

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

**Rejoicing At Jehovah's Word
(Editorial)**

**Doctrinal Drift in the Netherlands
(All Around Us)**

News From Jamaica

**The Christian Wife
(The Strength of Youth)**

**The Synod of Dordrecht on Atonement
(Contending for the Faith)**

CONTENTS:

Editorials —	
Editor's Notes	2
Convocation Address: Rejoicing At Jehovah's Word	3
Meditation —	
Built Into A Holy Temple	7
All Around Us —	
Evidences of Doctrinal Drift In The Netherlands	9
Ecumenical Developments	10
Feature —	
The Concern of the Reformation for Christian Education (7)	11
The Day of Shadows —	
A Personal Involvement	13
Contending for the Faith —	
The Doctrine of Atonement (Reformation Period)	15
The Strength of Youth —	
The Christian Wife	17
Mission News —	
News From Jamaica	19
From Holy Writ —	
Exposition of Hebrews	21
News From Our Churches	23

THE STANDARD BEARER

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Editorials

Editor's Notes

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Last Chance! Well, almost the last . . . At a recent meeting of our Publications Committee, the book publishing arm of our R.F.P.A., I learned that our stock of *Reformed Dogmatics* is down to 79 books. That means that before long the supply will be exhausted. If you are one of those people who tends to put things off and do not yet have this volume, you will be wise to delay no longer. You just might wait too long! The price is \$14.95, and the address is: R.F.P.A. Publications Committee, P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501.

Bound Volumes. This issue of our magazine marks the beginning of a new volume year under the grace of our covenant God. The 48th! But this also means that Volume 47 is complete and that before long the bound volumes will be ready. If you are not on the list, put your order in. Send it to our efficient business manager, Mr. H.. Vander Wal, at the address listed in the masthead.

Old-New Department. There has been a change made. In this issue you will discover that the Rev. J. Heys is no

longer the editor of *In His Fear*, which he wrote for many years. He has now taken over the department on Old Testament history. But it will not be called *A Cloud of Witnesses* as it was when Rev. Woudenberg edited that department. We have gone back to the name *The Day of Shadows*, under which the late Rev. G. M. Ophoff wrote for many years. Thanks to Rev. Woudenberg for past labors! Welcome to the new department, Rev. Heys! No, Rev. Woudenberg is not quitting the *Standard Bearer*. He has promised some articles of a different type. Wait and see!

Other Goodies! I've been holding out on you until the beginning of the new volume. But if everything goes

according to plan, you will be seeing more changes in the *Standard Bearer* in this new volume. For one thing, Rev. Engelsma is again appearing in print. In this issue he continues a project begun in the previous volume: The Concern of the Reformation for Christian Education. He will be completing this series, but also writing on other subjects. *The Strength of Youth* is planned for all 21 issues this year; and Rev. Robert Decker has become co-editor with Rev. Jay Kortering of this department. They plan to alternate. We have also been promised several articles by the Rev. Dale Kuiper and by the Rev. George Lanting. All in all, there will be somewhat of a new look! We hope you will enjoy it.

Convocation Address: Rejoicing At Jehovah's Word

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

[Editor's Note: On the evening of September 8, at our Hope Protestant Reformed Church, we had a public program in connection with our Seminary Convocation. A small, but attentive audience joined the faculty and student body for this program, led by the Rev. H. Veldman, president of the Theological School Committee. In his capacity as Rector of our school, your editor delivered the convocation address, reproduced below from notes,]

We may find what might well serve as the keynote, the motto, in all our seminary labors during the coming term in Psalm 119:162, "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." This entire psalm extols the Word of God. With its several synonyms for the Word, and with its references to that Word in every verse except one, and with the twenty-two sections of what might be called an acrostic on the Word of God, it is an altogether amazing psalm. I suggest that you read it carefully sometime in its entirety, rather than a section or two at a time, as we probably are accustomed to do: you will be impressed anew by its riches. The particular section in which verse 162 is found may be said, I believe, to stress the idea of God-fearing joy at the Word of God. Now it is precisely that Word, you know, which — directly or indirectly — is at the basis of and is the object of all our studies in the seminary. And these studies are, in turn, aimed at preparation for the ministry of the *Word*. Hence, it is indeed fitting that at the beginning of this term's labors at school we take this word to heart: "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil."

Let me make three introductory observations of a practical nature. In the first place, I point out that this expression of the psalmist ought to be, by faith, the expression of our own attitude. We should imitate the

poet in this expression. Notice that the expression of the text is very personal. It is not a mere dogmatic statement: God's people rejoice at His Word. No, the psalmist speaks personally. He speaks of his own experience, and that, too, *coram Deo*, before the face of God. And the intent is that we shall follow him in this expression: by faith we shall say, "I rejoice at thy word. . . ." There may be differences of circumstances and occasion between us and the psalmist. Those differences are not essential. We ought to say — and I have in mind our labors in the Word and doctrine at the seminary in particular "I rejoice at thy word, O Jehovah." In the second place, let me point out that this verse expresses what is the right spiritual attitude of him who comes into contact with that Word of our covenant God, namely, *joy*. And, in the third place, I point out that this attitude of joy should serve to furnish us with the right perspective and the proper motivation in our labors with the Word of God. Let us keep these three observations in mind while we briefly study the meaning of this verse.

The Word

The poet says that he rejoices at *God's Word*. What does that mean?

By the Word here is evidently meant the Scriptures, or the Word of God as we have the infallible record of it in the Scriptures in their entirety.

The Bible also speaks of the Word of God with respect to the Son of God: He is the Word. He is the Word of God as God eternally speaks it to Himself. Or it speaks of that Word of God as spoken in the work of creation: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Scripture also speaks of the Word of God as spoken on particular occasions and to individuals. In

that sense the Word of the Lord came to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, and to the prophets. But evidently the psalmist does not refer to any of these. Nor does he refer here to a Word of God which had come personally to him by direct revelation. But he has in mind the Word of God in the *Scriptures*. This is the idea throughout the psalm, in fact. The psalmist was in possession of the Word of God recorded, and as it contained, for example, commandments, statutes, precepts, testimonies, ordinances, judgments, promises. It is that Word of God which he could read, upon which he could meditate, which he could study and contemplate, that he has in mind.

Now what is the character of that Word of God which the psalmist possessed and which we also possess?

In the first place, it is always the Word of *God*, that is, the Word of which God is the subject, the Word which God speaks. Here in vs. 162 this aspect is even emphasized by the particular term which is used in the Hebrew, in distinction from the term used in the preceding verse. Both are translated by "word" in our English Bible; and both denote the same Word of God. But the terms are not quite the same. By the term in our text there is emphasized the idea that this Word is the Word which God speaks. In the second place, the Word of God is a word which God speaks concerning *Himself*. It is the revelation of God. Through His Word we always learn to know God. We learn to know Who God is and what God is and what God does. God is God! And when He speaks, He always speaks concerning Himself. He is the purpose of His own speech. And if I may run ahead for a moment, this is the deepest reason why that Word of God is found by the psalmist and by us to be so unspeakably rich, and therefore delightful. When you come upon that Word and are filled with joy at that Word, it is because you find God in that Word. And it is because the God Who speaks concerning Himself in that Word is the infinitely deep and unsearchable and rich and delightful God! In the third place, and this must have the emphasis here, that Word is the Word of *Jehovah*, the Word of God as the God of our salvation, our covenant God, in Christ. That is the special significance of the Word of God as we have it in the *Scriptures*. Nowhere else does God speak of Himself as the God of our salvation in the face of Jesus Christ our Savior. Nowhere else does He speak of Himself as our covenant God than in those *Scriptures*. This is the significance of the Word of God here. It is God's Word to His people, revealing to them Who He is and what He does through Jesus Christ our Lord. Such is the central content of all the *Scriptures*.

There is another question: how is that Word spoken to us?

The answer to this question is three-fold.

In the first place, that Word was spoken by the wonder of revelation throughout the ages until it was full.

The Word of God as the God of our salvation was spoken from the very beginning in paradise, Genesis 3:15, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed..." It was spoken through patriarchs and prophets throughout the old dispensation. It was spoken through types and shadows in Israel. Centrally, it was spoken through God's Son in the flesh, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the fulness of time — in all His manifestation, in all His words and works, in His incarnation, His suffering and atoning death, in His resurrection and ascension and exaltation at the right hand of God, in His reception of the Spirit and His pouring out of that Spirit through Whom He dwells in His church, and in His promised coming again to judge the quick and the dead. And it was spoken through the apostles in the new dispensation.

In the second place, that Word is *Preserved* for us in the *Scriptures*. That is the wonder of inspiration. The Word of God — and let me emphasize: exclusively the Word of God — is preserved for us in the *Scriptures* through the inspiration of the Spirit Who led men and guided men to write in such a way that what they wrote was not the word of man, but the Word of God, so that in the Bible in its entirety we have the perfect and infallible record of the Word of God.

And, in the third place, that Word of God has been *entrusted* to the church. Also this belongs to the wonder whereby we have the Word of God. God entrusted His Word to the church, so that from many other books that have been written only the sixty-six books of our Bible were collected into one, while all the rest were excluded. How was that possible? Was it accidental? Was it arbitrary? Not at all. Let us use the example of a jig-saw puzzle. Who cannot tell whether all the pieces of that puzzle are there? Who cannot distinguish whether a piece is missing? Who cannot discern which are the proper pieces of that puzzle in distinction from any which do not belong to it? So it was with the church and the canon of Holy Scripture. Inwardly the church was guided by the Spirit, that is, the principle here. And the objective principle is that the church was guided by the fulness of the Christ-revelation.

The Contents of the Word

Notice that the psalmist speaks here in the singular. He does not say: "I rejoice at thy words." But he says: "I rejoice at thy word." This signifies that this Word is *one*. It is one organic whole. As God is one, as the Son is one, as Christ is one, so the Word is one. And it is always essentially the same and complete. You might be inclined to say that when the psalmist writes of the Word of God here, and when we speak of the Word of God, these cannot possibly be the same. After all, the *Scriptures* were not by any means completed yet when the psalmist wrote. But we have the finished *Scriptures*. But this would certainly not be correct. There is difference of opinion as to the identity of this psalmist

and as to when he lived. Some place him in the period long after the return from the captivity; others place him much earlier in history, and even identify him with David. Certain it is that he did not possess the completed Scriptures, not even the completed Old Testament, when he wrote. Yet he speaks of "thy word." He does not say that he rejoices in a fraction of God's Word, in a section of God's Word, some words of God's Word. No, he has the whole Word of God. That one Word of God was spoken already in paradise. It became clearer and fuller and richer in its meaning and brighter in its light as time went on and as God continued to speak it. But it was always that same Word, the Word of the God of our salvation. And it was revealed in all its fulness in the fulness of time, when our Lord Jesus Christ sojourned among us. And its record was completed through the apostles. Yet it was always the same Word. That Word the psalmist possessed. That Word we possess.

From the point of view of its contents the oneness of that Word consists in its being the revelation of God in Christ — our Savior, our Sanctifier, our Perfecter, our Lord and our God. You may distinguish various aspects of that Word. You may distinguish many and varied words in that Word. The poet does that in this very psalm when he employs all the various synonyms for the Word of God which you find in this psalm. In the main, you may distinguish that Word as the revelation of the promise: the good news of our salvation and all that is connected with it. And you may distinguish it as the revelation of the will of the God of our salvation concerning our life and walk as His covenant people in the midst of the world, as this is so often emphasized in this psalm. But centrally that Word is the one revelation of the God of our salvation in Jesus Christ. That is its content.

And that Word is rich! It is like great spoil! When you come upon that Word, it is like coming upon rich spoil. Such is the implication of the figure and the comparison here. We will return to that presently.

But for the moment I want to emphasize that that Word is rich. This is the reason for the poet's joy.

And if you ask why that Word of God is so rich, I would answer, in the first place, that it is rich simply because it is the Word of God, the speech of God Himself. What a wonder this is! What a wonder it is that God condescends to speak to us! What a wonder it is that we possess that unmingled unadulterated speech of God Himself in the Scriptures, on our level, in our human language — and yet so that it is indeed the Word of God! In the second place, it is rich, as I have already pointed out, because — and this is the deepest reason — it always speaks of God, Who is Himself infinitely rich. This is the deepest reason why that Word is always new. Its riches are unending as God is unending.

This is why you can read that Word and study that Word and exegete that Word and preach on that Word, and never be finished! You always find new riches — much spoil — in that Word. In the third place, that Word is rich because it speaks of infinite riches of grace and of never-ending and unfathomable blessings of salvation through sovereign grace — of things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and which have never arisen in the heart of man. How wonderful! In the fourth place, that Word is rich because it reveals to us the knowledge of Him Whom to know is life eternal, through Jesus Christ Whom He has sent. It reveals to us that knowledge of God which is the knowledge of friendship, of covenant fellowship! How delightful!

Joy At God's Word

It is this objective riches of the Word of God that is subjectively reflected and echoed in the psalmist's confession here: "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil." And the language of the text is such that the poet emphasizes that this is his constant attitude. Literally, he pictures himself as constantly leaping for joy. And he describes that joy concretely by way of the comparison which he adds: "...as one that findeth great spoil."

You see, there are various possible attitudes which one may assume towards these Scriptures, the Word of God.

One can assume a coldly calculating, critical attitude when he takes the Bible in hand. And then he may attempt to maintain in various ways and various degrees that that Word is everything but the Word of God. That is principally the attitude of unbelief. A person who assumes this attitude has no joy at the Word of God. The attitude of joy, such as the psalmist expresses, is a spontaneous and naive attitude which excludes that shrewd and calculating criticism. And let me emphasize, because this critical attitude is so common today: there is no joy, no real joy, in such criticism. Another possibility is the assumption of a mechanical, coldly intellectual attitude. I often think that this constitutes a real danger for seminary students and theological professors and ministers. They are constantly busy with the Scriptures. That is their work, — and rightly so. But when they are busy with that Word of God day in and day out, sometimes plodding along and laboring hard, sometimes laboring under a certain compulsion, under the necessity of an assignment, or under the necessity of preparing a sermon by a certain deadline, there is a certain danger that you come to look upon your work as a job rather than a calling, as a task rather than a pleasure and privilege. You can labor with the Scriptures as a man on an assembly line labors at his machine. Sometimes before one realizes it he can get into such a frame of mind. This is at least one of the reasons why our attitude in our labor with the Word should always be a prayerful one.

But the psalmist says: "I rejoice, I leap for joy..."

That presupposes, of course, that he comes into contact with that Word. That Word is the object of his contemplation and his meditation, and that, too, constantly. It means, in the second place, that the Word of God finds receptivity in his regenerated heart. For we must remember that this is the language of a regenerated child of God. This joy is the reaction only of a heart that has been gripped by the power of God's grace, not the reaction of a totally depraved nature. And in and from that regenerated heart originates his joy. That joy is the opposite of a morbid and gloomy and critical and belittling attitude. From that heart springs a delight of the mind to know and to search and to probe and to understand that Word of God and its riches. From that heart springs a delight of the will to heed and to walk in the light of and to do that Word of God. And from that heart springs a delight of all our desires, so that they all concentrate around that Word of God. And this implies, of course, that we study that Word, those Scriptures, diligently and prayerfully. For through the Spirit of Christ that Word must enter our heart and mind and our entire being, so that we apprehend its riches and taste them.

In characteristic language of the Old Testament and of the psalms, the poet reenforces what he says here by a comparison: "...as one that findeth great spoil."

You recognize the picture. It is the picture of the battlefield after the battle, when the spoils of warfare are discovered and divided. The point of the comparison is not that of the way in which one attains to this great spoil, but that of the joy of one that findeth great spoil. If I may point to a couple of Scriptural illustrations: this is the joy which the mother of Sisera and her wise ladies are imagined as anticipating in the song of Deborah and Barak, Judges 5:29,30: "Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, Have they not sped, have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of diverse colours of needlework, of divers colours of needlework on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil?" Or it is the delight of those lepers, in the time of Elisha, when the Lord miraculously delivered Samaria from the siege of the Syrians, II Kings 7. You can imagine their excitement when they came upon the abandoned camp of the Syrians, as they are described in verse 8: "And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it; and came again, and entered into another

tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it." You can sense their amazed excitement. And then they come to their senses, and they realize that they must share these good tidings and go and tell the king's household. This is the idea of this comparison in our text. Notice that this joy is not something simply subjective. The reason and occasion for the joy is the finding of objective riches, much spoil. And thus it is when we come upon that Word, the Word of God. The result is excitement, ecstasy, delight at coming upon the depth of the riches of that Word of God! It is the excitement of one that returns and comes upon new and unending riches and depths every time again. It is the kind of rejoicing that makes the psalmist leap for joy! No, indeed, this joy is no shallow and unfounded and momentary emotion. It is a deep-seated and well-founded joy and an excited and ecstatic joy of one who has tasted the riches of grace and the depth of the riches of the knowledge of God.

Let me conclude where I began.

Let that fundamental attitude of joy fill us and guard us against ever under-estimating and under-evaluating the Word of God, or even beginning to criticize it. I assure you that its riches are beyond our boldest comprehension. For that Word is the revelation of the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, of Whom, and through Whom, and unto Whom are all things! You as students might be said to stand at the beginning of your contacts and your labors with that Word of God. From that point of view you have only begun to probe its much spoil. I, as one of your professors, have a good many more years of experience in this respect. But I, too, have not begun to reach that end of the riches of that Word. And if the Lord gives us many more years in these labors, we shall never reach the end of those unending riches. I say again: its riches are beyond our boldest comprehension. There is ample reason to rejoice continually.

And, in the second place, let the fundamental perspective and motivation of that joy move us and encourage us in our work. When we might be inclined to think that our labor is drudgery and that our load is too heavy, that the effort is not worthwhile, that the struggle is too great, or to imagine that with all the exegesis in the world we cannot find much riches and cannot mine much gold from the Word, cannot find much reason to leap for joy — then let us consider again and learn to say anew, as we go back to that Word: "I leap for joy at thy word, as one that findeth much spoil."

May God grant that this may be our attitude.

The Standard Bearer's witness goes to many overseas addresses; your continued generous support will help expand this witness.

Meditation

Built Into A Holy Temple

Rev. M Schipper

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

I Peter 2: 4,5.

Not another admonition or exhortation do the words of this text intend to be. In the light of the preceding verses of this chapter you might be inclined to interpret this portion of the Word of God thus. In the preceding the apostle admonished the newborn babes in Christ to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby. So in the text you might conclude that the apostle continues to say that we ought to build ourselves up into a spiritual house, into a holy priesthood, in order that we may offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable unto God. Yet this can hardly be the significance.

Rather the text should be regarded as a statement of fact; and as the translation has it, ought to be understood in the indicative sense. Our reason for this conclusion is that one can hardly say: be built up. You cannot admonish stones to be built up. The apostle therefore is not exhorting the believers to be built up into an holy temple, but is simply stating the fact that this is precisely what is taking place when they as newborn babes in Christ are feeding on the Word.

But what is the idea of this? What is the significance of being built up into a holy temple?

The temple or spiritual house is a covenant conception. In the temple God dwells with His people under one roof. The believers, as mere individuals, have no significance by themselves. Emphatically we would remind you that the Bible knows of no individualism. This is precisely the error of Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism, which is also called Arminianism. These isms are concerned with the individual. Their gospel is intended for the individual. But the Bible never approaches us from this point of view. O, to be sure, it speaks to the individual, but always as he is related to others. Nor is it so that believers are saved as mere individuals. Though it is true that I as an individual believer am saved, and can speak from experience of my salvation in Christ, and can even go so far as to say that Christ died for me on Calvary's cross; I can never do this apart from all the others whom Christ also saves. The reason for this is plainly that God ordains a spiritual house, a holy temple. The heart of this temple is God Himself. He is God, and ordains His own self-glory. Around Him are His people in Christ. This is the

eternal purpose of God as expressed by the apostle Paul in the first chapters of his epistle to the Ephesians and the Colossians. God gave a certain people to Christ to be gathered by Him into God's presence.

This eternal purpose is determined by God in sovereign election. God did not choose a mere multitude of individuals who have no connection. A house is not a mere pile of bricks. It is a unity, in which every part has its own significant place and function, and all the parts together express the thought of the architect. So it is also in the temple which God builds.

A beautiful house with one central thought in it! Each part of it is carefully designed to fit in its own proper place so that it may contribute to the beauty of the whole. A most beautiful fellowship, characterized by a harmonious unity—not a monotonous unity—but a rich distinction. All to serve the everlasting praise of the Artificer,—God! Not the glory of the stones, but the glory of the Architect! And every part contributing to the glory of the whole. This is the idea of the spiritual house God is building throughout the ages through Christ.

A historical reality!

In the Old Testament this house of God appeared in the figure of a rectangle, prefigured already in Paradise, which lay eastward in Eden. However, the figure is more sharply drawn in the tabernacle Moses was ordered to construct, called the tabernacle of the wilderness, with its holy place and holy of holies in which was the ark of the covenant with its mercy seat behind the veil, and its other furniture in the holy place the candlestick, the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, etc., and the outer court. After this pattern Solomon later built the temple.

In the New Testament the rectangle becomes a square. With the death and resurrection of Christ the veil of the temple is rent from top to bottom and that temple of Solomon loses its significance. Now the house of God is spread out over all the earth whence God gathers His people. Christ, through the operation of the Spirit, calls His people from the four corners of the earth, out of every nation, tribe, and tongue. Hence, the house of God may be compared to the square.

When the house of God shall dwell, then it may be compared to the perfect cube. The apostle John in the Revelation beholds the city four-square, the New Jerusalem. Then heaven and earth shall be united in perfect fellowship, and all the living stones shall have been fitted into their proper place, and the house of God shall be finished, in which He shall realize His covenant with them forever.

Such is the historical development and reality of the Holy Temple, in which is realized an holy priesthood, a spiritual house. Then God's covenant shall be perfected forever!

Of living stones is the holy temple built!

Not of dead stones, such as they are by nature. If this is what the believers are, like dead stones simply cemented on one another, as bricks used by the mason to construct a building, then the apostle could not speak of them as coming to Christ, the living Stone. Believers are not dead stocks and blocks. Rather, the temple of God is made up of living stones. Living they are, not merely because they are rational, and spiritual beings, but more particularly because they are regenerated. They have been born again from above, not of corruptible seed, but by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever.

Living stones they are (not lively, as the translation has it), who are coming constantly and continuously to Christ. Should they cease to come to Him, they would not be living anymore. Daily and all the day are they called, and they come to Christ, of Whom they have great need. All their life is bound up in Him Whom the text says is: the living Stone. Christ is the elect Stone, Chosen of God and precious. Living is He, not only because He is the manifestation of the living God; but He is the Mediator, Who is become a life-giving Spirit. After He died on the cross to atone for and to save His people, God raised Him from the dead. He attained unto immortality and life. This immortality and life He gives to His people. So they become living stones, after Christ first comes to them. But now having been made alive, they must come to Him constantly; to Him in Whom is all their life and salvation. To Him they come by faith through the Word — through the Word which is preached unto them, the milk of which they must drink also as newborn babes. The term "coming" in the text stresses the point not only that they come to Christ only once to make contact with Him, but it signifies a constant activity. Yea, more, it suggests that there is more and more an appropriation of Him, so that they continue to grow in His grace and knowledge.

O, indeed, they could not come to Him of themselves! He must, and He did come unto them first. This He did when He caused them to be born again. And secondly, He does this also through the living and pure Word of the gospel. And now as a fruit of His grace, they respond by coming constantly to Him, and appro-

priating Him as He is revealed to them in the preaching of the gospel.

And what is the purpose of all this?

To offer up spiritual sacrifices!

Well-pleasing to God through Jesus Christ!

You see, because these living stones which are built into an holy temple are at the same time a spiritual house, they by coming constantly to Christ are also become a priesthood. They become priests who completely consecrate themselves to the service and praise of God.

Christ is their High Priest! He it was Who was appointed to realize the house of God. He it was of Whom it was written: "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do Thy will, O God." This He did not merely by bringing a sacrifice as the priests did in the tabernacle and temple, but the offering He brought was Himself. In body and soul, in mind and spirit, He gave Himself in complete consecration to the will and service of God. All the high priests that ever served in the sanctuary were only faint pictures of Him Who is called the Great High Priest. As Mediator and Saviour of His people, He also through His redemptive work makes them kings and priests unto God. And coming to Christ constantly these living stones also become priests, consecrated unto God. O, to be sure, they need not, as He, to offer up sacrifices of blood to atone. Through His sacrifice all blood sacrifices have an end. But they are required to consecrate themselves, and all that they have unto the service and praise of God. They offer up spiritual sacrifices, that is, sacrifices as fruits of the Spirit of Christ. They have really nothing of themselves they can offer. All their sacrifices must be supplied to them by the Spirit of Christ.

And this is why the text states emphatically: sacrifices through Jesus Christ. Apart from Christ, the living stones, the anointed priests, have nothing to offer. It is all of grace!

And this is also why the text informs us that the sacrifices are well-pleasing to God. God has seen to it that we cannot bring anything of ourselves to Him, or it is first given unto us of God through Christ, in order that the spiritual sacrifices may be pleasing to Him and serve unto His glory.

Those sacrifices, those offerings which are given to us of mere grace by God Himself through Jesus Christ, are the only sacrifices which please Him. For in the house of His covenant only that may appear which is of Him, and through Him, and unto Him; in order that all the glory may be His alone!

Thus the living Stone, rejected and disapproved of by men, over Whom men fell to their own destruction, but Who was by God counted elect, a precious Stone, to Whom we as living stones may come and find in Him all that is necessary to make us become that holy temple in which God is pleased to forever dwell, — in

which temple He shall behold the work of His own grace which is most pleasing to Him, should also be most pleasing to us.

To Him we will indeed come when we are new-born babes desiring the sincere milk of the Word that we

may grow thereby, having tasted that the Lord is gracious. And finding in Him all of our salvation, we shall respond indeed as a royal priesthood with spiritual sacrifices well pleasing to God.

All Around Us

Evidences of Doctrinal Drift in the Netherlands Ecumenical Developments

Prof. H. Hanko

EVIDENCES OF DOCTRINAL DRIFT IN THE NETHERLANDS

In a couple of past issues of *Calvinist Contact*, the editors included a series of quotes from various Dutch papers which had been brought together and which show how far the *Gereformeerde Kerken* have fallen into apostasy. These quotes show as clearly as anything can that there is, among the leaders of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, almost no evidence of the reformed faith left.

Professor Koole, in "Gereformeerd Weekblad," Sept. 16, 1966:

The Bible is an ancient Oriental description of history which one should not expect to be absolutely exact.

Drs. T. M. Gilhuis, in "Opdracht en Dienst," Jan. 1, 1966:

The snake in Paradise, Balaam's donkey, and Jonah's whale are the three animals to which "saving grace" is attributed, but whose stories we are not to take literally.

Professor Bakker, in "Gereformeerd Weekblad," Oct. 14, 1966:

(On II Cor. 11:3: "but I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ") In II Cor. 11:3, the apostle Paul is limited by his own horizon. The unsuspected witnesses have merely adjusted themselves to the opinion of their contemporaries, or they have said so in their ignorance.

Dr. F. L. Box, in "Trouw," Jan. 8, 1966:

Paul has read the creation story regarding the duality and the individuality of man and woman through colored glasses.

Professor Kuitert, April 20, 1963, at the Conference of Christian Scientists:

Genesis 1 is a story borrowed from the Babylonian myths. God's creation has never begun (sic) "good" from the beginning. Genesis 3 is probably not a record of the facts. (as reported in the Netherlands *Dagblad*)

Professor Kuitert, Oct. 5, 1966, in a meeting of the Christian Pedagogical Studies Centre:

There has never been an Adam and no Eve either; there never existed a Paradise that was created without sin and death.

Professor Kuitert, in the "Friese Kerkbode," Nov. 11, 1966:

There never was a falling into sin.

Professor Kuitert, May 13, 1966, as reported in "Trouw" on the annual Theological School Day in Kampen:

You cannot say that something really happened because it says so in the Bible. For instance, in the time of Joshua, Jericho did not exist.

Professor Rothuizen, in "Centraal Weekblad," June 12, 1966:

Homosexuality is no sin.

Professor Rothuizen, in "Trouw," Oct. 15, 1966:

When the homosexual author VanhetReve compares God with a donkey with whom he commits fornication, that is not intended as blatant blasphemy. In many respects, Vanhet Reve is a Christian author.

Rev. Zwanenburg, in the "Groninger Kerkbode," Jan. 9, 1965:

I wish to deviate from the doctrine of original sin.

Professor H. Ridderbos, in "Trouw," May 9, 1966:

The Bible has no authority regarding the expression of a certain concept-view of the world, nor as far as style or historical statements are concerned.

Professor H. Ridderbos, May 7, 1966, in the "Nieuwe Haagse Krant":

We are increasing our understanding of the fact that the real authority of the Bible lies in its contents, not in its formal authority.

Mr. G. Vander Wal, in "The Free University Magazine," Sept. 1, 1969:

Western society has to be changed radically. Its pretended values are void. Democracy is a joke. We want socialism, solidarity, creativity, autonomy, and the complete development of self. The Free Univers-

ity must put its services at the disposal of the oppressed and those who are without justice.

Professor Kuitert, in "Centraal Weekblad," Nov. 8, 1969:

If a mother expects a child that she has not ordered, she has the absolute right to request abortion. It makes me very angry to think that society can be against that. It has nothing to do with murder. (As a doctor) I would be very generous with my approval.

Professor Lever, in an interview for the NCRV, as quoted in "On the Road to Damascus" of July 1, 1969:

... by way of a process taking millions of years, man has evolved from dead oceans which slowly filled with algae.

Drs. T. J. Baarda, in "The Reliability of The Gospels," 1969:

There are some accounts in the gospels that have the legendary touch, as for instance, the story of the cursing and withering of the fig tree, or more so even, that of the resurrection of some dead when Jesus died. Is it not possible that certain apocalyptic words of Jesus have been dramatized in the rumor, the story passed on orally by the people?

Professor Kuitert, in "Do you understand what you read?," page 76:

Just as little as faith requires us to call white black, against all human observation, in the same way it does not demand from us to cling to the first parents of humanity as historical figures, against all scientific evidence.

Professor H. Ridderbos, in "Trouw" of May 9, 1966:

The Church, led by the Holy Spirit, has to determine what must be believed.

Professor Augustyn, in "Voorlopie" of Dec. 1, 1969:

The Reformed community has not paid sufficient attention to the developments in Liberal (church) circles. This isolation has been terminated.

Professor Kuitert, in "Anders Gezegd," page 181/182:

In the world in which we live now, the Gospel of Jesus can only be combined with resistance against the established authorities.

Dr. P. G. Kunst, in "Trouw" of July 18, 1970:

We are in a period of deconfessionalisation, and, if that process continues and expands in the Reformed (Gereformeerde) Churches, WE ARE NOWHERE.

Dr. P. G. Kunst as quoted by Rev. J. H. Velema in "De Wekker":

I am not planning to prevent a separation in our churches at any price. It is important to indicate clearly where we are going. I stick with reformed Churches that continue to know what they confess. That will result in a loss of members, of people who do not see any beauty in the Reformed Confession any longer.

In addition to this collection of statements, Mr. J. VanWestenbrugge of Zwolle, Holland, who drew my attention to this material, added one remark to the

Kunst-quotations:

Brave words by the chairman of the Synod of Sneek (1969-1970)! But the brave deed did NOT follow. . . .

Such is the situation among many of the leaders in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. May God give strength and courage to a faithful remnant to preserve the heritage of the Reformed faith.

ECUMENICAL DEVELOPMENTS

One does not hear a great deal these days about recent and newly concocted merger plans. In a way, there seems to be a hiatus, a kind of catching of one's breath, a period of calm and perhaps reflection before the new moves are made. This is, in part, because of the fact that the whole COCU movement (a plan to unite nine or ten major denominations into one large church) has recently been in the doldrums. Even the leaders of the plan speak pessimistically of it and of any hope to implement it in the foreseeable future.

Nevertheless, there have been some recent developments which are of more than passing interest, for they are developments which, in some respects, speak of a growing strength among conservatives.

The Southern Presbyterian Church has come to a crisis of sorts in its denominational life. For many years conservatives in that denomination have vexed their souls over the growing liberalism of many leaders who were intent on destroying the authority of Scripture and leading the Church into the devious by-ways of a social gospel. Things came to a head at the last General Assembly of that denomination. The liberals clearly carried the day on several key issues. For example, a motion to rescind last year's liberal decision on abortion failed; a motion to withdraw from the N.C.C. failed, as did a motion to withdraw from the W.C.C. But the most important issue was a plan to alter the present boundaries of the particular synods. This issue is closely tied up with the issue of union talks with the Presbyterian Church of the north, the United Presbyterian Church. Merger talks in the past have been fruitless because liberals were always unable to gain the necessary three-fourths majority vote of the presbyteries to make a merger a reality. Apparently the move to restructure the synods is intended to do a bit of gerrymandering by empowering synods to redefine presbytery boundaries so that the necessary three-fourths vote for union with the more liberal church of the north can become a reality.

Although the margin of victory was only ten votes, nevertheless, the move to restructure synods passed. And conservatives are now convinced that it is only a matter of time before a merger with the United Presbyterian Church will take place.

The result is that four conservative organizations in the Southern Presbyterian Church has joined forces to make plans to separate from their denomination to continue the presbyterian and reformed witness which

they are committed to. These four organizations are Presbyterian Churchmen United, Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship, Concerned Presbyterians and the *Presbyterian Journal* board of Directors. A committee was organized to make plans for a split and to prepare for a new alignment of denominations. The hope is that conservatives in the Northern Presbyterian Church will join them in the future and that there will be a re-alignment of denominations along theological lines — with conservatives in one denomination and liberals in the other.

L. Nelson Bell, a founder and editor of *The Presbyterian Journal* and the father-in-law of Billy Graham, long associated with the conservatives in the southern church, has recently announced his resignation from the *Journal* because of his opposition to these plans for a schism.

It will be interesting and of considerable importance to see what future developments are. We have, at this point, only two observations to make. One is that it is our earnest hope and prayer that the conservatives will see that at the bottom of the drift towards modernism and liberalism lies the church's long commitment to Arminianism and that in their efforts to reform the Church they will rid the Church also of all vestiges of Arminianism and return to a genuine Calvinism which is according to the Scriptures. Otherwise their movement will come to naught. The second is that we sometimes get the impression that many leaders in the conservative movement are moving slowly and cautiously because they are more concerned about numbers and finances than the preservation of the truth of God's Word. Church reformation is not carried on this

way. The denomination of which they are a part has clearly, as they themselves see, gone the way of heresy. Let them now either bring the issues to the higher ecclesiastical assemblies for adjudication or, without delay, separate themselves fearlessly and courageously and leave the outcome to the Lord. Then genuine reformation will result.

The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod is caught in the same tensions. The last synod meeting was, in many respects, a victory for the liberals also in that denomination. Efforts to pursue the matter of ridding Concordia Seminary of false teachers have been frustrated. Movements to return the Church to her confessional basis have been stymied. Conservatives lost badly. And so conservatives also in this denomination have formed a new organization called Federation for Authentic Lutheranism to make plans for separation. The hope is that an alliance can be formed with two small evangelical Lutheran bodies and perhaps with the Wisconsin Synod Lutherans so that Lutheran programs in parochial schools, seminaries and missions can be carried out. Already several congregations have left the Missouri Synod Church and it is hoped that historical Lutheranism can be preserved through the way of separation. The estimate made by some leaders is that fifty major congregations will pull out.

These are harrowing times for those who are resisting liberalism. It is not easy to leave a Church which has been one's home. The future will tell whether these movements will preserve the Church.

There are several more items we intended to discuss. This will have to wait until our next issue.

Feature

The Concern of the Reformation for Christian Education (7)

Rev. David Engelsma

The Reformers did not propose schools in which the children of believers would receive instruction exclusively in the Bible. Rather, they called for and established schools in which capable teachers would give instruction in every branch of human knowledge.

According to Luther, foreign languages had to be taught, especially Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Instruction in the languages was mainly for the benefit of those young men who would preach and teach the Scriptures. In the schools of the Reformation, Luther also demanded the teaching of the "liberal arts," a traditional, medieval description of seven subjects,

grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. He wrote, in his work, *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*:

For my part, if I had children and could manage it, I would have them study not only languages and history, but also singing and music together with the whole of mathematics . . .

How I regret now that I did not read more poets and historians. . .

The breadth of Luther's view of Christian education is apparent when, in his *Sermon on Keeping Children in*

School, he speaks of schools that educate men for "the fields of medicine and the other liberal arts," for being "jurists," and for the work of writing. He advocated studies in the natural sciences, the knowledge of the creation and the creatures in the creation. With typical insight, he pointed out both the nature and necessity of such scientific study by the believer: "... by the grace of God we already recognize in the most delicate flower the wonders of divine goodness and omnipotence. We see in His creatures the Power of His Word."¹ It is not without humor that just as Luther assailed Erasmus' conception of grace, so he also giped at Erasmus' view of nature: "Erasmus passes by all that (that is, God's goodness and power in the creation), takes no account of it, and looks upon external objects as cows look upon a new gate." He insisted on the teaching and enjoyment of music in the schools, both vocal music and instrumental music. Jokingly (some school teachers will hope), he made musical ability a qualification for teaching: "A school-master must be able to sing, otherwise I will hear nothing of him." Luther did not limit education to the training of the child's mind. He saw a place for gymnastic exercises. This, he thought, "produces elasticity of the body and preserves the health. But a great reason for (its) practice is that people may not fall into gluttony, licentiousness, and gambling, as is the case, alas! at courts and in cities. Thus it goes when such honorable and manly bodily exercises are neglected."² The physical education department in the christian school has a staunch supporter in Luther, pictures of him to the contrary notwithstanding.

A glance at the subjects prescribed for the schools by Luther's colleague, Philip Melancthon, will show how far removed these schools were from "Bible schools."³ In the schools for the youngest children, in addition to Biblical studies, the children had to study the primer, which contained the alphabet; read Donatus; gain a good vocabulary from Cato's verses; learn grammar, including etymology, syntax, and prosody; read Aesop's fables, the dialogues of Mosellanus, the colloquies of Erasmus, the works of Terrence, Plautus, Virgil, the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, and the *Letters* of Cicero; write Latin verse; and study dialectic and rhetoric. In the schools for older children, the youth learned the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages; dialectic; rhetoric; mathematics; and cosmology. In the University of Wittenberg, the faculty of the liberal arts consisted of ten professors, who taught Latin, Greek, and Hebrew literature; ethics; mathematics; physics; philosophy; dialectic; and rhetoric.

The same broad view of the scope of education for the children of the Church is evident when Luther pleads for the creation of good libraries. Among the books which he recommends for inclusion are copies of the Bible in all languages; good commentaries on the Bible; books of poets and orators, whether pagan or

Christian, that are helpful in learning the languages; "books on the liberal arts, and all the other arts"; "books of law and medicine"; and the vital "chronicles and histories."⁴

It is obvious that the Reformation did not construe Christian education as instruction only in the Bible. Nor did the Reformation have a narrow, suspicion-ridden view of Christian education. On the contrary, it conceived of Christian education as embracing the whole, vast sweep of God's creation.

That which makes this view of Christian education all the more weighty is the fact that it was held by the leading Reformers in the face of vociferous objections, objections from within the Church. Some objected that knowledge of the Bible was sufficient, because this is all that matters for salvation. Others objected to the proposed schools in these terms: "Ha, if my son can read and write German and do arithmetic, that is enough. I am going to make a businessman of him."⁵ Against all such objections, the Reformers insisted on full-orbed, Christian education.

This emphasis upon Christian schools was not a peculiarity of the Lutheran Reformation. John Calvin was in basic agreement with Luther, in this matter. Calvin himself was a learned man, whose writings are sprinkled with references to the noted, secular authors. He was a friend of the arts and sciences, as long as they are subject to God's Word, which indeed is their only proper place.

... natural perspicacity is a gift of God, and the liberal arts, and all the sciences by which wisdom is acquired, are gifts of God. They are confined, however, within their own limits; for into God's heavenly kingdom they cannot penetrate. Hence they must occupy the place of handmaid, not of mistress: nay more, they must be looked upon as empty and worthless, until they have become entirely subject to the word and Spirit of God. If, on the other hand, they set themselves in opposition to Christ, they must be looked upon as dangerous pests, and, if they strive to accomplish anything of themselves, as the worst of all hindrances, and are much to be dreaded.⁶

Calvin took pains to dissociate the movement of the Reformation from those "fanatics" who were suspicious of all learning, who regarded all science as "science falsely so called," and who condemned out of hand all philosophy as "vain philosophies of men." Commenting on I Corinthians 8:1, after he has warned against that knowledge which lacks love and which, therefore, puffs up, Calvin writes:

At the same time, knowledge is not by any means to be blamed for this, any more than a sword, if it falls into the hands of a madman. Let this be considered as said with a view to certain fanatics, who furiously declaim against all the liberal arts and sciences, as if their only use were to puff men up, and were not most useful means and instruments, both for the knowledge of God, and for the conduct of common life. Now those very persons, who defame them in

this style, are ready to burst with pride, to such an extent as to verify the old proverb — “Nothing is so arrogant as ignorance.”

Also Calvin worked to carry out his thoughts on Christian education in the establishment of a Christian school. In 1559, the Academy of Geneva was founded, largely as the result of Calvin’s efforts. At its founding, the Academy “consisted of two parts: a primary school, the *college* or *scholia privata*, divided into seven grades and designed to serve all the youth of Geneva (the top-most class had 280 pupils that first year, and an extra teacher had to be hired at once); and a more advanced Academy or *scholia publica*, which was intended primarily to provide advanced training in theology.”⁷ Calvin and Beza taught in the seminary. Ten capable professors taught in the college. The subjects taught in the college included grammar, logic, mathematics, physics, music, and the ancient languages. The statutes governing the college were drawn up by Calvin. They prescribed the study of the famed, secular authors, Caesar, Livy, Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Herodotus, Xenophon, Homer, Demosthenes,

Plutarch, and Plato. At the dedication ceremonies, the Academy was dedicated “to science and religion.”⁸

(to be continued)

¹ Quoted in *Luther on Education*, F.V.N. Painter, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1889.

² *Ibid.*

³ These curricula are found in *Heroes of the Reformation: Philip Melancthon*, J. W. Richard, G.P. Putnam’s Sons, New York and London, 1898.

⁴ *To the Councilmen of Germany*

⁵ Martin Luther, *A Sermon on Keeping Children in School*

⁶ John Calvin, commentary on I Cor. 3:19

⁷ E. William Monter, *Calvin’s Geneva*, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York * London * Sydney, 1967.

⁸ Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. VII, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York, 1892, p. 805.

The Day of Shadows

A Personal Involvement

Rev. John A. Heys

It is well before any new undertaking to ask the question, Why?

Why should this new work be initiated? Why should the time and effort which it requires be spent on this project? Why is this the activity for which the moment calls, or at least, why is it the activity which will benefit us today?

These questions certainly are in order, and ought to be asked, as we with these lines begin what will be, the Lord willing, a lengthy series of visits with the Old Testament saints — and sinners — from Adam onward, who, though they are dead, yet speak to us from the pages of Holy Writ.

Why should we consider the earthly and spiritual lives of men who lived so many generations ago? Why concern ourselves with the problems and actions of people whose names we have difficulty pronouncing, who lived in lands where we have never been, and whose very existence is questioned today by many “learned” men?

We have our own problems of this present day, problems of drugs and crime, of social inequalities and unrest, of war and riots, of disease and environmental pollution. Would it not be better to devote words, and lines, and paragraphs and pages to these at-hand problems of our own? Should we not, do we not owe it to

our children to look at ourselves, at the present and to the future, rather than to go back to generations with whom we have lost contact?

In answering these questions we assume that our readers receive the Scriptures as the infallible, inerrant Word of God. Those who do not receive them as such are not able to give the correct answer to these questions, nor will they be able to follow us in our answer taken from the Scriptures. And the answer taken from Scripture must be accepted, because no one is able to prove that the Scriptures are not the infallible, inerrant Word of God. Men may claim that they are not. They may be vehement in their denial of, or be subtle in their attack upon the truth. But they cannot prove their claim. It is still nothing but the creature’s word over against the Creator’s word. It is nothing more than the theory of a creature who at best sees only seventy to eighty years of the history of this world, then by death has his mouth silenced, and not only loses his power to uphold and propagate his theory, but will appear before the God Whose word he has ascribed to fallible men. It still is the proud denial of a creature who was not there, and yet dares to call Him Who was there a liar!

What then is the answer to these questions? Why investigate, dig into this ancient history, weigh it in the

light of the New Testament Scriptures, and review the actions of the enemies who are now in the lake of fire? Yes, you guessed the answer. Our title gave you the clue. We are personally involved. We may not want to be involved. It might please our flesh to deny that Adam is our first father, the root of the whole human race and its corporate head. Our folly may cause us to prefer an ancestry that can be found behind the bars in some zoo, or climbing a tree in the jungle, swinging by its tail and sporting ridiculously silly features compared with those which we see in man. Yet we are personally involved. And God says that we are. To mind comes the text in Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And again in I Corinthians 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," to say nothing of Luke 3 where the line from Joseph is traced down to Adam and back.

We are descendants of Adam, and of Seth and of Noah. And although Scripture is not a history book of the human race, but rather the record of the work of the Son of God as He gathers from the beginning to the end of the world a church chosen to everlasting life (together with an account of the enemies of that church who foolishly rage and imagine that they can destroy her), this record reveals that we are involved as branches on the tree of which Adam is the root, but also as members of that Church that the Son of God is gathering. This is *our* history as such descendants of Adam and of Eve, but also as branches on the true Vine. And a consideration of this truth will work in us a richer appreciation of the fact that we are also personally involved in that salvation which is in Christ. In the measure that we are spiritual and concerned with our salvation, we will want to visit those whom the Son of God gathered out of the Old Testament dispensation, by meeting them on the pages of Holy Writ. For, and get this, these are the people with whom we shall spend eternity! With these we shall eternally be involved in singing God's praises in the new Jerusalem. These are members of the same body to which we belong. Surely we wish to listen to them as they speak a word of warning and of encouragement, witness to us of the Son of God and sing the praises of our God. Their struggle is our struggle. Their victory is our victory. Their hope is our hope. Their Saviour is our Saviour.

Let us, then, consider certain truths which should rule us in our consideration of what is recorded concerning them. And let us bear in mind, first of all, that this whole record is God's word to us. Not only must we stress that all of it, every word from Genesis 1:1 through Revelation 22:21 is the Word of God, but also that it is His word *to us*. It was not written for the world, although it pleases God at times to cause the world to come in contact with that Word, but it was

spoken and written for us.

You have His word for that in II Timothy 3:16, where Paul declares, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." God gave it for the man of God. And all this Old Testament is for our doctrinal enrichment, for reproof unto us, for our correction and for our instruction in righteousness, that we may be perfect and be fully equipped unto every good work.

At the same time, and for this very reason, the Old Testament Scriptures are the gospel, the good news of salvation. They are not simply the background of salvation, the background of the gospel. They are the gospel, the good news God gives us in His Son. They do from Genesis through Malachi speak the truth that "Christ is Coming," while the New Testament Scriptures declare that "Christ is Come." Yet to all the saints in the Old Testament dispensation God spoke the good news of salvation in Christ. This also we purpose to hold before your eyes throughout this whole series of visits with the saints, both in the old world before the flood, and with those in the new world under the law and in the days of the shadows. We will, the Lord willing, from the first Adam's appearance to the Last Adam's advent hear of salvation in Christ. We will see that, from the creation of the heavens and the earth, and from the moment that God called into being the light, God was bringing forth the Christ. This we begin to consider more in detail next time. But at the moment let us consider that all sixty six books of the Bible are the gospel. All reveal the good news of salvation in Christ when seen in the light of the whole. All do not reveal that good news in the same way. For that matter neither do Matthew, Mark, Luke and John present it in exactly the same way. All manifest the love of God for His people. All therefore reveal Christ through Whom that love is dispensed to the Church. And when our series is finished, and we lay our pen down, we trust that the Spirit will have opened our eyes to some beautiful manifestations of this truth, some marvellous works of God, so that we shall in our souls sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb: "Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, thou King of saints." (Revelation 15:3)

We have, therefore, a calling in regard to these Old Testament Scriptures. That calling, first of all, is to listen to what God has to say to us. As already suggested, these saints do speak to us. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews declares that of Abel in Hebrews 11:4 when he writes that "he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Yet it is God Who speaks to us through him. And it is God Who has something to say to us today in these historical accounts which He has preserved, and which are a part of His infallible Word. It

behooves us, therefore, to listen to Him and to learn what He has to say to us. We are not to speak and tell Him what a given passage means. It is our duty to listen to Him interpret His Own Word. We must then take any given passage in the light of the whole. We must let Scripture interpret Scripture and bow before its testimony. If we do that, we can never throw away the first eleven chapters of Genesis as fiction with a moral, a teaching in them. Instead we will cherish these eleven chapters and let the light of the New Testament shine on them. We will not run to some proud, prating scientists, — so-called. We will not listen to what men have to say, but to what God says.

The second element we are called to do with the Old Testament Scriptures, and particularly in these historical events is to look for Christ and His cross. Always we must find Him as the Seed of the woman Who is vehemently hated by the seed of the serpent. Always we must see Him as the Seed of the woman who crushes the serpent and his seed for us. If we do that we will find that blessed truth of Scripture that we are saved by grace and not by works. The Jews so often did not see Christ in the types and shadows, and exactly therefore they sought salvation by the works of the law. They sought salvation by their work of bringing a lamb, instead of seeking it in The Lamb of God.

It is also because men today do not see Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures that they say especially of it

that it is not relevant, and in answer to our original questions as to why we ought to treat this history today, they have no answer. They, too, will ask, "Why?" But their answer will be, "There is no reason why we should." And it is because men do not see Christ, the true Christ in the New Testament Scriptures, that they cannot find Him in the Old Testament writings *either*. But seeing Him in the New Testament, we have the advantage over the saints whose lives we purpose to treat. And let us not be guilty, then, of not seeking Christ in this Old Testament history. Yea, let us be sure that we find Him with His cross. For without that cross He is no Saviour, and without finding that cross we will find no comfort or peace in considering the lives of the saints in the Old Testament dispensation.

The continuity of the contributions in this department will be that of the history itself. We will not try to attach the various articles to each other, and will seek to avoid carrying a subject over to the next issue. Rather our plan is to write contributions to this department which are a complete thought in themselves. At times we may go rather slowly. And then again we may take larger and broader steps. But exactly because our plan is to have each contribution to this department a whole thought in itself, we will have to find Christ in every incident, and in the lives of all His saints of the Old Testament dispensation.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

THE REFORMATION PERIOD

THE SYNOD OF DORDT

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article we had begun to call attention to the opinions as expressed by the delegates to the Synod of Dordt from Great Britain. And we had quoted their first proposition which they had presented to that synod for its consideration.

Their second proposition reads as follows: "Out of this same love, through and because of the merits and intercession of Christ, these same elect are given faith, and the perseverance, and all other matters, through which the condition of the covenant is fulfilled, and the promised benefit, that is, everlasting life is obtained infallibly."

Again, one cannot object to this statement as such, except that we do not speak of the conditions of the covenant. However, we can make the same remark as in connection with their first proposition: they do not

declare that these benefits are given exclusively to the elect. They do declare that they are bestowed upon the elect, but not that they are given *only* to the elect. And, the Lord willing, we will have opportunity to show that this exclusive character of the bestowal of salvation as only upon the elect is emphasized in the Canons.

The third proposition, somewhat longer than the first two, we wish to quote in full:

God, having mercy upon the fallen human race, has sent His Son, Who gave Himself, as a ransom price, for the sins of the whole world.

In this sacrifice of Christ we note two things. The manner of calling people to the actual imparting of this sacrifice, and the fruit of the same sacrifice as diversely bestowed upon men.

Concerning the manner, there is no man who can-

not be called truly and earnestly by the ministers of the Gospel unto the imparting of the forgiveness of sins and of everlasting life, obtained by this death of Christ; Acts 13:38, 39, Unto you be it known, that forgiveness of sins is preached unto you through Christ, etc.; John 3:17; Whosoever believeth not, he is damned, because he did not believe in the Son of God. Now, in the Gospel there is nothing false or feigned, but whatever therein is offered by the Ministers or is promised to men, the same is offered and promised by the author of the Gospel in the same manner.

As concerning the fruit; out of the death of Christ, in which is contained an infinite treasure of merits and spiritual blessings, the actual fruit is bestowed upon people in the same manner and measure, and through the same means as it pleases God. Now, it pleases God, also after He has accepted the sacrifice, that the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life shall be imparted to everyone in no other way than through faith in the same Redeemer. And here that eternal and hidden decree of election is revealed, when that price, which is paid for all, and which will surely help all believers unto everlasting life, nevertheless is not helpful to all, because it is not given to all that they should fulfill this condition of the unmerited covenant. Thus, then, Christ died for all, in order that all and everyone, faith coming between them, through the power of this ransom price might obtain forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. Thus did He die for the elect, in order that they out of the merits of His death, according to God's eternal good pleasure, particularly ordained for them, infallibly obtain faith and everlasting life.

What must one say of this third proposition? In this statement by the theologians of Great Britain, one reads of being called truly and earnestly by the ministers of the Gospel, and this language one also encounters in our Canons of Dordt. However, instead of teaching that men are called unto repentance and faith in the preaching of the gospel, and that the Lord promises eternal rest and peace to all those who come unto Him, we read here that the author of the Gospel offers and promises salvation to all who hear the gospel. In the third paragraph of this third proposition, there is surely nothing particular as applicable only to the elect. Besides, we also read in this statement, toward its conclusion, that Christ died for all men. We read, if you please, that Christ died for all, in order that all and everyone, faith intervening, through the power of this ransom price might obtain forgiveness of sins and everlasting life. And in the very beginning of this third proposition, these delegates from Great Britain declare that the Son of God gave Himself for the sins of the whole world. Now it is certainly true that the Son of God gave Himself for the sins of the whole world, provided that we understand "world" as referring to all mankind as out of every tribe, people, land and tongue. But one can hardly believe that this is the meaning of these English divines. To speak of universal

atonement in one breath and then of the atonement as for the elect is hardly clear and unambiguous language. And the Canons certainly do not speak this language.

The fifth proposition of the theologians of Great Britain reads as follows:

In the Church, where, according to the promise of the Gospel, salvation is offered to all, the administration of grace is of such a nature that it is sufficient to convince all the penitent and unbelievers that they, through their own wilful fault and either because of neglect or despising of the Gospel have perished and have lost the offered benefit.

It has been stated in the past that the word "offered" as used by the fathers in the days of the Canons of Dordt meant: "to present, exhibit." However, in the light of the third proposition of these divines of Great Britain, one gains the impression that there is a general grace of God connected with this "offer" of the gospel. In the explanation of this proposition one reads this paragraph: "That not all are called to the grace of the Gospel, to whom the Gospel is preached, is not stating it correctly, however true it may be that there are those who are disobedient to the Gospel. Here they declare that it is incorrect to say that not all are called to the grace of the gospel to whom the gospel is preached. And we are of the opinion that these theologians of Great Britain are of the opinion that all to whom the gospel is preached are graciously called.

In the summation of the errors they reject, these delegates from Great Britain are generally sound. However, we do wish to quote the first error they reject. This reads as follows: "The first; the death of Christ having been set forth; is, that there is no other purpose of God to save any particular persons except conditionally, and depending upon the actual deed of man's faith." This, we believe, is stating the truth weakly. We read here that it is an error to state that God's only purpose to save men is a conditional purpose. This can surely imply that God has also purposed to save men conditionally.

Next, we turn our attention to the delegates from the Palatinate, "uit de Palts." In the quotations from these delegates, we must bear in mind that they present the position of the Arminians and then proceed to refute them. These quotations are surely of great significance. The Three Points of 1924 are a mixture of Dr. A. Kuyper's Common Grace and general grace. The former refers to God's general goodness to all men as revealed in the things of this present time. And the latter refers to the saving grace of God's salvation as Divinely intended for all men and revealed in the universal atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ and in the preaching of the gospel, which is presented as a general offer of salvation to all who hear this preaching of the gospel. We should bear this in mind as we listen to these quotations. We now quote the following:

FIRST PROPOSITION

God the father has ordained His Son Jesus Christ to be a Redeemer and Reconciler for our sins, out of that love whereby He has loved men, although fallen and worthy of condemnation, nevertheless as His creatures; and has willed to be merciful unto them, if this could occur as in any way in harmony with His righteousness.

JUDGMENT

A general inclination of the love of God, whereby He loves all His creatures, but especially the human race, we mutually acknowledge and confess with one mouth. The Heavenly Father also reaches out in His goodness toward man, also after the fall, giving us life, breath and all things, Acts 17:25; causing His son to go up over the evil and the good, and causing it to rain upon the righteous and unrighteous, Matt. 5:45. Yea, in the constant habit and exercise of sinning, He endures the sinners with great longsuffering, in order that He at least with goodness should break their evil, Rom. 2:4. And when He punishes and destroys the stubborn and impenitent, He has no delight in the destruction of the creatures but in the carrying out of His righteous judgment, Is. 1:24. This is truly an eminent love to sinners. But more eminent and higher one may justly regard the love by which God, being moved, has given us His Son to be a Saviour for our sins. The same we set forth not as general but as particular, not common to all and every man, but as peculiar for the elect. For that love is nothing else than a good pleasure to save in Christ, Eph. 1:4, 5. Is this the good pleasure of the Father with respect to the salvation of all men? Christ denies this plainly, Matt. 11:25, 26. Moreover, it is obvious that God's purpose is not general, Rom. 8:28, 29; neither is His

mercy general, whereby He is merciful to whom He will, Rom. 9:18; neither is also that grace common to all, out of which these are given faith in Christ and not to others, Matt. 13:11. Hence, the love of the Father in Christ, then, is no longer common; whereas the Scriptures exchange these things as equally important and as among one another; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 3:24, and 5:8, and elsewhere. Christ Himself, John 4:10, calls Himself a gift of God, Who has come forth out of the love of the Father and His goodness toward us.

It is general and equally common to all? This none will lightly say, who has learned from Paul that God has given us His son thus that He with him at the same time gives what is necessary unto salvation; wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, I Cor. 1:30. Thus it remains a special gift, ordained out of a peculiar and special love of God, in order to redeem the elect and to save the believers. Hence, Paul declares that God is a Saviour or Sustainer of all men, but especially the believers, I Tim. 4:10;

The Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation in our following article. We understand, of course, 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 A. Kuyper's Common Grace. But they are very firm in their maintaining that the love of God as revealed in Christ Jesus is very particular, extending only to the elect, and they deny emphatically that this good pleasure of the Father also extends to the reprobates. This goodness or mercy or love of God as in Christ is not common but very particular. To these interesting matters we expect to call attention the next time.

The Strength of Youth

The Christian Wife

Rev. J. Kortering

The Christian wife and mother must do a great deal of sighing nowadays. It is inconceivable that any dedicated wife and mother who knows the teaching of Scripture concerning her place in the home, should join the raucous cry of the women's lib movement. The entire movement adds insult to injury for the Christian woman.

What has this to do with the strength of youth? A great deal! You covenant young people are forming your ideas concerning the role of men and women in society, not only, but also in the home. You are bearing the brunt of the present day attack upon the traditional Christian values. As young people you cannot brush this subject aside and say it doesn't concern you,

for it does. Presently you are going to set up your own home and then you face the practical question concerning your idea of the proper role of husband and wife in the home. You do well to read and think concerning the issues.

THE ATTACK

Kate Millett is outspoken in her role as leader of the women's lib. Her most well known book is entitled, "Sexual Politics," and in it she writes concerning the plight of modern women, "Two leading myths in western culture are to blame, the classical tale of Pandora's box and the biblical story of the fall." Both, in her estimation, prejudice men against women and subject her to discrimination. The spirit of her move-

ment is to elevate women on a level with men, or one gets the impression, to exalt women over men. This has many practical implications for marriage. It is suggested that trial marriages are good, the idea being that compatibility can be determined without the legal entanglements of marriage. If one marries, the couple should determine whether they want children. Perhaps it would be for the good of the wife and husband that no children be born, but that each be permitted to develop his own career. If children are desired, the couple should decide who will stay home and care for the children. It is seriously suggested that many men are more qualified to care for children than many women and therefore in such cases the woman should continue her career and the man care for the children at home. The idea is that men and women are not confined to certain roles by virtue of their sex, for sexual identification has nothing to do with it. Each must be judged on their individual interests and abilities.

This we suggest is an attack upon the Scriptural role which God gives to the husband and wife within the bonds of holy marriage. In our last article we suggested that the formula for the Christian home may be found in Eph. 5:21, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." If we truly have the fear of God, we will receive God's specifications for our respective roles in the home.

THE HEADSHIP OF THE HUSBAND

According to Eph. 5:22-24, the role of the Christian wife is to submit herself to her husband. The reason for this is also given, the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church. This is not the only place in Scripture where this is indicated; consider I Cor. 11:3, "But I would have you to know that the head of the man is Christ and the head of woman is the man and the head of Christ is God."

What is included in the headship of the husband over the wife. Let's notice the following elements. (1) Headship involves rule. In a very real sense the husband is the king of the home. His calling is to exercise the law of God as it is applied to the domestic scene. To do this he must determine what is right and wrong, promote the right and forbid the wrong. (2) This law which gives the husband the right to rule is the law of love. This emphasized in verse 25, "Husbands love your wives." The rule of the Christian husband is to take God's law of love and in the way of love, apply it to the daily needs of the family. Hence a Christian husband is not a tyrant, a law unto himself. As Christ rules the Church, so a husband must rule his wife. (3) The power of this rule is not inherent in the man, but is given to him by Christ. It is not a question of the supremacy of the man over the woman in natural terms; rather, it is a question of divine assignment! The role of husband is a calling given to him by Jesus

Christ. Therefore, Christ must sustain and enlighten every man who is thus called to this responsible task. The guide for the husband is not human opinion, but the Word of God. The law of God is spelled out in detail in the Bible and it is the calling of the husband to know this and enforce it in the home. (4) The husband must give account for his conduct to God. With every responsible position is also accountability. The husband is accountable to God for the things of the home, even as the elder is in the church and the rulers are for the government of the nation.

A further question comes to mind. Why did God make man the head of the home? Notice carefully the form this question takes. We assume by this question that God is the one who made man the head of the home. We disagree entirely with the position of the women's lib that man assumed this position to himself. By the language that some proponents of this movement use, you would think that man by hook and crook grabbed this position away from the woman. This is wrong. God appointed man to the position of head. We ask why?

The answer is two-fold.

First, the relationship of marriage demands only one head. It is folly to speak of two bosses at work, two teachers in the class room, two presidents of the country; likewise it is folly to speak of two heads in the home. The nature of marriage itself, as well as home life, demands only one head. This is demonstrated for us in the original marriage. God made Adam first, then Eve as helpmeet. Eve's creation was not independent of Adam; rather Eve was taken out of Adam, her life was derived from the man and therefore subordinate to him. God made only one head of the human race: that man was Adam and Eve was to assist him. This principle carries through the whole of Scripture. I Tim. 2:12,13, "For I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence, for Adam was first formed then Eve."

Secondly, God made a natural difference between men and women, a natural difference that aids each one in his God-defined role. God gave the man the natural gift to be ruler and head of the home, God made the woman to have the natural gifts of homemaker and mother. Thus we read in I Peter 3:7, "Give honor to the wife as the weaker vessel." Read the beautiful description the Holy Spirit gives of the Christian wife and mother in Proverbs 31. God made her for this domestic role in the home.

I realize that by nature we may not like our God-given roles. There are many men who do not want the responsibility of headship, there are many aggressive women who want to usurp it. The reason for this is not due to the lack of clarity in the Scriptures; rather, fallen man rebels against God's assignment. Sin did not obliterate these roles; rather corrupt man violates his

responsibility concerning them. It is only when we recognize the truth of Eph. 5:21 that we will say in the fear of God: this is my calling. Anything else will only bring confusion and every evil work as we see it before our eyes today. One cannot rebel against God without reaping the consequence of such sin, which is death. This we also see today in the chaos that the women's liberation movement produces in our land.

THE WIFE'S SUBMISSION

A wife is to submit herself to her husband as the church is subject to Christ. We can delineate four things.

First, the church must recognize Christ's lawful place as its head. We read, "as Christ is head of the church, and he is the savior of the body," verse 23. The idea is this: Christ is Savior, therefore he is head. Remember Christ secured the marriage license through the shedding of His blood on the cross. We are betrothed to Him and the wedding will take place upon His return. God exalted Christ by making Him the head of the church. Therefore the church must recognize Christ's lawful place. So it is true for the wife in relation to her husband. Marriage opens the way for man, the husband, to assume his responsible place over a woman, the wife, not only, but the entire family that may come forth from such a union. If a wife is to be subject to her husband, she must recognize her husband's God-given place.

Secondly, the church must listen to Christ. Because Christ is the Lord of the church, he has the say over her. All the church professes to believe and all she is called to do is determined by what instruction Christ gives to her. So also a husband must give instruction to his wife and a wife must listen to her husband. She must be devoted to him, assisting him in carrying out the law of God as it applies to the home.

Thirdly, the church must obey Christ. Notice carefully, this means that we must do more than listen, we must act upon the instruction of Christ. This eliminates "Sunday Christians." If we, as the bride of Christ, listen in obedience to our husband, we will implement in our daily lives what He tells us. This obedience is one of love. So with a wife in relation to her

husband, she must obey him. The marriage vow emphasizes this in distinction from the vow of the husband. If a faithful wife listens carefully, she will also do what her husband says. The law of God will not be scorned; it will be furthered by her.

Finally, the church gladly gives the glory to Christ her Lord. This is proper: since the word of love and gospel of grace comes to the church from Jesus Christ, she gladly calls him Lord and honors Him for His position. Thus God receives all the glory eternally. And so it must be with the wife. The joy of the Christian home is enhanced when the wife responds to her husband and gladly recognizes that her place is to make him truly happy in the Lord, thus enabling him to fulfill his task in the world.

By mentioning this, we do not imply that there is no sharing of the responsibilities of life between husband and wife. How wonderful it is when both talk together concerning the important things of life. Remember the formula: Submitting yourselves one to another. This both husband and wife must do as each must seek spiritual wisdom from God. A Christian wife is a good influence upon her husband as a husband is upon his wife. They must discuss their most intimate desires. It is not proper for a husband to say, "I leave it up to my wife how many kids she wants." "No, they must prayerfully consider this together. Finances are considered together in the fear of God. Responsibility in the church must be discussed and decided upon mutually. The care of children and problems that result must be discussed together.

The point is that the final decision must be made by one, and that person is the husband. And in all lawful things, the wife is to subject to him in this decision. No, she does not sell her soul to him, she must be subject to him as they together are subject to Christ.

This produces harmony in the home.

You see why we need the fear of God in order to be willing to accept this God-defined role in life. We must truly know Him and stand in awe before Him if we are to bow and say, "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth."

May God give us hearing ears and willing hearts, and the peace of God will rest upon our homes.

Mission News

News from Jamaica

The LORD said to Isaac in a crucial time of his life . . . Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee."
Gen. 26:4a.

Once more we are in the land of Jamaica, a "little island in the sun" as the song goes accompanied by

off-beat Calypso music. We had the singular privilege to be home in the States for about four weeks. These

were good days at home, busy days packed with activity. There was not a dull moment. When we set our foot on American soil in Miami, the first impression we had was that we were no longer sojourners abroad. We were home! We were in the land of our birth and earthly citizenship. This was evident from our rapport with the Emigration officers, the customs agents, and the entire atmosphere about us. But what really was home was when our children and grandchildren met us at the Airport in O'Hare Field with placards "Welcome Home Grandpa and Grandma, we love you . . . Welcome Missionaries From Jamaica."

While at home amidst the churches we might spend a busy and happy time. We preached twice in Loveland, Colorado, once in South Holland, Illinois, and finally twice in our calling church, First Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan. We might speak before a large audience one Sunday evening at First Church, Grand Rapids, composed of the brethren and sisters also of the surrounding churches. We spoke in Loveland, Colorado and in Hull, Iowa (Doon and Eggerton present) and in Pella, Iowa and, finally, in South Holland, Illinois. We rode with our daughter Agatha and Winnie Koole and might cover some 3000 miles in twelve days and speak seven times. And we thrived on it. We were loved, feasted and treated as dear brethren and sisters in Christ. We are only too sorry that we could not, too, have spoken in Isabel, who sent a letter requesting us to come there, too, for an evening. We were in the "land that I love" and we enjoyed it "from the mountains to the prairies." It was wonderfully thrilling to behold the works of God. Three times we were feasted with perfect double rainbows after the storms. It was a message of God. And the cloudy pillars of God's throne were a beautiful sight to behold as we sped across the plains. And the majesty of the "eternal" mountains, Long's Peak with its beckoning heights, outdoing the other lofty mountain peaks is unforgettable. And then we thought of lowly Zion, and of the heavenly City, beautiful for situation, the joy of all the earth.

Now we have once more left the shores of our homeland. And the first experience in the Pan Am plane was that we were leaving our homeland for a foreign country. We were to be once more "sojourners in the land." When we showed our plane ticket in Miami we were held up because one stamp in our "Passport" book showed that we had received our visa on June 8, 1970 for one year and another showed the imprint of the Immigration officers at Montego Bay Visas for one year, September 9, 1970. Grudgingly the officer at Pan Am honored our ticket (which was one-way) and warned us that if we were deported we were on our own responsibility and not on that of Pan Am! I had been warned. We proved to be correct that our Visas were good till September 8, 1971. However, we were courteously informed that we should proceed to King-

ston to the Chief Emigration Officer in due time and have our Visas extended. We thought of I Peter 2:13 "Submit yourselves to every human ordinance. . . ."

Yes, we often think of the advantage which Paul had in this respect. The Romans had conquered the entire world around the Mediterranean Sea. And all the land was under the Roman sceptre. And Paul was a Roman Citizen by birth, born in the city of Tarsus. He did not need to live in the various countries as a "sojourner" with a passport or as one in need of a "Work Permit." Paul was a tent-maker by trade and freely plied his trade wherever he went to support himself and those who were with him. He would live off the land but not off the people of God. But Jamaica does not allow a "sojourning" preacher to live off the land and must control this officially. They have here "preachers" who come "in faith" and then somehow live off the land. This is not permitted. This makes for many bureaus and delays. Twice we applied for a "Work Permit" and as often received no reply, either from the Jamaica Embassy in New York City, or from the Ministry of Labor and National Insurance here on the island. Now we have made a third application and presented it in person to the Ministry of Labor, applied for extended Visas in the Ministry of Home Affairs and are now informed that the matter is being investigated, both the records and the nature of our work from the data which we offered the government. We cannot believe that our request for a "Work Permit" will be turned down.

Unless the Lord shows it differently, I believe that He says to us as He said to Isaac "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee!"

We cannot say how long our sojourn will be here. We look forward to another year of work, labor, toil. And soon another year flits by when one is busy and occupied. *Tempus Figit*.

As we look into the future we see our schedule. The ministers of the "Protestant Reformed Churches in Jamaica" have agreed with the plan that undersigned preach for a few weeks consecutively in each church. This will make for more constructive work by the undersigned and make a better base on which to judge of a sustained interest in the Gospel as we preach it as a missionary minister. There is ever much work here with the Building Program, the poor and the needy. And last but not the least is the labor of teaching students in the school. The Lord willing, school will again begin on September 8, 1971. We do feel that it will be necessary for us to hold school one day per week instead of two days. The drive is really too far for twice per week. It is 134 miles for each trip. So we will try to hold school one day for 5½ hours, instead of two days and four hours each day. It must be remembered that we also hold "Discussions" with the ministers every other week here for three hours. So that our teaching would be eight and a half hours one

week and five and a half hours the other week. This would free our hands a bit for an occasional mid-week service. I believe that this will meet with the approval of the Mission Committee as well as with the brethren here.

I believe it in order that I say to you "Pray for us." May all our ministers, professors, teachers, elders and

deacons constantly be held up on the wings of prayer. Be assured that we welcome also your letters, cards and all the tokens of your love. You are ever in our minds and prayers. God bless you and keep you all, dear people of God.

Sojourn in the land and God be with you!

From Holy Writ

Exposition of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

NOAH WARNED OF GOD (Hebrews 11:7)

The warnings of God are to be heeded by His servants, both by the prophets and by others! These warnings of the LORD are quite different from those of men, especially His predictive warnings concerning the judgments of the world and concerning the ultimate salvation of the Church of Christ in the world. It is the Son of God Who gathers and defends His church, elected unto everlasting life, in the unity of faith. And His ways are in the Sanctuary. His footsteps are seen in every day of the world's existence in His secret providence. And if ever we saw this Word of God fulfilled in the cataclysmic judgment, it was in the days of Noah. Forever afterwards the sacred record speaks of "as it was in the days of Noah." This became the divine pattern of the final catastrophic overthrow of the world in the last day!

Hebrews 11:7 says that Noah was "warned of God." The term here employed in the Greek is *chreematistheis*. This term is employed by the writer to the Hebrews also in Hebrews 8:5 and 12:25. In Hebrews 8:5 the writer speaks of Moses being warned of God. He is warned by the Lord that he make the tabernacle according to the pattern shown him on the mount, (Exodus 25:40). Moses was to be very meticulous in building the tabernacle and its furnishings; he was in no case to follow any design of his own ideas and fabrication. Moses was in no sense of the word to design the divine symbolism of the covenant of the Triune God. When we turn to Hebrews 12:25, we notice that the author of the Hebrews warns the church by way of comparison. He points out how God spoke on earth to men with His warnings. It may have been a less perfect revelation of God to Moses and Israel when compared with the final and heavenly, but it was nonetheless a "warning," a divine oracle which was heeded. These warnings and threatenings were the words of God entrusted to Israel. And that was Israel's chief advantage, (Romans 3:1-3)

The timing of this warning was according to the

divine time-table. It was one hundred twenty years before the actual fulfillment in the Flood. Unbelief, as we see in the world of Noah's day, would not accept the Word of God. But the veracity of the event lies exactly in the prediction, and that it comes to pass according to it. It proves to be no mere happenstance, a freak of nature, a breaking of the harmony of the Deistically conceived Universe which runs according to positive "laws of nature." But this is the warning Word, the oracle of God, spoken from His holy throne, summoning men and women, all the godless, into His court, and proclaiming to all that the "end of all flesh is come before Him." Noah was to heed this summons of God when all the world comes and stands in the fury of God's mighty judgment! We do well to notice this announcement as proof that the Flood was the work of God in His mighty judgment.

Besides, this warning, as to its positive instructions, must be carefully noticed by Noah. He must build an ark. And he is instructed in the minutest details how he is to build this ark. He is told who and what will go into the ark. He must prepare an ark for himself and for the animals of every kind, so that in a "new world" there may be survivors. God will not create a new world, but He will continue the world's history through this ark. The ark is, so to speak, the medium of the new world. Here the church will be preserved in the context of the cosmos! That is the "covenant" which the Lord makes and remembers with Noah. These words to Noah are covenantal words rooted in God's sovereign love and mercy. Noah found "grace" in the eyes of the Lord. He was a vessel of mercy prepared by the Lord for His purpose in His sovereign love. Noah did not find mercy because he "walked" with God. On the contrary, Noah walked with God because he had found favor with the Lord. Had the Lord not named him "Noah" through his father, as we read, "And he (Lamech) called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the

Lord hath cursed?" Pray, how did Lamech prophesy this? Did he do so by some vague human premonition? That no Bible student worthy of the name will hold. Lamech prophesied here as a divine indication that Noah had been separated for the "comfort" of the church from his mother's womb. Thus in the covenant of grace for the church from his mother's womb. Thus in the covenant of grace for the church of God in Noah's day it is: comfort ye, comfort ye my people.

And then when Noah was five hundred thirty years old, and after he had been a "preacher of righteousness" for centuries, he was told of what God would do for the "comfort" of the church, and what He likewise would do to all the godless because of all the ungodly words which they have spoken. Noah comforted the people of God with divine Eschatology. And, finally, Noah's preaching receive the "Amen" of God, received this "Amen" in the cataclysmic destruction of the world and of every living creature, (Jude 14, 15).

NOAH FEARS WITH A GODLY FEAR (Hebrews 11:7)

The things of which Noah is "warned" of God are as yet not seen. They are for Noah as certain as if they had already occurred. Noah believed God. He had found favor with God and, therefore, believed with a faith which does not fall back into perdition, but believes, to the saving of the soul. His conduct is an example for all the saints, and is a concrete exhibition of "faith as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," (Hebrews 11:1).

However, because Noah believed God, he "was moved with fear." The fear with which he was moved was simultaneous with the "warning." The hearing of Noah was mingled with faith. And thus Noah profited by the warning; and in this fear Noah translated the warning into action to build the commanded ark. And, therefore, the emphasis falls on "by faith" in the text.

One might become involved in a deep psychological study of "godly fear" here. One might try to trace with his finger the work of God in this wonder of faith as it moves to fear upon hearing the warning of God. However, those who have faith know the spiritual-psychological reality of this connection between faith and "godly fear." The term "godly fear" in the Greek is *eulabeethis*.

According to competent scholars the term *eulabeia* marks that careful and watchful reverence, which pays regard to every circumstance in that with which it has to deal, (Westcott). Trench says that the image on which this term rests is that of careful taking hold and careful handling, as if of some precious yet fragile vessel.

If such be the case, then the writer seeks to teach that Noah's faith was such in the divine warning and directions that he gave careful heed to them; yea, for one hundred twenty years he held on to this Word of

God concerning unseen things and worked while it was day, ere the night come in which no man can work. And this Noah did in spite of the evil men of his day, while the long suffering of God waited! (I Peter 3:20; Luke 17:26, 27) Noah did not hesitate and say, "Whereby shall I know that this will come to pass?" as did Abraham and Zacharias and Gideon. The godly fear was instantaneous with the divine warning. Notice the two aorist participles both alike, showing that the action was contemporaneous. (*Pistei . . . chreematis-theis . . . eulabeetheis*.)

NOAH CONDEMNS THE WORLD AND BECOMES HEIR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH (Hebrews 11:7b)

In the real sense of the word Noah could not condemn the world. That is the prerogative of the Judge of heaven and earth. Noah could only condemn the world by obeying the warning of God concerning the judgment of the Flood. And that is really what the text says. For the "by which" refers to Noah's faith and the godly fear of this faith. Noah judged and condemned the world by bowing his head in deep piety and reverence, trusting that God would call all his and God's enemies into hell and destruction, and that God would save him with all the elect in glory. Yes, this would mean many centuries of history yet; nevertheless, Noah looked for the final coming of the King in His glory.

Did he not prepare an ark for the "salvation of his house?" And is this "house" not the "generations of Noah" as they are blessed in the Noahic blessing, which reads, "blessed be the God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant?" For this house, the church of the living God, both Jew and Gentile, Noah prepared an ark. For from the sons of Noah the entire human race developed, and out of all these nations is the church gathered. The human race is saved organically in Noah's generations. For, according to the flesh, Christ was in that ark. So Noah's preparing of the ark was not mere "fleeing from the wrath to come," but it was an anticipation of greater things for the church, a new world in which the earth would not any longer be cursed for man's sake. It was for *the salvation* of his house that he prepared the ark.

Was not this ark and the flood a picture, a type of baptism, which is not merely a putting away of the filth of the flesh but is a question of a good conscience toward God? Was not the church saved in the ark and by the water? When Noah rides on the Flood and in the awful deep in which the entire world is condemned to death and hell — it was then that Noah must have sung a song as did Israel when Pharaoh and all his hosts were drowned in the Red Sea. And riding the waves and the mighty deep, Noah by faith condemns the world! Hallelujah!

And this same Noah also became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Before the Flood, Noah was simply a voice crying in the wilderness. He buried the saints until he even must commit the aged Methuselah to the earth in the very year of the Flood. The Flood could not harm such. Adam, Abel, and the saints are in their burial places. But the church is gathered, defended, and preserved not in spite of the Flood, but right through the Flood. And Noah has his reward. It is not a mere earthly and temporal reward. It is the reward of a son in God's covenant. He is remembered with a reward of grace.

Yes, Abraham has the promise of being heir of the

world, (Romans 4). In this same sense Noah, too, is an heir. He is the only Patriarch of his kind. He is heir, joint-heir with Christ. But it is according to the rule and standard of faith. It is by grace! Therefore, also Noah is not saved except by the sovereign love of God. Noah, too, was a poor sinner. No flesh is justified before God by the works of the law. Noah was saved by grace through faith, and all his house also, the church in the ark and the holy Christian church which the Son of God gathers out of the entire human race.

Let us, then lift up our feeble hands and strengthen our weak knees, looking at faith of this man of God in the cloud of witnesses.

IN MEMORY

Our Lord suddenly took unto Himself on August 9, 1971, our wife, mother, daughter, and sister

ELOISE SCHUITEMA.

Though we feel the emptiness, we trust in His perfect wisdom and believe He does all things well.

We acknowledge with thanks the many expressions of sympathy and have learned anew the true meaning of the communion of saints.

Mr. Ken Schuitema
Dianne, Brenda, Steven
The Kortering family

the full assurance of His peace and everlasting promise.

Mr. and Wm. A. Griess
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Trautman
Mr. Paul Griess
Mr. and Mrs. Russel Golgert
9 grandchildren
3 great-grandchildren

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The consistory and congregation of the Randolph Protestant Reformed Church express their sorrow and sympathy to MR. AND MRS. THEODORE DE VRIES and family in the death of their infant daughter. We pray that our God may strengthen and sustain them in their sorrow by His comforting Spirit.

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." (Malachi 3:17[a]). And from Romans 8:28 — "and we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

Consistory and Congregation of the
Randolph Protestant Reformed Church,
Randolph, Wisconsin

ANNIVERSARY NOTICE

On October 2, 1971, our beloved parents,

MR. AND MRS. ALVIN P. GRIESS,

celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

We, their family, express our sincere gratitude to our covenant God for the blessings we have received through them these many years. It is our hope and prayer that our heavenly Father will continue to bless them in the remainder of their earthly pilgrimage in

News From Our Churches

One thing that's even better than an abundance of bulletins from which to gather news, is a long Classis Report. Enough space remains, we think, for one short paragraph, so we'll put a few sentences together and proceed to take the evening off.

A congregational meeting was scheduled for September 24 at Hope Church (Grand Rapids) in order to call a minister from a trio consisting of Rev. D. Engelsma, Rev. G. Lanting, and Rev. G. Van Baren. The installation of Rev. R. Moore in Doon was held on Friday evening, September 10, with Rev. G. Lanting conduct-

ing the service. And, as you probably know by this time, Rev. C. Hanko has accepted the call from Hudsonville.

D. D.

REPORT OF CLASSIS WEST AT ISABEL, SOUTH DAKOTA ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1971

On Wednesday evening, September 1, Rodney Miersma, then pastor-elect of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Isabel, South Dakota, was ordained

as minister of the gospel. This took place in a worship service of the Isabel congregation that was wisely planned by the Isabel consistory to coincide with the meeting there of Classis West. All of the delegates to Classis could attend this impressive service. Several of the delegates participated in the ceremony. Rev. C. Hanko led the congregation in the congregational prayer. Rev. R. Decker preached the sermon, "God's Watchman to the House of Israel," from Ezekiel 33:7. Rev. D. Kuiper read the "Form of Ordination of the Ministers of God's Word." Rev. Decker, Rev. Hanko, Rev. R. Moore, then pastor of Isabel, and Rev. G. Van Baren, delegate ad examina to Classis West from Classis East, joined Rev. Kuiper in the laying on of hands. Rev. Moore exhorted the newly ordained minister and the congregation, according to the concluding part of the "Form." Rev. Miersma concluded the service with the benediction.

We ought to be thankful to the Lord that He has given our churches another young man for the ministry. It is our prayer that He bless Rev. Miersma in his office and make his work fruitful.

This ordination was possible because of the successful examination of Rev. Miersma by the Classis at its meeting on September 1. In keeping with a recent decision of Classis West, Rev. Miersma preached the required sermon the evening before the convening of Classis at a special worship service of the host church, in this case the congregation of Isabel. His text was I Peter 2:24. All of the delegates to Classis were present at this service, as were the delegates ad examina from Classis East, Rev. J. Heys and Rev. G. Van Baren. The Classical Committee of Classis West had appointed two delegates as the committee to give advice to Classis on the sermon. Classis examined Rev. Miersma on Wednesday morning in dogmatics, knowledge of Scripture, knowledge of the Confessions, controversy, and matters of his own faith and walk. With the concurring advice of the delegates ad examina, Classis decided to approve the examination and to advise Isabel to ordain him. One new and fitting aspect of Classis' examination was Rev. Miersma's public signing of the Formula

of Subscription. The president of Classis read the Formula aloud, after which Rev. Miersma signed the Formula in the presence of the Classis.

The examination was the major part of the work of the eight ministers and twelve elders of the Classis. Rev. B. Woudenberg, president of the previous Classis, led the Classis in opening devotions on Wednesday morning. He read Ephesians 1:3-10 and spoke on Ephesians 1:7b-10. We again experienced that this brief exposition and application of a passage of God's Word is an excellent way to begin the meetings of Classis.

Rev. R. Decker served as president of Classis.

Classis drew up a schedule of classical appointments for the vacant churches of Forbes, North Dakota and Randolph, Wisconsin. The schedule is as follows: *FORBES*: Sept. 26, Oct. 3 – J. Kortering; Oct. 24 – R. Miersma; Nov. 7 – R. Miersma; Nov. 28, Dec. 5 – D. Engelsma; Dec. 19 – G. Lanting; Jan. 16 – R. Miersma; Jan. 23 – R. Moore; Feb. 6 – J. Kortering; Feb. 27, March 5 – B. Woudenberg. *RANDOLPH*: Sept. 12, 19 – R. Decker; Oct. 10, 17 – G. Lanting; Nov. 7, 14 – R. Moore; Dec. 5, 12 – D. Kuiper; Jan. 9 – R. Decker; Jan. 16 – D. Kuiper; Feb. 27, March 5 – C. Hanko.

In executive session, Classis treated a request by a consistory for advice concerning the discipline of a member, according to Articles 76 and 77 of the Church Order.

The next meeting of Classis West will be held in Pella, Iowa on March 1, 1972, the Lord willing.



Rev. David Engelsma,
Stated Clerk
Classis West of the Prot. Ref'd. Churches

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