

The STANDARD BEARER



A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

You can be sure that anyone who walks with God does not regard Him as an emergency measure, someone to be called in conveniently when we are no longer able to take care of ourselves. That man's religion is not a conventional side-issue, but fills his whole life. God had first place in Enoch's life. God was his God and his sovereign Lord, before Whom he humbly bowed to ask: Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?

How else can a mere earthly creature ever possibly walk with God? He must be deeply conscious of his own emptiness and insignificance. Compared with God he is but an insignificant speck of clay, less than nothing and vanity. For God is God, the almighty, omnipresent, sovereign God, in Whom we live and move and have our being. And we are His creation, His handiwork, existing each moment by His power that sustains us. The Most High God is worthy to be praised. For even as all things are of Him and through Him, so He has also prepared all things unto Himself, to show forth His praises. He has even called His people unto Himself, not that they should live unto themselves, but that they should live unto Him in worship, fear and obedience.

[See page 204.]

February 1, 1974

MEDITATION

Spiritual Sensitiveness

Rev. M. Schipper

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."
 Philippians 1:9, 10

That your love may abound . . . !

The apostle does not pray that the church at Philippi may have love. He was deeply aware that love resided especially in this church, and in the hearts of all the members thereof. For this the apostle raises continual thanksgiving to God. He was so sure that they possessed this love because they had communicated it to him, not only in word, but in deed.

But he prays that that love may abound!

O, indeed, there were perhaps many other things for which the apostle could have prayed, also as they pertained to this particular church. Was it not small in numbers and strength? Could he not have prayed that the Lord would add to their number, so that the burden of the work of the church could have been more easily borne? Was it not a church which suffered reproach for the sake of Christ? And would it not be permissible to pray that the Lord provide for this church peace and prosperity if it be His will? But for this he does not pray. On the contrary, he reminds the church that it is given them of grace in the cause of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer with Him.

Rather, his prayer is, that their love may abound yet more and more!

But this is not all! Notice that the prayer is: that their love may increase in knowledge, and in all judgment, so that they may be able to approve the things which are excellent, in order that they may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.

What the apostle really is desirous of is that the church may increase in spiritual sensitiveness, such spiritual sensitivity that will keep the church above reproach unto the coming of the Lord.

Love that abounds unto spiritual sensitiveness!

That is what the apostle prays for in our text!

But what does this mean? And why was this so necessary? And how did the apostle prayerfully

expect this desire of his heart to be fulfilled?

That there is a need for the church of Christ in the world to be spiritually sensitive there can be no question. However shall this need be realized, there must of necessity be a constant increase in knowledge and discernment.

When the text speaks of knowledge, the reference is not, of course, to natural knowledge of natural things. As much as natural knowledge of natural things may be necessary for the realization of one's place in the world, and this acquired knowledge may be obtained through much study of the sciences and humanities, the apostle is not at all concerned about it. He is not interested in, nor does he pray that the members of the church have a well rounded education. Nor is he concerned even about their natural knowledge of spiritual things, important as this may be. One may very well have a head full of this knowledge and yet his heart is far from the Lord. It is always the danger of the theological professor and minister of the Word, as well as even the lay member of the church, when they approach the Word of God that they do this only to acquire a head full of Scriptural knowledge. And this knowledge may be so exact that they know about the doctrines of Christian faith so that they can develop and teach and even defend these doctrines, yet it is no more than an intellectual gymnastic with them, while they are strangers to the mercies of salvation and stand outside of the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, Whom to know is eternal life. Important as Christian education is, and as necessary as the accumulation of Scriptural knowledge may be, if it is no more than this, it avails nothing. It must be a knowledge of love shall it profit us; a knowledge of the heart, in which the love of God has been spread abroad.

Notice, however, that the apostle's prayer does not stop with his desire that the church be adept, and increase in this principle, spiritual, saving knowledge; but he adds to this knowledge "and in all judgment."

The knowledge for which he prays therefore is twofold. On the one hand, it is the knowledge of principle; while on the other, it is the knowledge of practise. He would not only be concerned that the church increase in spiritual knowledge, but he is also concerned that the church be spiritually able to apply that knowledge. For instance, one may know from the heart that God is the holy and exalted one, but unless this knowledge brings him into the dust before Him, it avails nothing. Or again, one may know from the heart that before God he is a sinner, but unless he humbles himself and repents of his sin, it is not enough. And again, it must be stressed that also this judgment or discernment must be more than intellectually logical, — it must be spiritual. This is what is meant by spiritual sensitivity.

And how necessary it is that we possess this spiritual sensitiveness!

How sad it is when our spiritual development goes in the opposite direction! When our spiritual life becomes more and more obtuse! When our spiritual senses are dulled, and blunted. When we become slow to understand, and to respond in the spiritual sense of the word! When we begin to act indifferently and insensitively to spiritual things! How appalling it is when the members of Christ's Church become accustomed to corrupt speech, to carnal pleasures, worldly fashions, and are no longer able to protest against profanity, against what is evil. How the Holy Spirit of Christ must be grieved when those who bear the name of Christ are playing ball as it were with the world, and no longer are walking antithetically in the world! Though there is no specific indication that the church at Philippi was in immediate danger of becoming spiritually dull, the apostle is fully aware that this may become the danger of becoming spiritually dull, the apostle is fully aware that this may become the danger of the church in the world. And surely this applies to the church as we see it today.

Approving the things which are excellent!

That is, of course, the end of the knowledge and discernment, for which the apostle prays.

The things excellent are those things which differ from all others because of their goodness. They are the things of God Who is the Excellent One. They are the things of His Spirit and truth, the things of His kingdom. They are the things of which God approves, and which He expects that we shall approve.

When our spiritual knowledge and discernment are what they ought to be, we are able also to discern the things which excel because of their goodness, and choose them. Then we also approve them because God does. This requires a spiritually developed taste and desire for that which transcends. Negatively, this

implies that we learn to abhor all that which is evil, corrupt, and ugly, — the things of darkness. And positively it implies that by grace we acquire a taste for those things which are in harmony with the being and will of God. It means that we find our delight in those things which are pleasing to Him.

And how necessary that is!

As we are by nature, we do not, neither can we choose or approve of these excellent things. Only by grace do we acquire a new taste. So that the things of darkness become repulsive, while that which is good becomes the object of our delight and approval.

But even so the prayer of the apostle is not ended.

He also has in mind the end purpose of this spiritual sensitiveness, and for that he also prays.

That ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ!

One who is sincere, according to the original text, is one who is unmixed, pure in walk; able to stand the true and severe judgment of the light. One, therefore, who is sincere must be able to stand in the light of God's judgment, and not be consumed.

That one is without offence implies that he walks so circumspectly that no one stumbles over him, nor is he the cause of stumbling in others. It means that you are never found in places where you are not expected to be as a child of light. Your walk of life is never such that another does not really know who you are.

All this means that if we do not develop in spiritual knowledge and discernment, we will be spiritually dull. If we are spiritually dull, we cannot be quick to approve the things which are excellent. And if we cannot do the latter, we will be insincere, and become stumbling blocks to others. Then we will enter Folly's Temple and eat of her dainties, and at the same time be the occasion for others to stumble and to walk with us in the ways of darkness.

Till the day of Christ!

Rather, into the day of Christ!

The day of Christ is Christ's day. It is the day of His full revelation. It is the day of His complete victory, when all darkness will be forever banished and destroyed, and when only the things that are excellent shall remain and abide forever. It is the day when His people whom He has redeemed shall be like Him, and reflect perfectly His saving grace in them. It is the day when Christ shall receive all His own and present them to the Father, without spot or wrinkle in the assembly of the elect.

The prayer of the apostle is, therefore, that the church may be spiritually sensitive, developing in spiritual knowledge and discernment, so that they are

always approving the things which are excellent, in order that they may be sincere and without offence into that blessed day when Christ shall take them and present them to the Father. Thus the children of God will be prepared to stand forever in the midst of all that is excellent in the new creation where righteousness shall dwell, and when God shall be glorified when He beholds in that people the perfection of His grace.

That your love may abound . . .!

That is the source of all this spiritual sensitiveness!

It is the love of which you and I have been made the living and conscious subjects!

O, surely, this love does not have its source in us!

Love has its source only in God, Who is love! And always this love of God is first. We love only because He first loved us. He sheds abroad in our hearts His love, but in such a way that we love Him, our neighbor, all the brethren, and all things excellent. Also here, as it is always, love is a bond of perfection. First, as it flows from God to us, as it is His purpose

to make us perfect as He is perfect. Then, as it returns to God Who gave it, it is the desire and longing of our new will to be perfect as He is. But then, too, it is not only the desire for our own perfection that we seek, but also the perfection of the neighbor and all the holy brethren.

See to it that that love abounds yet more and more!

Like the volcano which can no longer contain itself, but continues to spout forth lava; so also see to it that the love of God in our hearts overflows in a never ending stream.

One who does this by the grace of God shall never be ashamed; for he will be walking in the way of sanctification and perfection, without which no one shall see the Lord. And when the Lord's day shall come, he shall stand in spotless perfection before the face of His God.

The prayer of the apostle has an answer!

The church shall be perfected in glory!

EDITORIALS

Editor's Notes

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Seminary Dedication

As of this writing, "all systems are go" for the Seminary Dedication Program at First Church, Grand Rapids, at 8:00 P.M., Friday, February 15, the Lord willing. And this is a last reminder and urgent invitation to participate in this historic event, and also to attend the open house at our new facilities. Prof. R. D. Decker's dedicatory address will be entitled, "That All The Earth May Know That Jehovah Is God."

Of Book-Offers and Subscriptions

Does the propaganda by our Business Office help? Do the special offers, the combination book-subscription deals, the 10 for \$2 campaigns increase the subscription list?

Our dedicated Business Manager recently furnished some facts and figures to answer these questions. As a direct result of our last "greensheet" we sold 62

books, received 34 renewal subscriptions, and 11 new subscriptions. Books and subscriptions went to Michigan, Iowa, Maine, California, Washington, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, South Carolina, New Jersey, Illinois, and Tennessee, and even to Canada and Australia. As of December 28, we have received 404 "10 for 2" subscriptions, which have yielded a total of 76 new full subscriptions.

Gigantic growth? No, but steady growth for our *Standard Bearer*; and our over-all increase has been comparatively larger the last couple of years than in many a previous year, — reflecting also an increasing interest in what our magazine has to say.

With a little consistent effort, our Board and our readership could cooperate in this 50th Anniversary Year to produce the largest increase and the largest subscription-list our *Standard Bearer* has ever had. How about it, Board? And readers?

The OPC and the “Free Offer” (5)

Contrary to Scripture

(continued)

Last time we pointed out that in their purported exegesis of Matthew 5:44-48 and Luke 6:35, 36 the authors of *The Free Offer of the Gospel* beg the question, i.e., assume the very thing they are supposed to prove by means of these passages. Hence, we concluded that this part of their proof is a failure. They did not establish their claim of a divine love, or grace, to all men.

We shall also point out later that their proposed exegesis of these passages is completely contrary to the current thought of Scripture.

Before we proceed with our discussion, however, we wish to present the correct explanation of the two passages in question, so that the reader may compare. We will do so very briefly, leaving for a later time some further reflection on the meaning and significance of these passages.

The following, in brief, is the Murray-Stonehouse explanation:

- 1) We must love our enemies.
- 2) The reason why we must love our enemies is that we are to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. We are children of the Highest, and therefore must be like Him.
- 3) Hence, if we love our enemies, we will be children of God and reflect His love: for He loves all His enemies in this present life.
- 4) This love to all men is manifested in God's common rain and sunshine on all men without distinction.
- 5) Although these passages do not speak directly of the gospel offer, yet here we are given a disclosure of goodness in the heart of God toward all men (something we cannot see if we merely concentrate on the divine decree of reprobation), and a disclosure of the relation there is between gifts bestowed and the lovingkindness from which they flow.

And what has always been our interpretation of these passages? Permit me to quote a brief explanation from Rev. Herman Hoeksema's *God's Goodness Always Particular*, pp. 195, 196:

“1. God revealed His love and caused His people to know and to taste that love as a love that is capable of being merciful and kind to His enemies. [Note: not

all His enemies. The point is rather that this is the *character* of the love of God as His people experience it. HCH] And this is the only love of God that is mentioned in the text and in the context of both passages.

“2. The children of God, in whose hearts this love of God is poured out, and who experienced and tasted this love of God as a love to His enemies, must manifest this love in their life and walk in the world. Hence, they must love not only those that love them, but also their enemies, that revile and persecute them. They must do good to them, pray for them and bless them. In doing this they manifest the image of their Father which is in heaven.

“3. As a most general example of this they must look at God's work in nature, where He causes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

As we said, we shall have occasion to return to this subject later, as well as to point out that the Murray-Stonehouse presentation is contrary to the current teaching of Scripture.

Now, however, we want to turn to the pamphlet by Pastor Erroll Hulse on this same subject, and to point out that in connection with this same subject of common grace and the offer he is guilty of the same error of begging the question. In fact, this error is even more glaring in his pamphlet.

There is a certain amount of confusion in this pamphlet. Thus, for example, the author certainly sounds a good note when he writes: “Now this beautiful thing (preaching) is marred by two horrible errors which we should seek always to avoid. The one is to attribute power to fallen sinners which they do not have and make it appear that God is unable to save the sinner until that sinner gives him permission.” This is sound language, and clearly anti-Arminian. Yet the author later in the pamphlet insists that God is gracious in the preaching of the gospel to all who hear; and he never resolves the difficulty that arises from the obvious contradiction here. He never explains how it is that the “common grace” of the gospel offer is an *ineffectual* grace, does not save those whom God is allegedly desirous of saving.

Another item of confusion. On page 4 the author

writes: "The term free offer, of course, means that the Gospel should be preached indiscriminately to all men." Now if this were the meaning of the term, we would have no quarrel with it. In fact, there would be no controversy about the whole matter. Nor would the term be necessary. As we have said again and again throughout our history, and as our Reformed confessions plainly teach, the gospel must indeed be preached promiscuously and to all those to whom God in His good pleasure sends it. This is, however, *by no means* the doctrine of the free offer in the history of dogma; nor is this by any means the same as saying that God wills the salvation of all to whom the Gospel is preached or that God is gracious to all in the preaching. Nor is this mere truth of the promiscuous preaching of the gospel the doctrine which Pastor Hulse sets forth later in his pamphlet. On page 7 he writes, to cite just one example: "That God should thus address every creature with a saving Gospel is gracious and it is here we see the connection between common grace and the free offer of the Gospel." In fact, Mr. Hulse cites almost all the passages in support of the idea that God wills all men to be saved with which we have become very familiar in our Protestant Reformed Churches.

But I will pass this by for the time being. I will also pass by what I would criticize as a very defective definition of *grace*. And I will concentrate on his error of begging the question, of simply assuming what ought to be proved.

On page 5 Pastor Hulse begins to answer the question whether there is a grace of God which is common to all men as follows:

At the time of the fall Adam and Eve are not cut off completely. God speaks to them and confirms his judgment upon sin; but he also announces the promise of the Gospel. Abel is saved through Jesus Christ, represented in the sacrifice of a lamb (Gen. 4:1-17; Heb. 11:4). Cain on the other hand is rejected but, nevertheless, God reasons with Cain and protection is afforded him (Gen. 4:7, 15). We see then that God continues to deal with men as men, even though they are reprobate. That he should do so is surely gracious.

We will pass by, for the sake of argument, Hulse's interpretation of God's dealings with Cain. We will accept at face value the statement "that God continues to deal with men as men, even though they are reprobate." But notice that the next statement is *a pure, unproved assumption*. This is precisely the point that Pastor Hulse must *prove*, but fails to prove. Why and how is it necessarily gracious that God deals with men as men? How does the example of God's dealings with Cain "even though reprobate" show that God was gracious to him? I would ask the question: how else could God deal with men but as

men? Surely, He could not deal with men as animals, or as devils, or as stocks and blocks? Does God not always deal with each of His creatures according to the nature which He Himself gave that creature? Or I could ask the question: is God, then, also gracious to the reprobate in hell? Also there, remember, He continues to deal with men as men, that is, He causes them as men to suffer the everlasting torments of hell-fire. But is this perhaps gracious?

There is simply a total lack of exegesis here, that is, a complete failure to draw the meaning out of the text, and that, too, in the light of the whole of Scripture. I assure Pastor Hulse that he cannot find in Genesis or in the whole of Scripture an iota of proof that God was in any sense gracious to Cain — provided that he faithfully interprets Scripture with Scripture. But certainly there is no point proved in the above paragraph; there is only a point *assumed*.

The same is true of the next paragraph, which fails to give the reference, Genesis 6:3. Pastor Hulse writes:

In Genesis the Holy Spirit is described as striving with men and women that they might repent. [Note: The text does not say: "that they might repent." HCH] "The Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man." [A half quotation, HCH] God set a limit of one hundred and twenty years in which he would strive with man, "whose every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." But that he should so strive is surely gracious. Hence emerges the concept of common grace.

A clearer example of begging the question could hardly be found! Pastor Hulse simply assumes his conclusion without any proof and without so much as beginning to explain the text: "But that he should so strive is surely gracious." It is not my purpose at this time to explain the text. My point is that *Pastor Hulse* should explain the text and not simply draw conclusions. Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that this is indeed proof of common grace. It is not, of course; and we are well acquainted with this passage because it was used by the Synod of 1924 in support of the error of a common-grace-restraint-of-sin. But let us grant this for a moment. Then Pastor Hulse should *show* from the text, and that, too, in the light of Scripture, that this striving is gracious. The term *grace* is not so much as mentioned. One might even argue that the very term *strive*, which would seem to indicate opposition and conflict, indicates the opposite of a gracious attitude. My whole point is that there is an utter lack of exegesis and a mere assumption of what should be proved.

As one who is responsible before God rightly to divide the Word of truth, Pastor Hulse has no right to deal thus with the Scriptures. And he must not and may not expect people of God to accept his claim of

a common grace of God merely on his say-so.

The same error pervades the following paragraph:

Such is the all pervasive depravity of man that "it repented God that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Destruction, which came by the flood, was inevitable. Subsequent to the flood it was necessary that a covenant be established whereby God could continue to deal with mankind. A proper basis was needed upon which to provide for the whole fabric of the world, because of the evil effects of the fall. That the earth should not be destroyed again is part of this covenant (Gen. 9:11). Forbearance such as this toward a fallen world is gracious.

Again, it would be difficult to find a paragraph with more unproved assumptions and total lack of real exegesis. I have an idea that Pastor Hulse here accepts the whole (Kuyperian) notion of a covenant of common grace (sometimes called "the covenant of nature"). But this is beside the point. This one little paragraph contains Hulse's view apparently of the whole passage of Genesis 9:8-17. But the paragraph of "explanation" is not even as long as the passage itself! Note the following unproved assumptions:

1) Subsequent to the flood it was necessary that a covenant be established whereby God could continue to deal with mankind. Not an iota of proof is offered

that this was necessary, that this is any other covenant than that of Genesis 6:18, or that this was a covenant "whereby God could continue to deal with mankind." For the sake of argument, let us grant that all this may be true. The point is that Pastor Hulse does not *show* this from Scripture. And for my part, I do not believe either that it is true or that he *can* show it from Holy Writ. But I will stand corrected if he will come with Scripture, before which both he and I must bow.

2) A proper basis was needed upon which to provide for the whole fabric of the world, because of the evil effects of the fall. Proof, please?

3) This was a matter of divine forbearance. Proof, please?

4) Forbearance such as this toward a fallen world is gracious. Proof?

You see, if we are to deal with these questions correctly and convincingly, then we must come with more than human claims and assumptions. To me, it is nothing short of irresponsible to try to cover such a key passage of the Word of God in a few brief statements without an iota of proof, and then to build such a crucial and debatable doctrine as that of common grace and the offer of the gospel on such a flimsy foundation.

Book Review

Prof. H. Hanko

GIFTS AND MINISTRIES, by Arnold Bittlinger; Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1973; 109 pp., \$1.95 (paper).

Speaking from within the Pentecostal movement, the author attempts to re-explain the whole concept of offices within the Church to include the special office, to broaden the theological base of Pentecostalism to make it more ecumenical, and to

justify the movement with a reinterpretation of key passages. The book is thoroughly Pelagian, but has value for anyone who is interested in hearing what Pentecostals believe from their own spokesman. The author is hailed as "the most competent theologian within the charismatic movement." This statement does not speak very highly of the theology of neo-Pentecostalism.

QUESTION BOX

About Preaching In The Sphere Of The Covenant

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From a Canadian reader I received a rather lengthy letter which touches on an important question. I will quote most of the letter:

"However at this time I will try to put in words something on which I would like to have your opinion. This something concerns the 'covenant of grace.'

"By now you will be perfectly aware of the fact that I am not a theologian, and I hope you will also this time bear with me when I put things upside down and vice-versa. Although we as laymen cannot in many cases discuss the truth as a minister, this does not mean that we do not know our doctrine and our Bible; I must admit, of course, that our training in the Chr. Ref. Church has been far from complete.

"As I have said, my question concerns the 'covenant of grace'; and not this precious truth itself, but its application to believers and their children. By 'application' I mean, then: how should preaching be in our churches, and what shall we tell our children at home, at school, and in church? My concern goes somewhat as follows: years ago already, when I was still a boy, my parents used to say of the general preaching in the Gereformeerde Kerken, 'We hear so little of conversion and repentance; it seems that these are not necessary for covenant people.' And, of course, this has not changed in the years that followed, but preaching has become what I call 'one-sided' more and more all the time. For as it is now, it is taken for granted that when we are baptized, and go to church, all is well. But is it?

"Nicodemus was a 'master in Israel' but the Lord told him plainly, 'You must be born again.' We read in Hebrews 4:2, 'For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with

faith in them that heard it.' Also I Corinthians 10 gives us a clear picture that everyone of the old covenant people were not saved, but were destroyed because of their sins. And Paul says, 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.' (vs. 12)

"I am afraid that much preaching has led to a false security, in that the impression has been given that we 'stand' by reason of the covenant. 'The just shall live by faith.' Of course, all this is to be included in the covenant of grace; and for that reason the Jews said, 'We have Abraham for a father.' And Nicodemus lacked the knowledge that he 'must be born again.'

"It is also Answer 84 of our Heidelberg Catechism which deals with this matter of preaching to children of the covenant when it says, 'that to believers *one* and *all* it must be proclaimed that those who believe the gospel shall be saved; and that those who reject the gospel shall be damned.' This distinction as so clearly set forth in our Catechism has not been heard in many churches for a long time already. I am convinced that this lack in the preaching has many lulled to sleep, and is deadly.

"Preaching is all-important, for 'it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save those that believe.' (I Cor. 1:21) I know that I have been very incomplete. Much more should and could be said about this important matter. I hope (but I am afraid you may think different) that you do not get the opinion that I have anything against the dogma of the covenant; but I believe that a wrong interpretation of this doctrine, among others, has led us astray in our Chr. Ref. Churches. What is your opinion?"

"Yours truly,
N."

Reply

First of all, let me apologize for not answering earlier. Shortly before your letter arrived, there was a flurry of questions for Question Box, which partly accounts for the delay. Besides, it takes a little study and research to answer questions of this kind; and this in turn, takes some time; and the latter is somewhat of a scarce commodity in my life, it seems. At any rate, I will try to begin the New Year right by serving you with an answer.

In the second place, you need not have an inferiority complex about being a layman. There is something Romish about the term "layman" even though it is used well-meaningly. All the people of God are prophets, you know; and we all have the unction of the Holy One. Besides, your question is nothing to be ashamed about.

But now let me turn to the substance of your letter.

In the first place, your question concerns covenant-preaching in the Christian Reformed Church. You will understand that I hear very little Christian Reformed preaching. I do recall that Dr. James Daane recently complained about the lack of "election" and of "covenant" in Christian Reformed preaching. I do know, too, from my reading of various Christian Reformed periodicals that there is a serious lack in this respect. And I do know, too, that the whole concept of the covenant ought to occupy a central place in the theology and preaching of a Reformed church: for the covenant idea belongs to the very genius of the Reformed faith. For the rest, I will have to go on the information which you furnish in your letter.

In the second place, you write that your question does not concern the doctrine of the covenant as such and that you do not have anything against the dogma of the covenant. Your question concerns the application of this doctrine. Yet you also suggest that "a wrong interpretation of this doctrine, among others, has led us astray in our Christian Reformed Churches." Now I do not know what you understand by the covenant of grace. I am well acquainted with the Heynsian idea of the covenant which for many years was the prevailing view in the Christian Reformed Church and which was essentially Arminianism applied to the covenant. And there have been, through the years, many misconceptions concerning the covenant and the place of the children of believers in the covenant. I believe that this question of the idea of the covenant is most likely at the basis of the problem you raise in your letter. A wrong conception of the covenant is bound to affect preaching in the sphere of the covenant. Now I cannot here go into all these matters. I can suggest some good study material on this subject — *Believers*

And Their Seed and *The Triple Knowledge, Vol. II* (2nd edition), both written by Rev. Herman Hoeksema and both published by our Reformed Free Publishing Association. Briefly, let me say that our conception of the covenant is that it is the eternal relation of friendship between God and His elect people in Christ. This covenant God alone establishes and realizes, sovereignly and unconditionally. And God realizes this covenant historically in the line of the generations of believers. This is put very briefly; but it is essential to the understanding of the problem which you raise and the answer furnished below.

In the third place, I would suggest that part of the solution to your problem lies in the fact that the whole idea of the antithesis has been virtually lost in the Christian Reformed Church because of the error of common grace. Preaching in the sphere of the covenant, if it is to serve to distinguish the carnal element from the spiritual seed, must be sharply antithetical.

Finally, I can best describe for you what I believe preaching in the sphere of the covenant ought to be by means of a lengthy quotation from a chapter on that very subject in *The Triple Knowledge, Volume II*, pages 435, ff. Because of the importance of this question I will take the space in our magazine for this lengthy quotation. I propose that you study this. And then, if you still have questions on the subject, call on Question Box again. Here is the quotation:

We believe that in the line of the covenant, in the Church, the seed of regeneration is implanted in the hearts of the children of the covenant in very infancy. There are, of course, exceptions. God remains free to work His grace in the hearts of His people either in infancy or in later years; but as a rule their rebirth takes place in earliest childhood.

As we said, we do not base our view of immediate regeneration on the presupposition that children are regenerated. On the contrary, the conception that regeneration is an immediate work of the Holy Spirit, independent of the preaching of the Word, is directly founded on Scripture. But just because Scripture teaches this truth and presents the rebirth of His people in the narrowest sense of the word, that is, in the sense of the implanting of the seed of regeneration, as an immediate work by the Holy Spirit, therefore it is evident that also the littlest infants can receive the grace of regeneration. And again, because we believe on the basis of Scripture that regeneration must be conceived of as an immediate work of the Spirit, and because for that very reason the regeneration of infants is possible, therefore we regard it as a common rule that in the line of the covenant children are reborn from infancy.

Then we can understand the real significance and

operation of the preaching of the Word in the sphere of the Church and in the line of the covenant as a means of grace. Means require conscious reaction. They are elements which God uses but which we also use. Bread is used by God to nourish our bodies, but we eat it. Thus the Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the Word to work faith and to strengthen it, but we also use it and are even responsible for the use of the Word of God. Now, it is only the living that can use means. The dead can neither eat nor drink. And the spiritually dead do, indeed, react upon the preaching of the Word, but only to reject it. They never come to repentance and faith. To them it is a saviour of death unto death. But just as the physically living are able to use the means God provides for the sustenance of their earthly life, so the spiritually living are capable to use the means which the Holy Spirit provides for the working of faith and the development and upbuilding of the same.

Hence, life is first. Regeneration precedes all other work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner. And in regeneration the Holy Spirit implants the power of the faculty of faith, so that potentially the regenerated is a believer, even before he comes to the conscious activity of faith. And that this work of regeneration and the implanting of the faculty of faith is usually done in infancy, that is, in the line of the covenant, is the common view of the Reformed theologians. [Here follows a lengthy quotation from Ursinus, which we will omit. HCH]

Now, in the sphere of the covenant conscious faith and repentance are wrought gradually in little children through the influence of the preaching of the Word.

The influence of this preaching and its sphere is, of course, not limited to the official ministry in the church on Sunday and on the mission field. In the wider sense it includes many different spheres of labor. There is, for instance, the work of the theological school, where young men are trained for the ministry of the Word, where they are taught to exegete Holy Writ and to understand the doctrine of the Church, and where the truth is developed and maintained and defended over against all errors. There is the labor of preserving and translating as well as of interpreting the Bible, a labor that shows its fruit not only in many works on textual criticism, but also in hundreds of commentaries. There is the calling of the Church to establish and formulate the truth of the Word of God in her confessions, not only to defend it over against opponents and gainsayers, but also to preserve it in generations. Of all these labors the Church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, and to which the Word of God has been entrusted, is the subject. And of them all the preaching of the Word as a means of grace is the very

heart.

In the sphere of the Church God in His infinite wisdom and mercy causes the covenant child to be born, and under the influence of the preaching of the Word in this wider sense the child is placed from very infancy.

This begins already in the administration of baptism, of which we must speak later in detail. But in baptism the Church already exercises the influence of the preaching of the Word by exacting from the parents the promise that they will bring up their children "in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of their power." And of this doctrine in which the children must be instructed the parents are asked to acknowledge that it "is contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the Articles of the Christian Faith, and which is taught here in this Christian Church, to be the true and perfect doctrine of salvation." Hence, in accord with this pledge of the parents it is in the covenant home that the influence of the Word of God is exerted upon the child first of all. This is continued in Sunday School, and presently, through the ministry of the Word directly in catechism, and in the midst of the congregation through the preaching. And further, the influence of the preaching of the Word in the sphere of the Church is felt in many other ways, as the reading of the Bible in the home, the conversation of the saints among one another, and the study of Scripture in the various societies that are organized within the church. And once more it must be emphasized that the very heart of this sphere and influence is the preaching of the Word as a means of grace, together with the administration of the sacraments.

Now, who shall say at how early an age the Holy Spirit is able to quicken the seed of regeneration and bring the faculty of faith to a more or less conscious activity?

Worldly educators realize rather clearly that from earliest infancy, yea, from very birth the whole outside world streams in upon the consciousness of the child and makes its impression upon that consciousness. Hence, modern educators stress the importance of surrounding the child, even in the cradle, with objects, sounds, shapes, and colors and smells that are calculated to make the most favorable impression upon the little infant. Why cannot the Holy Spirit impress the little child with all the influence of a truly covenant home, the singing of psalms or hymns, the playing of sacred music, the simple prayer uttered by the parent at the cradle, the folding of the little hands of the infant in prayer at the table in the high-chair, and many other influences of the Christian home, to bring the faculty of faith into some sort of conscious activity?

At any rate, it must be admitted that we know very little of the life of an infant, and it is certain that long before what is usually considered the age of discretion there can be a decided influence of the Word of God upon our covenant children.

It is especially for this reason that according to our conviction children of the covenant are regenerated from earliest infancy. Why should He according to the rule of the covenant bring little children under the influence of the preaching of the Word from their earliest infancy if they were not regenerated? As we said, the dead cannot use means; and there is no proper reaction upon the preaching of the Word by those that are spiritually dead. Only those that are spiritually living are capable to use the means which the Holy Spirit provides for the working of faith and for the development and upbuilding of the same. And therefore we repeat: as a rule, barring exceptions, the children of the covenant that are elect are also regenerated from their earliest infancy.

Thus the covenant child gradually comes to conscious faith, receives the promise, and assumes his "part" of the covenant, which according to our Baptism Form consists in this, that we are "admonished of and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that we trust in him and love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life." When the child of the covenant reaches the age of discretion and has always walked in the way of the covenant, he is not and cannot be expected to be conscious of any sudden or remarkable change or conversion in his life. To be sure, the change which we call conversion must surely take place; as the Catechism has it in question 87: "Those cannot be saved who continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives are not converted to God. No unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or such like shall ever inherit the kingdom of God." The covenant child, therefore, must be able to give account of himself and be conscious of true conversion, which consists of the mortification of the old and the quickening of the new man. He must be conscious of a sincere sorrow of heart that he has provoked God by his sins. He must be cognizant of a desire to hate and flee from sin. He must be conscious of a sincere joy of heart in God through Christ and of a sincere delight to live according to the will of God in all good works. But in the way of the covenant this conversion is not sudden or marked, but gradual. The question is not when and where the covenant child was converted or how that change was effected in him, but whether he knows that he is ~~converted~~ and reveals his conversion by a

walk in the way of continued conversion in the midst of the Church and in the world. And this entire change is wrought through the preaching of the Word.

It stands to reason that the preaching of the Word in the sphere of the covenant must be both distinctive and upbuilding.

On the one hand, it cannot proceed on the assumption that all the children of the covenant, that is, those that are born in the sphere of and under the covenant, are elect and regenerated. The theory of presumptive regeneration, according to which it is presumed that all the children that are born under the covenant are regenerated, is certainly not Scriptural. All are not Israel that are of Israel; and not the children of the flesh, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Nor can it be said that those who are under the covenant but who are and remain carnal and never come to saving faith or true conversion belong to the exceptions. The history of the Old Testament Church teaches quite the opposite: always it was the carnal seed that abounded in the covenant of the old dispensation, and the remnant according to the election of grace was saved. Nor does it appear different when we look at the Church in general of the new dispensation. If we consider baptized Christendom as the whole, it would seem that those who have apostatized from the faith are far more numerous than the faithful believers. Always, therefore, there is the carnal seed in the Church. And the theory of presumptive regeneration, that presumes that all the children born in the covenant are elect, is not only unscriptural, but it is also dangerous. Dangerous it is, not because, as the popular saying goes, it tends to let the people go to hell with an imaginary heaven; for that is quite impossible, at least where the truth is preached. But the danger is that because it presumes what is not true according to Scripture, it leaves the carnally minded men in the Church, and thus the Church of Christ is corrupted. And therefore, the preaching must be directed not only to the elect but also to the reprobate, not only to the godly but also to the ungodly. It must be so distinctive that under its influence the reprobate and ungodly cannot remain, but will reveal themselves as haters of the truth of God and His Christ.

Besides, even the elect and regenerated are not perfect. There is even as regards them much flesh in the Church. Daily they have to strive with the desires and lusts of the flesh, and must be admonished steadfastly to walk in the way of the covenant, to hate sin and to fight against it and flee from it.

Hence, the preaching in the sphere of the covenant must always be distinctive. This does not necessarily mean that it must divide the Church into elect and

reprobate, converted and unconverted, and address them separately. Rather it means that the whole Church, as it organically exists in the world, must be brought under the influence of the very same preaching. The same Word must be directed to all; all must be exhorted to be converted and to convert themselves, to repent in dust and ashes; and all must be admonished continually to walk in the way of sanctification and to live antithetically, as of the party of the living God in the midst of the world. For: "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."

Such preaching will, of course, have the result that it is a savor of life unto life for those whom God has chosen unto everlasting salvation and a savor of death unto death for the rest.

And under such preaching alone the Church will be built up and believers will be edified.

The Standard Bearer In Retrospect

Prof. H. Hanko

The following article, written by Rev. C. Hanko, is a reprint from Volume XXIV. It was published in the rubric "From Holy Writ." Rev. C. Hanko was substituting at this time for Rev. G. Lubbers who was ill. The article is entitled "Walking With God."

Scripture says of Enoch that he walked with God. "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. . . . And Enoch walked with God and he was not; for God took him." Gen. 5:22, 24. That is by far the most unique biography that you can find anywhere in the annals of history or in the Scriptures. Whatever else Enoch may have done during the three hundred and sixty-five years of his life upon the earth, or whatever cherished memories he may have left behind, the outstanding feature of his life that governed them all was, that he walked with God.

This is also said of Noah as a reason why he alone found grace in the eyes of the Lord, to be spared with his family by the waters of the flood. "Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations; Noah walked with God." Gen. 6:9.

Otherwise this expression is not very freely used in Scripture. We do often read of walking before the face of God, or of walking after God, or following after Him, or even of walking in God's statutes and judgments. But the expression, "walking with God" is a unique description of the intimate fellowship and

friendship between God and His covenant people.

That is the meaning of the expression. It is evident, that this cannot possibly refer to a physical, outward walk with God. That would be impossible. Whatever physical association there may have been between God and Adam in Paradise was destroyed by the fall. God did establish a new relation of friendship between Himself and His people in Christ, but this is not a physical contact. How can an earthly mortal, who is bound to time and place, walk about with the omnipresent, infinite and sovereign God, Who is a Spirit? Moreover, no one can actually see God alive. So that physical association is at once impossible.

But it does refer to a spiritual relation between God and His saints, an inner association and communion through the Spirit. Walking, in this case, means going about, associating, living in fellowship and mutual friendship. It is the fruit of God's grace in the hearts of His people whereby they know that He is their God and they are His people. They count it their highest good that they are privileged to fulfill their "part" in His covenant by walking with them.

That was originally Adam's blessedness in the state of righteousness. Gen. 3:8 states, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." This is significant, for now God is walking alone. Adam and Eve are hiding from before His face. They dread His coming, because they



have broken their relation of friendship with God by entering into a friendly alliance with the serpent. That covenant communion in which they walked together and spoke together in mutual friendship is destroyed. And as far as man is concerned, he is neither able nor willing to restore that relation. It is broken forever. But God Himself promises to restore His covenant fellowship with them in Christ, by a declaration of war, creating enmity between the prince of darkness and all his host on the one side, and God's elect covenant people in Christ on the other.

As a result, Enoch and Noah, the seed of the woman, walked with God. Later God assures His chosen Israel, "And I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you. And *I will walk among you*, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people." Lev. 26:11, 12. This promise is also given to the Israel of God in the New Dispensation, "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and *walk in them*; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." This same promise is finally realized in heaven, according to Rev. 3:4, "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall *walk with me in white*; for they are worthy."

This walking with God implies a living faith, humble obedience, a devoted love, an implicit trust and constant prayer.

Faith is the bond that unites us to Christ and to God. By that living bond of faith a relation of friendship is established between God and His restored image-bearer. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3.

You can be sure that anyone who walks with God does not regard Him as an emergency measure, someone to be called in conveniently when we are no longer able to take care of ourselves. That man's religion is not a conventional side-issue, but fills his whole life. God had first place in Enoch's life. God was his God and his sovereign Lord, before Whom he humbly bowed to ask: Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?

How else can a mere earthly creature ever possibly walk with God? He must be deeply conscious of his own emptiness and insignificance. Compared with God he is but an insignificant speck of clay, less than nothing and vanity. For God is God, the almighty, omnipresent, sovereign God, in Whom we live and move and have our being. And we are His creation, His handiwork, existing each moment by His power that sustains us. The Most High God is worthy to be praised. For even as all things are of Him and through Him, so He has also prepared all things unto Himself, to show forth His praises. He has even called His

people unto Himself, not that they should live unto themselves, but that they should live unto Him in worship, fear, and obedience.

That service must be a willing service in love. Our relation to God is not that of a wage-earner. Nor may we regard it our duty for duty's sake, since God demands love from the heart. No man can walk with God without a deep conviction of sin and guilt. Because of our sins we are unworthy and unfit to enter into the presence of Him Who is spotlessly holy. We deserve only to be banished from His presence forever. But God Himself has removed our guilty stain through the perfect sacrifice of His Son upon the cross. He takes us unto Himself, makes us like unto Him in the true knowledge, righteousness and holiness of Christ, Who is our complete salvation. In holy awe His saints worship Him as their God and Father, Who calls them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Such love manifests itself in implicit trust. Have you never noticed how confidently a child will walk next to his father, no matter how strange the way may be, how dark the night, or how many dangers may threaten? Asaph expresses exactly that in the seventy-third Psalm. When he had ventured a step alone without His God, his feet had well-nigh slipped. He was ready to question the wisdom of the Most High, and allow the doubt to take root whether God was actually good to Israel. He almost mistook the prosperity of the wicked as a token of God's favor, and the adversity of the righteous as a sign that God had forsaken them. Until he went into the sanctuary, where he met his God, and soon his problem was dissolved. He learned to hold God's hand, walked confidently at His side. In child-like trust he confessed: "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand; thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." Ps. 73:23, 24.

Such confidence, Asaph teaches us, is possible only by abiding in the sanctuary in constant prayer. Walking together implies talking together, revealing the thoughts and secrets of the heart to one another. He who walks with God knows Him as his friend. He draws near to Him as to the overflowing fountain of life and blessedness. He delights in His presence, seeks His face, pours out his heart to Him, and makes all his needs known in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. He prays without ceasing, in devotion and fear, for from his heart rises the confession,

Whom have I, Lord, in heaven but Thee,
To Whom my thoughts aspire?
And having Thee, on earth is nought
That I can yet desire.

But that life of fellowship with God requires a

spiritual separation from the world of sin and evil. Friendship with God precludes enmity with the world. God says to Israel, "And if ye will not hearken unto me, but walk contrary to me, then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins." Lev. 26:27, 28. If Israel walks away from the Lord to seek other gods or the pleasures of sin, God will walk in the opposite direction away from her. A breach will be established that only grows wider as Israel departs farther from the Lord. The Holy Spirit can have no fellowship with sin, so that He withdraws Himself in sore displeasure, causing us to experience His disapproval until we are brought back in repentance. Therefore Micah admonishes Israel, saying, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to *walk humbly with thy God?*" Micah 6:8.

Enoch walked with God in the midst of an evil generation. And so did Noah. It was the time before the flood, when a rapid degeneration was hastening the world toward judgment. Cain's wicked city exalted itself against God and His church as a kingdom of antichrist. Wickedness abounded

everywhere, persecution ran rampant. As almost a lone witness of his God Enoch testified, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." Jude 15, 16. Noah, likewise, was a preacher of righteousness, boldly defying and condemning the world. Every hammer blow was a witness that he believed in his God, Who is holy and righteous and a consuming fire against all the workers of iniquity. The fact that they were friends of God made them enemies of the world. Should they not hate those who hate their God? And though they were hated by the world, they had the testimony of God that they were pleasing to Him. Heb. 11:5-7. They walked with God as a friend with a friend. And God took Enoch unto Himself in heaven. While Noah was delivered from an evil world by the waters of the flood. For God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. He takes them into His glory and clothes them with garments of righteousness in Christ, that they may enjoy His fellowship forever. God is faithful. His covenant never fails. Blessed is that people whose God is Jehovah.

Book Review

Prof. H. Hanko

THE EVANGELICAL RENAISSANCE, by Donald G. Bloesch; Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1973; 165 pp., \$2.95 (paper).

A Quotation from the Preface will give the best possible idea of the contents of this book.

Because I see in the resurgence of evangelicalism today both opportunities and pitfalls, I have been moved to share some thoughts on a direction for evangelical renewal in the future. An analysis has been made of the rise of the new evangelical theology and of the hallmarks of evangelicalism. I have also sought to reassess the contribution of Karl Barth, showing how it is possible to learn from his theology even while not embracing it as the answer for our times. In addition I have seen the need for dispelling the bogey of Pietism, since both ecumenists and evangelicals today should acknowledge their indebtedness to that great spiritual movement in the past which was responsible for the missionary upsurge and the outpouring of charitable enterprises in Protestantism. It can also be shown that a sizable number of Pietists and a great many of the Christian

mystics were actively engaged in social and political action. They not only brought revival to the church but helped to turn the destinies of entire nations. . . .

Those who espouse an evangelical position should not isolate themselves from other Christians if they are to be a bona fide source of renewal for the church today. We must let ourselves be corrected by our Catholic and Orthodox brethren, especially where this is warranted by Scripture. We have much to learn even from liberal Protestants, who have not been entirely off the mark in some of their protests and concerns. The new Social Gospel movement undoubtedly errs in confusing a just society instituted by social engineering with the kingdom of God, but it bids us to recall that there are definite social implications in the biblical message. . . .

The book is recommended to those who are interested in keeping up with recent trends in evangelical and ecumenical thought, not because we agree with the contents, but because we must know what is happening in the ecclesiastical world of our time.

OPEN FORUM

Correspondence re Jamaica

To the editor of the Standard Bearer.

Dear Sir,

In the Standard Bearer of Nov. 15, 1973 there appeared an article written by brother Mark Hoeksema under the heading, "Two wise men and a fool." In this little story, brother Hoeksema illustrates the foolishness of the Jamaicans. He writes about the foolishness of their way of driving their automobiles, also on the general economic situation, and about Jamaica's political instability all of which is a result of their foolishness.

I will pass all this by. But I have some criticism on the way the brother writes about the churches in Jamaica.

He calls them fools. Foolishness as men count it, and foolishness as God counts it. Unhappily, the brother writes, there are not two wise men for every fool. In fact one must search to find a wise man among the fools; but, the brother further writes, we must keep things in perspective for though most seem to be fools there are some wise men. The students whose training is almost finished have shown wisdom. There are elders who are wise, and there are some people who have shown wisdom. They are a minority, but they do exist.

Furthermore, the brother writes, against such a background, the decision of the Mission Committee to terminate the labors of the present is certainly justified, and according to the brother, it is wise.

That is brother Hoeksema's conclusion. And because of this conclusion we as churches must turn to other mission fields the Lord has opened for us.

But how can we turn to other mission fields, if we refuse to work among the foolish? Are not all mission fields among the foolish?

And ought not we confess that we are not better than those foolish Jamaicans? That includes you and me except for God's grace. That is what the Bible tells us in the light of what we read in I Cor. 1:26-29, "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence."

Let us, therefore, not be highminded, but fear.

Your brother in Christ,
Thys Feenstra

FEBRUARY 15 IS AN IMPORTANT DATE IN OUR HISTORY;

PLAN TO BE AT FIRST CHURCH, GRAND RAPIDS,

FOR THE SEMINARY BUILDING DEDICATION.

ALL AROUND US

Scientists and Evolutionism

Prof. H. Hanko

We are sometimes left with the impression that there are scarcely any scientists in this country or abroad who do not accept the evolutionistic view of the origin of the creation as the correct interpretation. In fact, scientists and scientific periodicals and science textbooks deliberately try to leave this impression. The idea is apparently to try to persuade the public that no one any more believes in creationism according to the Scriptures.

A periodical published by the Institute for Creation Research, entitled "ICR - Acts and Facts" recently included an article in which twenty-one scientists, from all over the country, were quoted on their views of evolutionism vs. creationism. We give some excerpts below.

Dr. Thomas G. Barnes is Professor of Physics at the University of Texas. He is quoted as saying:

As a scientist my concern about evolution is that it is a barrier to scientific progress . . . When (the rapid decay in the earth's magnet is) examined in the light of electromagnetic theory and the time factor involved, this is excellent support for Special Creation. I have never seen an evolutionist who was willing to face up to this fact.

Dr. Edward Blick, Professor of Aerospace, Mechanical, and Nuclear Engineering at the University of Oklahoma writes:

Evolution is a scientific fairytale just as the 'flat-earth theory' was in the 12th century. Evolution directly contradicts the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that unless an intelligent planner is directing a system, it will always go in the direction of disorder and deterioration . . . Evolution requires a faith that is incomprehensible! Biblical Creation is the only sensible alternative.

Dr. Larry Butler is professor of Biochemistry at Purdue University.

I am a creationist rather than an evolutionist because, while neither of these interpretations of the

origin of living things is truly scientific in the sense of being provable by experiment, only the Creationist position is true to the Scriptures. Despite theoretical claims, no organism has been experimentally demonstrated to evolve to a 'higher', biochemically more complex form. The evidence is more consistent with a pattern of degradation to 'lower', biochemically simpler forms, in agreement with the Biblical record and with the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

Dr. Donald Hamann is Professor of Food Technology at North Carolina State University in Raleigh.

I believe in special creation by the God of Scripture because the mass of scientific evidence corroborates Scripture and speaks of laws initiated by God . . . The tendency of the universe to die an energy death opposes evolution. A later cataclysmic act of God (evidence of the universal flood) is indicated by frozen extinct animals accompanied by tropical food where freezing occurred so rapidly that internal decomposition did not take place. Such evidence, along with the clear literal statements of Genesis, make it illogical for me to accept anything but the Genesis record of creation and the flood.

Dr. Duane T. Gish is Professor of Natural Science at Christian Heritage College.

My university training and research experience has tremendously supported (faith in creation), as the incredible complexity, the vast organization, the obvious plan, and evident purposefulness of every detail of the structure and function of the living cell was revealed through my biochemical studies.

While our faith in the work of creation rests in the Scriptures, these men give powerful witness to the fact that the evidence in the creation itself points to the truth that the worlds were framed by the Word of God so that things which are seen were not made from things which appear. Heb. 11:3.

Evangelicals and the Social Gospel

Prof. H. Hanko

More and more, modern day evangelicalism goes in the direction of the social gospel. Recent evidence of this is to be found in a *Declaration of Evangelical Concern* drawn up by a group of fifty leaders who are committed to evangelicalism and who include a broad spectrum of men ranging from the editor of *Right On*, a paper published by the Christian World Liberation Front of Berkeley, through Carl F. H. Henry, to two representatives of the Christian Reformed Church.

The document reads

As evangelical Christians committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and the full authority of the Word of God, we affirm that God lays total claim upon the lives of his people. We cannot, therefore, separate our lives in Christ from the situation in which God has placed us in the United States and the world.

We confess that we have not acknowledged the complete claims of God on our lives.

We acknowledge that God requires love. But we have not demonstrated the love of God to those suffering social abuses.

We acknowledge that God requires justice. But we have not proclaimed or demonstrated his justice to an unjust American society. Although the Lord calls us to defend the social and economic rights of the poor and the oppressed, we have mostly remained silent. We deplore the historic involvement of the church in America with racism and the conspicuous responsibility of the evangelical community for perpetuating the personal attitudes and institutional structures that have divided the body of Christ along color lines. Further, we have failed to condemn the exploitation of racism at home and abroad by our economic system.

We affirm that God abounds in mercy and that he forgives all who repent and turn from their sins. So

we call our fellow evangelical Christians to demonstrate repentance in a Christian discipleship that confronts the social and political injustice of our nation.

We must attack the materialism of our culture and the maldistribution of the nation's wealth and services. We recognize that as a nation we play a crucial role in the imbalance and injustice of international trade and development. Before God and a billion hungry neighbors, we must rethink our values regarding our present standard of living and promote more just acquisition and distribution of the world's resources.

We acknowledge our Christian responsibilities of citizenship. Therefore, we must challenge the misplaced trust of the nation in economic and military might — a proud trust that promotes a national pathology of war and violence which victimizes our neighbors at home and abroad. We must resist the temptation to make the nation and its institutions objects of near-religious loyalty.

We acknowledge that we have encouraged men to prideful domination and women to irresponsible passivity. So we call both men and women to mutual submission and active discipleship.

We proclaim no new gospel, but the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, frees people from sin so that they might praise God through works of righteousness.

By this declaration, we endorse no political ideology or party, but call our nation's leaders and people to that righteousness which exalts a nation.

We make this declaration in the biblical hope that Christ is coming to consummate the Kingdom and we accept his claim on our total discipleship till He comes.

Where in all this is the Word of God?

FEATURE

The Promised Victory of the Woman's Seed

Rev. M. Kamps

Gen. 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and Thou shalt bruise his heel."

Gen. 3:15 is known as the mother promise. Many forget that it was declared to Satan by God in the hearing of Adam and Eve. It is God's message spoken after the fall of man into sin and death. Man had been created good. He was created in the image of God in true knowledge of God, righteousness, and holiness. (Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:22-24) Man was created such that he should be and was the friend of God. As the friend of God, he was God's servant in the world. Man was made king-servant under God, for all of creation was put under the dominion of God's representative in the world. You agree, of course, when I say that Adam and we in him were given a high and blessed position of honor in the beginning of time. But Adam, who was both legally and organically our father, fell into sin. He died when he yielded to the temptation of the Devil. Man had despised his excellency and the good gifts of God his Sovereign Friend. Man chose the friendship of the devil as preferable to obedience to the will of God. He revealed that preference when he trampled under foot the Word of God and did instead the will of Satan.

But at that historical moment God reveals His sovereign will to save unto Himself a people in Christ. Gen. 3:15 as spoken by God to the devil constitutes a curse and judgment for Satan, the old serpent. But these same words, spoken in the hearing of Adam and Eve and in them to elect humanity in Christ, constitute a promise of salvation. It is the first declaration of the gospel.

THE CONTENT

In the consideration of this Promised Victory we shall treat, first of all, its content. Negatively, the promise to Eve and her seed is put in the form of a judgment upon Satan. Let us note various elements. First of all, God is speaking, "I will put..."

Secondly, God is speaking to the serpent, the "thee" of our text, and in it to Satan. That Satan is here the serpent can be proven by comparing our text with Rev. 12:9 where we read: "And the dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world..." What God says to Satan, the "thee" of our text, is said in the hearing of Adam and Eve. Therefore, we see that the words of the Promise are put negatively in a judgment addressed to Satan.

God says to Satan, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman..." What is enmity? First of all, and negatively, one cannot equate enmity with anger or wrath. Wrath does not always proceed from enmity. It is true that enmity will reveal itself frequently in wrath, but all wrath is not out of enmity. Wrath can and does frequently proceed from love! Consider the father who loves his child with all his heart; don't you see him frequently pouring out his wrath in punishment of his wayward son? Why does a father do that? So that, by letting his son feel the heat of his wrath, the father may correct the son whom he loves. God does the same with the elect sinner whom He loves eternally in Christ. There is a "wrath of love." Secondly, and positively, we note that enmity is hatred. Hatred seeks the destruction of its object. Hatred is the desire to remove one from your presence. This explains why hatred reveals itself frequently in murder.

Now, God says in Gen. 3:15 that he would put enmity or hatred between Satan and Eve, and between Satan's seed and Eve's seed. Note, too, that this hatred is to culminate in the bruising of the serpent's head. The woman's seed would destroy Satan. That God would put enmity in Eve and her seed for Satan, implies that God would cause them to turn in love towards Him; serve Him and walk obediently before Him as His friends. Adam and Eve

and her seed would turn to God and draw nigh to Him; which act necessitates that they turn from Satan and his seed. God assures Satan, then, that Adam and Eve and her seed would learn to hate him and his evil works. Eve and her seed would desire the destruction of Satan and his seed and even pray for it. This text, then, is a promise of deliverance to Eve from the bondage of sin and slavery under the devil; and, on the other hand, a promise of freedom to will the will of God and the ability to love Him.

When did God speak these words of promise? First of all, when it appeared as if Satan was victorious. Satan's temptation was successful! Man had chosen to do Satan's will and had become his friend. It appeared as if God was defeated and his purpose frustrated! Into that apparent victory of Satan God stepped to declare His message. That sovereign message was, first of all, to Satan and fallen man that God's Sovereign will would be realized. For we read "I will..." which is an emphatic assertion and declaration concerning the future. Secondly, God's declaration shows that the victory is to be gained through the revelation of the grace of God in Christ. Christ is the Seed of the woman. Revelation 12 makes this fact plain. Christ is the man child that is born to the woman. Christ is He that is snatched up to God and to his throne. Christ shall rule with a rod of iron. And it is of Christ and His victory over Satan, of which victory all heaven sings to the praise of God in the revelation of His salvation. (Rev. 12:10) From the viewpoint of Gen. 3:15, Christ is to be brought forth by the woman by the wonder of God's grace.

Secondly, we can answer the question: When Spoken?, by saying that it was in the beginning. The words of Promise were spoken in the garden. These words were spoken just after the fall of man and the apparent victory of Satan; they were spoken before the development of the age, before the development of the human race and nations. The promised victory is given in the beginning. Here the *End of all things*, the final manifestation of the victory of the woman's seed, is declared from the beginning. Do we not read in Scripture: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world?" (Acts 15:18) Not only does God know the end of all his works, but he declares that end in the beginning. Isaiah 46:9-10, "Remember . . . I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

Why does God declare the end of all things from the beginning? First, so that unbelieving man and Satan and his hosts may behold the sovereign, gracious and irresistible work of God in the elect in Christ and by it know that He is God. Secondly, so that the church may rest in His power, wisdom and

goodness. And finally, so that God may be revealed as God alone. Whose eternal purpose in Christ can never be thwarted, annulled, or frustrated by ungodly men and devils. We may conclude then, I believe, that even the fall of Satan and man through Satan's temptation all serve, in spite of themselves, the holy and all wise purpose of our heavenly Father.

THE WARRING SEEDS

Let us now notice that as a result of the realization of this word of promise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and her seed and thy seed. . . .", these seeds will be warring seeds. There are only two seeds, two kinds of people in all of history. These two seeds, or peoples, are at war throughout all of history. The church of Christ over against the world of unbelievers and devils. The woman of Gen. 3:15, who brings forth the seed, whom we saw is Christ, is the church of the old dispensation. It is the church as the woman of Rev. 12, which brings forth the man child who shall rule with an iron rod. At war therefore are Abels and Cains of all ages, spiritual Israelites over against spiritual Edomites, the regenerated and called elect over against the reprobate in all ages and in all countries of the earth. After the declaration of this word of promise to Eve, the record of Scripture immediately turns to the realization of this promise in the lives of Abel and Cain. Abel represents the church, the Sethites, in whom God has worked by His irresistible grace. Sethites are children of God in whom the victory of Christ is revealed in a broken and contrite heart. Sethites are those whom God unites to His Son through faith, and who by the same faith fight in the armies of the captain of our salvation.

Cainites are fallen and depraved men who hate God and His redeemed church. Cainites are the seed of the serpent, and as his spiritually they do his will. Cainites are the instruments of the old Dragon of Rev. 12 through whom the Dragon attempted to destroy the man child. Cainites of all ages hate the church and the church's Christ. The Cainites are the reprobate whom God is pleased to leave in the friendship of Satan.

These two seeds, who are spiritually radically different, relentlessly and continuously fight one another. We see, then, that there are really only two kinds of people in the world from the beginning to the end of time. The one is the seed of the woman, who have the testimony of Christ Jesus and who keep the commandments of God (Rev. 12:17); the other are the seed of Satan, who bear his image, and who despise God and His word, and who seek to destroy the church.

What motivates the woman's seed in this war? Two things; one, the love of God and of His Son, which

love is freely bestowed upon them; the other motivation is the hatred of all that is of sin and Satan in their own life and in the world. What motivates the seed of Satan in this relentless war? First, it is the love of sin, rebellion and the lie. Secondly, that which motivates the seed of the serpent is the hatred of God and of the virtues of God as they are manifested in the lives of His people.

We should not overlook the fact that in the world it always appears to the faithless and often times to the child of God as if the cause of God is defeated, as if the woman's seed is overcome and killed by sin and Satan. It always appears to mere sinful man as if Satan is victorious and the cause and purpose of God thwarted. It looked that way when Cain killed Abel. It looked that way when the Dragon through Herod destroyed Rachel's children in Bethlehem. It looked certainly as if Satan and his seed had the victory at the cross. And it looks that way throughout the whole new dispensation, for even now the church is a besieged city, which appears about to be destroyed once and for all. Today, many in the church despise our Reformed Confessions. Today, many theologians deny the very core truths of the Reformed faith; they deny God's absolute sovereignty, His immutability. They deny that grace is an attribute of God, they deny that the decree of God of election and reprobation is unconditional, they deny the doctrine of limited atonement; and much, much more of the truths of Scripture is denied by "Reformed" theologians. Not only do they deny many truths which the church of Christ has held dear, but they are able to lead many via Arminianism into Modernism. The church is plagued with many masters of deception, who go under the honorable name of

"theologians." Is the victory theirs? Is the love of Him who is the Truth completely lost? Is the church of Christ swallowed up by this raging sea of denials of the truth? You and I would often times think so. But!

THE VICTORY

But God's message *was* and *is* declared and is realized *always* in the midst of Satan's and unbelieving man's apparent victory. The victory of the woman's seed, Christ and those that belong to Him by a true faith, is certain. First of all, the victory of the woman's seed is eternally assured in the unchangeable counsel of God, who has chosen us unto salvation in the "Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8, Eph. 1:3-4) Secondly, the victory of the seed is realized and manifested in the cross and the resurrection. At the cross Satan's head is bruised and principally crushed. Heb. 2:14, "...that through death he (Christ) might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."

The result is that the believer never really doubts that the victory is his by faith in Christ. He is more than conqueror through Christ. The woman's seed, believers in Christ, have the victory over sin and death through the power of God's grace in Christ. The ground of the believer's confidence of the victory over sin and Satan and his seed is Christ, Who loved them unto death. The "in the beginning Promised Victory" is the eternal will of our ever faithful Father, Who declared the End in the Beginning and Who causes all things to be subservient to the realization of His sovereign good pleasure.

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Last Frontier

Rev. G. Van Baren

It would be a truism to suggest that many things of striking nature have happened during the past year (and years). It is a fact, however; and it ought to be observed carefully by the child of God. The striking events remind the Christian of the nearness of the end of this age.

We have, in this rubric, pointed out in the past how that "natural" disasters have not only fallen upon mankind, but that also these disasters have been increasing in intensity. It is not uncommon to read: "The worst storm of the century." It reminds one of the testimony of Scripture that as the end of this age approaches, the "natural" disasters in the world will increase. The book of Revelation points out that in the opening of the seven seals, there are revealed the normal number of disasters. But when the trumpets blow, the number and terribleness of disasters increase. It can only remind us that Christ is coming again — soon. The worldly man, however, shrugs off these facts — even though he does observe them. So one finds in a review of 1973 in *Time* the following:

The year 1973 probably cost Americans more in terms of their self-image than any year in recent memory. The effect was dismaying as Watergate, prolonged economic malaise, sudden energy shortages and a general crisis of authority and trust lodged deeply within the national psyche. In an odd and unwelcome tattoo of accompaniment, nature also wreaked a special havoc on the country for the second year running. Total damage for natural disasters in 1973 exceeded \$1.2 billion. Federal funds expended to assist local governments and citizens in the 31 states plagued with natural disasters came to an estimated 750 million, and 75,000 families received direct relief. It was scant consolation that the year before, 48 major disasters cost \$3.5 billion in damages, making disaster relief expenditures for the past two years more than the amount expended for the preceding decade.

Flooding created most of the need for disaster relief last year, and the ominous finding is that the Mississippi River system is in worse condition now than it was a year ago. . . . Unless the rain and snow ease off in the Midwest, 1974 could bring on disasters even worse than those of 1973 and 1972.

Strikingly, the same issue of *Time* (Jan. 14, 1974) contains a feature article that treats the subject, "Exploring the Frontiers of the Mind." It serves as further reminder of the development of man and its implications concerning the end of this age and the return of the Lord.

One can read in Daniel 12:4, "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." The fulfillment of that Word is seen so clearly in all areas of learning, but especially in man's study of the mind. To know and to control the mind of man would be the ultimate aim and desire of the antichrist.

But to return to the article of *Time*. The article points out the wonder of the brain. (And, incidentally, one is struck by the fact that this wonderful brain of man could hardly be the product of evolution.) It points out:

The most mysterious, least-known area of man's universe does not lie in the farthest reaches of outer space. Nor is it found in the most remote Amazonian jungle or in the inky blackness of the Mariana Trench. It is located instead inside the human skull, and consists of some 3½ pounds of pinkish-gray material with the consistency of oatmeal. It is, of course, the human brain.

. . . The brain is the newest and perhaps the last frontier in man's exploration of himself. Crossing that frontier could have the same impact on humanity as the discovery that the earth was round. "We are like the Europeans of the 15th century," rhapsodizes one

brain researcher. "We're standing on the shores of Spain or Portugal, looking out over the Atlantic. We know that there is something on the other side and that our discovery of exactly what this is will mean that things in our world will never be the same again."

...Finding the key to these mysteries (of the brain's functions), a discovery that would suddenly explain these functions, could lead to better ways of treating the psychoses and neuroses that plague millions. It could result in identification and correction of the causes of many neurological disorders and, by revealing how the brain works, revolutionize thought, education and communication. It might even help man turn away from what some see as a headlong pursuit of self-destruction.

The article continues by describing some of the wonders of the brain. It points to the various tasks or functions of the brain. Then the article suggests several benefits which supposedly will accrue to man as a result of the control of the brain:

Doctors are still not sure how the brain perceives pain, but some neurosurgeons have found ways of relieving the chronic and acute discomfort associated with terminal cancer and other diseases. Dr. William Sweet, chief of neurosurgery at Massachusetts General Hospital, has found that by destroying small clusters of cells in different parts of the brain, either by freezing or by electric current, he can relieve pain without producing the degrading effects of the old-style pre-frontal lobotomy

...Building on his earlier work, Sweet and others have also discovered that they can calm the violent outbursts of rage often associated with psychomotor epilepsy by destroying or partially removing the amygdala, an almond-shaped body in the limbic system of the brain. . . .

The article concedes that there are expressed fears by many with this tinkering with the brain:

While neuroscientists look forward eagerly to the day when they will understand how the brain works, some people feel that they have already gone too far. There are those who fear that new drugs and surgical techniques could be used to impose a form of "mind control" on non-conformists, tranquilize prisoners or inmates of mental hospitals, and tame those whose behavior or ideas society finds troubling. They note that psycho-surgery is being widely used in Japan to calm down hyperactive children. . . .

Most neuroscientists agree that their science can be abused but doubt that it will be. Schmitt, for example, feels that fear of thought control is unreasonable. "When it comes to thought control," he says, "politicians and journalists do a better job than neuroscientists." Instead, the brain researchers stress that the benefits resulting from their research would far outweigh the dangers. An understanding of how the brain works could lead to treatments for some forms of mental retardation. A greater

knowledge of what takes place during learning could result in improvement in teaching techniques. Even human intelligence might be increased as a result.

A breakthrough could also lead to the kind of social evolution that might help prevent the conflicts that now set man against man and nation against nation. "Most of our evolution has been somatic," says Schmitt. "We've changed our shape. But if we could really understand ourselves and by extension each other, we could evolve socially as well." That kind of evolution, Schmitt contends, may well be necessary for the continuation of the species. "Armies aren't the key to man's survival," he says. "Governments are not enough. Treaties are not enough. Only self-knowledge will help man to survive."

...The explorers of the brain have embarked on a journey even more significant than the voyage of Columbus in 1492. Columbus discovered a new continent. The explorers of the brain may well discover a new world.

All this ought to give pause for much thought. The article certainly emphasizes the extent of the development of man in the past century. Surely "knowledge has been increased!" The brain and mind are recognized as the "last frontier" in man's discovery of himself. That ought to serve as reminder how near the coming again of Christ must be. There are not many areas left for the inventiveness of man to discover more. As he reaches these "last frontiers," we are reminded of the fact that the end is at hand.

At the same time, though scientists would allay the fears of many, the control of the mind of man surely would open the door wide for the coming of the antichrist. The coming of the antichrist is described in Revelation 13. One can understand that chapter better in light of recent developments in man's attempt to control the mind. Man has indeed been doing that with mass means of communication. But he will be doing that through the use of drugs or other inventions as well. Revelation 13 describes the subservience of almost all men to the antichrist. He deceives men that dwell on the earth by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the earth. Through discoveries in connection with the control of the mind, the antichrist could well seek to establish peace and contentment among men. If he can control the mind of man, he can control the world.

Be sure to look about you and see what is happening. Do not be lulled into sleep by man's assurance that "fear of thought control is unreasonable." Man never seeks to accomplish this sort of development except for the purpose of promoting a kingdom among men in subservience to satan. Yet we are assured, even as we see these things taking place about us, that the "day of the Lord is at hand."

News From Our Churches

We have a couple of short items for the little space that remains for the news column. Prospect Park made a trio consisting of the Revs. D. Kuiper, R. Miersma, and R. Moore. They elected to send the call to Rev. Moore. The call to serve as Home Missionary was declined by Rev. Engelsma, who subsequently accepted the call to serve as pastor of our South Holland congregation.

Then we have a couple of local statistics which, I think, are of at least passing interest. First, in the bulletin of First Church there was an expression of thanks by Mrs. Wm. Nienhuis for the cards she had received on her *ninety-ninth* birthday. And, second, Scott Michael Lubbers was born on December 4,

1973. He's a little young, therefore, to appreciate the fact that his membership by baptism in the Hudsonville congregation marks what must be something of a record in our churches. It happens that the membership role there includes also the names of Scott's father, his grandfather, his great grandmother, and, finally, Mr. Jacob Schut, his great, great grandfather. Five generations in one congregation! From the rest of us — congratulations!

And, finally, this requested announcement: Clerk and bulletin editor of Southwest Church is Mr. Phillip J. Lotterman, 871 Rushmore St., Jenison, Michigan 49528. The treasurer of Southwest is still Mr. John Vander Woude, 7085 Sunset, also in Jenison. D.D.

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

January 3, 1974

Southeast Prot. Ref. Church

Classis East met in regular session on January 3, 1974 in Southeast Church. Each church was represented by two delegates. Rev. H. Veldman, whose turn it was to lead the classis in opening devotions, was absent due to mission work in Houston, Texas. Present at this classis and given advisory vote were Rev. G. Lubbers, Prof. R. Decker and Rev. D. Kuiper.

The regular business of every session classis was conducted. The report of the Stated Clerk was received; the regular committees were appointed and reported. Elders T. Engelsma and C. Lubbers were appointed to the Finance Committee for this session. Expenses incurred for this session were \$181.36. Elder J. M. Faber thanked the ladies of Southeast

Church for their catering services.

Classical appointments were requested by Prospect Park and by Classis West for help in filling South Holland's pulpit. Rev. M. Schipper and Elders J. Boone and P. Burnham were appointed to construct the appointment schedule. Classis adopted the following schedule for these churches: PROSPECT PARK: January 20 and 27 - R. C. Harbach; February 3, 10, 17, and 24 - G. Lubbers; March 3, 10, and 17 - M. Joostens; March 24, 31, and April 7 - M. Schipper; SOUTH HOLLAND: January 20 - R. Van Overloop; February 10 - J. A. Heys; March 17 - C. Hanko; March 31 - H. Veldman.

There was some unfinished business from previous

(continued on back page)

PLAN TO ATTEND

THE SEMINARY BUILDING

DEDICATION

ON FEBRUARY 15.

ANNIVERSARY

On February 6, 1974, the Lord willing, our beloved parents,

MR. AND MRS. BEN BLEYENBERG

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to our covenant God for sparing them these many years for each other and for us. We pray that God may continue to bless them in the remainder of their earthly pilgrimage and that they may enjoy the peace which alone can be found in Him.

Their grateful children and grandchildren, Mr. and Mrs. Tunis Jansma, Mr. and Mrs. John Haverhals, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Peter Rynders, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. John Hoksbergen, Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Bleyenbergh, 21 grandchildren, 1 great grandchild.

Sioux Center, Iowa

classis which this session had to consider. In the first place, the matter referred to the consistories for study and response had to be treated. This matter had originally been brought by a consistory to the January, 1973 classis, had been placed in committee, had been referred after the committee reported to the consistories and was now ready for final disposition. The final outcome was that Classis declared that the January 3, 1973 and June 27, 1973 classis had erred in entering the matter in the first place, since the matter had not been finished in the minor assemblies. Secondly, the church visitors appointed by the classis in its April session were scheduled to report. Again, however, due to the press of mission work, this committee was not able to report. This time classis decided to dismiss the committee altogether.

Classis further busied itself with matters unique to a January session: subsidy requests, election of delegates *ad examina* and synodical delegates.

Subsidy requests for the year 1975 were received from three churches, viz., Faith, Kalamazoo, and Prospect Park. Faith requested \$4796 subsidy, Kalamazoo \$4300, and Prospect Park \$12,580 with a pastor and \$3170 without a pastor. All these requests were granted and forwarded to Synod for final action.

Delegates *ad examina* elected were Rev. Heys to a three-year *primus* term and Rev. R. Van Overloop to a three-year *secundus* term.

Delegates to the 1974 Synod were elected. The result of that election is as follows:

MINISTERS: *Primi* - C. Hanco, G. Lubbers, G. Van Baren, R. Van Overloop; *Secundi* - R. C. Harbach, J. A. Heys, M. Schipper, H. Veldman; ELDERs: *Primi* - T. Engelsma, J. M. Faber, J. Huiskens, D. Kooienga; *Secundi* - P. Burnham, C. Lubbers, H. Meulenberg, J. Van Baren.

After the questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and satisfactorily answered, Classis adjourned. The next session of Classis East will be held on April 3, 1974 in Hope Church. Rev. Schipper closed this session with a prayer of thanksgiving.

Respectfully submitted,

Stated Clerk
Jon Huiskens

THE STANDARD BEARER

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