

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation

Salvation in Zion

Feature

Key '73 — What Must We Say About It?

Editorial

Dishonesty And The Formula of Subscription

Special Report

Synod of 1973

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THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July, and August.
Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.
Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

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Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$7.00 per year (\$5.00 for Australasia). Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order, and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

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

Feature

Key '73 – What Must We Say About It?

Rev. David Engelsma

What Key '73 is

Key '73 is the name of a project that unites more than one hundred churches and religious groups in the work of evangelism in 1973. The leaders of Key '73 describe it in various ways. One calls it "cooperative evangelical thrust for world evangelism." Another refers to it as a "corporate manifestation of biblical faith." Still another calls it "a dynamic evangelical fellowship." Another leader calls it a "non-organizational 'evangelical Christian coalition.'" Recently, a spokesman for Key '73 called Key '73 "transdenominational evangelical cooperation."

There are two main aspects of Key '73. One of these is evangelism. The avowed objective of Key '73 is "to confront every person in North America more fully

and forcibly with the gospel of Jesus Christ." The theme of the endeavor is: "Calling Our Continent to Christ." The other main aspect of Key '73 is the union of churches and religious groups. Key '73 unites many churches in the work of evangelism. Over 130 churches and groups have joined Key '73.

The explanation of the name, "Key '73," is that those who planned the project met in Arlington, Virginia, near a bridge called "Key Bridge" after Francis Scott Key. They named their project after this bridge. They added "73" because 1973 is the year that they chose in which the project is to be carried out.

Key '73 is run by an executive committee of ministers and other churchmen from such churches and groups as The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod;

the American Baptist Church; Campus Crusade for Christ; the United Methodist Church; the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association; the Christian Reformed Church; the Salvation Army; and the Assemblies of God. There are more than 130 member churches and religious groups including the Reformed Church in America, the Presbyterian Church U.S., the Free Will Baptist Church, the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, the Wesleyan Church, and many more. The Roman Catholic Church is also a full participant now.

Our calling to examine Key '73

There are many who approve Key '73 uncritically, simply because it claims to do evangelism. They resent any criticism of Key '73 and condemn every critic out of hand as a man who is not evangelistic. But we have a calling to examine Key '73. This is a God-given duty. I John 4:1 requires us to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Ephesians 4:14 warns the saints not to be swept away with every latest fad in the sphere of religion: "That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie to wait to deceive." Especially pastors and elders have the duty to examine Key '73 carefully, so that they can instruct and warn the church which Christ has put under their care. The movement itself forces us to examine it and to say something about it. Some of us have been invited to join Key '73. Pressure is put on those churches that do not join. An example of this pressure was found in the *Grand Rapids Press* of April 16, 1973. Under the caption, "Spirit of Christ Fills 5,000 at Calder," the *Press* reported on an inter-denominational, "Key 73 worship service" featuring three speakers, the editor of the Christian Reformed Church's magazine, *The Banner*, the mayor of Grand Rapids, and the bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Grand Rapids. In the article, the *Press* quoted a spokesman of Key '73 as saying that "one disappointing thing about the day was that in spite of all the denominational cooperation, some groups, particularly the Baptist and minority churches, were still not participating much in Key 73."

Our viewpoint

Our viewpoint in this examination of Key '73 will be that of the Reformed faith, the faith embodied in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt. The question, "What must we say about it?" means: What must a Reformed Church say about it and what must a Reformed believer say about it? This by no means implies that non-Reformed people are ignored. The standard by which Key '73 will be measured is Holy Scripture, God's inspired and, therefore, infallible Word. Our sole concern is: What

does Scripture require us to say about Key '73? Therefore, we intend to set forth what every Christian must say about Key '73.

* * *

Key '73, a project of neo-evangelicalism

The beginning of Key '73 was an article in the June 9, 1967 issue of the religious magazine, *Christianity Today*, entitled, "Somehow, Let's Get Together." The author was Carl F. H. Henry, who was editor of the magazine at that time. The opening line was: "This is a rallying cry for evangelicals everywhere." The article pleaded for cooperation of evangelicals, particularly in the work of evangelism. The response was enthusiastic, and in September, 1967 Henry and Billy Graham called a meeting of leading evangelicals. From that and subsequent meetings came the project known now as Key '73. This history shows that Key '73 is the baby of "neo-evangelicalism" "Neo (that is, new) — evangelicalism" is the name given to their movement by a certain group of Protestant people. They call themselves "evangelicals" because they claim to spread the gospel (in the Greek New Testament, the word "gospel" is *evangel*). They call themselves "neo-evangelicals," that is, the *new* evangelicals, because they like to distinguish themselves from an old evangelicalism, that which is known as "fundamentalism." This new evangelicalism is a large, powerful force on the religious scene today. To know Key '73 it is necessary to know something about neo-evangelicalism, for the baby resembles the parent. It is all the more necessary to know what neo-evangelicalism is because Key '73 is not the only project that this movement has planned. On the drawing-board of neo-evangelicalism are more projects and activities after 1973.

First of all, it is helpful to take note of the persons and institutions that head the movement. The man who coined the name and who is regarded as the father of neo-evangelicalism is the well-known pastor of the Park Street Congregational Church in Boston, Harold Ockenga. Other leaders include Carl Henry, Billy Graham, and Bernard Ramm. The views and projects of neo-evangelicalism are promoted in the flourishing magazine, *Christianity Today*. Fuller Theological Seminary in California trains men to preach, teach, and practice neo-evangelicalism.

Secondly, we ask what neo-evangelicalism stands for. It is not a church or a denomination of churches. Rather, it is made up of many people in many different Protestant churches. Nor is it a movement, at present anyway, that seeks to establish a new church. Rather, it strongly advocates that evangelicals remain in their churches. Harold Ockenga himself described neo-evangelicalism in an article entitled, "Resurgent Evangelical Leadership," in the October 10, 1960 issue of *Christianity Today*. The ambitious goals of

neo-evangelicalism are evident in Ockenga's opening sentence: "What the Communist party is in the vanguard of the world revolution, the evangelical movement must be in the world revival." He defines an evangelical as a Christian who holds what a majority of Protestants regard as the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, e.g., the Trinity, the fallen condition of man, and the literal return of Christ; a spiritually minded man and zealous for practical Christian living, not merely orthodox; and a man who seeks the conversion of sinners. He distinguishes the new evangelicalism from three other movements in Christendom, Roman Catholicism, modernism, and fundamentalism. It differs from Roman Catholicism in that Catholicism is sacerdotal, that is, Catholicism teaches that salvation comes through the priesthood and the sacraments. It differs from modernism in that modernism denies the fundamentals of the Christian faith, e.g., the Virgin Birth and the resurrection of the body. Ockenga stresses that neo-evangelicalism also differs from fundamentalism, "the *old* evangelicalism." Especially two characteristics of fundamentalism displease the new evangelicalism. The first is fundamentalism's anti-intellectualism. The second is fundamentalism's separatism, its refusal to have fellowship with those that hold false doctrine. The new evangelicalism contends that this position leads to unfortunate and unnecessary schism in the church. Neo-evangelicalism is determined to avoid ecclesiastical separations and splits. Ockenga speaks for the entire movement when he calls evangelicals to remain in modernist, apostate churches. They must "infiltrate" such denominations in order "to minister in and influence modernist groups" and in order to "strengthen the things that remain and possibly resume control of such denominations." In harmony with this basic principle, the new evangelicalism refuses to engage in controversy with those who deny the truth. Rather, it advocates carrying on courteous dialogues with the enemies of the Christian faith.

Neo-evangelicalism, then, is a large, well-defined group in Protestantism, cutting across all denominational lines, which likes to call itself conservative because it holds to such fundamentals as the Virgin Birth and which boasts of preaching the gospel. It has ambitious, clearly articulated goals. It intends to revive Christianity in the midst of the secular world. It intends to make Christianity respectable to the modern world by intelligent courteous defense of the faith and dialogue. It hopes to recapture the big Protestant denominations from modernism. It wants to make Christianity a force that reforms the social order of America. This last is an important item on the agenda of neo-evangelicalism. It receives more and more emphasis, even during the current project of evangelism. One discerns in the propaganda of Key '73 that the improvement of

society is the main goal of evangelism. For the accomplishment of all of this, there has to be a union of all the evangelicals.

What must we say about it? A Reformed man has two main criticisms of neo-evangelicalism, criticisms which are most serious. Neo-evangelicalism works for and realizes an ungodly union, or ecumenicity. And neo-evangelicalism displays an unchristian disregard for the truth of God's Word; indeed, it proclaims a perverted gospel. Both of these errors characterize Key '73 and make that project totally unacceptable to a Reformed Church and to a Reformed man.

Key '73 is an ungodly union

The leaders of Key '73 insist that Key '73 is not an ecumenical movement. The Executive Director, Theodore Raedeke, states flatly: "Key 73 is not an ecumenical movement" (in Key 73's official *Congregational Resource Book*, St. Louis, Mo., Concordia Publishing House, p. 5. After this, this book will be referred to as *C.R.B.*). The ground for this disclaimer is that Key '73 does not aim at the *organizational* union of the different churches; it does not intend to *merge* churches. Repeatedly, Key '73 claims that all churches and groups are left free to do their own thing in their own way. Reformed Churches may do evangelism in a Reformed manner; Rome may engage in the work of Key '73 in the Roman way; the Pentecostals may participate with tongues; the Salvation Army may beat its drums, toot its trumpets, and shake its tambourines.

In fact, however, Key '73 involves the union of churches and groups, and this oneness of the many participants is an essential element of Key '73. That Key '73 both aims at a union of many churches and effects such a union is obvious to everyone. 130 or more churches and groups, from Rome to the Salvation Army, are united in this one, massive program and work. There is even an *organizational* union. All the participants must express agreement with a single, officially adopted message and with a set of officially adopted objectives. Also, all the churches and groups are headed by an Executive Committee. That Key '73 is a union of all the churches is plain from the descriptions given of Key '73 by its own leaders: "*cooperative* evangelical thrust"; "*corporate* manifestation of biblical faith"; dynamic evangelical *fellowship*"; "*non-organizational* evangelical *coalition*" — all terms expressing union, oneness, and fellowship.

Union of the evangelicals was the purpose of the neo-evangelicals who conceived of Key '73. Union was their main goal. It is not the case, as we are led to believe, that the union of the churches in Key '73 exists for the sake of evangelism; rather, evangelism serves the end of bringing about the union of the churches. This was evident in the editorial of Carl Henry which resulted in Key '73. The title itself shows

this: "Somehow, Let's Get Together." The entire article breathed one main concern, that evangelicals be united. Evangelism was regarded as a good means to achieve this goal. In the *C.R.B.*, one of the members of the Executive Committee of Key '73. Rev. Joe Hale, tips the hand of Key '73 as regards its intention to realize union of many, diverse churches: "There is a growing Christian consensus that we cannot be divided — into black or white, brown or red — reformed or free — catholic or evangelical. We *can* move out together to proclaim to the world the One who has broken down the middle wall of partition between us" (p. 162). Immediately, he quotes with approval a certain Dr. Rufus Jones, who said that "the old divisions (read: denominational lines — DE) no longer apply."

The leaders of the new evangelicalism who gave us Key '73 are going to give us much more after 1973 in order to perpetuate and strengthen the union begun in Key '73. For this reason, those in Reformed Churches who are opposed to Key '73 but who console themselves regarding their church's participation in Key '73 by supposing that Key '73 is a temporary evil are fooling themselves. Key '73 is only a beginning. Already in 1967, in an editorial that followed up his original call for evangelical union, Carl Henry denied that evangelism was the only reason for getting together. He wrote: "We must go beyond evangelism and missions. Evangelism is not the only reason for evangelical rapprochement." Other reasons for getting together include the benefit of praying together, the benefit of fellowship, and the benefit of worshipping together (cf. *Christianity Today*, July 7, 1967, pp. 20, 21). In the October 27, 1967 issue, *Christianity Today* reported that the meetings at Key Bridge not only planned cooperative evangelism but also discussed plans "to further transdenominational evangelical cooperation beyond evangelism."

Key '73 deliberately set out to accomplish union of the churches, and now, marvellous to relate, we see that the union it brings about is a union that also includes the so-called "liberal," that is, apostate, Protestant churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Key '73 began with a call for evangelicals to get together. Now, it invites and receives such apostate churches as the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ. In 1972, the Roman Catholic Church accepted an invitation to join Key '73. So, Key '73 is a "coalition," a "fellowship," a "corporate manifestation of biblical faith," of evangelicals, liberals, and Rome.

What must we say about Key '73 as regards its union of many churches? We repudiate the charge beforehand, that we are critical of this union because we are unconcerned with the unity of Christ's Church and because we are separatistic and schismatic. It is not in the Reformed tradition to take lightly the unity of the Church. Witness Calvin's fervent rejection of

Rome's contention that the Reformation broke the unity of the Church. Not the Reformation, but Rome, by proclaiming false doctrine, was the "troubler of Israel," insisted Calvin. Neither is it part of the heritage of the churches in which I am a pastor, the Protestant Reformed Churches, to disparage the unity of the Church, say, for the sake of maintaining the truth. Our deep concern for true unity is the reason why we have always thought it important to note that our separate existence as churches is not due to our having left the Christian Reformed Church but to their having put us out of their fellowship. The burden for that division in the Church is on them. But there is an ungodly union as well as a Godly unity, and Scripture warns the saints against that ungodly union. Believers are warned against fellowship with unbelievers, whether they be heretics, who oppose the gospel of Jesus, or immoral persons, who live contrary to the law of God. II Corinthians 6:14-18 admonishes the saints: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" We are told to "come out from among them, and be . . . separate." The passage points out the fundamental importance of the saint's life of separation when it says that only in this way will we be received by God and do we experience Him to be our Father and ourselves to be His children. II John 11 forbids us to receive into our house a man who teaches false doctrine or to bid him godspeed. I Corinthians 5 forbids the members of the Church "to company" with persons in the Church who live unholy lives. Revelation 13 warns the Church that in the last days there will be a vast getting together of churches and religions and that this "beast" will have the appearance of Christianity. It will look like a lamb. But this union is effected by the spirit of Antichrist and stands in the service of the Antichrist, and whoever joins this unholy alliance will be damned.

Key '73 is not a holy unity but an ungodly union. This is what we must say about it. In its union, Key '73 carries out neo-evangelicalism's precious principle that Christians should not separate from unbelief and the lie but remain in fellowship with heretics and immoral people, in order to influence them. This includes avoiding sharp, uncompromising condemnation of heresy, because, of course, this leads to separation. Key '73 is the embodiment of this principle of the new evangelicalism. But this principle and the practice that flows from it are ungodly; they are contrary to God's Word. They represent a denial of the antithesis, the God-established separation between His holy people and the unholy world and the God-established enmity between them. Key '73 is a movement to obliterate the antithesis. Completely lost in this effort to bring everybody together is the calling given to the Church to exercise Christian discipline, that is, to put out of the fellowship of the Church

those who by doctrine or walk show themselves to be unbelieving. Christian discipline is the "Key-Power" of Christ by which He opens and closes the Kingdom of Heaven to men. Christ has given these keys to His Church (Matthew 16:19), so that the exercise of Christian discipline is one of the marks of the true Church (Belgic Confession, Art. 29). I Corinthians 5 teaches the Church that she may not have fellowship with any member of the Church, that is, one who claims to be a Christian, who lives impenitently in sin, but that she must put away the wicked person by excommunication. The ground for this instruction is the warning of verse 6: "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." This warning completely overthrows the notion of neo-evangelicalism and the practice of Key '73, namely, that the union of the truth and the lie works in such a way that the truth influences the lie and gradually gains it. This may be the principle of Key '73, but the principle of the Bible is the very opposite. "Conservatives" in an apostate Church do not leaven the "liberals," that is, the unbelievers, but unbelief and disobedience leaven the whole lump. Conservative denominations in Key '73 do not influence the modernists and the Roman Catholic Church, but the modernists and Rome are the death of the conservative churches. Lot did not leaven Sodom, but Sodom leavened Lot's whole lump, his family, and he himself escaped by the skin of his teeth; Jehoshaphat did not leaven Ahab; Paul did not advise the Galatians to tolerate the false teachers and coexist with them in order to carry on dialogues with them and win them; but he cursed them and expressed his will that they be cut off.

Key '73 is laying the groundwork for a full-blown ecumenicity the like of which has not been seen in our country up to now. In comparison with Key '73, the World Council of Churches is mere babes-in-the-woods. Key '73's profession not to be an ecumenical movement is false. Built into Key '73 is the basis for a future, total union of every church and group involved. Key '73 joins all its 130 participating churches, from Rome to Reformed, in the work of evangelism. Now, evangelism is this: Preaching the gospel. Therefore, Key '73 implies that all the churches and groups involved have one and the same gospel. And if their gospel is the same, they are all united in the one, essential thing as far as the Church of Christ is concerned. All other differences between churches are secondary and can be resolved. If churches are one in the gospel, they can be and ought to be one institutionally also. Key '73 maintains that Rome and the Reformed, Lutherans and Baptists, Presbyterians and Wesleyans, no longer have any essential reason to be separate. Never has there been an ecumenicity like this. Already, the implication of union in evangelism is being drawn out by the participants in Key '73: the various churches are meeting together in worship

services.

Key '73 is accomplishing union. No one can pull the wool over our eyes on this point. The only way to determine whether that effort is good or bad is to discover whether Key '73 is uniting the churches on the basis of a common confession of the truth. The only way to determine whether the union of Key '73 is the unity of the Holy Spirit is to see whether the churches of Key '73 are bound together by a common love of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the issue, as regards what we must say of Key '73. Key '73 stands or falls here. When Key '73 is measured by the standard of the Scriptures, it becomes plain that Key '73 seeks union apart from the truth, that is, Jesus Christ, and that the union established by Key '73 is founded on a common rejection of the gospel and a common love of a gospel that is no gospel. This is the main condemnation of Key '73 by a Reformed man.

Key '73 is unchristian disregard for the truth and the perversion of the gospel

The truth, or message, that Key '73 proposes as a basis for its union is a pathetically poverty-stricken "gospel." This is necessarily the case, for it must be such that all the participants in Key '73 can subscribe to it — Rome and the Reformed, United Methodist and Lutherans, Salvation Army and Southern Presbyterians. The attempt to link faith and unbelief never raises unbelief to the level of faith but always lowers faith, in stages, to the level of unbelief. That Key '73 would water down the gospel in the interests of union was apparent already in Carl Henry's editorial, "Somehow, Let's Get Together." Having called evangelicals together, he proceeded to describe "the common ground" shared by evangelicals: "Evangelicals: common ground is belief in biblical authority and in individual spiritual regeneration as being of the very essence of Christianity." This is all that it takes to be an "evangelical," and this is the requirement for membership in the union of evangelicals. But who on the face of the earth that claims in any sense to be a Christian would deny that he believes in "biblical authority and in individual spiritual regeneration"? At the outset, Key '73 adopted a "gospel guideline" to which all of the churches and groups had to subscribe. This statement was intended to be both the message that Key '73 would proclaim and the basis of the union of all the churches in Key '73. The "gospel guideline" is this: "The Bible is the Word of God through which Christ is made known. God through Christ offers man the way of salvation, wholeness, and meaningful life. Men are confronted with Christ's call and through the power of the Holy Spirit comes the repentance in faith. Genuine saving faith affects every area of a person's life and engages him in Christ's serving ministry" (C.R.B., p. 196). In this basis of union and message of Key '73, there is no mention of an infallible Bible; no mention

of the Deity of Christ; no mention of sin; no mention of the cross, much less of the substitutionary satisfaction rendered to the justice of God by Christ; no mention of salvation by grace alone, much less justification by faith alone; and no mention of the believer's life of serving *God* and enduring tribulation in the world. Key '73's "statement of faith" can be embraced by everyone, by Rome, by the Barthians, by the rankest modernists. It is a lowest-common-denominator-gospel, a gospel stripped of offensiveness. Compare with this meager, bland "message" that which a Reformed Church would propose both as the basis of union and as the statement of the message to be proclaimed: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt or, if you will, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Catechisms.

If the above indicates disregard for the truth, recent statements by the leaders in Key '73 express outright contempt for the truth of God's Word. In a recent editorial criticizing churches who refuse to join Key '73, *Christianity Today* dismisses all the theological differences between the participating churches as merely a "babble of disagreement" that ought to be silenced: "The participating groups have all agreed to silence whatever babble of disagreement might normally exist among them and sound the Gospel clearly . . ." ("On Sitting This One Out," *Christianity Today*, April 27, 1973, p. 30). To mention nothing else, this is to call the truths of the gospel of grace held by the Reformed faith over against Rome a "babble of disagreement," and this is contempt for the truth of God's Word.

Most serious of all, Key '73 proclaims a message of salvation by the free will of man, rather than the gospel of salvation by God's free and sovereign grace. The message of Key '73 is the announcement that man must save himself. This hardly needs to be proved, since we know Billy Graham to be one of the main movers of Key '73. The *C.R.B.* declares that Key '73 should "focus on the unity Christians share in the mandate to witness to God's love for all persons" (p. 24). The message of Key '73 is a universal love of God. Therefore, Campus Crusade can belong to Key '73 and have its head on the Executive Committee — Campus Crusade whose first spiritual law, with which it confronts every person, is: "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." In accordance with Key '73's notion of a universal love of God is its teaching in its "gospel guideline" that "God through Christ *offers* man the way of salvation." If God loves every man, He tries to save every man by offering him salvation; but salvation depends upon man's acceptance of the offer by his free will. From the teaching of universal love and salvation by man's free will follows the second of Key '73's five objectives: "To employ every means and method of communication of the gospel in order to

create the conditions in which we may respond to God" (*C.R.B.*, p. 196). Not only does this objective authorize other means of bringing the gospel besides the one means authorized by God, namely, preaching, thus opening the way for Key '73 to use such means as gospel rock, drama, and the like, but it also makes salvation depend upon our clever creation of those conditions which will entice the sinner to make a favorable response to God's offer, as if there were any conditions which enabled the totally depraved sinner to respond favorably to God. The materials of Key '73 are rank with this teaching: God loves everybody; Christ died for everybody; God in evangelism desires to save everybody; now, it is up to Key '73 and the free will of the sinner to get him saved.

What must we say about Key '73's attitude towards the truth and about its gospel? We condemn its cavalier treatment of the doctrines of Holy Scripture, whether that be ignoring them or banishing them to the realm of the unimportant. We must have the full truth of Scripture, the complete gospel, including creation as well as redemption, eschatology as well as christology. If ever in her history, then today, the Church must be *precise*, not vague, in her confession of all the truth. Secondly, we have every reason to be suspicious of Key '73, since it is the product of neo-evangelicalism. Neo-evangelicalism is shot through with serious doctrinal errors, e.g., denial of the infallibility of Scripture, the theory of theistic evolution (or, progressive creationism, as some like to call it), and pre-millennialism. But our chief condemnation of Key '73 is this, that the gospel it preaches is, in the language of Galatians 1, another gospel, not the gospel of Christ and Paul. Key '73 proclaims that salvation depends on the choice of the sinner by his free will. This is heresy. Romans 9:16 plainly teaches that salvation is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, that is, that salvation does not have its source in nor depends upon man's works or man's will. Rather, salvation is "of God that sheweth mercy," that is, salvation has its source entirely in and depends wholly upon God's free and sovereign grace. The truth of salvation by God's sovereign grace, popularly referred to as "Calvinism," is a fundamental of the Christian faith every bit as much as are the truths of the Virgin Birth and the Deity of Christ. This truth includes God's sovereign, unconditional, eternal predestination, election and reprobation. As Romans 9 teaches, God has chosen some men unto salvation, merely out of grace, and He has, according to His good-pleasure, determined other men to perish. This truth is the rock against which the first spiritual law of the Campus Crusade for Christ is shattered. There are some men whom God does not love, but hates, e.g., Esau (Rom. 9:11-13), and some men for whom God's "wonderful plan" is their eternal damnation, e.g., Pharaoh (Rom. 9:17, 18). The truth of sovereign grace

includes Christ's limited, effectual atonement for the elect Church (John 10:15). It includes the Spirit's efficacious salvation of some totally depraved sinners by regeneration and effectual calling, that is, "irresistible grace" (John 6:44). It includes the Spirit's preservation of the saints so that they persevere to the end (John 10:27-29). A Reformed Church confesses this to be the gospel itself, a "fundamental." For this reason, a Reformed Church condemns much of so-called "fundamentalism," even though "fundamentalism" insists on separation from "liberals" and Rome. There is one fundamental of the faith that much of fundamentalism hates as much as Rome does, and that is the truth of salvation by sovereign grace. The fact is that such a fundamental as the Deity of Christ comes to expression in the truth of sovereign grace. Christ is no hapless, would-be Savior, dependent on the will of man, but He is the very Son of God in our flesh Who certainly does save His people, every one, from their sins. Much of fundamentalism boasts loudly of its confession of the Deity of Christ, in contrast to the "liberals," but its denial of a sovereign Savior gives the lie to that confession. The doctrine of salvation by sovereign grace is not a minor point, part of the "babble of differences" that we can give up without loss to the Gospel, but to lose it is to lose the Gospel. What is more, a Reformed Church condemns the lie of man's salvation of himself, whether by his running or by his willing. We have no tolerance for this heresy; we do not carry on courteous dialogues with it. This is not bigotry, nor is it the expression of a bitter spirit. On the contrary, it is love for our neighbor, e.g., the Roman Catholic, who depends for his righteousness and salvation upon his own works, as well as upon the work of Christ. We warn him against his eternal ruin when we condemn work-righteousness, and we admonish him to put all his trust in the merits of Christ alone. It is not love for him to further his trust in self, as that church does which approves Roman doctrine by uniting with Rome to preach the gospel in Key '73. Besides, condemnation of the lie is love for God, Whose truth the gospel of grace is, and love for Christ, Who is revealed in the gospel of grace as the only Savior.

Agreement in the false gospel of free will explains the union of Key '73. There is, after all, a reason why all of these churches and groups can be one, from Rome to the Salvation Army. That reason is that they all share the same belief in a salvation dependent upon man himself. This is what the *C.R.B.* implies when it states that all the members of Key '73 are one in maintaining that God loves all persons. To this false gospel can also be traced Key '73's distaste for the antithesis. According to Key '73, all men, including the wicked world, are alike objects of God's love and grace in Christ. Ultimately, the antithesis derives from predestination, and Key '73 has no room for

predestination.

To Key '73's perverted gospel are due other objectionable features of this evangelistic extravaganza. One of these is Key '73's use of many worthless and wicked means to get men to respond to Christ: the entire "decision system" which presses for quick, easy decisions for Christ; the use of "gospel rock"; the exploiting of ungodly entertainers and athletes; the use of movies and other drama; and many other gimmicks. Such methods of "evangelism" show disdain for the Word of God. The use of them is due to Key '73's notion that men can be wooed and won by human persuasion, in ignorance of the truth that God sovereignly draws whom He wills to save through the preaching of the Word. Another of its objectionable features is Key '73's delusion that the salvation of North America depends somehow upon the size, numbers, and massive program of the evangelistic effort. The leaders of Key '73 are beside themselves with numbers, size, the co-ordinated use of all the media, and all the aspects of the elaborate machinery. Lost out of sight is the Word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). The bare Word of God saves the Church, apart from the grandeur of the earthen vessels through whom it pleases God to bring this treasure "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (II Corinthians 4:7).

Our Reformed stand with regard to Key '73

We stand apart from Key '73, and we stand opposed to it. We need to be strengthened in this conviction. The size, the glamour, the prestige, and the apparent success allure us. It appeals to us, especially, to our youth, by its claim of union and its boast of evangelism. In obedience to God, we remain separate, and in faithfulness to Christ, we insist on proclaiming the gospel of grace. Key '73 is ungodly union, and Key '73 is a perversion of the gospel. Over against the siren-song of Key '73 that allures to an amalgamation of neo-evangelicals, liberals, and Rome, we must hear God's call to us: Be Reformed! We are not neo-evangelicals nor fundamentalists nor liberals, but Reformed. Let us be Reformed. Let us be Reformed in doctrine, confessing the truths set forth in the Reformed creeds. Let us be Reformed also in our church-life. Key '73 has a woefully bad view of the church institute and wreaks havoc with it. For one thing, the Church of Christ needs no para-ecclesiastical organization to help her preach and evangelize; nor has God given the calling to do these things to any other than to the Church. These are some of the things that belong to a Reformed church-life. We pursue fellowship which is based on a unity of the faith, or truth. We exercise discipline with regard to the leaven of unbelief and disobedience. We recognize and stick

to the Church's calling. The calling given the Church by her Lord in the Scriptures is not the improvement of society and the solution of society's ills. Her calling is to preach the gospel and thus to call the elect to faith, build up the people of God in Christ, and enable the saints to live in the world the antithetical life of a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is part of this calling that the Church do evangelism. In the true sense of that word, genuinely Reformed Churches are the real evangelicals, for they have the gospel to preach. And we are called to preach to those outside the Church. We are able to do this. Specifically, we Protestant Reformed Churches are able to do this. Our denial of the "well-meaning offer of the gospel," or "the free offer," in no way represents a weakening of the calling of the Church to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature, or the duty of the Church to call everyone to repentance and faith, or the responsibility of the Church to publish promiscuously the promise that whoever believes will be saved. Our denial of the "offer" is a denial that God loves everyone who hears the preaching, a denial that God is gracious in the preaching to everyone who comes under the preaching, and a denial that the nature of the salvation accomplished through the gospel is that of God's making and man's accepting an offer. As Churches, we unreservedly confess the following: "Moreover, the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends the gospel" (Canons of Dordt, II, Art. 5). Not only *can* we do evangelism, that is, preach the gospel to those outside the Church, but we *must*. The Church must do this through the office of the preacher, sending a man whom God has called to preach. And the Church must preach the same gospel that she preaches within the Church, the gospel of a sovereign, holy, glorious God; the gospel of a totally depraved and guilty sinner; the gospel of God's great grace in Christ crucified; and the gospel of the believer's calling to live a thankful, holy life in the midst of a wicked world, a life of costly discipleship and self-denial.

It is part of our responsibility as Reformed Churches to confront those who are not Reformed, but who oppose Key '73, with our conviction that, in the end, only the Reformed faith is able to stand against this and subsequent movements, especially because of its confession of the sovereignty of God in the gracious salvation of His people. Let Protestantism in general, alarmed at the union of the Protestant churches with Rome, consider whether much of Protestantism has not fallen away from the gospel of grace, the gospel still proclaimed where the Reformed faith is

maintained, so that Protestantism no longer has any reason to be separate from Rome.

Our duty as Protestant Reformed Churches also includes that we call to our Reformed brothers and sisters in churches that are swept away by Key '73 and similar movements to continue with us to be Reformed. Key '73 is working the abolition of everything Reformed! It obliterates the very distinction between the Reformed faith and the faith of Rome, as well as the distinction between Calvinism and Arminianism. When Key '73 has had its way with the Reformed churches that are participating, the only Reformed thing that will be left will be a hollow, empty name. There is abundant evidence of this already. Reformed doctrine is first compromised and then lost in the message of universal love and atonement. The antithesis is rejected, both in practice and in theory. Discipline is ruled out, especially, the discipline of heretics. God's covenant with believers and their children, dear to a Reformed heart, is denied in the practice of treating covenant children as the targets of evangelism at a later age, instead of viewing them as covenant children from birth, to be reared in the truth from infancy. The offices are despised — everybody becomes a preacher, or evangelist, today. These things are going on in Reformed churches now. Therefore, we call the Reformed saints: Continue to be Reformed with us. It is essentially the same as the call extended by Judah to Israel in II Chronicles 30. During the reign of King Hezekiah, Judah called the children of Israel to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover with Judah. At that time, God called the remnant in Israel out of that apostate nation, calling them to express their real, spiritual oneness with Judah:

Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of kings of Assyria.

And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see.

Now be ye not stiffnecked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which he hath sanctified for ever: and serve the Lord your God, that the fierceness of his wrath may turn away from you.

(II Chronicles 30:6-8)

Such is our call today: Come, celebrate the Passover with us; worship Christ crucified for our sins, the gracious and only Savior. Do it by a living faith that confesses Him purely; that hears Him truthfully preached, and that fellowships with the saints who are one in Him.

There is a warning attached to the call. In the days of Hezekiah, just a few years after Israel was called to the Passover, the nation of Assyria destroyed the

nation of Israel. The call through Hezekiah was God's final call to Israel. Today, the end of Reformed churches and of the Reformed faith on a wide scale is at hand. And this goes hand in hand with the approach of the end of all things.

The response of most of Israel to the call of Judah was a scornful rejection: "but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them" (II Chronicles 30:10). However, there some who heeded the call and came up to the Passover: "Nevertheless divers . . . humbled

themselves, and came to Jerusalem" (vs. 11). To them God gave a wonderful promise. May this promise be an incentive today to many to heed the call, "Be Reformed": "For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him" (II Chronicles 30:9).

Meditation

Salvation In Zion

Rev. M. Schipper

"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

Joel 2:32.

Striking it is, in the first place, that this portion of Scripture is found in the context of the prophecy which speaks of the coming day of Pentecost, which the prophet sees on the background of the terrible day of the Lord.

The Lord will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh; sons and daughters will prophesy; old men shall dream dreams, and young men shall see visions; and upon servants and handmaids will He pour out His Spirit. And this wonder will be accomplished in the midst of wonders and signs in heaven and on earth, signs of judgment, — blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke, — while the sun shall be turned into darkness, the moon into blood.

Striking it is also, that the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, explains the wonder of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as being the fulfillment of this prophecy. Almost literally he quotes the prophecy, and explains that what happened on that day with its sound as of a mighty rushing wind, with its manifestation of cloven tongues as of fire resting upon their heads, and the marvelous miracle of tongues, — was that day a time of judgment, wherein God, the discernor of hearts, would search the hearts, and cause the remnant according to the election of grace to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved. (Acts 2:14-21). Incidentally the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, also reflects on our text, especially the first part of it, when he writes: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13). And Paul considers the "whosoever"

to apply to all nations, both Jew and Gentile alike. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."

Indeed, there is salvation in Zion!

For the remnant whom the Lord shall call!

As the Lord hath said!

Salvation is spoken of in terms of deliverance. Literally the word that is translated "delivered" or "deliverance" comes from a word which means "to be made smooth." And that which is made smooth will be able to slip away and escape. So that deliverance or salvation is looked upon as that experience whereby one eludes or escapes from something by slipping through.

What that is from which those delivered escape is, according to the context, judgment. Typically the judgment refers to a judgment brought upon the land of Israel by the enemy. To slip through the hands of the enemy was for Israel deliverance. But there is more, much more! When we consider the judgment in the context in the light of the Book of Acts, then the judgment must refer to the day of Pentecost, the day of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ. Then, to be sure, the day of Pentecost was more than a day when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church in heaven and on earth. It was the day when that Spirit would convict men of their ungodly deeds which they had ungodly committed; when He would prick them in their hearts, and they would cry out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Indeed,

He would search the hearts even as He searches out the deep things of God. And to pass through and escape the terror of that judgment is salvation. It is this which the prophet evidently has in mind when he speaks of salvation for the remnant.

Salvation for the remnant!

And the remnant is the survivors, those who escape, those who are left over after the judgment is passed. Indeed, not all escape, but many succumb in the judgment.

The term "remnant" also suggests that the survivors are few.

Does this mean then that those who are actually and ultimately saved will be few in number? Does not all Scripture, which everywhere speaks of the precious remnant, always refer to them in terms of an innumerable host? Are they not always described as being as many as the sands on the seashore, and as the stars of the heavens for multitude?

Indeed, there shall not be one empty space in the house of many mansions; every last one for whom that house is prepared shall be there. Make no mistake about it! The host of the redeemed is so great that no man can count them.

Yet the Scriptures stress the very sober thought that, while the remnant that is saved are many, they are nevertheless few when compared with the multitude that go lost and perish. It is always true throughout history, and it shall become evident in the final judgment that the nucleus saved is small. It is always a remnant which God counts His precious possession.

Take note of their description in the text!

They are those who call on the name of the Lord (Jehovah), who are delivered! And in the last part of the text, the remnant are they whom Jehovah shall call!

There is no discrepancy here, for both are true! But each must be seen and understood in its proper order. The remnant call upon the name of Jehovah only after Jehovah calls the remnant, and always in this order. It is true that both Peter and Paul, as noted above, stress the former, namely, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. But both of these apostles were deeply conscious of the fact that no man can of himself call upon the name of the Lord unless and until Jehovah first calls him efficaciously and consciously out of darkness into His marvelous light. Paul makes this very plain when he adds: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom (not: of whom) they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" And Peter, after he addresses the remnant as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and holy nation, a peculiar people (people for God's own possession)," continues by showing them why they

are such, — "that ye should shew forth the praises of him who *hath called* you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (I Peter 2:9). And in the context of Acts 2, it is very plain that they call upon the name of the Lord and are saved upon whom first the Spirit of Pentecost fell.

The Spirit of Pentecost is the Spirit of regeneration, who quickens and renews those who by nature are dead in trespasses and sins. He makes them alive from the dead. A spiritually dead sinner can hear no call, nor can he call upon the name of the Lord, no more than a corpse can hear anything or say anything. And whom the Lord by His Spirit renews, them He also calls efficaciously and consciously, the effect of which calling is such that they who are called begin to call upon Jehovah's name. And so the remnant come into a conscious, living experience of their own salvation.

This salvation for the remnant is in Zion!

For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said!

Typically mount Zion was in Jerusalem. Mount Zion was the temple hill, the place when God tabernacled with His people. A place beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. Elevated above and distinguished from the rest of the hills about Jerusalem. Here God is known in her palaces for a refuge. The Psalmist in Psalm 48 goes on to say: "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generations following. For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death." All of this has reference, first of all, typically to the temple hill, where God typically revealed Himself to His ancient people as the God of their salvation. Apart from this mount Zion there was no salvation.

Symbolically mount Zion refers to the church of Christ, of Christ Who is the revelation of the everlasting God, the God of the Covenant. On and in this church, which is both holy and catholic, the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, is poured out. That Spirit which is to abide with the church forever, and to lead her into all the truth. That Spirit Who is the Author of the infallible Scriptures, and Who also separates men to preach His Word, and Who calls in the name of Christ the remnant according to the election of grace, — that Spirit takes the salvation prepared by Christ and graciously applies it to the hearts of those whom Christ through His Word and Spirit calls.

Ultimately, of course, mount Zion and Jerusalem is in heaven. "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." (Galatians 4:26). "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." (Hebrews 12:22). There God eternally tabernacles with His people in Christ. It is the final realization unto which God has purposed to bring

the remnant with all His creation into everlasting glory.

In this mount Zion and Jerusalem, even as it is found in the midst of this present evil world, only is salvation! Never apart from it!

For Israel in the old dispensation there was no salvation anywhere else. For the remnant today there is no salvation outside of the church.

O, do not misunderstand! We do not mean to imply that one is saved merely because he belongs to some church. Our view is both Protestant and Reformed, — not Romish. The church does not save us. Christ only saves, and that, too, by His death and shedding of His atoning blood, by His glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, from whence He sends forth His Spirit. By that Spirit He quickens and gathers, through His Word preached, a church chosen to everlasting life. It is therefore not true that you can ignore the church and Christ's ministry through the church and be saved. So and not otherwise shall there be deliverance in mount Zion and in Jerusalem for the remnant. In the church, which is the living manifestation of the body of Christ, and which Christ has instituted and ordained that she shall preach His Word, the gospel of our salvation, and shall go out into all the world preaching that gospel, through which Christ will call out of darkness the remnant in such a way that they respond by calling on the name of the Lord, so, and not otherwise, shall the remnant be saved. In the world you are lost, — you are not safe. In the church Christ works by His Spirit and Word to call the remnant out of darkness into His marvelous light. Never apart from His church does He proclaim His gospel, by which He calls them. And because the Holy Spirit never operates apart from the Word, He also operates only in the church where that Word is purely preached, never apart from it.

Let those who are being carried away with what they call pentecostal fervor, speaking in tongues, etc.,

take heed. Satan has a way of imitating Christ and the things of the church only to deceive. That's why He is antichrist and antichurch.

Salvation is only to be found in Zion!

And that salvation is sure!

For Jehovah hath spoken! Note how beautifully the text emphasizes this assurance! They who call upon the name of the Lord SHALL be delivered. For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem SHALL BE deliverance; as the Lord HATH said, and in the remnant whom the Lord SHALL call.

Jehovah, the covenant making and covenant keeping God, the I AM THAT I AM, hath spoken, and His Word shall not fail. He shall save His people from their sins. Not one of those precious sheep given to Christ shall perish. Though sometimes He appears to be slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, He is not slack but longsuffering, not willing that any who are strangers and pilgrims in the earth should perish, but that all should come to repentance. In His own time, and according to the wisdom of His own counsel, and by the efficacious calling of His own Word and Spirit, He shall call them. Not by some universal offer of salvation which all men, righteous and wicked, elect and reprobate, can accept or reject at will; but lovingly and powerfully, graciously and savingly He calls the remnant. And He calls them "one of city, and two of a family," and brings them to Zion. (Jeremiah 3:14).

This assurance of salvation is promised them in the proper preaching of the gospel. It is this preaching which makes the weary heavy laden, which drives them to the Rest-Giver and His cross, which impels them to call upon His name, and which saves them unto the uttermost.

The remnant is surely saved!

Thanks be unto God! Amen!

Editorials

Seminary Graduation, 1973

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema



Left to right: M. Joostens and M. Hoeksema

One of the highlights of this year's Synod was the graduation of two Candidates for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, Meindert W. Joostens, a son of our Redlands, California congregation, and Mark Homer Hoeksema, your editor's son and presently a member of First Church, Grand Rapids.

These two young brethren received their diplomas at a graduation program held on Tuesday, June 12, at our Hudsonville, Michigan Protestant Reformed Church, the host church of this year's Synod. The fitting and

timely address of this year's graduation speaker, Prof. H. Hanko, was on the subject, "Exegesis and Preaching." A transcript of this address will appear in the next issue.

We rejoice and are thankful that the Lord has given to us as churches these two candidates for the ministry and has shown us this token of His faithfulness in continuing to raise up among us ministers of His Word — particularly in this day of crying need for faithful

preachers of the Gospel and at this time when the Lord is opening doors for us on the mission field. Our prayer is that the Lord will keep these young men faithful to His Word, that He will before long give them a place of labor in His vineyard, and that He will cause them to be a blessing in the midst of His church.

A snapshot, courtesy of Rev. Dale H. Kuiper, accompanies this article.

Dishonesty And The Formula Of Subscription

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

One of the items confronting the Christian Reformed Synod which (at this writing) is about to convene is an overture from Dr. Harry Boer for a new Form of Subscription. In *Calvinist Contact*, June 4, 1973, there appears an article on this subject from the pen of the Rev. John Vriend — an article taken over from another paper, *The Bridge*.

In this article, Vriend writes, in part, as follows:

It's Dr. Boer's contention — and I agree with it — that no office bearer in the Christian Reformed Church can sign the document without mental reservations. Or if he can, he is so obviously unintelligent as to be unfit to serve in a capacity of leadership and trust in the church. So — you ask — one is either a rascal or a fool if he signs the form? That would depend, it seems to me, on the nature of your reservations.

Let no one panic if I list some of the areas in which today hundreds if not thousands of our office-bearers are bound to be in non-agreement with our confessional standards . . .

Mr. Vriend then goes on to list some of these areas, among them being the doctrine of reprobation in Canons I, 6 and 15, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in Article 35 of the Confession, and the Catechism's statement concerning the mass in Question and Answer 80. And then he continues:

By this time you may begin to wonder how I can go to Synod next week and, upon hearing the form of subscription recited, respond with a clear spoken "Amen." Actually, this question may be addressed to every minister and elder who stands up for this solemn act of assent. Every office-bearer, no matter how faithful and honest, must have his private solution for this problem. Let me tell you mine.

I say "Amen" to the Creeds with a clear conscience because I am, heart and soul, committed to the evangelical content and intent of the Creeds. I sense a deep and dynamic unity of faith with the Reformed fathers who faced Roman Catholicism and Arminianism and found those systems wanting. I

share their love for the Gospel of God's sovereign grace in Christ and their loyalty to the Church as a non-sectarian body of believers. I see the Creeds as fallible historically-conditioned statements of faith serving to express that love and that loyalty. My act of signing them, my mental reservations with regard to certain formulations notwithstanding, is an act of faith which at the level of the heart is filled with joy and conviction.

There you have it!

Is it not strange that the pressure for a change in the Formula of Subscription never comes from those who are in agreement with the creeds? If it would, a church could face such overtures calmly and objectively, and could conceivably judge the request for change on its own merits. But no! Always the demand for change comes from those who at various points are in disagreement with the confessions. And it always comes not at the moment when they first discover their disagreement, but long afterwards!

It may seem to some that a man like Vriend is being very honest and frank when now he admits to having mental reservations when signing or assenting to the Form of Subscription. And some may be deceived by his attempted explanation.

But in plain language, Vriend admits to being a liar and to having been a liar every time he assented to the Form of Subscription over a period of years!

For this is the significance of the Jesuit ethics of "mental reservations." Orally or by written assent, Vriend states publicly in subscribing to the Creeds that he agrees with "every article and point of doctrine." But in his own soul — without stating these exceptions — he says every time he subscribes: "But I don't agree with this. I take exception to that. I do not agree with that," etc., etc.

What Vriend does in this article is admit that he has been doing this over the years. And he claims that "hundreds if not thousands" of Christian Reformed office-bearers do the same thing.

This is utterly dishonest!

It makes no difference that now Vriend bluntly states that all along he has had mental reservations. It makes no difference that he may plead that this is the only way in which he could subscribe to the creeds — let alone the fact, of course, that this is not true. It makes no difference that he and Boer may claim that if one can sign the Formula of Subscription without mental reservations, he is “so obviously unintelligent as to be unfit to serve in a capacity of leadership and trust in the church” — let alone that it is the height of cocksure conceit to make this claim. And it makes no difference that “hundreds if not thousands” have been doing the same thing: for a thousand wrongs do not make a right.

The simple fact is that Vriend admits to lying and having lied — and that, too, about the most sacred things and before the church, the body of Christ, and therefore to the Holy Spirit.

This is a dreadful thing! It is dishonest! It is hypocritical!

Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for this sin, Acts 5:1-10.

Moreover, according to the very provisions of the Formula of Subscription, the first order of business in this connection should not be the treatment of Harry Boer's overture, but the declaration that Vriend and the “hundreds if not thousands” of others are *de facto* suspended from office.

To be sure, I am not so naive as to expect that anything like this will take place: the church is too far

gone for that! This, however, does not change the fact that it *should* take place. And do not forget: God is not mocked!

But let this be a lesson of warning to all concerning the necessity of honesty and of insisting upon the provisions of the Formula of Subscription.

Let no officebearer sign the Formula of Subscription unless he can do so in all honesty before God and His church. Better far it is that he should frankly refuse to do so than that he should do so dishonestly and with mental reservations.

And let no ecclesiastical assembly shrink from its duty of enforcing the provisions of the Formula of Subscription without reservation.

Failure to do so can only result in a situation in which the church is wide open for faithless officebearers, a situation in which these faithless and dishonest ones finally occupy a majority position, and a situation in which that majority will insist that their dishonest subscription be legitimized by changing the Formula itself.

And when this latter stage is reached, a church will begin to manifest the marks of the false church, using the power of discipline to persecute the faithful and to cast them out and to uphold heretics and those who depart from the way of truth.

This has happened in the Netherlands.

It is happening here today!

Be warned!

Special Report

Synod of 1973

Prof. H. Hanko

If one would attempt to capture the predominate mood of this year's Synod in one short phrase, one would most likely conclude that the appropriate phrase would be that Synod labored in a profound sense of thankfulness to our covenant God for the many blessings He has given. This consciousness of God's faithfulness was especially impressed upon the delegates by the sharp contrast between the work before our Synod and the nature of the work facing many other higher ecclesiastical assemblies in other denominations. It is so often true today that denominations are in the throes of profound struggles involving fierce battles over the issues of apostasy and false doctrine. There are denominations who face their meetings of the broadest assemblies of the Churches with the prospect of the denomination being fractured

by deep seated divisions. Splits loom on the horizon. There are denominations who face this summer's assembly meetings anticipating discussions over issues which ought not to have even a place in the Church of Christ. These issues involve fundamental questions of the nature of the authority of Scripture, Pentecostalism, the place of women in offices in the Church, revision of the Formula of Subscription, the status of the confessions of the Church, — even such questions as whether homosexuality is a sin or not. And these issues appear on the agenda of Churches within the Reformed tradition. These things are the measure of how far these Churches have drifted from the moorings of God's Holy Word.

Our Synod was a kind of peaceful island in the

stormy seas of ecclesiastical strife where every wind of false doctrine blows. The delegates were conscious of this and deeply thankful. This gratitude to Jehovah Who has manifested His covenant faithfulness to us was repeatedly spoken of in the prayers which were offered in Synod and in the private conversations of the delegates as well as in the discussions on the floor of Synod.

Opening of Synod

The Synod was opened by means of a pre-Synodical Prayer Service held in the auditorium of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. C. Hanko had charge of the service and preached on Jude 3b: "... that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." In connection with a brief review of Synod's business, Rev. Hanko urged upon the Synod and those present the importance of this calling in these times of apostasy and departure from the truth. The sermon will appear in its entirety in the *Acts* and our people are urged to read it carefully, for it set the tone of the entire Synod.

Synod opened its sessions Wednesday morning, June 6. The officers elected were: President, Rev. J. Heys; Vice-President, Rev. G. Van Baren; First Clerk, Rev. R. Decker; Second Clerk, Rev. B. Woudenberg. These officers functioned capably throughout Synod; and it was under the leadership of Rev. Heys that the Synod accomplished its work with a minimum of delay and diversion.

One aspect of the Synod which struck this reporter rather forcibly was the fact that another generation is gradually coming to the fore in our Churches. This was evident from the presence of many of our younger ministers on Synod. It was evident from the presence of younger elders. It was also evident from the fact that one of our Seminary graduates is a third generation minister. Mark Hoeksema, son of my esteemed colleague Prof. Hoeksema and grandson of Rev. H. Hoeksema, represented this third generation. This younger and new generation is also a generation which loves the truth of the Scriptures and is firmly committed to the cause of Christ as represented by our Churches. This is great reason for thankfulness to God.

Rather than attempt to give a day-by-day description of Synod, it would probably be better to divide the work of Synod under two main headings and give our readers an idea in this way of what transpired.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL MATTERS

There were two graduates from the Seminary this year: Mark Hoeksema and Meindert Joostens. Wednesday afternoon, all of Thursday and a large part of Friday was given over to their oral exam before Synod. The students did very well in their exams, and the Synod, without reservation, declared them to be

candidates for the ministry of the Word in our Churches. They will be eligible for a call after July 8. The graduation exercises were held Tuesday evening, June 12, in Hudsonville Church. There will be additional material in this issue and the following one concerning their graduation.

This is always a high-spot in the work of Synod. The brief ceremony which is always held in our Synod after students have been declared candidates is always a very moving one. The fact that the Lord has provided additional laborers in His vineyard is evidence of His faithfulness to us. This is especially true because there is so very much work that needs to be done in these days when the love of the truth grows cold. May the Lord soon provide for them both a place in His Church to labor faithfully in the preaching of the Word.

A considerable amount of time was spent on Theological School matters. Some of the more important matters which were treated are the following:

Synod authorized the Theological School Committee to proceed with the building of our new Seminary. Over the course of the year, the costs have risen sharply. Perhaps a more detailed report can be given in a future article in the *Standard Bearer*. But Synod was gratified to learn that our people have supported this cause generously. The preliminary work of grading has already begun, and the work should proceed without delay. A special word of thanks goes to the Building Committee which has spent uncounted hours in this cause, and which will be spending many, many more hours before the work is completed.

The Synod also gave its attention to the calling of a third professor. Rev. D. Engelsma from our Loveland congregation received this call. Rev. R. Decker was made the secundus. Our Churches are urged to remember Rev. Engelsma in their prayers to God that he may be guided by the Spirit in consideration of this weighty matter.

Synod spent a great deal of time on a revised Constitution of the Theological School. These revisions were necessary in the light of the addition to our Seminary of a Pre-Seminary department. It is not possible to sum up all the changes which were made in this Constitution in the scope of this article. But incorporated in the Constitution were provisions for the admittance into our Seminary of men who desire a Reformed Seminary education although they do not intend to be ministers within our Churches. The Pre-Seminary department is also opened to such students. We have had and continue to receive requests for admittance from others. Now the Constitutional provisions are made for this.

The Constitution also now requires that a full four years of college work is required for entrance into the Seminary. The Pre-Seminary Department will include about 75 hours out of a total of 125 hours of such

instruction.

As matters stand now, there will be three young men in our Seminary next year; there will be eight young men in our Pre-Seminary Department; there will be one who will audit a few courses in the Seminary. There is a possibility of one or two more who will be coming to School with us.

Synod also decided to instruct the Theological School Committee to make inquiry into the matter of making our Seminary a degree-granting institution. This matter will come again before next year's Synod. This whole question involves also the matter of transfer of credits.

The Lord has richly blessed our School and the labors of the Seminary are committed to the prayers of our people.

MISSION MATTERS

Matters of missions occupied a great deal of time on Synod. There are especially three areas in which these matters were of concern to Synod.

The first was the work of Jamaica. Detailed information on this will appear in the *Acts*. However, to give our readers some idea of the nature of the work, we quote brief excerpts from the advice of Committee II which summed up the work from reports submitted to Synod by the missionaries and the Mission Committee.

We have reached a kind of crossroads in Jamaica, and decisions have to be reached by this Synod which will have effect for some time on our work in that area. There are various problems which are connected with this work . . . From a certain point of view, the work in Jamaica is not going well. There have been disappointments and many difficulties . . . Many Churches have left us . . . One minister . . . has left us. The work is extremely strenuous and the missionaries on the island find it difficult to trust many of those with whom we work . . . On the other hand, there are some bright prospects also . . . There are sincere people of God in these churches; there are good officebearers here and there; there is evidence of positive fruit among some. There is a good work being done in the school where four men are presently being trained for the ministry in these churches. Thus we have as yet no clear indication that the work has come to a standstill on the island, and that God is pointing us to the fact that our work there is ended . . .

Perhaps the greatest problem which we have at present is the question of our goals in Jamaica. When we originally began work in Jamaica, the decision was taken to work with these churches as indigenous churches. That is, basically the churches were independent from us in church structure, and Rev. Lubbers worked there to assist them. This has led to problems. The Synods of 1969 and 1970 decided to try to do work there independent of the Jamaica churches themselves. That is, the Synod thought it worth our while to try to establish in Jamaica mission

stations of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America. This work is being done, but the results are very inconclusive . . . We want to point out that we really have a two-track work going in Jamaica, and our missionaries tell us that there is insufficient time and man-power to do even one as thoroughly as it ought to be done.

Within this general context, several important decisions were taken.

The Synod decided to send Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers back to the island for another year. The Lord opened the way for this when a work permit which Rev. Lubbers had long been seeking came to his house here in the states during the sessions of Synod.

It was evident to the Synod that someone needed to go along with Rev. Lubbers. And it was decided to ask one of the candidates to accompany him for a six month period. This does not alter the eligibility of the candidate. He is still eligible for a call after July 8. Should he receive and accept a call however, he would not assume his work until he returns from the island. Provisions were also made for ministerial assistance to Rev. Lubbers when and if that becomes necessary.

The financial assistance we have given the Jamaican Churches has been a source of grief to the missionaries. And so, with the exception of help in emergencies, and some help for travelling expenses, it was decided, on the advice of the missionaries, to suspend any financial aid for a year.

The four students in Jamaica will have completed their studies in the next year, and the Mission Committee was advised to see to it that this is done.

The Mission Committee was instructed to evaluate carefully the work in Jamaica during the next year to advise Synod what precisely should be our course of action in this field in the years to come.

Several resolutions were adopted by Synod: one an expression of thanks to Holland's congregation for releasing Rev. Heys for five months; another to Rev. and Mrs. Heys; and another to Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers. Few of us are aware of the tremendous difficulty of the work there. May the cause of missions in Jamaica be included in our prayers.

Synod also received various reports of work being done on the home mission field. Revs. Engelsma, Van Baren and Kortering have all labored in Philadelphia. This work will be continued. Rev. Kuiper expected to leave for Philadelphia immediately after Synod.

Revs. Decker and Veldman have worked in Prospect Park, New Jersey where there are people of God who are thirsting for the pure preaching of the Word. The work there will also be continued. Rev. Woundenberg has visited Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and will continue to make contacts there over the next months.

Under the general heading of missions we could probably make some general remarks too about the work of the Committee of Contact. There have been

contacts made with brethren in different countries throughout the world, and it was reported on Synod that through the means of our *Standard Bearer*, *Theological Journal* and other publications, the Lord is using us to reach many who are called with us to fight the battle of faith in defense of the truth of the Scriptures. It is becoming increasingly apparent that there are growing pressures towards apostasy throughout the world; but that there are faithful people of God in many places who are being called to stand together in the cause of Christ. It was with this that Synod was concerned. And our prayers ought daily to be that the Lord will unite in one faith and one calling those who are faithful to Christ.

A work which is not generally known is the work of translation of materials prepared by Rev. Woudenberg and distributed in the States. This material is being translated in Indonesia and is widely distributed. There are also some possibilities that these will be translated into some dialects of the people in India. There has been a lot of response to this work, and Synod decided to support it.

One other item of Synod's business which stands in a class by itself is the work of preliminary preparations for the celebration of our Fiftieth Anniversary as Churches. The year of celebration will be 1975. The theme which Synod chose for this event is "Covenant Faithfulness." A committee from Classis East and Classis West was chosen to act as Steering Committee in preparation for this event. Various guidelines were drawn up including the publication of a booklet. If any of our people have ideas for this celebration they should see to it that these suggestions are forwarded to the chairman of the committee, Rev. C. Hanko.

And so, Thursday Synod finished its work. No report of this nature can adequately cover the work which was done, nor accurately convey the genuine spirit of unity and joy which pervaded the Synod in its labors. All who attended would however agree that there is only one response to this year's Synod: Thanks be to God for His many mercies towards us who are so undeserving of His favor and love. May our Churches join in this thankfulness.

In His Fear

Pastoral Aspects of the Canons of Dordt

Rev. D.H. Kuiper

The Word of God calls those men whom Christ has given to His Church as His mouthpieces, through whom He speaks His saving Word, *pastors*. This designation is distinct from other gifts of the ascended Lord, for Paul writes the Ephesian church that Christ gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. The word *pastor* also has a different emphasis than do other common terms in use today, *preachers* and *ministers*. A pastor is a shepherd, a shepherd on earth of the Great Shepherd's dearly beloved sheep. The term is a tender one. It calls to mind the relationship of a flock and its shepherd. This shepherd knows his sheep individually, calls them by name, is known and trusted by them, and this in distinction from other shepherds and hirelings. The labor of the shepherd involves the leading, feeding and protection of the flock. Thus local congregations are flocks of Christ's sheep who are gathered, fed, and defended through the labor of Christ-sent shepherds. There is also an aspect to the work that is very personal; the labor of the shepherd with a single family, or with an individual, which has a peculiar weakness or problem. In our times, pastoral work has come to refer especially to this individualized labor. We know it as family visitation, sick calls, and

visits in homes where there is some difficulty of a spiritual nature.

The standard of behavior for both pastor and sheep is given in the Word of God. As the pastor busies himself with the work of the ministry, he has in mind the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the body of Christ "that we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. 4:14) In other words, he brings the Word of God also in pastoral work. That Word feeds, gathers, defends, consoles. *Reformed* pastors possess the decided advantage of having the Three Forms of Unity in their hearts and minds as a guide in interpreting the Scriptures and in applying the Scriptures to the sin-sick souls of the sheep individually. We are all well acquainted with the Heidelberg Catechism and its subjective, personal approach to salvation. As it treats matters of misery — deliverance — gratitude, the Catechism never wearies in asking, "What doth this profit thee?" We love the Catechism for this concern, and saints do not tire of hearing the Lord's Days preached to them over a period of seventy or eighty years. The "other" confessions, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of

Dordt, are less well known, and because of their theologic, doctrinal approach are thought to be of less value in pastoral labors. This is a mistake. Pastors and sheep alike continue to make this mistake only to their disadvantage.

CANONS HELD IN DISREPUTE

The Canons especially are thought to be cold, hard, and difficult. They are thought by many to be the product of unkind theologians who wrote of abstract mysteries without any concern for the life and needs of the Church. This general low regard which the Reformed community has for the Canons is typified by the following words from the pen of Leonard Verduin. In a review of *Carl Bang's Arminius* (The Banner, Jan. 19, 1973) Verduin writes, "Many of the nuances in the theology of Arminius have gained respectability among Reformed thinkers since his day, and one wishes that Gomarus and all the rest who were after his scalp had been less vehement." Later he recommends Bang's sympathetic account of Arminius' life and doctrine as *must* reading "If there are still people around who live with the caricature that Arminius was an arch-heretic, a Pelagian, a man who shied away from the idea that salvation is by grace and by grace alone . . . if there are still people who think Arminius got a square deal at the hands of the 'orthodoxy' of his times . . . if there are still people on the scene who think of the Synod of Dort as an altogether holy moment in the annals of Christ's church . . ." I, for one, thrill at the vehemence displayed by the hard pressed, synodical president Bogerman (who finally exclaimed, "*Dimittimini, exite!* You are dismissed, leave!"). I am convinced that Arminius was an arch-heretic, a Pelagian, who spoke of grace but denied the power thereof. I know that through long, difficult labors orthodoxy (without the quotation marks) gave the Arminian party a square deal. And I thank God for the monumental work the Synod produced in the Canons; they were a congress of which to be proud! Besides, the question is not: Was every delegate to the Synod sinless or spotlessly pure in his motivation? The question is: Are the Canons *true*? And, through the Great Synod did God preserve the doctrines of sovereign grace for the future Church? The answer to these latter questions is a resounding *yes!*

At any rate, the above demonstrates the low place the Canons occupy in much of the Reformed churches. Add to this the fact that a long series of articles on doctrine, with more articles called Rejection of Errors, are thought by many to be difficult and cold, and you have more than enough reason for some to come to the careless conclusion that the Canons can best be left on the shelf; certainly they cannot be used in approaching distressed souls in pastoral work as we have briefly described it. The error underlying this conclusion is

that doctrine is not profitable for life and life problems. The Gospel is needed, not doctrine. The Canons seem to anticipate this modern error by speaking of "doctrines of the Gospel"! We will develop the thesis that the Canons of Dordt are a wonderful tool in pastoral labor, and that the reason is that pastoral concern for the child of God in this sinful world shines through everywhere. The fathers of Dordt were not cold, merciless men who entertained themselves at the expense of the Arminians by splitting hairs. They were pastors! They demonstrated an admirable balance between concern for the glory of God's Name and the well-being of His people. And they succeeded in demonstrating that the two go together!

PASTORAL CONCERN EVIDENT IN THE FIRST FOUR HEADS

There can be no doubt that the occasion that demands the individual pastoral labors of a minister is sin, either a walk in sin that is an offence in the Church or the accusing testimony of sin in a person's conscience. All such labor, therefore, is directed toward bringing a person to confession of his sins (with an accompanying forsaking of them) and toward his receiving the Spirit-worked testimony that all sins have been forgiven him for the sake of Christ so that no one can lay anything against the charge of God's elect. Although it would be possible to list every statement in the Canons that have bearing on these matters, we would rather show but a few instances from the first four heads of doctrine. It is very striking that already in the First Head, Of Divine Predestination, this concern for the soul's welfare is present. One who is having spiritual problems, doubts concerning forgiveness and salvation, will be especially anxious concerning election and reprobation. The fathers, understanding this, carefully state in Art. 12 that "the elect in due time, though in *various degrees* and in *different measures*, attain the assurance of this their eternal and unchangeable election." And this assurance is attained not in the sickly prying into the secret and deep things of God, but "by observing in themselves with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure, the infallible fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God." Here already the anxious are pointed to God and His Word and away from their sickly, despondent selves. And in the Word we find the fruits of "true faith in Christ, filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, etc." If some might say that they don't observe those fruits in their lives, Art. 16 provides the further answer. Those who lack faith, have not the peace of conscience, do not possess an earnest endeavor after filial obedience, but who continue to use the means of grace are not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor rank themselves among the reprobates, but wait for a season

of richer grace. The beauty of this entire article that the fathers *understand*, they have *been there*, they are able to describe various kinds of believers and their problems. In Art. 18 of this same First Head the Canons speak to believing parents who have lost an infant to death. There is more, but this will suffice in showing that the fathers are careful to adjust every possible misconception and to comfort the feeble.

The Second and Third-Fourth Heads of the Canons also contain Truth that must be carried to the troubled saint. It might seem that there is not much here of a consoling nature, but we may not overlook the fact that the heart of the Gospel is that the death of Christ made satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf (Art. 2). Further, Arts. 8 and 9 teach that the saving efficacy of the Son of God's death extends to *all* the elect, and that this powerful work shall stand even against the ineffectual opposition of the gates of hell. And the conversion of man to God, the subject of the Third and Fourth Heads, is ascribed to God alone and His irresistible grace. Finally, if the weary saint is tempted to give up, to stop using the means of grace, to withdraw into himself, he is warned in Art. 17 to continue in their use because God has in His good pleasure intimately joined together grace and means, namely, the preaching of the Word and the use of sacraments.

THE FIFTH HEAD A PASTOR'S MANUAL

It is in the Fifth Head that we find the concrete treatment of the imperfect saint's problem. After all, most often the problem takes this form: I am a sinner who has fallen many times in the past. How may I know that I will not fall in the future (or am falling at the present time) in such a way that I will never be restored. Very wisely the fathers catalog the remains of indwelling sin that remain in the believer: spots adhere to the best works of the saints, there are daily sins of infirmity, there are infirmities of the flesh, the lamentable sins of David and Peter are mentioned, sin is not excused but called enormous. It is recognized that sin offends God, grieves the Spirit, interrupts the exercise of faith, and grievously wounds the conscience. And as the weeping saint shakes his head in sad recognition of these things, the words "but God..." are constantly held before him. But God is faithful, but God is rich in mercy! According to His unchangeable purpose of election, God does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit, does not allow His people to lose the grace of adoption, so that the assurance of justification is lost, does not allow the committing of the sin unto death, nor will He allow the saint to plunge himself into destruction. Look, therefore, to God! Remember that every saving benefit proceeds out of His election of grace!

Again, a warning is necessary. One may not expect to receive this assurance of preserving unto the end by

way of special revelation. One receives this through faith in the promises of God as these promises are recorded in the Bible. The Spirit, the Spirit of our Father of all consolation, speaks through and with the Scriptures. And it is through the preaching of this Gospel that God continues His once-begun work in us (Arts. 10, 14).

This is enough to show that the Canons of Dordt are not abstract and cold, and that the fathers were not unkind or lacking in understanding. Throughout the Canons ring true with the solid sound of the Word of God. Throughout they demonstrate Father's concern and Christ's concern for the child of God's spiritual welfare. Let this creed occupy a large place in our ecclesiastical life, that the spouse of Christ may continue to love tenderly and defend constantly these truths, and esteem them an inestimable treasure. Then honor and glory will be unto this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Art. 15, V).

In closing, two recommendations seem to be in order. Bible study societies, both young people and adult, ought seriously to consider an article by article treatment of the Canons. We recently spent our after recess programs for three and a half years in this study, and have profited immensely. Secondly, the Permanent Committee for the Publication of Prot. Ref. Literature ought to consider the publishing in book form of the lengthy exposition of the Canons that Prof. Hoeksema has written. These articles, found in *Standard Bearer* Volumes 29-37, should be available as a study guide for all those who love the Reformed faith.

Notice to the Churches

The 1973 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, having approved the examination of the following seminary students, declares them Candidates for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in our churches. They are eligible for a call on July 8, 1973.

The Candidates are:

Mr. Mark H. Hoeksema,
748 Fuller Ave., S.E.,
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

Mr. Meindert W. Joostens,
2152 Audubon, S.W.,
Wyoming, Mich. 49509

—Rev. D. H. Kuiper,
Synodical Stated Clerk

From Holy Writ

Exposition of the Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

LOOKING AWAY TO THE RECOMPENSE OF THE REWARD (Heb. 11:26b)

The verb form here in the Greek is a composite of a verb with a preposition. It has a resultant meaning which it would not have if the verb stood by itself without the preposition, which is here *apo*. It is a preposition which indicates that it was "away from." It was, therefore, looking away from one thing to something else. In this case we are told that Moses looked away from the treasures of Egypt, which were but for a short season, unto the recompense of the reward. It might seem that Moses made a foolish choice, that he would come out on the short end. And so it is ever with those who suffer for the sake of Christ in the world. It seems to be nothing but bitter suffering, to be ill-treated for the sake of and with the sufferings of Christ. However, that is not really true. Jesus tells us in Matthew 11:11, 12 that we must rejoice and be exceeding glad when such suffering is our lot: "for great is your reward in heaven." And that blessedness was also the portion of Moses in his choice of faith. In faith and hope he looked away from this suffering to the recompense of the reward.

One day the books will be opened, then all shall stand before the Lord and His great white throne. And then Moses will receive his final reward, to dwell with Christ in the light in glory, having been faithful over much as a "faithful servant" (Heb. 3:1-6; Num. 12:7), and shall hear, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of thy Lord." However, the faith of Moses is rewarded also in the greater responsibilities and privileges which he receives. He will be the one to lead Israel out of Egypt, and he shall stand before the Lord on the holy Mt. Sinai in Horeb. God will speak to him in the burning bush. And later God will speak to him face to face on this same mount, giving him the holy oracles.

This is the recompense of the reward which Moses saw and sought. Surely, Moses did not look at this recompense as a payment for service, a meritorious reward. He understood that it was all of grace — both the suffering with the people of God and the recompense of the reward. And thus it must be also with us. Such is the example of Moses which the writer to the Hebrews holds before them. It is faith as the substance of things hoped for. Such is the boldness of faith which has a great reward!

MOSES FORSAKES EGYPT IN FAITH (Heb. 11:27a)

We now come to a new verse, which gives us another instance of the great faith of Moses, the man of God. Let us state at the outset that we hold that the writer here refers to Moses not as a mere individual, but as the called one of God to lead Israel out of Egypt to fulfill the promises made to the fathers. We will not argue the point here. We merely state our position. The text refers to the entire episode of Moses' leaving Midian to go to Pharaoh upon the Lord's bidding until the night of the passing of Moses out of Egypt at the head of the thousands of Israel. And in all this Moses' faith shines forth brightly as one who walks as seeing the invisible God. God is back of Moses in all His mighty deeds and judgments in the ten plagues; Moses sees God in His invincible power and majesty, and he is fearless of the mighty king of Egypt!

Moses "forsakes" Egypt. Here, too, we have a composite verb. It means that Moses quit Egypt wholly and altogether. There is one thing that Moses and the people must never do: return to Egypt! This is a forsaking in being delivered. That is indicated in the composite verb which is translated in the KJV "forsook." It is true that there are expositors who hold that this act of faith refers to Moses' leaving Israel in flight after he had killed the Egyptian persecutor of his brethren. True, that was forsaking Egypt too; however, here we do not see the fearlessness of Moses, but the rashness of Moses' act visited upon him. Moses had much to learn in the 40 years in Midian! He must be prepared yet by the Lord for 40 years to be such a fearless leader who walks as seeing the unseen God. He had to learn to walk alone with God. Patience and clinging to the everlasting unseen God in faith must be exercised by him, tending the sheep in the desert, where later he will lead Israel like a flock, as gently as a shepherd who carries the lambs in his bosom.

THE FEARLESSNESS OF MOSES (Heb. 11:27)

This fearlessness of Moses is his basic attitude toward the wrath of the mighty king Pharaoh, before whom he must represent the cause of Jehovah God and of His people Israel, His first-born son! (Ex. 4:22) Now surely, this fearlessness of faith was a gift of God. Moses did not have this stature of faith when he was tending his father-in-law's sheep in the desert. It was here that the Lord appeared to Moses at the burning bush as Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM, God Almighty, Who will be with Moses each step of the way and Who will surely fulfill His promise, which He

made to Abraham concerning Israel's deliverance out of Egypt. But Moses is very fearful and timid. Faith as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen is very weak in Moses. It is only when the Lord works in Moses' heart this boldness that he sallies forth into the fray.

Here Moses speaks to the Lord. He seems quite meek at first; however, he finally even refuses to go to Egypt to deliver Israel. He has three objections, which all indicate a lack of faith and of seeing the invisible God. And this is so very true also to our lives! In the first place, the fact is that all Moses' hopes for delivering Israel as he attempted to do 40 years before are dashed to pieces. Moses had learned the basic temperament of Israel. They were a hard and stiffnecked people, as says Stephen before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem many centuries later, reviewing the history of Israel in rejecting Moses and all the prophets. (Acts 7:51-53) Objects Moses: "The people will not hear me." (Ex. 4:1) Secondly, Moses appeals to the fact that he, Moses, is not eloquent. How shall he be able to speak to the people of Israel and to Pharaoh? And, thirdly, he refuses to go! Such was the littleness of faith of Moses at this time here at the burning bush with the shoes off his feet.

No, shall Moses have the fearlessness of faith, then the Lord must give him this faith. He must give him signs from the "invisible and mighty God," Who dwells in the unapproachable light of His own holiness and power. In the first place, the sign is that Aaron his brother will come to meet him. Secondly, he is given a sign in his own hand. He must cast his rod upon the ground, and it becomes a serpent. And his hand he must put in his bosom, and it becomes smitten with leprosy. And again, he must place his hand in his bosom, and it will become whole and clean once more.

This "fearlessness" to stand before the king is faith which God wrought in Moses' heart by His word, signs, and the operation of the Holy Spirit.

MOSES FEARS NOT THE WRATH OF THE KING (Heb. 11:27)

Nothing which the king of Egypt does and utters in his wrath and hardness of his powerful will shakes the faith of Moses in the unseen God. It is good to take a little notice of this point in depth. And then it ought to be obvious that the *issue* is not really between Moses and Pharaoh, but between the Unseen One, Whom Pharaoh says he does not know, and Pharaoh. The issue is between Jehovah God and the idols of Egypt. Pharaoh must come to learn that he cannot any longer say, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go." (Ex. 5:2) It must be a complete crushing of Pharaoh; he must learn to say, "I have

sinned." Finally, God must come and smite all the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast; against all the gods of Egypt will the Lord execute judgment. The issue is clearly between Pharaoh and the Unseen God!

Hence, Moses feared not the wrath of the king. He will execute the Lord's judgment upon Pharaoh. He will "endure" in his arduous and glorious task. Read how Moses brings three sets of three plagues upon Egypt. And in these the Lord will show His great power as the Unseen One. It will be the manifestation of His power and divinity. Pharaoh will first reluctantly say, "It is the finger of God." But by and by he will ask Moses to intercede for him to the LORD!

See Moses stand at the beginning of each of the three series of plagues, meeting Pharaoh in the morning at the river. Before each second plague, see Moses standing before Pharaoh in his very court. And then notice Moses simply bringing each third plague unannounced. And see the devastating effect of these plagues. The first three touch creation, and thus touch the life of man a bit remotely. The second three touch man and beast in their physical existence directly. And the third three have a terrifying effect in the very soul, the marrow and bones of man. And the final blow is effected in the death of the firstborn of both man and beast.

And then see Pharaoh bow under the crushing blows! He gradually breaks under the sledge-hammer blows of the Almighty. Pharaoh does not repent, but he whimpers under the fearless onslaught of Moses' "enduring faith" in the Unseen God! He breaks down more and more! At the second plague (frogs) he says, "Entreat the Lord . . . and I will let the people go." (Ex. 8:8) And after the fourth plague (flies) he says to Moses, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God . . . I will let you go." (Ex. 8:25-28) And after the seventh plague (hail) the LORD presses from his unrepentant lips, "I have sinned . . . entreat the LORD." (Ex. 9:27, 28) After the eighth plague (locusts), in increasing tempo, Pharaoh pleads, "I have sinned . . . forgive . . . entreat." (Ex. 10:10, 17) And, finally, after the ninth plague, Pharaoh gives up and says, "Go, serve the LORD." (Ex. 10:21-27) Thus Pharaoh meets an unrelenting Moses who sees the Unseen God!

Moses endured the wrath of the king when finally Pharaoh said, "If I see your face again, ye shall die." (Ex. 10:28) And then the fearless answer comes forth, and Moses has the last word, "Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face no more again." (Ex. 10:29)

Such is the fearless Moses, who forsakes Egypt at the head of the thousands of Israel! It is the great lesson and example of fearless faith which overcame all his littleness of faith at the burning bush!

Question Box

About Casting Out Devils, Matthew 7: 22,23

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Dear Editor of Question Box:

In Matt. 7:22-23 we read: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

By whose power were these casting out devils, since Jesus Himself says in Mark 3:23, "How can Satan cast out Satan?" — Grand Rapids Reader

Reply

Evidently my questioner is applying the sound principle of exegesis that Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture, and has thus arrived at this little problem: 1) These people cast out devils. 2) They are workers of iniquity, and therefore children of the devil. 3) Yet Satan cannot cast out Satan, and therefore they could not have cast out devils.

In reply, I would suggest the following:

1) The Lord Jesus is here speaking of a peculiar kind of "workers of iniquity." They are, in the first place, those who serve Him with their lips, i.e., they are characterized by a mere outward confession. They say, "Lord, Lord!" Hence, they are those who know of Christ and who with their lips acknowledge Him as their Lord, that is, as Him Whom they are willing to serve. They are even emphatic about this, as is implied in the repeated "Lord, Lord," and in the fact that they address Him directly. Secondly, however, they are not to be distinguished as hypocrites by a vivid contrast between their confession and their works. On the contrary, as they confess Christ as their Lord, so they also realize their confession in mighty works. They point to their works. They prophesy, i.e., they preach and teach and speak of Christ. They probably even defended the doctrine. And they cast out devils — whether in the literal sense, as, for example, in the case of Judas Iscariot, or in the general sense of combatting evils in the world, fighting the devil of drunkenness, of poverty, of greed, of corruption, of disease, of crime. They do many wonderful works. They employ their powers and influence and means for the interest of mankind and for the purpose of making the world better. Moreover, they do all this "for Christ." Every time, notice, they repeat: "In thy name . . ." And the peculiar form of the words used here suggests not that they claim to have done this by the power of Christ's name, nor on the authority of His name, but rather in the interest of Christ's name. What they did they

attributed to Christ: they did it for the furtherance of His cause and for His benefit.

2) Notice, however, that all these are not necessarily works of the kingdom. These people claim to have a right to enter the kingdom on the basis of these works. But these are all external works, and not necessarily of a spiritual-ethical value. Their claim is false on that score, therefore, first of all. But it is also false because one does not enter the kingdom on the basis of his works.

For the Lord calls them workers of iniquity, i.e., workers of lawlessness, transgressors of the law of God. They do not have the love of God (the heart of the law!) in their hearts. They are not dominated by that love of God. They work the very opposite, and walk in sin and darkness. Their way is a way of *much work*, while it is nevertheless a way of sin and unrighteousness.

Notice, in this connection, that the Lord says in verse 21 that "he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Hence, the Lord Jesus does not say that confession of His name (Lord, Lord!) is not good. Nor does He say that prophesying and casting out devils and doing mighty works is not good. But all these *without* doing the will of His Father in heaven are no good; one can very well be a worker of iniquity at the same time. And what is the will of God? It is this: "Love Me!" — something which cannot be satisfied with a number of works, but which demands our inmost heart, and from that inmost heart our outward walk. And what is it to do the will of God? Is it to prophesy? To cast out devils? To do great things? No, but in a word: to believe on Him Whom God has sent! (John 6:29) Outside of Him, God's only begotten Son, we lie in the midst of death, are guilty and corrupt. In Him is righteousness, the knowledge of God, sanctification. And to believe on Him means to repent and be sorry after God, to put all our trust in Christ only as our righteousness, and to bear fruit unto sanctification, fleeing from sin, loving God from the heart, through grace.

Hence, my conclusion is:

a) That in the sphere of the church in the midst of the world it is certainly possible to do all these things outwardly, without participating in them personally and from the heart.

b) That this happened and still does happen many times (the Lord says, "Many will say unto me . . ."). It was possible for a Judas Iscariot to do such works

when he was sent out with the twelve. It is possible, for example, for a preacher to do this also today: that is, to preach the gospel, but to be himself a worker of iniquity.

c) That this is due to the fact that such people live

in the sphere of the church, that is, where the Spirit operates, without themselves being affected in their hearts by the operation of the Spirit. Consult Hebrews 6:4-8, for example, to learn how "near" and yet how "far" one can be from the kingdom.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 28, 1973, the Lord willing, our parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Schipper, will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary. We thank our covenant God for the Christian upbringing they have given us and that He may continue to bless them in the years to come.

Mr. and Mrs. William Lafferty

Grandchild Laura

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Schipper

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

With gratefulness to our covenant God for the many blessings He has given to us through our parents,

MR. AND MRS. JOHN KNOPER,

we rejoice with them on their 50th wedding anniversary which they hope to celebrate July 5. May God, Who has given them these years together continue to bless them in their earthly pilgrimage.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Bouwkamp

Mr. and Mrs. D. Knoper

Prof. and Mrs. H. Hanko

20 grandchildren

2 great-grandchildren

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, extends its sincere sympathy to two of its members, Miss Julia Dykstra and Mrs. E. Pluger, in the death of their mother,

MRS. JOHN DYKSTRA,

whom the Lord took home on June 7, 1973.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21).

Mrs. H. Veltman, Pres.

Miss R. Sietstra, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, mourns the loss of one of our members,

MRS. JOHN DYKSTRA,

whom the Lord took home on the 7th of June, and hereby express our sympathy to the bereaved family.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15).

Mrs. T. Newhof, Pres.

Mrs. Chas. Pastoor, Sec'y

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 27, 1973, our parents

MR. AND MRS. MAYNARD VEENSTRA

celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

We, their grateful children and grandchildren, are thankful to our covenant God for the many years of instruction we were privileged to receive from them. Our prayer is for God's continued blessing upon them throughout their earthly walk.

Mr. and Mrs. Jay Veenstra

Mr. and Mrs. Ira Veenstra

Mr. and Mrs. Arie Griffieon

Miss Helen Veenstra

Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Van Den Top

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Van Den Top

Mr. and Mrs. John Besselsen

Mr. and Mrs. Merle Veenstra

and 29 grandchildren

IN MEMORIAM

Our Heavenly Father, who always deals with His people in love, called our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother,

MRS. JANNA DYKSTRA

to her eternal home on Thursday morning, June 7, 1973, at the age of 76 years.

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (I Peter 5:10, 11)

Children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren

IN MEMORIAM

On Tuesday, May 22, 1973, our beloved mother, grandmother and sister

MRS. SADIE VAN HAM

was called to eternal glory. Our comfort is in the promise of God's Word, "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth." Psalm 121:1-2.

Mrs. Senetta Vriesenga

Herman and Jeanette Van Ham

5 grandchildren

6 great-grandchildren

Mrs. Johanna Aldering

News From Our Churches

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THE STANDARD BEARER

If the rest of you *Standard Bearer* readers enjoy hearing from our Business Manager as much as I do, you'll be pleased to note that, for this column, we have a little more news from Mr. Vander Wal. Here he is:

"The Postal Service of our United States is often berated and made a target of jokes and puns regarding the delivering of mail. In some (remote) instances it may be true that our mail delivery is not all that it should be. But — postal employees — here is a tribute to your service which proves that this 'is not always so!' One of our servicemen, receiving *The Standard Bearer*, writes the following — 'Dear Sir: I thank you for the prompt presence of *The Standard Bearer*, while overseas with the Navy. It may interest you to know your publication was received by me both in the Philippines and Singapore, as well as on station in the Tonkin Gulf.' So — any postal employee reading this report — a 'pat on the back' to you!"

On occasion Mr. VanderWal also forwards to me a letter or two from *The Standard Bearer's* Mail Box. A couple of recent ones were received from Great Britain — one from Bradford, England, and the other from South Wales. Perhaps I ought to quote a little from the latter, since it's particularly encouraging to those who write and to those who work to distribute our literature. The reader from the other side of the Atlantic writes as follows: "As a theological student, completing a 3-year course on 5th July this year at the South Wales Bible College, I was delighted to have been introduced to your publications via a fellow student.

"Particularly helpful was the study of 'The Means of Grace' by the Rev. Herman Hoeksema, and his excellent treatment 'The Biblical Ground for the Baptism of Infants . . .'

"I trust that God will continue to encourage you in your work of putting forth, in these days of confusion, sound publications which will aid those who seek the glory of God in preaching and the salvation of many precious souls through the faithful exposition of the Holy Scriptures.

"Two acquaintances of mine would also be pleased, as I myself, to receive any literature you may have available and thus in the days ahead be able, if God so desired, to increase the circulation of your publications here."

Rev. D. Engelsma, as most of you surely know by this time, declined the call from our Faith Church in Jenison. Following that decline, Faith's congregation

extended a call to Rev. Woudenberg. Rev. Decker is still considering the call to serve as our home missionary in the northeastern part of our country. And, as will probably be reported elsewhere in this issue, our Synod has elected to extend the call once more to Rev. D. Engelsma, to serve as third professor in our Seminary.

News concerning the recent and current mission activities of our churches comes from various of our church bulletins. Rev. Decker has returned home from New Jersey, after spending several weeks in Fair Lawn, where he conducted services, taught catechism, and conducted an adult Bible class. Much interest was reportedly shown there. Rev. Veldman left on May 29, to continue the work in that area through the month of June. He reports that "most of their evenings are spent with interested groups discussing the truth and the church."

Rev. Schipper returned home from Maine on May 30. In giving an account of his activities there, he recalled that "each Sunday morning, one hour before the service, (he) conducted a class treating the Reformed Confessions. He preached twice each Sunday, except the first, when he preached only in the evening. He conducted a lecture each Wednesday . . . During the week, when he was not busy preparing to speak, we visited with the people of the church, most of the time into the wee hours of the morning. Our assessment of the area — a little nucleus of spiritually hungry souls, living in an area that is spiritually dead. Only the Lord knows what the future will bring in regard to the seed sown. We are reminded of the word of Jeremiah: 'And I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.'"

Rev. Kortering extended his stay in Philadelphia an additional week, to include the tenth of June. Rev. Kuiper planned, the Lord willing, to continue the labor in that field after the adjournment of Synod. Rev. Lubbers and Rev. Heys have returned from Jamaica. And, from one final bulletin, we learn that Rev. Woudenberg "has been requested to contact a group in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada." Hudsonville's bulletin, which included some of the above items, added the hope and prayer that the Lord would "use our churches for the preservation and propagation of His sovereign grace; and may we faithfully fulfil the privilege extended to us by our Lord, 'Ye are My witnesses.'"

D.D.