

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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The Standard Bearer and the Next Generation

Faddist Or False Teacher?

(Editorial)

Meditation:

The Nobility of God's People

The Day of Shadows:

All These Are Yours

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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Editorial

Faddist Or False Teacher?

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

Blatant Situation Ethics

The lead article in a recent issue of the Dutch political paper, *Tot Vrijheid Geroepen* was entitled "Notes On A Quasi-Debate," and it is a report on one of the most recent and perhaps the most shocking (if it is possible to be shocked any longer) pronouncements of Dr. Harry M. Kuitert, professor of ethics and dogmatics at the Free University of Amsterdam. The article is written by a Dr. A. Zeegers. It reads, in part, as follows (I translate):

On Sunday evening June 27, the NCRV produced on television an interview between Prof. Kuitert and Mr. Godfried Bomans which many will recall. What was it really about? About the views of Prof. Kuitert? One can better say – and the professor will apparently agree with this – that it was not about *his* views but about the correct understanding of God's Word. For that is decisive, and our views are – to use a fashionable word – relevant only in so far as they are based upon that Word and flow forth from it.

Permit us to say first that, at least in our judg-

ment, the choice of Godfried Bomans as 'debater' was definitely unhappy. We will gladly acknowledge that we have truly enjoyed that which Mr. Bomans has offered both via T-V and via radio and via the written word. Engraved in our memory are the T-V productions which he brought to us from the 'holy places' in Jerusalem and Rome. Superior work, which for our part could well be repeated. But for this interview they were at the wrong address with him. How can the Roman Catholic Bomans speak with fruit and with knowledge of matters about the tensions which the views of Prof. Kuitert have called forth in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, about the legitimacy of these views? How can he put them to the test of Scripture and the confessions? Was that not an impossible task?

The question arises why they did not let the interview with Prof. Kuitert be conducted by a reformational theologian. We mention only a few: Dr. W. Aalders, Dr. Arntzen, Dr. Graafland, or someone from the circle of the professors, which makes us think of Van Itterzon, Jonker, Lekkerkerker, Van Niftrik, Herman Ridderbos, Troost, Veenhof, or Velema? Their questions would have been less facetious, but would have touched on the heart of the matter and would have put Prof. Kuitert repeatedly before the question in how far he can base his views on Scripture and the confessions.

The writer goes on to describe how the interviewer, Mr. Bomans, proceeded. He began by drawing a caricature of Dutch Calvinism by picturing them as the black-stockings people who are chronic sufferers from the fear of hell and damnation and who find everything wrong. The writer points out that this was precisely the method followed by the free-thinking liberals of the previous century; and that this caricature formed a beautiful background of narrowness and lack of understanding against which Prof. Kuitert's enlightened thought-structures might come out the more clearly. Then the interviewer Bomans quoted from a lampoon against Kuitert in which the Professor was likened to the Nazi's, but failed to bring out the fact that numerous theologians have in a manner that bespeaks good will raised serious objections against the professor's views — objections which he has never troubled to answer.

Dr. Zeegers then points out that Kuitert presented his views very bluntly and frankly, which leads some to praise him for his honorableness instead of blaming him for his unfaithfulness to Scripture and the confessions, to which he bound himself when he signed the Formula of Subscription for ministers of the Word, a formula now admittedly functions as a piece of waste paper. And then he continues as follows:

Reformed people have always understood the Bible incorrectly; all sorts of things which we consistently considered to be no cunningly devised fables now appear to be indeed just that, at least according to Prof. Kuitert. Not only were various historical figures relegated to the realm of fables, but also the bodily resurrection was denied. But there is even

more. Prof. Kuitert is so kind as to dress up his free-thinking thought-structures a bit, out of pastoral considerations. But only a little, because he sees it as his task to furnish guidance for faith in as prickly a manner as possible.

As an example of the sexual ethics for which he stands — which, as is known, also includes abortion — we might hear that pre-marital sexual intercourse is no longer considered wrong by him. Hence, one can go his own way in this respect with appeal to the professor of ethics at the Free University. Another prickly observation (by Kuitert): the power of the establishment must be broken, if necessary by a strong arm in the literal sense of the word, — hence, by revolution. In this vision it fits completely that Prof. Kuitert also accepts little or nothing from synods.

One can put it this way: Prof. Kuitert holds to a theology and ethics of his own workmanship, in which he makes not even an attempt to base these upon Scripture and/or confession. A pseudo-religion adapted to human taste, which has nothing to do any longer with the Reformed confession. He knows but one principle, that of freedom, but then not in the evangelical sense, but in the humanistic sense: the autonomy of man, who will settle matters for himself, and who guards against believing things not worthy of being believed. Science has taught him not to do this; and he is too articulate to do it.

The writer expresses himself as being happy in a sense about this T-V production. And here is his explanation:

...It (the telecast) has in great measure contributed to the exposing and thereby to the trying of the spirits.

When a Minister of the Word in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* may teach these things, then those churches have thereby completely given up their basis of existence, or, if you will, their identity. We do not see why, if this may be taught within the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, they do not simply immediately in this time of mergers consummate a fusion with the *Hervormde Kerk*, at least if the *Gereformeerde Bond* and the *Confessionele Vereniging* (two conservative groups in the *Hervormde Kerk*, HCH) do not make objection against this.

After this pointed comment, the author goes on to point out that at the Free University, where Kuitert teaches, the work of Abraham Kuyper has been completely denied. And he points out, too, that the question concerning the training of ministers comes to stand out as a great life-problem through such plain expressions of Kuitert, whether or not he is protected by Prof. Berkouwer.

So there you have it!

The *Standard Bearer* has from time to time called attention to the astounding and bold heretical statements of Kuitert and others (for Kuitert is not alone!) in the Netherlands. We have also emphasized that the very fact that the *Gereformeerde Kerken* have been

unable and unwilling and afraid to institute any disciplinary proceedings against these bold heretics — and they are heretics indeed, whether or not the *Gereformeerde Kerken* have officially called them such — this very fact is a sad commentary on the decadence of the GKN.

But this is as extreme as any pronouncement of any adherent of situation ethics. The professor of ethics blithely stamps his okay on fornication and revolution!

One would be inclined to expect that no one who claims to have any Reformed sensitivities left would hesitate to condemn Kuitert and his kind roundly as fraudulent heretics who have not the barest claim to the name “Reformed” and who should be cashiered and exorcised out of their office and out of the church without ado.

Not Faddist But False Teacher

Yet Editor De Koster, of the *Banner*, calls Kuitert a brother, and twice in recent issues of that Christian Reformed weekly has suggested only that Kuitert is going to extremes and that he is guilty of “theological faddism.”

Now a fad is “a custom, amusement, or the like, followed for a time with exaggerated zeal; a craze” (Webster). And faddism is, of course, the tendency or inclination to engage in fads.

There are several things which need saying about this evaluation by Editor De Koster.

In the first place, of course, it is a rather insulting characterization of the work of one whom one calls a brother. If Kuitert at all cares — and I’m not sure he does, — then I am sure that he does not consider himself to be nor want to be classified as a theological faddist. To this very day Kuitert insists that he is teaching people how to understand the Word of God aright. This is the whole burden of his booklet, “Do You Understand What You Read?” This, I recall, was his plea when he spoke in the Calvin College Fine Arts Center for the Christian Reformed ministers. In fact, one of the first things he said in his first lecture was that he begged to be accepted as believing the Bible.

In the second place, it is a very serious mistake to underestimate a foe; and this is precisely what De Koster does when he calls Kuitert’s work theological faddism. After all, a fad in the very nature of the case cannot be very serious. It is a passing thing, a temporary craze. If you wait a little while and ignore it, it will pass away into oblivion. One must not get very

excited nor show much concern about fads. But if you call something a fad which is more serious than a fad, then you will be badly fooled, deceiving yourself into a lethargy and self-complacency which will spell defeat and destruction. This is precisely the danger of Editor De Koster’s fad-idea. Consider:

1) That Kuitert does not stand by any means alone, either in the Free University or in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. He has thousands of adherents and supporters, both among the people and among the clergy and theologians. He can even claim Prof. Berkouwer as a supporter. Certain it is, whatever the proximate reasons may have been, that the churches were not able to condemn him officially at the Synod of Sneek, in spite of numerous protests.

2) That Kuitert’s theology can hardly be classified as of the passing nature of a fad. It has been around now for several years. Instead of dropping in its influence, as one might expect of a fad, it has increased.

3) That Kuitert indeed has a theology. This man does not simply throw out wild ideas, even though he may be rather sensationalistic in some of his pronouncements for the sake of getting attention and abrasively setting people athinking. No, indeed, there is an entire theology behind Kuitert’s practical pronouncements. Did not he himself suggest in his lecture referred to above that all of dogmatics had to be revamped? Going back to his *De Mensvormigheid Gods*, there is a theology at stake that is as different from Reformed theology as night from day.

In the third place, Editor De Koster’s characterization is beside the point. It is not church style. Before the church, the question is not faddism — yes or no. Before the church, the question is one of true or false doctrine, and that, too, according to the Church Order and the Formula of Subscription and in the light of Scripture and the Confessions. This is the question for Kuitert as professor of theology and as minister. This is the question for the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. This is the question for the Christian Reformed Church, in which there are also adherents (how many?) of Kuitert. This is the question for all God’s people. It is a question which concerns their *faith*. It is a question that concerns the very gospel.

And it is the ONLY question for the church and for believers who must try the spirits, I John 4:1-3.

And the plain answer to that question is unequivocally: Kuitert is a false prophet!

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Guest Editorial

The Standard Bearer and the Next Generation or The Standard Bearer: A Force To Preserve A Heritage

(Note: This is a transcript of the address delivered at the annual meeting of the R.F.P.A. on September 30, 1971.)

Mr. Jon J. Huiskens

In my reply to the RFPA board, I wrote that I accepted this speaking assignment with a bit of trepidation. That trepidation is as of this moment confirmed. I am not at all easy up here. I am far more comfortable in a classroom-type setting where the situation is one of exchange and interchange. My uneasiness stems not only from my inexperience as a speaker, however, but stems as well from the importance of the topic which was suggested to me, a topic which interests me a great deal but certainly is a topic which has very grave and serious connotations. It was suggested to me by the board that I talk a bit about the relationship of the *Standard Bearer* to young people, to the next generation. I have an immediate problem, however, in this regard. I have trouble defining that word "young people." Who actually does belong in the next generation? The younger generation is sometimes defined as anyone under age 30. That puts me, you see, still in that category. That makes me feel good but it did not do much for my speechmaking. The quip is often made as well that "young people" do not trust anyone over age 30. In fact, any one over that magical age of 30 is immediately held suspect and is classified as being part of the fuddy-duddy establishment. Well, to put your minds at ease, my still being under 30 does not gain me much respect from those somewhat younger than I nor does it gain me much respect from those who are somewhat older. In sum, I guess I would have to say that the statement that one ought not trust anyone over 30 and conversely should trust everyone under 30 is quite absurd. I think that we can state, however, for our purposes tonight that we will consider the next generation to be those of us who are under 30. This however, you understand, is arbitrary.

I am not sure what the RFPA board had in mind for me when they asked me to speak on this topic. Consequently I will employ an old speech-making trick which I have learned from listening to some of our ministers give these types of speeches, namely, that if you are not sure about what is expected of you, or, if

you really do not like the subject that was assigned, there is only one thing for you to do and that is to make it fit you, to tailor it in such a way that you are comfortable. That is exactly what I did.

Consequently, I will not try tonight to give suggestions about how to arouse our interest in the *Standard Bearer*. It will not be my purpose to suggest neat little tricks and gimmicks which can be employed to get me and my generation to read the *Standard Bearer*. To me, that will never work. Rather, I have decided to take a very personal point of view with respect to this topic. And, I wish you to be aware of this as you patiently listen to the rest of my speech. What I have to say must be viewed in this light: what do I want the *Standard Bearer* to do for me and my generation? What is its real purpose with respect to me and my generation? I think the idea that I wish to convey tonight is pretty well summed up in my title which is as follows: The *Standard Bearer* and the Next Generation, or, The *Standard Bearer*: A Force to Preserve a Heritage. This is how I read the situation and this is what I wish to confirm tonight: that what I wish the *Standard Bearer* to be doing for us is to preserve, to guard, defend, and develop our heritage.

Now I am going to do another thing which I have learned from listening to ministers giving speeches. I am going to have *three* points. That certainly ought to make you comfortable. Consider with me then this topic: The *Standard Bearer*: A Force to Preserve a Heritage. Considering first, what is that heritage which ought to be preserved, considering next that that heritage is presently under attack, and considering finally what we, mutually as *Standard Bearer* and the next generation, ought to be doing to see that that heritage is preserved.

First, then, let us take a look at our heritage. It must be obvious from the outset that our heritage includes all history which precedes us. This, of course, encompasses centuries and centuries. It includes the Old Testament and the New Testament Church and all of the

subsequent ecclesiastical history. It ought to be obvious, then, that I can not possibly give an outline of that heritage in an exact, minute, detailed manner.

What I wish to point out, however, is that that heritage has always contained certain general elements. And, these elements are what I wish to have you consider tonight.

To get at these elements, then, and in particular to get at what I consider to be the central thread, the most general, the most universal, and the most significant element of our heritage, I wish to take a closer look at that term *heritage*. I wish to distinguish its use and meaning from the term *inheritance*. Now a heritage is certainly something which is handed down from one generation to the next, as is an inheritance. It denotes an activity of the older generation and a passivity of the younger. Something is given or left by the older to the younger. This is how Webster defines it: "that which is inherited; the lot, condition or status into which one is born."

Something then is left to us. But I submit to you that that something with which I am left can not be junk or trinkets. Certainly, when a father dies and passes down his possessions to his children, he gives them something of value and something of significance, be it material or sentimental. Such is the case in both heritage and inheritance.

So far, then, the idea of heritage and inheritance are somewhat similar. Something of value is handed down from one generation to the next. But there is more. To me, an inheritance connotes that which is material, that which is tangible. The term *inheritance* is usually used in reference to those goods which are left by parents for their children. The other term, however, the term *heritage*, is to me far richer in content and much broader in scope. A heritage does not merely refer to material goods, but rather refers to the intangible. It refers to a tradition, a way of life, a spiritual, moral, intellectual environment. The term *heritage* carries with it the idea of a perspective of life, a world and life view, a way of looking at and measuring things. It includes a value system and a set of beliefs. This is my idea of heritage.

In sum, we might say that a heritage in distinction from an inheritance is ideological rather than material. It connotes the spiritual and the philosophical.

But there is still more. The term *inheritance* gives the idea that one does not obtain his possessions until after the older generation has passed away. It is not delivered until then. Not so with a heritage. A heritage connotes the idea of instruction and tutelage and, there is a sense of urgency in this regard. The Jewish fathers could not keep to themselves their Sinaitic heritage. They were told in no uncertain terms to instruct their children in God's precepts. They had to dispense immediately that heritage. So, too, today. That heritage can not be kept in escrow somewhere,

but must be dispensed.

The question, then, is inevitable. What is there about our heritage that makes it valuable? What are those key elements which are reason for our concern tonight?

It soon becomes evident from reading the Scriptures themselves and from reading the church fathers, and I have in mind tonight particularly three of those fathers, viz., Augustine, Calvin, and Hoeksema, that the motivating force behind this heritage is, in a word, the Scriptures. And that's not all. These Scriptures were seen to be authoritative. They were considered to be the infallibly inspired Word of God and as such were the only rule of faith and life, the only guide for one's life. This was the foundation upon which all their works were built. In the final analysis, this was all there was: human reason had to bow before the authority of the Word of God. The Old Testament prophets had come to the people of Israel with these simple yet pregnant words: "Thus saith the Lord." There were no more questions asked. That Word was final. So, too, with these men. Read Augustine's *Confessions*. Certainly one can not leave that work without being impressed with the fact that it was the Word of God which had the primary importance in Augustine's life after his conversion. The emphasis of the Reformation cannot be denied. *Sola Scriptura* was the motto of the reformers. The Scriptures alone had authority over doctrine and life. Parenthetically, I would like to call your attention to the most recent issue of the *Theological Journal* in which Prof. Hanks has an article concerning this very topic. I call your attention to this article because in it Prof. Hanks confirms this attention of the reformers to the idea of the sole authority of the Word of God. I wish that you all would read it, and, by the way, it could be read with a great deal of profit by those of high school age. Certainly, however, without going into a great deal of detail it can be said that this was the emphasis of the reformers. The late Rev. H. Hoeksema has some very pointed remarks on this topic as well. I will quote but one, which is found in the "Introduction" to his *Dogmatics* (he speaks here of the relation of the church to dogma): "Even though the church sets its seal of authority upon the dogmatic truths elicited from the Scriptures . . . yet their ultimate basis is not the authority of the church, but that of the Scriptures alone."

There can be little doubt, I think, that our heritage is rooted in this idea of the authoritative, infallible, inspired Word of God.

This brings us to consider what I believe to be a second important element in our heritage. That heritage is not only pervaded with and founded upon the notion of the authoritative Word, but it is also characterized by a dogmatic stance. In this day of anti-dogma we might do well to emphasize this and the next generation would do well to accept this as fact. Again, I can not go into great detail in this regard. If I

do nothing else, however, I do want to get this point across: our heritage is characterized by a unique dogmatical position and we would do well to see to it that this element of our heritage is not lost. If one wants a capsule view of that dogmatic position, there is one article in particular which comes to my mind and that is the speech which the late Rev. Hoeksema gave to the student body and faculty of Calvin Seminary. It was entitled "Particular Throughout" and appeared in Vol. 40, p. 364 of the *Standard Bearer*. We ought not to be ashamed of that dogmatical position neither ought we to be afraid of dogmatics. In the final analysis, it will be our dogma which sets us apart from everyone else. The crucial question has always been and will always continue to be: What do you believe? Man likes to change that around a bit today. He does not ask the question: What do you believe? but rather asks the question: How do you feel? Brotherhood and society must be maintained and, if need be, at the expense of dogma. A dogmatic position, however, must be considered to be a vital part of our heritage.

In the third place, as we consider the third element of our heritage, let me bring this whole idea of our heritage still closer to home. Our heritage has as its focal point, its foundation, the Scriptures, and it certainly is characterized by a dogmatic position, but it also includes our own unique local, ecclesiastical history. We have a history as Protestant Reformed Churches which may not be excluded from our heritage. That, too, might well be emphasized in our day and might well be clearly understood by the next generation. 1924, 1953, 1962, 1970 are all part of our heritage. We ought not to wish them out of existence.

Three things, then, three essential elements, I have asked you to consider as vital parts of our heritage, the authoritative scriptures, our dogmatic stance, and our own local ecclesiastical history. And, it is this heritage which I wish to have preserved.

We must proceed, then, to our second main point, viz., the idea that this heritage is presently under attack. This is not to say, however, that that heritage has not always been under attack. That would be foolishness. The history of the church shows that her heritage is never left alone. Each era, however, has its own unique problems and situations to face.

Now I have stressed so far that our heritage is something which is ideological rather than material, and it would follow, then, that our battle is primarily ideological as well. This does fit, does it not? Paul told us long ago that our battle was not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, against spiritual hosts. And, it becomes very clear as he describes the Christians' armor, that this is the case. Augustine's battles and Calvin's battles and Hoeksema's battles were of this nature. So will ours be. Let me quote for you an introductory statement from Charles Reich's book, *The Greening of America*. I

guess I could have gone to other works, but this one is especially significant in light of our topic concerning the next generation. This book has been read primarily by young people; it is dedicated to them by the author. In addition, it has already sold over a million copies and has been a No. 1 bestseller. It has had an impact. Let me quote: "There is a revolution coming. It will not be like revolutions of the past. It will originate with the individual and with culture, and it will change the political structure only as its final act. It will not require violence to succeed, and it cannot be successfully resisted by violence. It is now spreading with amazing rapidity, and already our laws, institutions and social structure are changing in consequence. It promises a higher reason, a more human community, and a new and liberated individual. Its ultimate creation will be a new and enduring wholeness and beauty — a renewed relationship of man to himself, to other men, to society, to nature, and to the land. This is the revolution of the new generation. Their protest and rebellion, their culture, clothes, music, drugs, ways of thought, and liberated life-style are not a passing fad or a form of dissent and refusal, nor are they in any sense irrational. The whole emerging pattern, from ideals to campus demonstrations, to beads and bell bottoms to the Woodstock Festival, makes sense and is part of a consistent philosophy. It is both necessary and inevitable, and in time it will include not only youth, but all people in America." There is no doubt in your mind, is there, that the emphasis is ideological. And, it takes little imagination as one continues to read this book that this movement is diametrically opposed to our heritage. They are not concerned, you see, with establishing the Word of God as their base, nor are they concerned with a dogmatic position, and they are practically a-historical and traditionless.

This is one example of today's thinking, but one could cite many more. It has become evident to me, however, that we observe a major trend in today's thinking and that trend is the thinking of the existentialist.

Now, I have no intention of bombarding you with philosophical jargon regarding the philosophy of existentialism, nor can I delineate carefully its major tenets, but let me nevertheless point out a few things which cause me to reject its teachings. In the first place, the existentialist is a creature of the "now," of the "moment." Tradition, heritage, history, do not have much meaning for the existentialist. Secondly, the rational, logical way of determining truth does not have a great deal of meaning for them either. Their emphasis is on the *innerlichkeit*, the intuitive and the experiential. Something inside me tells me whether or not what I perceive is real. It becomes obvious, furthermore, as you read the works of the existentialist that the direct result of his philosophy is that he becomes a relativist of the baldest sort. Having dumped tradition

and the rational, he becomes very subjective. All things, consequently, become relative: morality, values, ethics, you name it. And, finally, you can easily see that if all is relative, there is no authority left other than the individual himself. The existentialist has destroyed every ounce of objective authority.

This philosophy, of course, has its practical results. We need not look far in today's society to determine that. But I am not primarily interested in what is commonly labeled as "the world." My feeling is, and consequently my emphasis will be, that this type of thinking has had an effect upon us as well. Let's bring this matter a little closer to home.

The ecclesiastical world certainly has been affected. Report 36 of the 1971 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church certainly is no cause for joy. For all practical purposes, they have dumped the authority of the Scriptures out the window. Is there little wonder, then, why men can talk freely of The Scripture as *sitz im leben*, the new hermeneutic, and situational ethics? The Dooyeweerdians are no cause for joy either. In many instances they appear to be conservative, orthodox and Reformed, but certainly the recent writings of De Graff, Seerveld, and Hart on the Scriptures are no cause for jubilation. This is not to mention the modern ecumenical movement with its stress on brotherhood and tolerance at the expense of dogma and confessions and an absolute, authoritative Word of God. The educational world is not immune. The authority of the teacher, both in discipline and in pedagogy, has been questioned. Behaviorism, with its blatant denial of the depravity of man, has become the philosophical backdrop of the educational scene. What about the home? Marriage doesn't mean much these days. And, in the face of an unbridgeable generation gap, parents have retreated to the level of their children.

But, you say, that's all out there. Somehow or other we always remain immune. But I wish to submit that the attack on that heritage does not always come from without. The history of the church ought to teach us that the most serious attacks come from within. We hear rumblings, do we not, about being bored by doctrine and the subsequent need to be fired up by so-called practical preaching. We want a short course in how-to-do-it theology. We hear talk, do we not, that our devotional lives at home are slipping. We hear talk, do we not, that we ought to forget about 1924 and the whole issue of common grace. I can recall from my own experience a paper in a young people's meeting to this effect. We ought to talk more, this young person said, about what is happening in today's society; we ought to talk about today's problems; we ought to talk more about culture. Strange, isn't it, that this is what 1924 was all about. Probably the quickest way to kill a heritage is to neglect it. That's the point I wish to emphasize. We have not been untouched, you see, by the philosophy of relevancy and relativity.

It should be quite evident, then, that we have a job to do. We ought never to convince ourselves that the enemy has put down its military equipment, that somehow he has gone to beating his swords into plow shares. Not so. The battle is very real, and we must mutually fight side by side as older and younger, as former and next generations. Our heritage must be preserved.

This is, of course, where the *Standard Bearer* comes in. I intimated in my title that I conceive the *Standard Bearer* to be doing exactly this; it is a force to preserve a heritage. It has a responsibility in this regard and that responsibility has not been negated. It is my contention further tonight and I believe that the *Standard Bearer* has more than adequately met this responsibility. Rehearse for a moment the central characteristics of our heritage and then review in your mind some of the articles in just this last year's issues of the *Standard Bearer*. Certainly no lack of emphasis or lack of effort was exhibited there.

The responsibility, however, to preserve our heritage does not lie solely with the *Standard Bearer*. That responsibility also lies with us, the reader. That perhaps is the biggest problem when one views the relationship of the *Standard Bearer* and the next generation. Our fears are that the *Standard Bearer* is not being read by that next generation. It appears as if the next generation is not interested. It appears further, that perhaps the older generation did not use the *Standard Bearer* as an important medium to help them in the preservation of our heritage. Certainly, the material was there.

The problem, then, as I see it, is not with the *Standard Bearer*, but rather with the attitude of the reader. From my viewpoint, I can only say, "Go to it, *Standard Bearer*. Continue to defend that precious heritage. If you need a vote of confidence, you have mine."

To the next generation, and as far as that goes, to the older generation as well, I can only say, "Get with it, you had best assume your responsibility for the preservation of our heritage before it is too late. Use the *Standard Bearer*; it has proven to be a mighty force in that preservation."

In conclusion, let me relate to you what I heard recently from a man called William Ewald. Ewald is a city planner and as such has become very concerned about the future of mankind in the next fifty years. In the course of his speech he made a statement which came home to me. He said: "If man is to survive in the next fifty years, he will be forced to choose between an existential, relativistic, float-with-the-times mentality in which he will have to accept changing mores, changing values, changing everything; or, he will be forced to cling to a system of absolutes, he will be forced to exercise his faith in them as never before." God give us grace and the spiritual courage to make the latter choice.

Meditation

The Nobility of God's People

Rev. M. Schipper

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:

Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

I Peter 2:9, 10.

What a glorious “but” that is, which introduces this portion of Scripture!

For it depicts for us a deliberate contrast; the contrast, namely, between two classes of people. On the one hand, the people of God; a people which is peculiarly distinguished by their election, by their royal priesthood, by their separation from the world, in order that they should shew forth the praises of God. On the other hand, a people distinguished by their disobedience to the Word, and their stumbling over the rock of offence, which rock shall break them to pieces. Concerning the latter the apostle had written in the preceding verses of this chapter. Concerning the former he speaks in the words of our text.

A contrast, if you will, which the Word of God here draws between the objects of election and the objects of reprobation. For God has chosen Sion, which in time past was not a people and had not obtained mercy; but now have obtained mercy, and are the people of God. But the rest He has rejected through the way of their disobedience, and stumbling over the chief corner stone.

Not so were the people of God appointed that they should stumble, that they should be disobedient to the Word, that they should fall over the chief corner stone; but they were chosen to be the people of God, to be a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a people which is God's peculiar possession, and former for His praise.

Herein, indeed, is described the high nobility of God's people!

That people is distinguished, first of all, by their birth. Not, you understand, by their natural birth; but by their spiritual birth. Oh, to be sure, the people of God also have a natural birth. In time they are born out of the race of men, all descendants of their first father, Adam. However, there is nothing that distinguishes them from all other people through this natural birth. Rather, with all other people they are alike — all are children of darkness by nature. All are conceived and born under sin and guilt, in corruption. But something wonderful and heavenly and spiritual has come to the people of God, in distinction from all other

people — they are born again, from above, and by the Words of God which liveth and abideth forever.

Nor does the nobility of this people of God consist in the fact that historically they became a nation, in distinction from all the nations of the world, namely, the nation called Israel. Oh, indeed, it is true that for a time the people of God could be found peculiarly in that nation, yet we may say without fear of contradiction that Israel as such was never the people of God. Nor because one was a Jew, was he necessarily of the people of God. Nor because one could historically refer to Abraham as his father, was he necessarily of the people of God. This the Scripture makes abundantly clear when it informs us “they are not all Israel which are called Israel.” (Romans 9:6) “He is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart.” (Romans 2:28, 29) “Neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” (Romans 9:7, 8)

Oh, indeed, it is true that for a time the people of God in the old dispensation were to be found in the nation called Israel. Also it is true that they could refer their ancestry back to Shem, who was the father of the Semitic race; and to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, patriarchs in the generations of the covenant, progenitors of the Israelitish nation. And because God's people and the generations of the covenant were to be found almost entirely in that nation, God often addressed them through Moses and the prophets as His people. “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” (Exodus 19:6a) And again, “For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God: The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth.” (Deuteronomy 7:6) And again, “But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed

thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls; because I give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise." (Isaiah 43:1, 20, 21)

Yet it was not those by natural birth, called Israel, that constituted the people of God; but those who were born of the Spirit of God. Born they were, "by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." (I Peter 1:23)

A chosen generation!

Notice once more, that the apostle does not speak of this people as mere individuals, but as a generation. The people of God are never looked upon as mere individuals, but as a generation. Though, as we shall see in a moment, election is very personal, and redemption comes to the individual and is a very personal experience, yet God's people are never looked upon as mere individuals, but always as belonging to others. All belong to one spiritual Father, all address Him as Abba, loving Father; all are covenant seed, and connected to the Seed, which is Christ.

And the generation becomes a nation!

An holy nation!

Typically and historically this was beautifully demonstrated in the nation Israel. There was one people; one King (God), one place of worship — Mount Zion; one land — the land of Canaan. The reality is the Church of Christ as she is gathered in both dispensations, from all peoples, tribes, and tongues. Realized in the generations of the believers and their seed.

A royal priesthood!

Not only are they a priesthood that stands in the service of God, and who consecrate themselves and all that they have unto God in that service; but they also are a royalty. They belong to a royal family. Royalty runs in their spiritual veins. In principle now they reign over all things and bring them into subjection to the rule of Christ, the King; and for ever they shall reign with Him. Herein we see especially their high nobility. An holy nation they are, because God has separated them from the world, sanctified them through the blood of Christ, and has given to them the Spirit whereby they are dedicated unto God.

A peculiar people!

That is, a people for a possession!

They are not their own, but with body and soul, in life and in death, for time and eternity, they are God's precious possession. Peculiar they are, because they are distinct from all other peoples — yea, from the world.

God's noblemen!

But how are we to account for this nobility? How did they become so noble and come to such high estate?

The text underscores three causes.

The first mentioned cause of their nobility is their election.

But ye are a chosen generation! And election is that eternal and sovereignly free decree of God whereby He determined upon a certain people, their identity and number, whom He gave to Christ (the Elect) as members of His body; in distinction from others whom He determined should serve the election of grace, and who, through the way of their sin, would be destroyed forever. Indeed, election has to do with a certain number of persons, and is therefore very personal. Yet, as we said before, we should not conceive of election merely as the divine determination of certain individuals, but as an organic whole, who with Christ make up the body of Christ. As God has fashioned the human body, composed of many members, all fitted into their own proper place under the head; so God has also chosen His people in Christ. He is the elect Head, and all of His people constitute His body.

And as God has chosen His people in Christ from eternity, so has He given them unto Christ to be redeemed by Him.

Their redemption is the second cause of their nobility!

When the text speaks of a peculiar people, as the translation has it, it means literally: a people for or unto a possession. God has obtained them for Himself. And if you ask, "How was this done?" then the answer is: they were bought with a price — the price of the blood of the Only Begotten Son of God. This idea is also implied in the last part of the text, where the apostle, referring to a passage in the prophecy of Hosea, chapters 1 and 2, quotes from these passages. We quote here only Hosea 2:23: "And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." That mercy of God is as eternal as the election; but as it is realized in time in this people, it is that grace of God according to which He wills to bend down to objects in misery, with the fervent desire to make them blessed as He is blessed. And so God finds His people in time. They were no people, they had not obtained mercy, and were therefore miserable and wretched. But He through His Son in the flesh redeemed them and showed unto them His mercy. Thus He makes them His own possession, and peculiarly they are separated from all the peoples of the world.

And as God has chosen them and redeemed them in Christ, so also He has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

This calling is the third cause of their nobility!

Out of the darkness of natural depravity and death, into the marvelous, wonderful light of His life and fellowship He has efficaciously called them. Outwardly He called them through the Word of the gospel which was preached unto them. Inwardly He called them by bringing that Word into the inner recesses of their

hearts. Thus "they heard the voice of Jesus say: come unto Me and rest." Powerfully and irresistibly He calls them, and they come unto Him. Such is the nature of the calling. When He calls, they come! Out of ignominy and the darkness and shame of their natural plight, into the glorious liberty, life, and nobility of the children of God, He calls them.

Wondrous and mighty calling!

That exalts them to the highest heavens!

And unto what purpose? Unto what end must this high nobility serve?

That ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you!

The praises are the virtues, the excellencies of our God!

The God of our salvation who has chosen us, redeemed us, and called us, is pleased to show unto His

people all His perfections. He is full of infinite perfections. And to praise Him is to enumerate, speak out, recount these perfections. That is His praise.

This is in harmony with that which also the prophet Isaiah declared: "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise."

This that people do now in principle, even while they walk in this vale of tears. They publish abroad the mercy and grace, the truth and the righteousness, the lovingkindness of their God. And presently, when all this weary night is over, they shall do this in heavenly perfection for ever.

They shall see the glory of God, and bathe in it unto endless ages!

This is the high estate of the people of God!

Amen!

Come Ye Apart. . . And Rest A While

Good Stewardship

Rev. C. Hanko

I cannot afford it.

Those words pass so readily over our lips. Almost every day we are confronted with buying something, indulging in some luxury, enjoying some pleasure; and each time the question must be answered: Can we afford it? Children hear their parents say in almost wearisome monotony: We cannot afford it, forget it. Often parents and children can differ violently on the question whether or not the family can afford this or that.

It becomes a matter of values. What is essential for my daily existence? When I pray for my daily bread, what do I include in that long list of daily needs? When I realize that all that I am and all that I have comes from the Lord and belongs to Him, it becomes a question of: What does the Lord require of me? How does He want me to use His gifts?

Actually it is all much more serious than that. It is a question of Christian stewardship, using the means God has entrusted to us in His fear and to His glory. God has given us knowledge and wisdom, gifts and talents, even all our possessions down to our dollars and cents, not to use for our own selfish interests, but for the glory of His Name. So readily we forget the admonition of the apostle Paul, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God."

And so I pause a moment to consider: When I awoke this morning, was my first thought of God, and

my first conscious act a prayer? Did I eat my breakfast consciously seeking the glory of God? And how about that telephone conversation I just had? My friend did not give me the impression that God was foremost in his thoughts, but neither did I give him that impression, even though our conversation centered about the church. And then I think about the many things I do all day long, the many things I say, the making of sermons, my Sunday worship, and last but not least, my prayers. Am I a good steward in God's house? When I appear before God to give an account of my stewardship, will I be weighed in the balance and found wanting? No, at the moment I am not even thinking of the sins that I am aware of and confess from day to day. What bothers me is more like a secret sin, because I am so little burdened by it. It is my failure to be a good steward, my failure to use the gifts and means entrusted to me only to the glory of God and the coming of His kingdom.

And so my mind wanders to those masses of people who live in complete involvement of sin. They cannot afford what might well be considered the barest necessities of life, a decent home, respectable furniture, a dependable car to drive to work, and the like. They have their beers, their liquors, their TV set, but as for the rest they are content to struggle along. If you were to ask them, I suppose they would tell you that they cannot afford a better home, better furniture, and all that.

And then there are others who do have a beautiful home with modern furniture and every conceivable convenience. They have their cars, their camper, their boat, and many other necessities for enjoying their leisure time with their children. They might seem to be among those who “have everything.” Yet, no doubt, they also say of one thing or another: “I cannot afford it.”

As children we were taught that the kingdom of heaven comes first in our thoughts and in our giving. We were constantly reminded that we had to give of our small earnings or allotments to the church and to kingdom causes. As we eyed our small handful of coins with visions dancing through our heads of some dainties or of a bike, we were told not to be selfish. Yet how soon we forget.

That brings me almost unawares to the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The rich man was a member of the church and proud of his prominent position in it, which certainly no one dared to challenge. How freely he referred to Abraham as his father. Even in hell he still made an appeal to father Abraham to send him a bit of relief in his misery. He was rich, and proud of his riches. He dressed like a king in purple. He carefully chose his fine linens. Why should he not insist on the best? He could afford it, and he had worked hard for it. In his stately mansion only choice foods and wines were served to satisfy his ravenous appetite. By his own right he was a connoisseur of the most delectable foods and liquors. One thing he did enjoy, and that was his meals.

But there was that Lazarus that someone had deposited at his gate, without even consulting him. Well, he could lie there as far as Dives was concerned. It was a shame that the priests neglected their poor, and that the city fathers were not more concerned about ecology in the Holy City. But if others allowed such rubbish on the streets, why should he be bothered? That Lazarus with his ugly, ulcerous sores! It made him shudder to think of touching him.

And then those dogs that were attracted by the foul smell of this beggar! At least, they licked the poor man's sores. But why must that Lazarus be placed in front of the rich man's house? Must rich men have their pleasant life disturbed by a beggar who cries for crumbs?

Then the day came that the beggar was delivered from his misery. Who would have thought that Lazarus had a stewardship to fulfill? And he who bore the beautiful name “God is my Helper” had even fulfilled that stewardship amid all his poverty and misery! No, I do not know how he did it, but he did. Just imagine.

When he died God sent an escort of angels to give him a hearth welcome into Father's House, where a mansion awaited him. Carefully these angels laid their charge in Abraham's bosom.

And the rich man died also. He could not linger to enjoy the eulogies and pomp of his fine funeral. His soul hastened on, and in the next moment of consciousness he opened his eyes to torment. Still worse, those tear-stained eyes looked about and focused upon — Lazarus. There was that same beggar of the street, but now enjoying the bounties of the heavenly wedding feast, reclining right next to Abraham. Suddenly the “rich man” became a beggar, pleading for a drop of water to quench his thirst, just as poor Lazarus had begged for a crumb of bread. But he who showed no mercy receives no mercy. God is just. To him come those accusing, condemning words: “Son, remember!” Let him but remember the things he had set his heart on, which he deemed so essential for his happiness. Let him realize what he had done with God's gifts; how he had failed in his stewardship. Eternity is a long time to chew one's tongue in remorse under the righteous judgment of God.

And so I got to thinking about kingdom causes. There are not so many Lazaruses lying at our gate at present, at least not in that physical form. But we do manage to find a number of income tax reductions each year. And we do know our obligations to the church and to kingdom causes. Many churches have a high budget. Many families are burdened with high tuition for the instruction of their children. These obligations often force us to forego some desired luxury. And the last synod also made some far-reaching decisions. The delegates felt as good stewards in the house of God that our churches should call another missionary, call a third professor for the seminary, and work toward a new seminary building. They felt that in times like these we must not hide our light under the bushel, but proclaim wherever possible the truth our Sovereign God has entrusted to us. We must properly train our pre-seminary and seminary students, if we are to have ministers that can properly serve our churches in the future. And they did not consider a new seminary building a luxury.

Also for us it becomes a matter of good stewardship. And therefore voices already are heard: Can we afford it? Good stewardship requires that we ask ourselves whether this is to the glory of God, for the extension of His kingdom, and the ingathering of the church. Does it belong to your stewardship and mine? The question could also be turned about: “Can we afford not to have them?”

Know the standard, and follow it. **Read the Standard Bearer**

Feature

The Concern of the Reformation for Christian Education (8)

Rev. David Engelsma

In several articles we have now set forth the concern of the Reformation of the 16th century for Christian education. The Reformation in both its branches, Lutheran and Reformed, called for Christian instruction of the children of believers not only in the home but also in Christian schools. The result was the establishment of Christian schools very early in the development of the Reformation. It remains to evaluate this indisputable fact of history.

Apparent in the emphasis upon Christian education is the importance of Christian education in the minds of the Reformers. One might think that the Reformers would have been too busy to concern themselves with Christian schools, occupied as they were with opposing the whole Roman Church, withstanding the Empire, and recovering and proclaiming the gospel. That they did set forward the cause of Christian education, in spite of their massive task in the Church, indicates how important they esteemed this cause to be. In fact, concern for Christian education was not so much a matter of the personal judgment of the Reformers as it was an integral part of the Reformation itself. That mighty movement of the Holy Spirit confessed and proclaimed the sovereign, glorious God Who is revealed in Scripture. The heart of hearts of the Reformation, not only in Calvin but also in Luther, was *Soli Deo Gloria*. To God Alone be the Glory. To the glory of this great God belong His works of creation and providence. He is the Maker of the universe and its sovereign King. He is the Lord of its history. The reason for the existence of the world and every creature in it is His praise. Therefore, the attempt to teach concerning the creation (and what other subject can there be in the schools?) while ignoring or denying God is an assault on the glory of God. To concede the possibility of education which ignores God is to acquiesce in the robbery of God of His most precious treasure, His glory. This is the crime that the ancients were unanimous in condemning as the worst of all crimes: leze majesty. Teaching that “merely” leaves God out is the lie, the fundamental lie of fallen mankind: God is not God. The inevitable, positive formulation of this lie is: Man is god — all glory be to man. What must then be said of teaching that brings the God of Scripture into the instruction, only to disparage Him, to laugh at Him, and to blaspheme Him? *Soli Deo Gloria* does not only imply churches in which the gospel of sovereign

grace is preached. It also implies biology classes in which the foundation and the goal of the instruction are the adoration of Psalm 139:14: “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.” It implies astronomy classes that climax in the outburst, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork” (Psalm 19:1). It implies history classes that study the arising and overthrow of kingdoms in the light of Daniel 2:20, 21: “Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings. . . .” It implies science classes that begin with the assertion of Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Having this zeal for the glory of God, the Reformation required that God be praised in all His handiwork. Somewhere, Luther wrote a very sad lament concerning the future of the doctrine of justification by faith only. Because of the innate aversion of man’s nature to this doctrine, Luther feared that soon this truth would again be lost, even among those who professed to be his disciples. There is abundant reason for us, as Calvinists, similarly to lament the loss of the hallmark of the Reformed faith, *Soli Deo Gloria*.

In addition to its zeal for God’s glory as a reason for its demand for Christian schools, the Reformation regarded the children who were to be taught as God’s own children, covenant children. It is true that the doctrine of the covenant has been developed since the time of the Reformation. But the Reformers knew the essential elements of the covenant. They knew the basic truth that God gathers the Church in the line of generations, that children of believers are, as infant baptism signifies, included in the Church and covenant of God, and that, for this reason, these children are to be reared and instructed in the fear of the Lord.

Reformed people, generally, have acknowledged the importance of Christian schools. Article 21 of the Reformed “Church Order of Dordt” stipulates that “The consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant.” In addition to Reformed Churches, the Roman Catholic Church and Lutheran Churches have historically advocated Christian schools. It becomes plain in our

day, however, that the concern of Rome is shallow, for she is quite willing to surrender her own schools when they begin to be costly, even though she has more than enough wealth to support those schools and all other schools besides. Nor are many Lutherans impressive on this score. There are in Loveland, for example, three, large, wealthy Lutheran Churches, but no Lutheran Christian School and, apparently, no interest in one. In this as well as many other important matters, we are more "Lutheran," that is, faithful to the teachings of Luther, than they are.

Even in those churches which have not supported the movement of Christian education, the Christian school has had its strong defenders. In an article entitled "Parochial Schools," written in 1846, the eminent Presbyterian theologian, Dr. Charles Hodge, urged Presbyterians to repudiate the public schools in favor of Christian schools.¹ He noted that the principle of Christian education has always been maintained by the Church: "In all ages of the Church and in every part of Christendom it has been considered a first principle that religious teaching should be incorporated with the common school system." He regarded the attempt of the public schools in America to give instruction in "secular" subjects apart from "religion" as "a novel and fearful experiment. The idea of giving an education to the children of a country from which religion is to be excluded, we believe to be peculiar to the nineteenth century." Hodge viewed this attempt with the greatest alarm:

The whole system is in the hands of men of the world, in many of our states, and is avowedly secular . . . Again, it is obvious that education without religion, is irreligious. It cannot be neutral, and in fact is not neutral. The effort to keep out religion from all the books and all the instructions, gives them of necessity an irreligious and infidel character.

The conclusion of Dr. Hodge was that it was the duty of Presbyterian Christians to establish their own Christian schools:

The conviction, we are persuaded, is fast taking possession of the minds of good people that the common school system is rapidly assuming not a mere negative, but a positively anti-Christian character; and that in self-defence, and in the discharge of their highest duty to God and their country, they must set themselves against it, and adopt the system of parochial schools; schools in which each Church shall teach fully, fairly and earnestly what it believes to be the truth of God.

Another Presbyterian, the philosopher, Dr. Gordon H. Clark, has more recently written in condemnation of the public school system and in defense of Christian, and specifically *Reformed*, education. In an excellent book, *A Christian Philosophy of Education*, which our teachers, Board members, and parents could very profitably read, Clark exposes the fundamental evil of the public school system:

Obviously the schools are not Christian. Just as obviously they are not neutral. The Scriptures say that the fear of the Lord is the chief part of knowledge; but the schools, by omitting all reference to God, give the pupils the notion that knowledge can be had apart from God. They teach in effect that God has no control of history, that there is no plan of events that God is working out, that God does not foreordain whatsoever comes to pass. Aside from definite anti-Christian instruction, to be discussed later, the public schools are not, never were, can never be neutral. Neutrality is impossible. Let one ask what neutrality can possibly mean when God is involved. How does God judge the school system which says to Him, 'O God, we neither deny nor assert thy existence; and O God, we neither obey nor disobey thy commands; we are strictly neutral.' Let no one fail to see the point: the school system that ignores God teaches its pupils to ignore God, and this is not neutrality; it is the worst form of antagonism, for it judges God to be unimportant and irrelevant in human affairs. It is atheism.²

He also proclaims the foundation of the Christian school:

There is only one metaphysics, one philosophy, that can really unify education and life. That philosophy is the philosophy of Christian theism; that metaphysics is the metaphysics of the Being of the Triune God. What is needed is an educational system based on the sovereignty of God, for in such a system man as well as chemistry will be given his proper place, neither too high nor too low. In such a system there will be a chief end of man to unify, and to serve as a criterion for, all his activities. What is needed therefore is a philosophy consonant with those greatest creeds of Christendom, the Westminster Confession, the Canons of the Synod of Dort, and the like. And in such a system, God, as well as man, will have his proper place. This alone will make education successful, for the social and moral disintegration of civilization is nothing other than the symptom and result of a religious breakdown, and the abominations of war are the punishment of the crime, better the *sin*, of forgetting God.³

Dr. Clark concludes his book with the simple question: "Does not your child deserve a Christian education from kindergarten to university?"

(to be continued)

¹ Charles Hodge, *Church Polity*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1878. All of the following quotations from Hodge are taken from his article, "Parochial Schools," in this work. It is not necessary for our purposes to show why we reject the specific form of the Christian school which Dr. Hodge advocates, namely, the parochial school, and rather propose parental schools.

² Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education* Eerdmans, 1946, pp. 79, 80.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28.

The Day of Shadows

All These Are Yours

Rev. John A. Heys

From nothing at all to something so vast that our minds cannot comprehend it all!

From a void mass which existed in total darkness to a radiantly lighted, beautiful and amazingly complex creation!

All this work of God is recorded in just twenty-eight short verses in the first chapter of the Bible. Once again we assume that our readers believe the Scriptures to be the infallible, inerrant Word of God. They will, therefore, believe that all this work of God was performed in six successive days of twenty-four hours each. We do not purpose to say anything more about the God-dishonouring position of theistic evolution than to point out that the denial of the first eleven chapters of Genesis as fact is a denial of the whole of Scripture. For there are several elements in these eleven chapters that are presented elsewhere in Scripture, and emphatically so in the New Testament, *as fact*, and not fiction. The fall of Adam is presented as fact in Romans 5:12-19. Hebrews 11 is especially rich in presenting the incidents of chapters one through eleven of Genesis as fact. The offering of Abel is mentioned there as an act of faith. The translation of Enoch, the building of the ark by Noah, and the flood itself are presented alongside of facts that occurred after the history of these eleven chapters. Hebrews eleven draws no line between the deeds of Abel, Enoch and Noah and between those of Abraham, Moses and the rest of those mentioned in this chapter. John mentions the murder of Abel by Cain in I John 3:12 as a fact, not as fiction. Peter in I Peter 3:20 and II Peter 2:5, speaks of the flood and of the work of Noah in building the ark as cold, hard facts of history. And they, these theistic evolutionists, lose Christ too! And they are anti-christian as well. For Christ Himself speaks in Matthew 24:37, 38 of the flood and of Noah's deeds as facts, not fiction.

We do wish to point out, as our title suggests, that all this earthly creation was made for us. And then we mean both the heavens and the earth. Both were made for us. Although man was created to live on this earth, and will, after heaven and earth are united in Christ, live on the new earth, the heavens (note the plural) were also created for man. In the material heavens is his light plant, his furnace, his water system, his air conditioning system, and his clock to mark off his times and seasons. And though the earth may not be the center of the solar system, it is the most important body that "floats" in space. Here is life. Here God

created man in His own image. Here, and here only, He sent His Son. And the sun, moon and stars serve that earth. The earth does not serve them.

We said *heavens*, because there is also a spiritual realm called heaven. This is the dwelling place of the angels and the place where God reveals Himself most intimately. This heaven was also created for man, not to dwell in (though for a time his soul may sojourn there) but to serve the inhabitants thereof, who are man's servants. That is right. The angels are our servants. Hebrews 1:14 asks the question, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation?" Indeed, all these heavenly creatures also are yours!

As far as the earth is concerned, we would note that it was all prepared for man, and was fully furnished for him, before he was created to dwell upon it. If we may, we would liken it to a house which was not only built carefully with deep concern for all its details, but was also made with cupboard and pantry full of the food man would need when he appeared. It made life on this earth in every respect delightful, comfortable and enjoyable. Man's food was there for the taking. All around was a blaze of color and beauty, of design and texture. God's glory shone all around.

Consider these plants which were designed to provide man's food. Today we speak of factories and of manufacturing plants. Why call them plants? They cannot compare with real plants. The plants which God created are the original and real factories which manufacture man's food. Without them there is no life for man. They are his link with the earth from out of which he was created, upon which he depends, and to which he will return.

But we cannot eat the dust of the ground. It must be transformed into carbohydrates and fats and proteins. This the plants do for us. They manufacture our food. They, using the rain and the sunshine, change that dust with its minerals into grains, vegetables and fruits and a host of foodstuffs. They are indeed the original factories, or manufacturing plants. They are some very specialized factories, for plants only inches apart in the same soil, with the same amount of rain and sunshine will produce two fruits that are the exact opposites in nature. The one will produce a sweet fruit, the other a very bitter one. The one will bring forth food to nourish man's life, the other a poison that will take his life away. And what does the theistic science-worshipper say? Did our edible plants evolve from the

poisonous, or did the poisonous evolve from the food-bearing plants? How is it today that tares always chock out the grains, and the weeds destroy the valuable plants?

After the flood God gave man the flesh of beasts also for food. See Genesis 1:30 and 9:3. But even these creatures depend upon those plants for the support of their life. Some of these animals are strictly vegetarians, as the cow, the horse, the deer. Others are carnivorous, that is, will only eat meat, like the lion, and the tiger. Some, however, like the bear, eat berries and honey as well as fish, and flesh of beasts. It makes no difference, these animals that will eat only meat depend upon the plants to nourish the life of the animals whose flesh they eat. And we would have no flesh to eat, were it not for the plants that give support to the bodies of the beasts of the field. We would have no beef steak, no beef roast to eat. Take away all plant life, and you take away man's life. It is not simply his dainties and delicacies that you take away. You take away his life. For you take away from him the link between him and the earth out of which he was formed. Evolution, both the Darwinian and the theistic, will concede that point. But they do not consider the origin of these creatures that are so important for our life to be a command by God to come forth out of the earth, and to be the work of one day of twenty-four successive hours.

The evolutionist does not see these plants as given to man by God, but rather as producing man himself. After all, as far as the theistic evolutionist is concerned God was already making man when he made the plants. The Darwinian evolutionist says that man was on the way to appearing and evolving when the plants began to be formed in the process of billions of years. Scripture, and we hope to treat this more fully next time, presents the creation of the plants as something quite distinct from that of man. These plants were created for man, but they did not produce man. They produce for man, but man they do not bring forth indirectly by bringing forth the creatures that have power of moving around. Trees, plants and animals and man have this in common that they are all living creatures. But the plants rooted in the soil do not bring forth a living creature that overcomes this bondage to the soil, to move about at will.

These plants, together with all the earthly creation are ours by a wisdom of God that fills us with wonder. All these are ours not only for food, but also for shelter, for tools to work the earth, to produce our paper, even the rubber for our automobiles, and our coffins as well. Presently a tree of the cross will serve the payment for our sins and deliverance from the guilt and curse of sin.

However, when we say that all these are yours, there are two items that must be emphasized. These are *yours*, but not all men's. Originally in Adam all the

earthly creation, yea the whole universe was man's to serve him and work for his good. The sun shone for man, and the mist came up for man. Because the plants need these, and man needs the plants, the sun shone in the heavens for man and was man's. It is our sun. But we lost the right to all of it, to every grain of sand and drop of rain, to every bit of oxygen in the air, and to stand on God's earth. For we rebelled against the Creator. And the fact that God drove man out of the best part, out of the garden of Eden is symbolic of the fact that we deserve nothing any more. That is also why we die and thereby lose everything. We ought to get that straight. We are not born free and equal. We are born in the slavery of sin with no right to any place but the prison of hell. And we are equal only in the sense that we are equally under condemnation in Adam. If we would hold on to this truth that because of sin we lost the right to *all of these*, and to life itself, we would not fall into this serious error of maintaining that we do have a right to something even better, namely, salvation. Some go about speaking glibly, and promiscuously offer salvation to everyone who hears the preaching. But if we lost the right to our earthly, natural life as punishment for our sins, how do we suddenly have the right to a life that is far better and higher than it? We have no right to salvation in ourselves. We are guilty and deserving only of a continuation of our death until we are in hell! And the natural man cannot say today, All these are mine! He must say, I have no right to these, nor even to life itself.

But in Christ all things are ours again. As Paul writes in I Corinthians 3:22, 23, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours: And ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Because we are Christ's, all this creation and the one to come are ours.

The second element to be underscored is that all these are yours as tools, means, instruments wherewith to serve God. They are yours relatively, remaining God's in the absolute sense of the word. He gives them to us in Christ in order that we may have means wherewith to serve Him. All paradise was given Adam, according to Genesis 2:15, "to dress and to keep" it for God. All is restored to us in order that we may "dress and keep" it in the service of God.

The first object you see when you wake up in the morning, do you see it as God's and as that which is given you to praise and glorify God? The clothes you put on — and have taken off — when you dress for the work of the day, do you see God in them, and your calling before God in them? The food you sit down to eat, and that chair and table made from the plants that God made, does it link you up with God? Do we simply see the plants as a link between us and the earth out of which we came, or do we see God behind and under it, and find ourselves by faith linked up to Him? Do we know our calling with all these possessions

which have been given us?

Take a good hard look at Genesis 1. In the beginning *God* . . . Do you today rule Him out? *He* said each time, "Let the water (earth) bring forth. . ." They are His. And you are His. All these are yours only to use to the glory of His name. All these Christ used only for

that purpose, and presently He will bring us into the new creation where all the creatures shall be used by us and all the redeemed in a joyful service we will not want to interrupt or terminate. In Christ we not only have the right again to all these, but also the power to use them for the purpose for which God created them.

The Strength of Youth

The Fear of the Lord

Rev. J. Korterling

We direct your attention to the well known words of Ps. 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

There is nothing that is more important to young people than wisdom. Knowledge is important, but wisdom is even more important. Those who are involved in teaching know this very well. One may have four years of college and have a great accumulation of knowledge, but knowledge doesn't make a teacher. You need wisdom. You need the ability to communicate that knowledge to a young person. You have to know how to handle the class room situation, how to deal with the slow learner and the discipline problem.

In the area of our Christian faith, wisdom is putting into practice the knowledge which we possess. This is important for us, because you came here to this Christian school to gain not only knowledge, but especially wisdom. You need wisdom in order to put into practice your Christian faith. Until we do this we have not accomplished the task for which we have set out. You need wisdom in order to pray; what is your prayer life like? Are you wise in your prayers? You desire to witness, both to one another and to those who cross your path in life; this is important for in it you serve Jesus. Are you wise in your witness? You need wisdom in all the important decisions you have to make in your youth, your courtship and marriage; if you truly desire to establish a Christian home you need wisdom in your dating.

It is this wisdom, which is so important, that is so lacking today. Isn't it striking to you, as it certainly is striking to me, that there is so much foolishness going on. Foolishness to be sure is in the world of the wicked: look at the foolishness of war, crime, drugs, and rebellion. There is also foolishness in the context of that which calls itself the church. This concerns me very much and I want to share some thoughts with you on this.

Let's examine one aspect of putting into practice our Christianity; that is, our prayers. So much of that which is called prayer is foolish. That shouldn't shock

you. You and I have to be discerning today. When we stand before God in that holy activity of prayer, one stands struck with that fact that if we don't have the fear of the Lord in us when we pray, our prayers will be foolish. This is what strikes me often, when I listen to young people pray. I'm sure they mean well, but how foolish it is to pray a so-called "pop-prayer." It seems that the Campus Crusade movement advocates and promotes this kind of praying. Sometimes you hear prayers, "Hi God," and it makes me tremble, tremble because prayer is foolish when you talk that way to your God. O, it started a long time ago with the changing of pronouns, but it hasn't ended with that. Now foolish man thinks he is going to bring God to the human level, he wants Him to be a good buddy with whom he can talk. That's foolishness, that doesn't show the fear of the Lord.

There is another area, that of Christian witnessing. O, I thank God that we have young people who are filled with zeal to witness in their word and life. When witnessing assumes the proportion of the Jesus movement, again I tremble before the Lord God of heaven and earth. When someone tells me that Jesus is "cool, and that you might listen to him and follow him," I tremble. This is Jesus of the Scriptures? No, here the Son of God is dragged down by the use of such common language. He is presented as the one who can solve all your problems, He is the lovey-dovey Jesus who can change the whole world, and by following Him, all your problems are solved. What is lacking? Here it is: the fear of the Lord! Without it, witnessing becomes foolish.

This same thing applies to the most important question we ever ask, how do I get into Jesus Christ? How can I be assured of my salvation? In this area also, there is much foolishness. It comes under the banner of Neo-Pentecostalism. It is presented in such a way as if somehow the credentials to enter into the kingdom of heaven consist of an emotional experience whereby you are "turned-on" by the Holy Spirit. When this happens, we are told you have the guarantee of enter-

ing into heaven, and if you don't have it, too bad, you are out. Again, I tremble. When an emotional experience is made the criterion of salvation, and the Holy Spirit is made so common that He turns-on people, how foolish! Why do we have this foolishness? Here it is: the fear of the Lord is lacking.

I hope you understand that these three areas to which we have directed your attention are crucial in our Christian experience. We need wisdom if we are to be faithful in serving God in these areas of our life.

We are told in our text that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. By this the inspired Psalmist does not mean that the fear of the Lord is one department of our Christian life and that has to precede our walking in wisdom. When he tells us that it is the *beginning* of wisdom, he tells us that it is the principle that permeates our whole Christian life. If we lack it, our whole life will be foolish: if we possess it we will certainly be wise. You sense now the importance of the fear of the Lord." We must ask ourselves personally, "Do I possess this fear of the Lord?"

What then is the fear of the Lord? Let's notice briefly that it includes three things.

First, the fear of the Lord is this, that we stand consciously before God. Note carefully with me that I did not say that we stand consciously before a caricature of God. There are plenty that do that; you find them in darkest heathendom bowing before idols. And they are foolish! The only God before whom we can stand in the fear of the Lord is this, the God who has revealed Himself in the Holy Scriptures. That God is not a buddy whom you drag down to your sinful human level; He is JEHOVAH, the God Who spoke His creative word in the beginning and by a miracle brought all things into existence! This God sovereignly wills to save His people chosen unto everlasting life in Christ, and therefore gathers, defends, and preserves unto Himself this people. He is a righteous God, not a lovey-dovey God Who wants everybody in His fellowship. He is a God of vengeance upon the wicked, and a God of great love and mercy through Jesus Christ which He bestows upon His children. When you have the fear of the Lord you stand consciously before this God. Then you are standing with your Bible open. Then you are spending time pondering the Scriptures and reading diligently with the one desire that the Lord God will reveal Himself to you as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. You reject any caricature, any idol, and stand before Jehovah.

The second thing that is involved in the fear of the Lord is this: as you stand before the God who has revealed Himself in His Word, you are struck with awe and reverence. This is what is wrong with cheap prayers. This is what is wrong with superficial witnessing. Where is the awe, the reverence for the God whose Name we take upon our lips? No, I know the fear of the Lord is not to be afraid, but I wish that

some people were more afraid of God. The Word of God tells us that it is a terrible thing for sinners to stand in the presence of the holy God. Awe, reverence! When you contemplate that the God before Whom we sinners stand is holy and just, we smite our breasts in humble repentance. You realize that Jesus Christ is God Himself joined in human flesh. When we speak of Him and about Him it is in deepest reverence. The fear of the Lord demands this.

In the third place, the fear of the Lord brings us to our knees and we make this one petition, "Teach me thy way, O Lord, show me thy paths." For us it is not a question of what I want, what I think: rather, what does the Lord God of heaven and earth have to say. The truth, this is paramount for one who has the fear of the Lord. We need the truth not only to know intellectually, but to believe and to use it as a directing influence in our entire life. With the fear of the Lord we will reject all false doctrine and promote an understanding of the Word of God. Doctrine and life are inseparably connected. We will make it our earnest prayer, "Lord, I desire to do thy will in my life, show thy will to me as I read the Scriptures." You see the point, the fear of the Lord brings us to the Word of God, whether for our belief or for our conduct. It makes us have a profound reverence for the Word of God.

With this fear of the Lord, we will be wise. Isn't this a wonderful truth. I know it means that we will be distinguished from all that which is unbelieving and from all pseudo-Christianity. Mark you well, young people, that anti-christ is coming soon. This Jesus movement is part of the total picture. Do not be deceived by everything that calls itself Christian or that assumes to itself the right to be called a follower of Jesus. Anti-christ will make Jesus popular. But that Jesus is not your Jesus and mine. He is not the Jesus of the Scriptures. He is a nice man who will give you all you wanted, peace, prosperity, brotherhood. For such, His death on the cross was a tragedy. But the Jesus of the Scriptures is the very Son of God who shed His blood on Calvary as a payment for the ransom of God's elect people. Don't be deceived when many young people sing hallelujah to Jesus. We need wisdom to be discerning in our Christian faith.

With such wisdom we will be repentant of our sins. Examine your lives as young people. Look at yourselves in the mirror of the Word of God. How do you live? Are you wise? With the fear of the Lord in your heart you will be wise. You know what you will do? Not beg God for a rush of the Spirit to lift you up to a cloud of ethereal bliss; no, you will get down on your knees and pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner." You will ask God to show you the right way and assure you that His grace will be sufficient to help you walk in it.

The way will be open for you to pray fervently.

With such fear of the Lord making you wise in your prayers, you won't try to drag God to your level; you will seek to rise up and stand consciously in the presence of the holy God. Our prayers will not be man-centered: rather, they will be God-centered. The purpose of our prayers will be the praise of our God. Our thankful hearts will overflow with expressions of adoration. Even our requests will be sanctified with grace, we will not seek our will first of all, but the will of God. And that is wisdom!

With the fear of the Lord we will also have the wisdom to witness properly. You will not say, I'm a Christian and it doesn't make any difference how I live. You will witness in the words that come from your lips; you will have a burning eagerness to tell

others about Jesus Christ. You will share this together. In so doing you will not cheapen Jesus: rather, with reverence you will speak together of what Jesus means to you as your Saviour. He is the Son of God who went to Calvary in our behalf, and now He is our Lord!

You see, young people, wisdom is very important. Foolishness is so rampant. The fear of the Lord makes the difference.

May God use our meditation to instill in us the fear of His name in order that we may have wisdom.

In this way the God of all wisdom receives the glory, for His wisdom returns unto Him in thankful praise.

(The above is a transcript of a chapel speech presented at Western Christian High School at Hull, Iowa on Sept. 20, 1971).

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

THE REFORMATION PERIOD

THE SYNOD OF DORDT

Rev. H. Veldman

Continuing our quotation of the first proposition as presented to the synod of Dordt by the delegates from the Palatinate, we now complete it:

For He does sustain all by a general goodness; whereof Ps. 36:7; but He preserves the believers by a special goodness and grace in Christ, Who was prepared for them before the ages of the world, 2 Tim. 1:9. When we say this, then we do not destroy the merit of Christ and do not render useless for the elect their redemption through Christ and the reconciliation with God. For thus did God love His elect, scattered throughout the entire world, that He, to prove His righteousness, has willed to intercede, yea anticipate in the carrying out of the election a perfect satisfaction for their sins. Thus He elected them unto eternal life, that Christ should obtain for them, being sinners that same life with the price of His blood, in which sense they are said to be elect in Christ, Eph. 1:4. Although it is then true that this special love of the elect is absolutely distinguished from the first, not dependent upon any cause outside of God; nevertheless it is not absolutely distinguished from the latter, neither to be divorced from the means which God, according to His wise and righteous counsel, has subordinated in order to carry out and exercise His love. Look up for this the places, John 3:16; Rom. 3:24, 25; Eph. 1:4, 5, 6, 7; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10. Following this clear truth, we reject and cast from us the Proposition of the Remonstrants, and we place in its stead this Antithesis or contrary proposition.

At the conclusion of our preceding article we have already called attention to the fact that these delegates

to the Great Synod of Dordt here set forth their belief in a general goodness of God as extending to the things of this present time. This is also the theory of Common Grace of the late Dr. A. Kuyper. Calvin also taught this common grace. These delegates, however, are also firm in their maintaining that the love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus is very particular, extending only to the elect, and they reject the notion that this good pleasure of the Father also extends to the reprobates. Now we have never denied that this theory of Common Grace was taught in the past, also by John Calvin. And I believe that I may say that if the Christian Reformed Church, in 1924, had done nothing more than speak of this general goodness of God as extending to all men and as revealed only in the things of this present time, no split would have occurred in 1924 and we would not have been ejected out of that church at that time. The Three Points of 1924, however, also speak of the general grace of God, presenting as general the saving love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus, as when they speak of the general offer of the gospel, or of the general offer of salvation in the preaching of the gospel. Also these delegates from the Palatinate speak of this common goodness of the Lord in this first proposition. And it is undoubtedly true that many more of these synodical delegates believed in this general goodness of God. But this, however, is a striking thing: this general goodness of the Lord, revealing itself in the sunshine and the rain upon the just and the unjust, WAS NEVER INCORPORATED IN

THE CONFESSIONS. The fathers, as led by the Spirit of God and of Christ, were therefore never led to give this theory a name and place in our reformed creeds. It is true, of course, that the issue in 1618-1619 was not the theory of a general goodness of God, but the Arminian position of a conditional predestination of election and reprobation and a universal atonement of Christ upon the cross of Calvary. In 1924 the church made of this theory a dogma and demanded of us that we submit to this decision and teach nothing contrary to it. We were led by the Spirit of the Lord to reject these declarations of 1924. And what is the result? As far as our Prot. Ref. Churches are concerned, we have not departed one iota from the position we took in 1924. Is it not always characteristic of a heretical church that, once it departs from the truth, it departs ever farther and farther from the truth? But it is true of our churches that we have not departed one iota from our position of some forty-seven years ago. And what is true of the Christian Reformed Church which cast us out and refused to tolerate us in its membership? Has that church remained the same since those days? Has that church consistently adhered to the faith of our fathers, to the truths of historic Christianity, as they claim in their Back To God Hour? The history speaks for itself. There are undoubtedly many in the Christian Reformed Church today who are very alarmed because of conditions within their church. They have refused to discipline, synodically, a professor who openly declares himself in support of a universal atonement of Calvary. And this is not all. Many are the departures from the historic Christian faith, including a denial of the literal inspiration of the Bible and the historicity of the book of Genesis.

And, having refuted the first proposition of the Remonstrants, the delegates from the Palatinate submit their own version of what they believe to be the Scriptural presentation of the atonement as follows: "God the Father has ordained His Son Jesus Christ to be a redeemer and reconciler for our sin, out of the love whereby He particularly loves His elect unto everlasting life."

These delegates present a second proposition of the Remonstrants as follows: "Christ, according to the Father's and His own purpose has obtained for all and every man, without distinction, as well for them who perish as for those who are saved, reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life." After refuting this presentation of the Arminians in the light of the Word of God, they again submit their own and Scriptural version in these words: "Christ, according to the Father's and His own purpose, has indeed obtained for all and every elect alone the reconciliation with God, the forgiveness of sins, and everlasting life." Notice, please, the word "alone" here.

The third proposition of the Remonstrants which these delegates refute reads as follows: "The ransom

price of Christ is not only sufficient but also powerful in all and every one, for the atoning of the original sin, to accept in grace and into His covenant the entire human race; also finally, to impart unto it a sufficient grace." Refuting this presentation of the Arminians, these delegates declare that none disputes the sufficiency of the ransom price of Christ for all and every man. But, according to these delegates, their dispute with the Arminians does not revolve about this question of the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ, but whether the working and power of this ransom money has any power in all and every man, so that at least any of its fruits can reach all and every man. The Arminians teach that the original sin has not been imputed to anyone, whether child or adult, that the entire human race, in and with Adam, has been accepted in grace out of the general or common fall, yea, has been admitted to the covenant which God began with Adam, renewed with Noah, and in the last times has established and perfected through Jesus Christ. Thereupon these delegates present to the Great Synod their own positive presentation of the truth as follows: "The ransom money of Christ, it is true, is in itself sufficient for all and every man; but it is powerful unto the atonement of sins, whether original or actual, for the restoration in grace, according to the content of the gracious covenant, finally unto the imparting of sufficient and powerful grace in all of the elect, and in them alone." Notice again the use of the word "alone."

The fourth heresy of the Remonstrants which these delegates quote and refute reads as follows: "Christ died in the same sense for all sinners, but is risen and prays in the Heavens before the Father, with the intention to save in the same sense the believers alone." This proposition of the Remonstrants, these delegates declare, has a perceptible error, that it separates the acquiring and appropriation of the benefits of Christ from the objects, and divides them, and declares that they are not all appropriated by them for whom they were obtained. Teaching that Christ died for the entire human race, all men head for head, the Arminians realized, of course, that all men are not saved. Salvation was merited for everybody, but everybody does not appropriate this salvation unto himself. So Christ died in the same sense for all men, head for head, but He is risen and prays to the Father with the intention that only the believers may be saved. We understand, of course, that the Arminians mean to say that Christ prays only for the believers, but this is only because only the believers will to receive this salvation and be saved. This intercessory prayer of the risen Christ is a prayer, therefore, that rests for its fulfillment upon the faith of the sinner. This separation, so these delegates continue, must be made, in order that the Pelagian error of the accidental and uncertain enjoyment of the benefits of Christ, and of the everlasting salvation, may remain standing. Now the Scripture unites these two

(the obtaining of salvation by the blood of Christ and the appropriation of this salvation by the sinner) by an inseparable knot, inasmuch as it declares that it is also appropriated by those for whom it was obtained, and that it was obtained for those who appropriate. And then these delegates quote several passages from the Word of God, all emphasizing this oneness between the meriting of salvation by Christ upon the cross and our receiving of this salvation, such as Is. 53:11, John 10:15, 18, Rom. 4:25, 8:34, 1 John 2:1, Rom. 8:32 and 5:10. And then these delegates refute the charge of the Arminians, namely that the commandment to believe is weakened and the obedience of the believer is nullified, when it is declared that the obtaining of the benefits of Christ by the blood of Christ and the appropriation of the same are equally broad in scope. Of course, this is the old, old charge of the enemies of the truth, namely that the emphasis upon the sovereign and particular character of the grace and salvation of God tends to produce careless and profane christians. How can anyone be admonished to believe when everything has been determined from before the founda-

tions of the world, when Christ died only for the elect, when the Holy Spirit works irresistibly only in some, the elect of God? This charge of the Remonstrants is ably refuted by these delegates from the Palatinate, and then they conclude by presenting their own positive and Scriptural statement of the truth in the words: "Christ has both died and is risen, and prays in Heaven to the Father, for the elect and believers alone, that is, partly in their stead, partly unto their good." Notice, please, that these delegates do not only speak here of the believers but of the elect and believers, and the idea is, of course, that only the elect of the Lord become and are these believers.

I believe that these quotations from the delegates to the Great Synod of Dordt are of great interest to our readers, also and particularly to our younger readers, including our young people. This is surely instructive also in our present day and age, characterized, as it is, by an ever increasing denial of the particular character of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, also and especially in so-called reformed circles, among those who claim to champion the historic reformed faith.

Studies in Election

Its Exemplification

(continued)

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

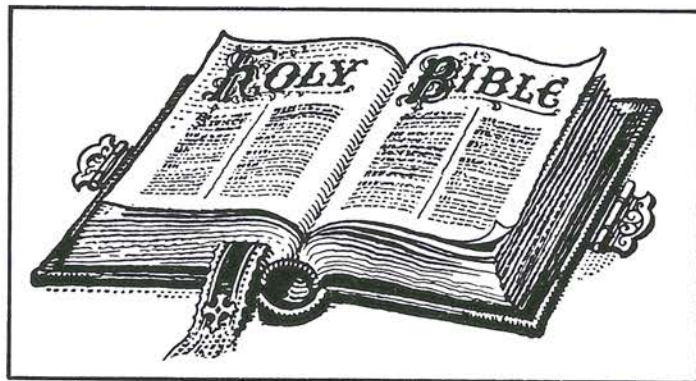
Instances of God's predestination we showed from both Old and New Testament. Also we indicated how this truth is opposed, especially by those of Arminian thinking. We proposed to show also how this opposition to true Presbyterianism has and does appear in some of the Presbyterian bodies. In the recent confessional perversions being perpetrated in the United Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., the doctrine of predestination was the first marked for extinction. Sometimes mother-tender intimidation is employed against this truth. It is said that, though scriptural, it is too easy to misunderstand, therefore is more dangerous than edifying, and so unwise to preach it. So, with increasing credal changes, we may expect that the least semblance of this doctrine will finally be expunged from the modern Presbyterian churches. This has already practically come to pass. For most Presbyterians have been sailing under a false flag, that is, their true colors are deep-dyed Arminianism. Is this not true of many, *many* who bear the name Reformed? Many, if they could only bring themselves to be honest, just honest, for a change, would leave the Presbyterian and

Reformed churches where they hibernate, to take up with the Unitarians, or at least go join the Arminian Baptists. If they had one grain of honesty, they would not pose as advocates of "good Calvinish." Some people, today, talk about being "more than a Calvinist." If we may so speak, then these many have a long, long way to go. For they are not only far from being Calvinist, but it is the least of their intentions of having any kind of Calvinism. And their purpose is to brainwash their dupes with humanism.

As the presbyterial form of government in the Presbyterian and Reformed churches is dying out, and democracy, socialism and communism are fast penetrating the churches and increasing in popularity everywhere, or at least are being forced on us whether we like it or not, while representative authority is more and more despised, it is no surprise that the authority of Scripture is denied. Following this thought, it is no surprise that the glorious truth of predestination should find its worst enemies within its own household. The writer was born, baptized and raised in what was then the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Before he

was born, the denomination drew up and adopted a document of a very shady character called "A Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith, 1902." Since the church was founded on the wonderful, truly Reformed Westminster standards, what was the purpose of this brief declaration? It sounded rather suspicious, but nevertheless, it was prepared in order to express the Reformed Faith "in untechnical terms," suggesting that the Westminster Confession is beyond even above average intelligence. It was also to be understood that the Brief Statement was only for "giving information" and "not with a view of its becoming a substitute or an alternative of our Confession of Faith." In this document we read, "God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. . . . He has provided a way of eternal life for all mankind" (Art. VI). This is not "giving information," but injecting the corruption of "universal redemption." If this is not substituting another creed for the Westminster, it is a compromise of that Confession. It is an Amyraldian drawbridge between Calvinism and Arminianism. At another place, election is said to me "unto holiness, service and salvation." It is added that "those who come to years of discretion can receive this salvation only through faith and repentance" (Art. VII), which implies that faith and repentance are outside salvation, are conditions unto it, and are the ground of election, not the results of it. Faith, however, has its origin in the preordination of God. For He not only requires "faith in Him that they may be saved," but also promises "to give unto all those that are ordained unto life His Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe" (W.C., VII, 3). Further, the Brief Statement says, "the kingdom of God is to be made manifest" in the brotherhood of man (Art. XIII). But the W.C. states that the kingdom of God is to be made manifest in a brotherhood of the redeemed, which "consists of all those throughout the

world, that profess the true religion together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God" (XXV, 2). The drawbridge of 1902 was found too heavy for the orthodox, the conservatives to draw up and to keep up. Then the liberals, as they intended, let it down with a crash. So the Westminster doctrine was given up to the enemy. In all too few places is its unadulterated form retained and defended.



ANNIVERSARY ANNOUNCEMENT

On the 7th of November, 1971, the Lord willing, our beloved parents,

MR. AND MRS. DANIEL POORTINGA

hope to celebrate their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. In gratitude to our Covenant God, we are thankful for the years He has given them to instruct us in the fear of our Lord. Our earnest prayer is that they may continue to experience God's loving kindness and tender mercies.

Their grateful children,

Mr. and Mrs. David M. Poortinga

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond K. Poortinga

Kevin, Jessica

Lansing, Ill.

Annual Reports

Mr. Chairman, Members of the R. F. P. A. and Friends,

Again the Board of the R. F. P. A. comes before you with our annual report and once again, by the grace of our Covenant God, we are thankful and rejoice to inform you that we have fulfilled our mandate, which according to your constitution consists in "the express purpose of witnessing to the Reformed Truth" and, "to witness to the truth contained in the Word of God and expressed in the Three Forms of Unity." We can inform you further, that our subscription list continues slowly, but steadily, to increase. During the past 12 months we had approximately 50 cancellations and 54

new subscribers were added to our mailing list. This indicates that our subscription list is holding, whereas the trend nowadays in the church world is that subscription lists of religious periodicals tend to decrease. At present 1,275 copies each issue are printed; 125 copies of which are retained for Bound Volumes, requests for back issues, and a mailing margin.

Cooperating with the Mission Committee of our churches, we are most happy to report that several contacts were made in various countries of the world. For example, interest in our publications have been received from people in South Africa, Australia, New

Zealand, England, and South America. It might also be of interest to the members present to learn that our *Standard Bearer* is sent to many countries. 43 copies of each issue are mailed to foreign countries such as Switzerland, Japan, Hungary, The Netherlands, England, New Zealand and Australia. Our brethren on the Island of Jamaica receive 22 copies and 14 are mailed to Canada. The bulk of our subscribers reside in our own state of Michigan. The distribution in the states is as follows:

572 copies in Michigan
 74 copies in Iowa
 70 copies in Illinois
 55 copies in California
 16 copies in New Jersey (a state which has no Prot. Ref. church as yet).

Your Board also was instrumental in the printing and distribution of over 5,000 of the recently printed folder catalog listing all the material published by the R. F. P. A. and other organizations of our Prot. Ref. Churches. Several new subscribers were obtained by means of this catalog.

Mr. Gerrit Pipe continues to be our mailing clerk and Mr. Henry Vander Wal, Business Manager.

The Board heartily thanks the Editor-in-Chief and department editors for their dedicated labors in the past year.

Board retirees this year are: G. Bouwkamp, J. Buiter and T. Rietsma.

We are also thankful for the many gifts received from individuals, societies, and congregations enabling us to "sound forth true Reformed testimony," while it is yet day. We wait upon our covenant God's blessing in our endeavor, mindful that, "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it, except the Lord keep the city the watchmen waketh but in vain."

Respectfully submitted,
 G. Bol (Sec'y)

Balance on hand Sept. 1, 19704,735.85

Receipts:

Subscriptions6,406.90
 Memberships99.00
 Gifts6,160.17
 Advertising156.00
 Bound Volumes518.00

Miscellaneous166.70
 Receipts for the year13,506.77
 Total receipts18,242.62

Disbursements:

Wobbema Printing Co.4,582.75
 National Correct Color1,078.00
 Photo Composition Service4,920.00
 Postage563.99
 Holland Bookbinding Co.317.55
 H. VanderWal — transportation expense ..74.96
 G. Pipe — transportation expense100.00
 Miscellaneous156.59

Disbursements for the year11,793.84

Balance on hand Sept. 1, 19716,448.78

Gifts

Protestant Reformed Churches

Doon128.72
 Edgerton45.60
 First1,005.95
 Holland220.06
 Hope864.43
 Hudsonville630.37
 Hull158.87
 Kalamazoo36.62
 Loveland125.88
 Lynden38.54
 Oaklawn4.51
 Randolph91.79
 Redlands145.12
 Southeast568.55
 South Holland586.67
 Southwest82.53

Societies

Hudsonville Ladies Aid20.00
 First Church Ladies Aid50.00
 Eastern Ladies League50.00
 South Holland Ladies Aid25.00
 First Church Men's Soc.30.00
 Southwest Men's Soc.25.00
 Hope Men's Soc.35.00

Total Gifts

Churches4,633.61
 Societies235.00
 Individuals1,291.56
 6,160.17

— G. Bouwkamp, Treasurer

News From Our Churches

CLASSIS REPORT

Classis began its October session with devotions by Rev. J. Heys, chairman of the July session, and after the credentials were read and received was duly constituted.

The reports of the Stated Clerk, the Classical Committee, and the Deputies *ad Examina* were received. Classis was informed through these reports of the receipt of the ministerial credentials of Rev. C. Hanko, who soon will be laboring in our Hudsonville congregation, and of the successful classical examination and

subsequent ordination of Candidate Rodney Miersma, who from here on in will be known as the Rev. Rodney Miersma.

The Finance Committee constituted of Elders J. Buiter and J. Dykstra, Jr. reported expenses of \$16.40. The Classical Appointment Committee adopted the following schedule for Hope Church: Oct. 17 — H. Veldman; Oct. 31 — M. Schipper; Nov. 21 — G. Van Baren; Dec. 5 — R. Harbach; Dec. 19 — J. Heys; Jan. 2 — C. Hanko.

A protest against the site of the proposed Theological School building was submitted by a local consistory but was tabled because technically the time for protesting this synodical decision is past. The consistory was advised to submit an overture to our January session. Classis was once again requested to approve the erasure of a baptized member. After determining that the consistory had labored diligently with the individual, the consent of classis was gained.

A special note of thanks was expressed to the classis by the Hudsonville delegation for the services given by classis during their vacancy.

The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were answered satisfactorily and classis was adjourned. Classis will meet again on January 5, 1972 at Southeast Church.

Jon Huiskens
Stated Clerk, Classis East

We have several short items of interest with which we would like to begin this time. Our church in Redlands has extended a call to Rev. D. Engelsma, from a trio which included also Rev. R. Harbach and Rev. G. Van Baren.

The congregation at Redlands planned to hold a Farewell for Rev. and Mrs. Hanko and Alice on Friday, October 22.

On September 27 there was a congregational meeting in our South Holland church, for the purpose of considering "the council's proposal for the plan and contractor's bid for the new parsonage."

And then we have a long item, also of interest, we trust. We indicated in the news column of the last issue of this magazine that there had been, this past summer, another workshop attended by a number of teachers in our Protestant Reformed Schools. Perhaps you would be interested in hearing a little about the efforts expended there.

We could say, first of all, that the session was attended by Mr. Harry Langerak and Miss Agatha

Lubbers from Covenant, Mr. Fred Hanko and Mr. Darrel Huiskens and Mr. Gerald Kuiper from Hope, and Miss Carol De Jong from Adams. Miss Beverly Hoekstra, from Loveland, attended part of the time. Mr. Lamm Lubbers, of South Holland, served as director of the workshop.

As you perhaps know, the workshop is sponsored by the Federation of Protestant Reformed School Societies, whose membership includes, at present, our Adams, Hope, and South Holland Protestant Reformed Schools. The stated goal, or purpose, of the Federation is, among other things, to "provide seminars to promote the development, understanding, and presentation of distinctive Christian education." To that end, the Federation has, for the past two summers, used funds raised by assessment of member school societies, to provide stipends for teachers who attend the summer workshop. And, judging by the fruit of the past two workshops, the money has been very well spent. The work of the 1970 workshop centered around the teaching of Literature. This past summer, some of our teachers again met together, this time in a two week session, and concentrated their attention on the teaching of Social Studies.

As in the previous workshop, the *primary* benefit was derived by the participants themselves. It's beyond doubt that the participants are better equipped, as a result of attendance at the seminar, to provide education from a truly Protestant Reformed Christian perspective. The attending teachers spent some time developing and discussing a set of objectives for the teaching of Social Studies. Further, they reviewed the current Social Studies curricula in our schools and considered possible improvement. And, perhaps most importantly, they directed their attention to specific problems or concerns which arise repeatedly in the study of history. Each member volunteered to "undertake a study" of such a problem, to "search for Biblical directives," and present a paper, which was then discussed and modified. Topics included the Biblical position with regard to war, revolution, economic systems, decline of nations, linguistic development, and the relationship between church and state.

The primary benefit, we said, belongs to the participants. But the intention of the Federation is that it not be limited to them. We trust, therefore, that, as was the case with the Literature Studies workshop, there will soon be a written product which will make it possible for other of our teachers to benefit from the labors of the 1971 "Summer Session for Social Studies."

D.D.