone. They can continue to preach the gospel. Instruction of covenant youth can continue. The church is being gathered. The last of the saints are brought in. When this is finally accomplished, then the world can briefly unite — revealing its utter godlessness. And Christ shortly returns thereafter.

Youth for whom?

A California reader sends in a gruesome picture taken from the local newspaper which presents two evil-looking young men looking fiendishly at a bloody, living head of a girl lying apparently on a platter. This was part of the "Scream in the Dark" Halloween program presented for those 12 and older. Proceeds of the program would be "for continued youth activities." Who presents this ghoulish program? The "Campus Life, a division of Youth for Christ."

Yes, Ma'am, that is a horrible caricature of Christian activity and definitely a sign of the times: a sign of the terrible apostasy of our day when anything can go under the name of Christian.

It reminds us again: "... The Lord is at hand." (Phil. 4:5)

From Holy Writ

Exposition of the Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers Hebrews 11:9, 10, 13-16 (continuation)

THE PEDAGOGICAL WAY OF THE LORD WITH THE PATRIARCHS (Hebrews 11:10)

The thought arises: how could Abraham have understood the promise as referring to a heavenly city, the beautiful cleansed Bride of Christ, which will one day descend from heaven in perfected state in a new heaven and in a new earth?

This question is suggested by the form of the verb in the text which is translated "looked for." Now in this term there is the idea of seeking and of eager expectancy of faith and hope. And the form of the verb is in the imperfect tense. This tense is the historical tense, it is the moving picture. A.T. Robertson calls it "the picturesque progressive imperfect (exedecheto), the pa-

tient and steady waiting in spite of disappointment." It is the confident expectation of a living hope. Such was the life of Abraham's sojourn with Isaac and Jacob. Abraham thus walked for one hundred years in the land, and Isaac his one hundred and eighty and Jacob his one hundred forty-seven years. And all the while their expectation was constant and living, they confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers in the earth. Truly, the Patriarchs understood more and more that the promise was not of an earthly land but of a better country, that is, an heavenly.

This was due to the very words of the promise to Abraham when the God of glory appeared unto him as recorded in Genesis 12:1-13. For here we have the promise of God in which all is said. The Architect and Builder of the city which has foundations is laying out the master-plan, the blue-print, so to speak, of the perfected Church in Jesus Christ. We have noticed in a former essay what the terms were. We merely sum them up here briefly:

- 1. "And I will make of thee a great nation."
- 2. "And I will bless thee and make thy name great."
- 3. "And thou shalt be a blessing."
- 4. "And I will bless him that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."
- 5. "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Here we have the basic foundation of the Church of the living God both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Here we have all the lines as they lead from Abraham to David, to Christ, (the SEED) and in Him the church gathered from every nation, tongue and people. These lines shew that in this promise and command Abraham now can and will walk, with Isaac and Jacob, in the frame-work of the Architectural lines of the heavenly Jerusalem. Such is the pedagogy of the Lord.

Now by faith Abraham can do a bit of "accounting." Faith has its own ratiocination, its own process of exact thinking. And Abraham was a prophet. He has the Spirit of the Lord to guide him into the truth of the promise. He could and did work out his salvation with fear and trembling. And he saw with faith's exactitude, and that unerringly, that all the lines of the promise led to the "Seed." Yes, he had his fainting spells when his faith needed more instruction as to the details. We have here but to think of the great revelation of the Lord spoken on in Genesis 15. We notice how the Lord here predicts the initial receiving of the land after four hundred years of bondage in a strange land. (Gen. 15:13-18). Here again the Lord not only comes and renews the promise but gives more details of how and when these things shall come to pass. And then the faith of Abraham laid hold on each new and more detailed explication of the first formulation of the promise and that made for "a looking for" the heavenly city, of which God is the Builder and

Maker. Abraham had to wait each time for renewed instruction as God was building His city out of his very loins. In Isaac shall the Seed be called. And, finally, Abraham sees it on the mount and obtains the promise with much faith and longsuffering. In the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen! Jehovah-jired! (Gen. 23:14) For it was here that faith did its highest and most accurate exact thinking. It saw that God must raise from the dead. And so Abraham ends his pilgrimage in purchasing a burial place in the land, insisting that he is a stranger and a pilgrim amongst the children of Heth: "I am a stranger and a sojourner in your midst," reasoning "I seek a better country, that is, an heavenly." I see the city by faith in the dim, distant future, and I rejoice even in burying my dead.

Thus the LORD led Abraham and the other Patriarchs from step to step on their pilgrim journey.

They saw the day of Christ from afar and rejoiced. (John 8:56) We have but to read the accounting of the blessing wherewith Isaac blesses Jacob when he says "...let peoples serve thee, and nations bow down to thee ... cursed be every one that curseth thee and blessed be he that blesses thee," to observe this seeing of Christ's day from afar, looking even in the prophetic perspective for the sufferings to come upon the Christ and the glory to follow. And Jacob, when he is about to die, blesses his sons and speaks of the things that will befall them in the time when the Seed shall have come "Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise . . . The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Genesis 27:28; 49:8-11) Here we see the people gathering in the city, the people, redeemed out of all ages. which shall be the city, the Bride prepared for the Bridegroom. (Revelation 21)

GOD UNASHAMED TO BE CALLED THE PATRI-ARCHS' GOD (Hebrews 11:16)

God is called in the Holy Scriptures from this time forth the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God deems this compatible with His divine glory, the truth of the promise and the power of God which is revealed in the resurrection of all things, changing the earthly and corruptible into the heavenly and immortal.

That God is called the God of the Patriarchs in Scripture is quite clear from many key-passages both in Moses and in the Prophets. The verb here to call is "epikaleisthai," which means to name upon. This verb indeed has various senses and meanings. In Romans 10:12, 14 the meaning of the verb is "call upon" and refers to the believer's calling to the Lord for help and salvation from sin, guilt and corruption. There, quoting Joel, Paul says that everyone who calls upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. However, when Paul appeals his case to Caesar in Rome, then the term has another

meaning. (Acts 25:11, 22; 26:32; 28:19) In our text here in Hebrews 11:16 the meaning is to surname. God is *surnamed* the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In this sense the verb is used in I Peter 1:17 where we read "If ye call Father, who without respect of persons judgest according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear and trembling."

In the Genesis record God Himself calls Himself by this "Title," by which He is not ashamed to be called. He appears to Jacob at Bethel, when the latter was fleeing from Esau, in a dream. Standing at the head of the ladder which reached from earth to heaven, he says "I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac etc." Earlier He had appeared to Isaac in the night and said "I am the God of Abraham thy Father; fear not, for I am with thee, etc." (Genesis 28:13; 26:24) Jacob is very conscious of the meaning of this "title" and the intimate care and relationship between God and the Patriarchs expressed in this name, since he uses it in his apology with his father-inlaw Laban and replies to the latter "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham had been with me. surely thou hadst sent me away empty." It was this God who was "with him" that gave Jacob his wives, children and great multitude of sheep, oxen and camels. Thus Jacob also addresses God in his fervent prayer in the night of his Peniel when he says, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac the LORD which saidst unto me return to thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee. . . . " (Genesis 31:42; 32:9)

Later it is David who also addresses the Lord and says, "O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination and thoughts of the heart of thy people..." (I Chronicles 29:18, 19) And Elijah on Mount Carmel pleads with God at the altar, which had been drenched with water, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel, etc." (I Kings 18:36)

But that God is not ashamed to be "called" the God

of the Patriarchs is still more abundantly proven by the fact that He Himself calls and pin-pointedly designates Himself by this name. There is here something of unending, condescending covenant faithfulness, goodness and mercy in God's usage of this Name. Here is the covenant Jehovah in his coming down to pick up Israel in all her sorrows and bondage in Egypt. And to assure Moses that He is indeed the God of Israel and of Moses He says, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. . . . " (Exodus 3:6) Small wonder that the prophets later addressed God by this Name! And it shows the utter blindness of the unbelieving and rationalistic Sadducees that they had never seen the grandeur and implication of this self-manifestation of Almighty God. Truly they erred because they knew neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. One must know the meaning of the Scriptures to know what is implied in this surname of God. There is something truly sublime in this," He is not ashamed to be called their God." And it is this, that it postulates the great eternal and infallible truth of the "anastasis" the resurrection of the saints in glory, but also the resurrection of all things, changing all the earthly into the heavenly. God will one day change all the earthly pilgrimage-plane of the saints, where they tread their three score years and ten, into the heavenly glory of a new heaven and of a new earth. (Rev. 21) For God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Really Jesus says God is not the God of dead ones but of living ones. He does not use the article in the Greek. The absence of the article shows that Jesus is pointing out the quality of living. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are still living. He that liveth and believeth shall never die!

No, God is not ashamed to be called their God. He calls Himself by this name and we call him by this name, and all the wondrous heavens will be the realization of the truth of the resurrection expressed in this name as unerringly interpreted by Christ Himself. Let all the multitude then marvel at this teaching!

Contending For The Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

THE REFORMATION PERIOD
THE SYNOD OF DORDT

Rev. H. Veldman

Of interest is also the opinion of the synodical delegates to the Great Synod of Dordt of Emden in connection with the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. They first present the position of the Arminians and then refute these propositions of the Remonstrants.

These opinions of the delegates of Emden are of great interest. Our churches have been accused in the past of permitting our logic to rule over our interpretation of the Scriptures. Our readers will do well to notice how these delegates are motivated in their writings by the

power of logic.

I. Whether God died only for the elect and for those who are saved, or whether He also died for other men? This latter is asserted by the Remonstrants in the Conference at Hague, page 139, and page 184 of Brand.

II. Whether Christ died at all for all men. The Remonstrants say Yes; in the Hague Conference, page 141, etc. There they say that Christ died for all particular people, for them who are lost as well as for those who shall be saved. And the Geldersch Remonstrants, page 47. We say freely that Christ died without distinction for these and other people, considered as fallen and sinful, from the beginning of the world until the end. These same delegates (Gelderschen) say that Christ has obtained forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God for all and for everyone, from the beginning of the world until the end, whether repentant or unrepentant.

Over against this we place this proposition:

Christ has laid down His life only for His sheep, that is, for His elect, not at all for the goats, John 10:15. Whereas this proposition has been proved diffusely in the Hague Conference by the honorable Brethren, we will not offer more proof.

III. Whether the ordination of the death and the suffering of Christ preceded in order the election unto salvation, etc. The Remonstrants say Yes.

Our Contra-Distinction.

The ordination of the Mediator and His death and suffering is, according to order, later than the election unto salvation, and is a means of the execution of election. For thus speaks Is. 53; 10; after he had spoken broadly and at length of the suffering and death of Christ: The will, or the decree, and good pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. But, whereas this has been provided extensively in our observations upon the first Article, we shall not add to this.

IV. Whether Christ died for all, according to the purpose, counsel and decree of the Father. The Remonstrants say Yes; in the Hague Conference, page 143 and 175, etc.

Our Contra-Distinction.

Christ, according to the intention, counsel, and the decree of the Father, has died only for the elect. (the undersigned, H.V., has already remarked that these delegates did not hesitate to reason from the Scriptures, to be motivated in their writings by the power of logic. This does not mean that their reason governed their interpretation of the Word of God, but was based upon that Word of God. After all, the Scriptures do not speak nonsense. And now notice how this is emphasized in the following quotations.)

Reason, For: 1. The good which God purposes, and, according to His decree and counsel, would have occur, that He also brings to pass. He does not cause all men to be saved through the death of Christ. Consequently, thus or therefore He did not intend this, neither did He will that it should happen (notice, please, how the fathers here reason from the result to the cause: it does not happen; so, the Lord did not

intend that it should happen, - H.V.).

- 2. If God purposes something and decrees it, which does not come to pass, then He does not attain unto the end of His purposes; and so many things will happen outside of His purpose. But God, according to what the Remonstrants say, has purposed, decreed and willed, that all men should be saved through the death of Christ, which, however, does not occur. Consequently, He does not obtain the end of His purposes, and many things take place outside of His purpose. Which is absurd, yea, to say this is blasphemous. Therefore also this saying (this is also very logical, is it not? H.V.).
- 3. If Christ, according to the counsel, purpose and decree of the Father, died for all men, then it follows that there is neither an election of some nor a reprobation of some. But we have shown above that there is election and reprobation. Consequently, Christ, according to the counsel, purpose and the decree of the Father, did not die for all men (logical, is it not? God elected some and reprobated others; hence, Christ did not die for all men. H.V.).
- 4. If Christ, according to the purpose and counsel of the Father, died for all men, then God has the same purpose with respect to all men, equally and in the same manner. Likewise, then the saving grace is general. But God does not have the same purpose in the same manner with respect to all, and His grace is not general. For if this be true,

Where is 1. the gracious election?

Where is 2, the gracious calling of some, as of the Israelites, Deut. 4:7; Ps. 76 and 147. Thus He did not do to all peoples.

Where is 3. the covenant, established with Abraham, and not with others?

Where is 4. the mystery of the calling of the Heathens, whereof the Prophets make mention so often?

Where is 5. that particular favour, love, grace, wherewith the Lord embraces His elect?

V. Whether Christ, for whom He did not merit the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation, does not attribute the same; or whether He is not an intercessor for all those whose reconciler He is and for whom He died?

The Remonstrants say No expressly. In the Hague Conference, page 172, etc.

Our Scriptural Contra-Distinction.

Christ has also been raised for all those, for whom He died; for them He also sits at the right hand of God; for them He also prays, and attributes unto them the merited benefits.

- 1. Out of Rom. 8:32; He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? How should He then not pray for those, and appropriate unto them His benefits, for whom He died?
- 2. Christ is our High Priest, Who not only offered for us an offering, but also prays for us. John 17; I pray for all who through their word shall believe in Me. And He is always heard. What kind of madness is this, what raging, to separate the parts of Christ's Priesthood from each other.

- 3. Christ is a Saviour according to merits and power. Matt. 3; He baptizes with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Luke 24; He causes our hearts to burn.
- 4. If He merely saves according to merits, and not according to power, then He is not a perfect Saviour. But He is a perfect Saviour, Who can save us perfectly, Heb. 7. Consequently, it is for us a blasphemous reason, to say that Christ is merely a Saviour according to merits, not according to power, or that Christ has merely obtained the forgiveness of sins, not the application of the merited benefits. For Christ, through the pouring out of His precious blood, has merited for us both, the forgiveness of sins as well as the Spirit of regeneration, appropriate unto ourselves the benefits through faith, which have been acquired by the blood of Christ. For He has come in order that He should put to nought all the works of the Devil in the elect.
- 5. We keep silent that, where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also the salvation and life, as Luther declares. And Ps. 32, blessed are they whose sins are forgiven. There is then the acquiring of the forgiveness of sins, there is also the appropriation of the acquired benefit. Otherwise, how can they be declared saved? A gift, exhibited from afar and not actually bestowed, cannot save anyone and make him blessed.

In summary, this doctrine of the universality of redemption and the obtaining of the forgiveness of sins for all men, is in conflict:

- 1. With God's omnipotence. For He should have willed, that a benefit should have been merited which He, because of the evil of men, would not be able to bestow.
- 2. With His wisdom, for He should have purposed unto which He would not be able to attain. Of the conditional purpose and the intention of God, which

- the Remonstrants propose, we will speak later.
- 3. With His righteousness. For He has received from the Son full payment, and nevertheless He does not receive all in grace.
- 4. With His highest love. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. Now I ask: what, I pray you, would the love of the Son be, or what benefit would it impart, if He did not at once bestow faith in His Son?
- 5. With the highest love of the Son, Who loved us, while we were yet sinners, to such an extent that He died for us; Rom. 5. And a benefit, so hard-earned and obtained with such a precious blood, He should not appropriate unto those for whom He merited them?

We will stop here at this time. The Lord willing, we will continue with this the next time. We consider these quotations of the fathers of Dordrecht of the greatest significance, also for our young people, and in our present day and age. It may be that these articles will "stretch out" because of these quotations, but surely they will help us to strengthen us in our conviction with respect to the particular character of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we repeat: how logical these delegates are! They do not hesitate to say that the doctrine of the universality of Christ's atonement is in conflict with the doctrine of God's election and reprobation, with the attributes of God's omnipotence, wisdom, righteousness, love, His own love and the love of Christ. They declare that this doctrine of a general atonement is absurd, madness, a monstrosity. And how true this is. It is well in these days that all the emphasis be placed upon the doctrine that Christ died only for his own, for His sheep given Him of the Father from before the foundations of the world.

Book Reviews

The Cure Of Souls

THE CURE OF SOULS: An Anthology of P. T. Forsyth's Practical Writings; edited by Harry Escott; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971; 138 pp., \$1.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

If one may judge by the number of books being published of Forsyth's writings and the number of books published concerning his theology, there is a revival of interest in this author. He lived from 1848 to 1921 and spent most of his life as a minister and teacher in the Congregational Church in England.

This present book gives brief excerpts from his practical writings and is, chiefly, a devotional book. If one can overlook the deficiencies in Forsyth's theology

(which appear quite clearly also in these writings) one can find many pleasurable hours in reading this anthology. Forsyth's writings are clear and original in thought and give profound insight into many problems of the Christian's life. A brief quote from an address to students who were ready to assume the active ministry will give some idea of this:

You are first of all stewards, not owners. Men with a trust, not men with a property. You have to carry what many others have tried to carry, a Gospel, a Truth many times uttered. And so I would warn you not to strive to win notice by originality but only by the Gospel you preach. The truest things you will have to say are those that have been said many times, but they are still the most original. Grace is the most

original thing in the world. However original sin may be, Grace is more original still. The Grace of God is so original as to be unexplainable.

It is a great thing to have gifts to bring home to

your hearers, truths, great truths, in a clever way, but remember always that the essential thing for a minister is not gifts but faithfulness. Faithfulness not to your people but to God. (p. 134)

The Bible On The Life Hereafter

THE BIBLE ON THE LIFE HEREAFTER, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, 1971; 222 pp., \$2,95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

This book is a reprint of a book first published in 1959 and which has gone through four printings. Dr. Hendriksen is well-known as a lucid and Reformed writer of New Testament commentaries and as a scholar in the field of eschatology. This book is intended as a study guide or as outlines to be followed for Society discussions. It treats a large number of sub-

jects under the general themes of "Death and Immortality," "The Intermediate State," "The Signs," "The Second Coming," "Events Associated With the Second Coming," and "The Final State." The book suffers from too short a discussion of many subjects, as this type of book inevitably does; but it is highly recommended as a guide to the study of Eschatology and as a valuable book for use in "After-recess Discussions" in Society life. The author concludes each chapter with a number of questions for general discussion.

The Growing Church Lobby In Washington

THE GROWING CHURCH LOBBY IN WASHING-TON, by James L. Adams; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970; 294 pp., \$6.95. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

The author is a reporter for the Cincinnati Post & Times-Star and is thoroughly acquainted with the Washington scene and the enormous influence of churches in their lobbying for particular legislation in the halls of Congress. The book discusses the first major victory for the church lobbyists in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the role of church leaders in the OEO legislation, especially in the Delta Ministry in which

federal funds were funnelled through churches to fight the war on poverty. It is a story of corruption, misapplication of funds, involvement of the church in politics and social issues, and power plays by the church. There is also a lengthy discussion of the bill for education passed in 1965 and the part the church played in this legislation. The lobbying roles of various church groups and the problems involved in church lobbying are treated. For those who are interested in this subject, this is a valuable book. It left us with the strong impression that the church in America today is far more apostate than is generally realized.

An Office Bearer's Conference is to be held, the Lord willing, Tuesday evening, January 4, 1972, at the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church, at 8:00 P.M. All past and present office bearers are urged to attend. Rev. C. Hanko will speak on the subject — "What is the deacons' responsibility toward those who cannot pay school tuition? How far should the diaconate become involved, and when does it become a matter for the elder?"

P. Knott, Sec'y

continue to keep them in perfect peace as He has promised for those whose minds are stayed on Him because they have trusted in Him.

Their children,

Mr. and Mrs. Vern Huber Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Lanning Mr. and Mrs. Bill Huber Mr. and Mrs. Tim Heemstra and 11 grandchildren

ANNIVERSARY NOTICE

On December 12, 1971, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. GUSTAV HUBER, commemorated their 40th wedding anniversary. As their grateful children we are thankful for the years of covenant love and instruction given us. We pray that our faithful God will

ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT

On December 19, 1971, our beloved parents, PROF. AND MRS. H. C. HOEKSEMA will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. We, together with them, thank our gracious heavenly Father for keeping them for each other, for us, and for the cause of His truth

and covenant during these years, and pray for God's the assurance that He doeth all things well. grace and blessing upon them in the years to come.

> Their children. Mr. and Mrs. Mark H. Hoeksema Eunice Hoeksema Lois Hoeksema Candace Hoeksema

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to its members, Mr. and Mrs. Klaire Berends and Mr. Roger Berends, in the death of their brother

JAMES E. LUBBERS.

May our Heavenly Father comfort the bereaved with

Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Pres. Mrs. Chester Haveman, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Choral Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sympathy to one of our members, Mrs. Klaire Berens, in the sudden passing of her brother

JAMES LUBBERS.

May the Lord comfort the sorrowing and grant them peace in the knowledge that "all things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28b).

> Paul Shipper, Pres. Betty Haveman, Sec'y

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News From Our Churches

Trios and calls certainly figure in the news for this issue of The Standard Bearer. From a trio consisting of Rev. R. Decker, Rev. M. Schipper, and Rev. G. Lanting, Hope Church (Grand Rapids) has extended the call to Rev. Decker. Rev. G. Van Baren received the call from our Redlands Church. He was chosen from a trio which included also Rev. R. Harbach and Rev. J. Heys. Randolph's trio consisted of the following: Rev. Decker, Rev. Schipper, and Rev. Woudenberg. At the time of this writing, the seats used for Randolph's congregational meeting were probably still warm; but since a considerable expanse of country lies between that city and Grand Rapids, we have not yet received word of the results.

Hope Church (Michigan) is, as you no doubt remember, the calling church for our second missionary. Their trio for home missionary was: Rev. J. Heys, Rev. M. Schipper, and Rev. B. Woudenberg. In their congregational meeting of Nov. 26, Rev. Heys was elected to receive the call.

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

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According to Southwest's bulletin of Nov. 21, Rev. Veldman made an unexpected return to the hospital "because of complications due to surgery." The announcement added that "his condition is not serious and he is feeling quite well." According to the following week's bulletin, the second stay in the hospital was a brief one, but necessitated confinement to his home till December 7. "He is well on the way to recovery and looks forward to the time when he may again go in and out with our congregation."

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Included in First Church's 1972 budget, adopted at the annual Congregational Meeting, was a figure of \$4000, which is intended to be the beginning of a "Building Fund for the purpose of relocating the parsonage and church if this becomes necessary."

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Are you interested in hearing about the progress of the "drive" for funds for our proposed theological school building? Mr. R. Teitsma, who is a member of the Theological School Committee, and is in charge of the funds collected for the new school, reports that the first contributions came in February of this year. Gifts of note include an anonymous one of \$500, two collections amounting to a total of \$782 from our church in Pella, and also a gift from an industry. As of the beginning of November, church collections, gifts from societies and from individuals, etc. brought the total to \$7,156. The estimated cost of the proposed building was given as \$70,000. Mr. Teitsma didn't mention this, but it's clearly evident that there's quite a bit of room above the present balance in the fund.

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The annual Protestant Reformed Teachers' Institute Convention met in Adams Street School on October 28 and 29. This convention of our "eastern" schools included teachers from Adams, Covenant, Hope, and South Holland. There were a number of "sectionals" held during the course of the two-day convention, in addition to a couple of speeches presented to the group as a whole. You might, perhaps, be interested in some of the topics considered there. One sectional was led by Mr. Darrel Huisken, who gave a scholarly presentation concerning "The English Bible." At the same time that Mr. Huisken was leading his sectional, another group of teachers attended a presentation on "Remedial Help in the Classroom," by Miss R. Dykstra

and Mrs. R. Petersen.

Those were only two, of ten different and interesting topics treated at the Teachers' Convention. The keynote address was, without doubt, the speech by Prof. H. Hanko, His topic was "The Scriptural Conception of the Covenant Child, from a Spiritual Point of View." He spoke on the child as a regenerated sinner, as a developing adult, and as a potential saint. The speaker did not merely busy himself with interesting theory. The eminent practicality of his speech can be readily understood from the fact that each of his three points concluded with remarks concerning the implications for teaching. This is hardly the place to give even a brief summary of that fine speech; but perhaps we can be excused for quoting a few scattered lines, in order to convey, in a limited way, a sense of what might be called the flavor of his address. "We cannot deal responsibly with children unless we know ourselves. The only difference between a child and an adult, as far as sin is concerned, is that the adult has learned to present to others an erroneous picture.... In our discipline of the child, we will find that the only thing that will appeal to the child is the Word of God. Psychological tricks won't work.... There's precious little that a teacher can do to change the child. The relationship between child and parent is the influential relationship in the child's life. . . . God has determined from eternity the place that each individual child of God has in the church on earth and in the church in heaven. God uses the experiences of youth to prepare him for that place. We don't know that place. So, in a sense, we work in the dark.... It's a glorious task.... We are instruments.... 'Weakest means fulfill thy will."

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On Reformation Day Sunday, a singspiration was held in our Hull church. Rev. Moore gave a short speech, and the young people of Doon rendered a special number.

The preceding item came from Doon's bulletin, of course. From that same bulletin, we learn that, on October 29, the school children of Doon Protestant Reformed School traveled to our Edgerton school for a combined chapel service, at which Rev. Moore was again the speaker. Measuring with a meter stick on a map in an Atlas, we figure that distance to be about 40 miles one way. (Editor's note: A bit short! My odometer always registered 55 miles when I used to go on classical appointments from Doon to Edgerton.) The students of Doon probably enjoyed that Friday afternoon, for reasons in addition to attendance at a chapel exercise.

D. D.

144