

The  
Standard  
Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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**Our Heavenly Citizenship**

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**Is It True? Is It Equitable?**

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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*Meditation***Our Heavenly Citizenship**

*Rev. M. Schipper*

*"For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."*

Philippians 3: 20

For our conversation is in heaven . . . !

Literally, according to the original text, we read:  
"For our commonwealth exists in the heavens . . ."

Now, if our commonwealth is in the heavens, it must follow that we are citizens of that heavenly form of government. It must mean that the laws by which we are governed are dictated from heaven.

That the translation has "conversation," is due undoubtedly to the fact that the apostle is contrasting the life and walk of the church of Christ with that of the children of this world. Of the latter the apostle

writes in the context: "For many walk . . . who are enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." They give evidence that they are merely world citizens.

Not so, however, do the redeemed members of Christ's church live and walk! Their walk is wholly different. They seek and set their hearts not on the earthly things, but the heavenly. They do not idolize their belly, but they live in the Spirit. They hate not the cross of Christ, but they are crucified with Him,



yea, they are identified with Him in His death and burial, in His resurrection and ascension, and exaltation at God's right hand. Their end is not destruction, but blessed eternal life. All of this blessed estate the apostle with one sweep of the pen describes in the text as our commonwealth which is in the heavens. There is our citizenship, even though temporarily we are required to sojourn here on the earth. Here is not our real citizenship, — our walk is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. While we are still on the earth, we are governed by the laws of heaven, and possess all the rights of the citizens of that heavenly kingdom.

Indeed, we have the rights of citizens in the heavens!

What this means can perhaps best be understood by the illustration of an immigrant who migrates, let us say, from the Netherlands to these United States of America. Such an one leaves his fatherland and seeks a better country in this western hemisphere. As a stranger in a strange land, he enters through the port of entry to make this land his home. That such an one is a complete stranger is immediately in evidence. You can see it in his face, you can hear it when he speaks. In fact, his whole appearance gives him away as being a stranger in our country. What is still more severe, is the fact that he is also a stranger in the juridical sense. His citizenship is on the other side of the ocean, in the land of his birth. In the new land he has no citizen rights. Under certain circumstances it is possible that such a migrant may be forcibly returned to the land whence he came. However, if he is determined to remain in the new land, in time he may take out naturalization papers. Accordingly, he will then be pronounced by a court in the land to have now become a citizen of these United States after he has promised to abide by the laws and regulations of the new land of his choice, and he swears his allegiance to the flag of his new country. When this happens, he obtains all the rights and privileges of those who are regular and native citizens of our country, namely, the right to live here, to be protected by the law of the land, etc. Juridically he is pronounced to be an American citizen.

So our citizenship in the kingdom of heaven is determined juridically.

O, indeed, it may be difficult for us who still dwell on the earth to form a clear and perfect conception of the heavenly. Not only are we as children of God still so imperfect and does the darkness of our sinful understanding hinder us from perceiving the things of the kingdom of heaven; but also, even apart from the fact that we still have a sinful and corrupt nature, we are earthly, not heavenly. We are earthly from the point of view of our creation; we are bound to the earth, to the material, earthly, tangible, and temporal things. All our senses whereby we take cognizance of things, are earthly. We are simply bound to the earth in

all our thinking, willing, and acting. And therefore we cannot form another conception of the heavenly than is revealed to us in the mirror of the earthly.

In spite of all this, however, there is nevertheless much that can be said of the heavenly. We can know of and speak about it with confidence, that there is a commonwealth, a fatherland, a heavenly kingdom, where God, the Lord Himself is King, where His will is law, but where He is the Sovereign Friend of His people, and where He purposes to spread out His tabernacle over them in eternal love, wherein He is feared and worshipped with awe, where the bond of His covenant friendship encircles all His own, where they behold Him in the beauty of holiness, and serve Him in love forever. This constitutes the very heart and essence of that which is heavenly. Further, we know that in the heavenly commonwealth all the above mentioned relationships find their concentration in and realization through our Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the Mediator through Whom all the glory of the heavenly shines in all the members of His body. He is the First-born among many brethren. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell, and unto Him is given power to renew all things, and to destroy all that is of the earth, earthy. In the heavens and earth made perfect there shall be no more death and curse, but complete deliverance from the material bonds that tie us to the earth. In the new creation which shall be dominated by the heavens there is no corruption, no death, no struggle, no sighing, and all tears are forever wiped away. There is perfect peace!

In that heavenly kingdom we have received citizen's rights, and are declared to be the lawful citizens!

These rights we have obtained through our Lord Jesus Christ! He obtained them for us by His perfect obedience, through His suffering and death. Because He so deeply humbled Himself, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name. Therefore also God has given unto Him the Spirit without measure, in order that He might sanctify us, and write on the table of our hearts the laws of the heavenly kingdom. And because we are in Him, both by sovereign election and by faith, we are principally already with Him in heaven. This is the tone of all the Scriptures. Listen to what the apostle writes in Ephesians 2:5,6: "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Or again, in Colossians 3:1: "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." But note, too what we read in Hebrews 12:22,23: "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, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made



perfect." Such, indeed, is the rich meaning of our heavenly citizenship!

But even so, there is much more that must be said! Particular notice should be given to the fact that the apostle neither in the text nor in any of the texts mentioned above is exhorting us to become such heavenly citizens. Nor does he inform us that we shall become such in some future time. Rather, he makes the positive statement that our citizenship is now in heaven. Our present walk as citizens is now in heaven.

That is what is so remarkable about our present status! Calling attention once more to the illustration we used above concerning the immigrant who becomes a citizen of our country, you will observe that there is a marked difference between that earthly example and the spiritual reality of our present citizenship which is heavenly. Though the migrant is eventually juridically declared to be a citizen of his new country, and after many years residing in his new land he may assume the customs of that new country, learn to speak the new language quite fluently, adopt the modes of dress, and habits of living, etc., so that in many respects it would be difficult to distinguish him from the natural citizen; yet with all this change, you will still detect that he is a foreigner, with different blood in him. You will observe, and he will admit that he came from another nation. Even if he has learned to speak the American tongue fluently, he has a brogue, or there are certain words which he cannot pronounce as the native. He reveals certain habits which plainly indicate that he has not perfectly coincided with our manner of living.

But how different it is with the citizen of heaven!

While he is in the world, he is estranged to it. He lives the life of heaven. Not only is he declared juridically to be the proper citizen of heaven, but he is made such a citizen spiritually by pure and sovereign grace.

All this is accomplished for God's people by the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ!

He is our Saviour! Who delivers us from the greatest possible evil, unto the greatest possible good. Who delivers us from the sin and corruption, from the curse and destruction of the present evil world, and makes us to be partakers of the very life and glory of heavenly citizens.

He is the perfect Saviour, while He is the complete Mediator! This is beautifully indicated in all the names ascribed to Him. He is the Lord, Who purchased us

with His precious blood, Who possesses us in body and soul, Who defends us against all our enemies, and preserves us in the salvation He has merited for us. He is Jesus, Who saves His people from their sins, Who saves unto the uttermost all who were given Him from the Father. He is Christ, the Anointed of the Father, and qualified to make us the partakers of His anointing by His Holy Spirit.

So our heavenly citizenship becomes a present reality!

And so also it follows that we look for Him out of the heavens!

You see, because we are heavenly citizens, we of necessity become strangers in the world!

Not only do we become estranged to the world, lose all our attraction to the world, and seek those things which are above. But we actually become strangers to the world, and in the world. At least, so it ought to be! O, indeed, we readily confess that we have but a small beginning of new obedience. We freely admit that often the line of demarcation between us and the world is hardly discernible. And in the measure this is so, we cannot boast that our citizenship is in heaven, nor can we say with the apostle that we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this fact that deeply humbles us into the dust, so that with the publican we must cry out: "O, God, be merciful unto me, the sinner!" But when by God's grace we live as strangers, we are marked by the world and treated as such. Then we are hated, maligned, persecuted, and required to suffer for His Name's sake.

It is this, that moves us to look to the heavens, from which we expect our Saviour!

Our heavenly citizenship then brings with it this salutary effect. On the one hand, we are made to become strangers in the present evil world. On the other, to look in holy anticipation for the Saviour, Who shall change our vile body, the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. When we are delivered finally from the body that must be returned to the dust whence it came, and this body is conformed to Christ's glorious body in the resurrection, then our citizenship will be perfected in glory.

This is our blessed hope!

**According to our summer schedule, there will  
be only one issue in the month of August.**



## Editorials

# Editor's Notes

We take this means of expressing, in behalf of the Staff, our sympathy to our Business Manager, Mr. Henry Vander Wal, in the recent death of his aged mother, Mrs. Dena Vander Wal, a charter member of the First Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. May the Lord grant comfort according to need, and give the joy of resurrection-hope.

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*Key '73: What Must We Say About It?* will be ready in pamphlet form by the time you read this announcement. Single copies or quantity supplies may be had for the asking. Write to our business office: The Standard Bearer, P.O. Box 6064, Grand Rapids,

Michigan 49506. If you have already written earlier, you need not repeat the request. Our Business Manager will fill all back orders.

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We must apologize for the tardy appearance of the reprint of *Reformed Dogmatics*. We had expected it from the bindery in June; at this writing we dare not set a new date. We *hope* it will be ready by the time this appears in print. To those of you with back-orders: Don't worry. Our business manager is keeping careful record of all orders; you will receive your copy as soon as possible.

## Is It True? Is It Equitable?

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

*[And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. — Isaiah 59:14,15]*

In a commencement address to this year's graduates of Calvin Seminary, the Hon. John Feikens, Judge for the U.S. District Court, Detroit, spoke on the subject, "Is It Fair? Is It Just?" (cf. *The Banner*, June 29, 1973, pp. 14-16) Though Mr. Feikens is considered an expert in the realm of civil justice and jurisprudence, he was not, however, giving of his expertise in this area; he purposed to admonish the graduates to seek and to practice ecclesiastical justice and to bring about improvement in their denomination's ecclesiastical assemblies as far as rules for good order, and thus as far as fairness and justice, are concerned.

This is in itself a good goal. And, I suppose, the occasion of graduation could be considered a proper occasion for thus admonishing a class of future ministers. With this we have no quarrel. We will not even quarrel with the fact that one who sits on the federal bench was chosen to speak to the graduates—although, as my experience has taught me, a civil judge does by no means necessarily have the knowledge and qualifications which enable him to render advice in things pertaining to Reformed church polity and ecclesiastical justice. We will pass that by: it is entirely possible that as a son of the Christian

Reformed Church Judge Feikens is qualified to speak on things ecclesiastical.

However, Mr. Feikens was critical of his denomination. He made the claim that a few years ago the Synod turned down an opportunity to bring about good order and proper rules of procedure and due process. And he made the claim that "this problem has been with our church for a long time."

To bolster this claim, Judge Feikens makes reference to two cases of fifty years ago: that of Dr. Ralph Janssen and that of the Rev. Herman Hoeksema. And this is the point at which Mr. Feikens begins to err, and to err very seriously.

In connection with the Janssen Case, Judge Feikens writes as follows:

Fifty years ago the case of Dr. Ralph Janssen, a professor of this seminary, rocked the denomination. In an excellent series of articles in the *Reformed Journal*, Harry R. Boer has written about this case. Issues regarding Dr. Janssen's teachings, his view of Scripture, inspiration and miracles, had twice been brought before Calvin's Board of Trustees, and each time the complaints against him had been denied. But in 1922 it again took up the matter when further complaints against Janssen were made. When the case



reached the Board, a motion was made to hear Dr. Janssen, so that he would have an opportunity to defend himself. This motion was defeated.

The Board of Trustees then proceeded to judge his case even though Dr. Janssen was not present and even though he had not been given an opportunity to be heard. Dr. Boer suggests that the argument made against inviting Dr. Janssen to the Board was that he would not come anyway. In a split decision, the majority of the Board then recommended to the Synod that Dr. Janssen's teachings were not satisfactory and that he should be dismissed.

It is not inappropriate to say to you at this juncture that in a civil proceeding or in a criminal proceeding in a United States Court, no judgment may be made against a defendant who is not present in court and who has not been given an opportunity to present his case personally or to defend himself.

The Janssen case then went from the Board of Trustees to the Synod of 1922. When Dr. Janssen was invited by an advisory committee of the Synod to meet with it, he did so. At the committee meeting, he stated in writing that the only circumstances under which he would appear would be if Synod took up his case in a proper ecclesiastical manner. He wanted Synod to vacate the ruling of the Board of Trustees and then to hear his case in its entirety. He took this position because he had not been given an opportunity to appear and to defend himself before the Board. In that way the refusal of the Board of Trustees to permit Janssen to come before it and to defend himself in person became a threshold issue at Synod.

But Synod did not face and decide this issue. It did not criticize the Board of Trustees for its denial of this basic right. On the contrary, it took up the Majority Report of the Board of Trustees and found against Dr. Janssen by adopting it. In so doing, Synod condoned and ratified the action of the Board of Trustees, and thus an individual Christian's basic right to be treated justly was ignored.

This was not good order. This was not basic fairness. Justice and the appearance of justice demand that decisions and judgments made in this manner be declared invalid; they are not sound judgments at all. The right to face one's accusers and to be present in person and with counsel before the tribunal which makes a judgment is an unalienable right. It is a right which the church no less than the state must guarantee to an individual who is under investigation and attack.

Now, in the first place, I would suggest that Judge Feikens is himself guilty of a procedural error here. He apparently accepts hearsay evidence, or, at least, not the best evidence. When I read this version of the Janssen Case, I can only come to the conclusion that it is a much oversimplified and twisted version which is itself based on the twisted version of Dr. Harry Boer in the *Reformed Journal*. As a civil judge and as a lawyer, Mr. Feikens certainly knows something about rules of evidence. And the best evidence would certainly be: 1)

The ecclesiastical records themselves, including: Acts of Synod, 1920; the Majority and Minority Reports and the Acts of Synod, 1922; and the Acts of Synod, 1924, with its detailed treatment of the protest of the Rev. Q. Breen concerning the Janssen Case, in which many procedural objections were (again) raised and answered. 2) The testimony of the participants themselves, as recorded in many brochures and articles in religious periodicals of the day.

Incidentally, I have the distinct impression that Dr. Harry Boer in his articles in the *Reformed Journal* aims in part at a *post mortem* rehabilitation, or restoration to honor (*eerherstelling*), of Dr. Janssen — somewhat in the fashion of the rehabilitation of Dr. Geelkerken in the Netherlands a few years ago. We have not yet commented on Dr. Boer's presentation because we wished to wait until he finished his series; a third and final article has not yet appeared though the second article of the series was published in January. Perhaps it may be added that such *post mortem* restoration to honor is at least consistent, both in the light of the decisions on the Nature and Extent of the Authority of Scripture and in the light of the fact that today errors such as Janssen's are tolerated in the Christian Reformed Church.

In the second place, the misrepresentation of the Janssen case by Feikens-Boer is merely their opinion, as it was the opinion of Janssen himself and of many of his supporters in by-gone years. And it should not be overlooked that the various elements of alleged unfair and unjust treatment of Janssen were all considered at the time the case was before the churches; these allegations were considered by the Board of Trustees and by the Synods of 1920 and 1922, and they were found by ecclesiastical decision to be without validity. Yet Janssen and his supporters, even after 1922, refused to accept these decisions as settled and binding, but kept on bringing up the same old arguments, even as Dr. Boer has in his articles. Now it is entirely possible, of course, that those synods were wrong; but as a jurist, Mr. Feikens should have much better grounds than he here adduces before he makes bold to say (fifty years later) that the ecclesiastical courts were guilty of unjust and unfair treatment.

In the third place, without going into all the ramifications of the case, I believe it can be shown from the record:

1) That in 1920 Dr. Janssen was given ample hearing by Synod. If my memory of the record serves me correctly, he was allowed more than an afternoon session to speak. Would it not be strange if the same Dr. Janssen would be refused the opportunity two years later?

2) That when the Board of Trustees appointed an investigative committee in the interim between the two synods, Dr. Janssen refused to cooperate with this



committee. He wrote that he did not "care to be responsible in any way for what may involve the violation of our Reformed Church polity." In other words, he would not even submit under protest.

3) That it was both in the light of the preceding refusal of Janssen and in the light of the fact that the sole subject before the Board of Trustees at the time of their alleged refusal to give him a hearing was *Janssen's teachings as reflected in the Student Notes* (not Janssen's person or words or personal notes, which he refused to submit) that the Board did not hear him.

4) That Dr. Janssen was not interested in discussing or defending his teachings or in submitting to investigation. Whenever he had the opportunity, he tried to bring up alleged violations of church polity and alleged un-Christian conduct and heretical teachings on the part of his opponents. Let it be pointed out that Janssen had the perfect right, of course, to register protests against the conduct or the teachings of his colleagues; what he did not have the right to do was to try to confuse his case by making these counter-charges. This is a favorite device of defendants, of course: "the best defense is a strong offense." And certainly, what Janssen did not have the right to do was publicly to accuse his colleagues without preferring charges against them; and the latter Janssen did not do. Moreover, even after 1920, when this matter had been synodically decided, Janssen continued to claim that in the beginning of the case the four professors should have gone the way of Matthew 18.

5) That at the Synod of 1922 Dr. Janssen had the opportunity to appear before the advisory committee and to defend himself, but he refused to do so. Now it is fine for Judge Feikens to write that in the civil court no judgment may be made against a defendant who is not present in court and who has not been given an opportunity to present his case personally or to defend himself. But let him not forget: 1) That Janssen had such opportunity. 2) That an ecclesiastical court cannot bring a man before it in irons as can a civil court. In the church, if a man refuses to appear, nothing can be done about it.

In the fourth place, Judge Feikens overlooks a major point. In 1922 the Reformed truth of our confessions triumphed. Truth did not fall in the street. This, surely, is "fair" and "just." And I believe – and the assemblies of Mr. Feikens' church believed – that truth did not triumph at the expense of equitable procedure and personal justice.

But then Judge Feikens turns to "another instance, the Hoeksema case."

I will not quote the several paragraphs which Mr. Feikens devotes to this case. His material is drawn from the Rev. Herman Hoeksema's book, *The Protestant Reformed Churches in America*. The chief example of injustice and of the necessity of better

rules of procedure which Feikens cites is the failure of the Synod of 1924 to give Hoeksema the full right to defend himself before the advisory committee and before the Synod.

And on the fact of this failure as such Mr. Feikens is, of course, correct.

However, in the first place, if Judge Feikens imagines that some rules would have prevented even that single injustice, he is utterly mistaken. I ask: did not the Synod know? Had they not given Rev. Bultema a hearing in 1918? Had they not given Janssen a hearing in 1920, and the opportunity for a hearing in 1922? Did not the very Synod of 1924 give to the Rev. Q. Breen – who was a protestant, not a defendant – full opportunity to shed light on his protest before Synod? Did they not *know* that a defendant should have a hearing, should have the full right of self-defense? In such a situation rules would make no difference.

That my last statement is correct, in the second place, is evident from the fact that the rules which Synod did have were trampled ruthlessly. An example of this is the fact that all the materials of the case which came from Classis Grand Rapids East were admitted for Synod's consideration *contrary to the rule* which set the deadline for the Synodical Agenda at May 1. I ask again: did they not know?

In the third place, let me remind Mr. Feikens that there were more important "rules" at stake in the case of 1924 than mere rules of good procedure and of fair treatment. There were rules of long standing at stake, rules which belonged to the heritage of Reformed churches ever since the Great Synod of Dordrecht. I refer to the "rules" of the Church Order of Dordrecht – such rules especially as Articles 36 and 84 of the (old) Church Order. And these fundamental principles of right order in the churches were ruthlessly trampled by the churches. It was in 1924 that the collegialistic and hierarchical misinterpretation of the Church Order gained the field; and it has held the field in the Christian Reformed Church ever since, – let alone the fact that all the terrible injustices of that black page in the history of the Christian Reformed Church have never been undone!

"And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off . . . and equity cannot enter."

No, Mr. Feikens, do not engage in building the tombs of the prophets and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous!

And what is more important, in the fourth place, in 1924 in the case of Herman Hoeksema and Henry Danhof – in distinction from the Janssen case – there was no denial on the part of the defendants of the doctrines of Scripture and the confessions. There was no "doctrine" of common grace for them to deny, only a theory and a current opinion. The very opponents of Herman Hoeksema at one time said



among themselves that they wanted him put out of the church, but that this could not be accomplished with the confessions. And the Synod of 1924 itself gave these men the testimony that they were Reformed in the fundamentals.

“...truth is fallen in the street.”

“and equity cannot enter.”

“Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.”

Such is the situation today in the Christian Reformed denomination. Witness, for example, the Dekker Case, when again truth and justice were trampled; or the Sweetman Case, in which no justice was done; or the case of Willis De Boer, in which it was impossible to get justice done.

“And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.”

To all of the above, this is probably in the nature of a footnote. In the course of his address Mr. Feikens says in reference to the case of 1924: “Today perhaps we would view such division between believers differently than our fathers did. We live today in an age of ecumenicity. We seek today for the areas in which Christians can agree. Hopefully, as individuals, while not denying our doctrinal standards, we stress more our

identity as Christians and we are happy for the places where we can meet on common ground.”

I wish to point out two items:

1. The Christian Reformed Church has never manifested this sweet spirit of ecumenicity toward the Protestant Reformed Churches. Officially it has twice refused even to *discuss* what holds the two denominations apart.

2. Recently I have heard testimony from our home missions laborers that the attitude of the Christian Reformed Church is quite different than is described above. People may be absent from the services for weeks; they may attend no church at all or churches of other denominations. In some cases they are even advised, in case of dissatisfaction, to attend another church. Admonition or discipline for neglect of the means of grace are absent. But let there be an inkling that they are attending or thinking of attending Protestant Reformed services! Then there are warnings and hints of discipline. Then there is slander of the Protestant Reformed Churches as schismatic and as troublemakers. All spirit of ecumenicity vanishes as the morning mist! “And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.”

## Graduation Address

# Exegesis And Preaching

Prof. H. Hanko

### Introduction.

It is to be hoped that this subject will be, first of all, of benefit to our graduates. I refer to the general decline in preaching in our day. I refer not so much to the fact that there is a drift away from the preaching as the center of worship services. I refer rather to a radical change in the *content* and the *form* of preaching. The two are related to each other. And it is my intention to defend expository preaching. This defense requires a stress upon exegesis as being at the bottom of all sound preaching.

But it is to be hoped that some consideration of this matter will also be of benefit to all you who are in attendance this evening. This is not a subject of little or no concern to you; you are the people of God; it is for you that preaching is done.

### The Scriptures

Expository preaching is preaching which is exposition of the Scriptures. In the Reformed tradition

the relation between Scripture and preaching has always been obvious. This is no longer true today. There are many pulpits, perhaps the majority, where preaching no longer has much to do with the Scriptures. This has to do with the question of what preaching is all about, and of what, in the mind of the preacher, preaching ought to accomplish. Is preaching an offer of salvation? Is preaching a moral discourse intended to uplift men's minds? Is it a commentary on present day social and political problems? Or is preaching the power of God unto salvation? One's attitude towards the preaching will determine the relation between preaching and Scripture.

To get at the point that needs to be made, I can make use of an illustration. I recall that as a small boy I was aware of the fact that the minister in preaching concentrated his attention on all the details of the text: the individual words, the order of the words, the meaning of the words, etc. I had accepted this as being proper for preaching without ever giving much thought



to the matter. But one day I read a parody written by an unbeliever in which he mocked expository preaching. He had constructed a "sermon" by means of exegesis of a nursery rhyme — I think it was "Old Mother Hubbard." He prepared a rather lengthy "sermon" with a theme and three points in which he went carefully into the meaning of each word and the relation between the words, expounding with diligence the meaning of the whole. I can recall that I was deeply shaken by this for a long time. It planted seeds of doubt in my mind that the careful attention to details which characterized a minister's sermon was really a kind of "playing church."

But there was one point I had forgotten or, at least, did not yet understand. In a sense, it is possible to apply exegesis to any written work whether it be a nursery rhyme of childhood days or a philosophical treatise of some learned man. The term "exegesis" means "to lead out"; and, as applied to any writing, it means "to lead out of a writing the meaning." In a broad sense of the word, this is not peculiar to the Scriptures.

What then sets the exegesis of Scripture apart from the exegesis of any other book? The difference is in the nature of the book — the Bible as overagainst all other books in the whole world. The Bible is unique. It stands in a class by itself. If any book is relatively well-written, its meaning lies on the surface and it can be readily determined by anyone who reads it but once. But Scripture is not this way. This does not mean, as the Roman Catholics maintain, that Scripture is obscure, difficult to understand, a book only for trained theologians. Scripture is also clear. It is so clear that a small child can read it with understanding. But Scripture is like one of these pools in Yellowstone National Park. It is so clear that one can see very deeply into it. The longer one looks, the farther one can see into its depths. But yet, it is impossible ever to see the bottom. It is so deep that the bottom lies forever beyond our penetrating gaze.

The point is that the character of Scripture determines exegesis.

There are therefore certain elements concerning Scripture which are important to recall to mind. I do not propose to offer an exhaustive list of the attributes of Scripture tonight; it is my purpose to concentrate particularly upon those points which have direct bearing on our subject.

Scripture is truly a miraculous book. From whatever point of view one looks at the Scriptures, the truth stands out in sharp focus that Scripture belongs to the whole realm of miracles. Do you wish to examine its origin? Its origin cannot be explained except in terms of a miracle. Do you wish to know its character? Its character throughout is truly miraculous. Do you wish to investigate its preservation throughout the ages? and

its power in the life of the Church? This can only be understood by understanding that Scripture is a miraculous book.

Scripture is a book divinely inspired. There are those who maintain this doctrine, but insist that there is what they like to call "a human element" in the Scriptures. The trouble is that they raise this human element to such a level of importance that the divine element is all but neglected. Divine inspiration means verbal inspiration. And, as far as exegesis is concerned, this means two things. It means that the very words and expressions of Scripture are of divine choice, the precise way in which the Holy Spirit chose to express Himself concerning the truths of revelation. The Holy Spirit is never arbitrary. He chose what He did with good reason. It is the work of the exegete to discover that reason. Divine inspiration means also that the exegete is always dealing with a book which carries the authority of God Himself in it. This instills in him a proper sense of reverence and awe as he approaches a book which is so completely of God.

We confess also that Scripture is perspicuous. It is often said that one can hear many sermons on a given text — even by many different ministers; and all these sermons are different. This is not because a minister can make a given text teach anything he wants. Not if he is honest with his text. But it does mean that no one hundred sermons will exhaust the riches of any given text. This, in itself, has always been to me one of Scriptures' most wonderful characteristics. A child of three or four years old can hear his father at the table read: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"; or: "And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger." Such a small child will have no trouble understanding such a text. He knows what it means. It is child-like language. A preacher of thirty years experience can preach his tenth sermon on this text and firmly believe that he has not pulled from its well of living water the last bucket. There are depths there too profound for his understanding.

We confess that the Scriptures are a unity. They have as their underlying theme: Christ, the full revelation of Jehovah the God of the salvation of His people. Or, as a Bible teacher of mine once expressed it, wherever Scripture is cut it flows with the blood of the Lamb. But, and this is a remarkable fact that I cannot fully explain, the whole of the Scriptures comes into focus in every single passage. Truly, Scripture in every passage moves from Paradise to Paradise. Every truth of the whole of Scripture is implicit in every text. The trinity, sovereign predestination, total depravity, divine providence, particular atonement — these and all the rest are to be found implicit in every passage of the Word of God.

We confess that Scripture is a spiritual book. It is not an interesting collection of ancient writings; it is



not a textbook for a literature course. It is a profoundly spiritual book. Beware when you come to it. You walk on holy ground. In a very real sense Scripture is a closed book to the unbeliever. And it is open only to the man of faith.

### The Exegete

With this book the minister has to do. This is the heart of his calling. Many other tasks may be placed upon him — important tasks indeed. He may be called upon to give lectures and speeches. He may assume responsibility to write for the *Standard Bearer*. He may have to take part in the work of various committees. He may be called upon to print the bulletin for his congregation. But he is above all an exegete, whose work it is to exegete the Holy Scriptures. He is a preacher of the Word. And to be a preacher he must be an expositor of Holy Writ.

It is not my intention tonight to give a brief and condensed course in exegesis. But there are a few remarks which seem to be essential to the subject. These have to do especially with the fact that an exegete works as a son of the Church. I want to stress this fact tonight because I consider it to be of singular importance.

What does this mean?!

It means surely that a minister of the gospel is a product of the Church. He was, as a general rule, born and raised in a covenant family where from childhood on he was instructed in the Scriptures. Paul makes quite a point of this, e.g., in his letter to Timothy. He was spiritually nourished in the Church for there he received all his instruction. He was taught the Scriptures not only in his home, but also in his school, in catechism, and under the preaching of the Word. And particularly, he was prepared for his task in the Seminary.

Now all of this implies that the exegete is a man who comes to Scripture with basic presuppositions. Before he ever begins to preach he has received the whole system of the truth. He has received a system of the truth which was not the invention of his parents and his pastor, but a truth structure which has come down to him from the earliest history of the truth. He has received a truth structure which is the fruit of the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the Church throughout the ages. He has been instructed in this in such a way that it has become his own peculiar heritage and confession. To him is committed what Jude calls "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." He has received this of grace, by the operation of the Spirit within his own heart. And particularly he has received this through the confessions of the Church. It is with this truth structure that he comes to the Scriptures as exegete. It is very important that he should do this. He must not be, as some are today, embarrassed by this. This is his life and safety.

And, from this it follows, that he is a servant of the Church. This must not be misconstrued. He is not a servant of the Church in the sense that the pew determines the pulpit, that the man in the pew determines what he must preach. He is a servant of the King of the Church, the Lord Christ. He owes obedience to no one but Christ. But, as a servant of Christ, He is a servant of the Church, for the Church is the body of Christ.

Thus he may never be isolated from the pew.

There is danger of this. I warn you of it. It is possible for a minister to assume that he is a learned man who enjoys studying abstruse and esoteric subjects for the mere pleasure of study. The knowledge of the truth is then for its own sake. He engages in learned and wise discussion with his fellow theologians of like faith or differing faith and finds his delight in the mere knowledge of difficult problems and the intellectual stimulation which comes from studying and discussing them. The danger of this is readily apparent. It leads to the idea that there is a certain area of the knowledge of the Scriptures which belongs to the learned, and another area which is the province of the unlearned.

I engaged in a discussion with another professor concerning this matter but a few weeks ago. He was deeply steeped in the area of New Testament criticism. And he kept wanting to engage me in debate over very involved and difficult textual problems. Finally I asked him concerning a question he brought up in connection with the Scriptural narrative of Jesus' conversation with the Syro-Phoenician woman, how he would discuss these problems of textual criticism on the pulpit. Oh, he assured me, he would never think of bringing these problems on the pulpit. I asked him why not. His answer was that these were areas of Scripture reserved for the theologian; they were of no concern to the man in the pew. But they are matters of Scripture. Is Scripture then to be divided into two categories? that which belongs to the trained theologian and that which belongs to the man in the pew?

This same idea has even led so far that it is claimed that there are different meanings in Scripture — one for the theologian and one for the laymen. For the theologian, e.g., it is obvious that Christ did not really rise bodily from the dead. But we must nevertheless teach this to the layman. For he can only understand picture truths. As one man so aptly observed: "I'm sure if I had to produce picture-truths to a parishioner in great anguish or under fierce temptation, and produce them with that seriousness and fervour which his condition demanded, while knowing all the time that I didn't exactly believe them myself, I'd find my forehead getting red and damp and my collar getting tight."

This whole idea must be reprobated. And yet it is, e.g., the very issue in the so-called Report 44 of the



Christian Reformed Church which deals with the question of Biblical authority. Only a trained theologian can understand that report. And there are serious differences of interpretation even among them.

The exegete is a servant of Christ for the sake of God's people in everything he does. All his labors are to that end. You may take it as a rule of thumb that if you stumble on an idea which enamors you but which you would be hard pressed to explain to any single child of God, you have stumbled on an idea which is false.

As a servant of the Church the exegete does his work, for he is a preacher.

### The Preaching

There is a problem which remains and to which I call your attention in conclusion.

We are agreed that true preaching is preaching of the Word. Only in this way can a minister be a servant of Christ. Only in this way will the sheep of God hear the voice of their Shepherd when they hear the preaching.

But expository preaching means preaching which explains the text. Does not then a preacher, in his explanation of the text, interject into the Word of Scripture his own word. Or, to put it another way, is it not better simply to read Scripture from the pulpit to be sure that only the words of Scripture itself are heard? Is not exegesis, exposition, always man's work?

It is my concluding thesis that true preaching is indeed expository preaching. It would not be true preaching for a minister to read selected passages of Scripture in place of a sermon. The Reformers were correct when they divided in the liturgy the reading of Scripture itself and the sermon which was based upon Scripture. Both are important.

There are especially two reasons for this.

Preaching, because it is expository preaching, is always explaining Scripture with Scripture. It lies in the nature of Scripture that he must do this, for Scripture is a unity, an organic whole. But it is precisely in this way that he does not come with his own word, but lets the Scriptures themselves speak. This is most important. It is exactly why heretics always fail. They come always with isolated texts. In this way it is possible to prove anything from Scripture; but the very character of Scripture is denied. The true preacher preaches in such a way that the whole Word of God shines through and must be made to shine upon every text.

Secondly, preaching brings out the truth as it lives within the consciousness of the Church. There is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the people of God. This operation of the Spirit brings the whole Word of God to God's people. That is, the very truth of the Scriptures itself is the work of grace wrought within the hearts and lives of God's people. Do the Scriptures teach the forgiveness of sins through the blood of the cross? But this same truth is a work of grace wrought within the consciousness of the people of God. The very truth of the Scriptures is the objective testimony of what God has given to His people in Christ. That truth is therefore the confession of the Church — a confession in all life's experiences. And so the believers of God find themselves and the work of grace in their hearts in the preaching. This is the great wonder of preaching the Holy Scriptures.

And so God has given to us this calling to preach the Scriptures. The very authority of that calling lies in the authority of the Word itself. This has been and is today more than ever the strength of our Churches. May God give grace that that preaching is preserved among us.

## Critique

# SIN, by Dr. G.C. Berkhouwer

Prof. H. Hanko

*SIN*, by G. C. Berkhouwer, translated from the Dutch by Philip C. Holtrop; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971; 599 pp., \$9.95.

Prof. G. C. Berkhouwer continues to produce additional volumes in his series "Studies in Dogmatics." This volume, appearing along with the others in an English translation, includes two separate volumes on the general subject of sin which were entitled "*De Zonde I; Oorsprong en Kennis der Zonde*" and "*De Zonde II: Wezen en Verbreiding der*

*Zonde*." That is, *Part I: The Origin and Knowledge of Sin* and *Part II: The Essence and Spread of Sin*.

Berkhouwer is always difficult reading, and this book is not a book which can be read and enjoyed by everyone. There is something ironic about this. In a review in *The Banner* on this book by James Daane, Daane praises the book highly. One of the reasons for such high praise is given as:

Stated positively, Berkhouwer's theology contends that all theologizing and every legitimate theology,



must be an articulation of the Christian faith, and therefore a help to the pulpit and, accordingly, that every theology that arises outside of the Christian faith and Church pulpit is speculative, something that unsettles the Christian faith and muffles the voice of the pulpit.

There is considerable and convincing evidence for the truth of Berkhouwer's contention. Every one of the above mentioned Berkhouwer affirmations (affirmations which Berkhouwer sets forth in this book, H.H.) can be *preached* and believed unto salvation, and every position which these affirmations reject are positions that can *neither be preached, nor believed unto salvation* . . .

Authentic Christian theology is the point where theologians and babes meet, for the former only scientifically reflects on what is revealed to babes. And this point of meeting is a reflection of the Christian pulpit in which the man of the pulpit, the preacher of the gospel, must speak, and can speak, the gospel powerfully and effectively to the greatest theologian and to the youngest occupant of the pew.

If what Daane writes is true, then one would surely expect that Berkhouwer's writings would be so clear and simple that any child of God, young or old, could sit down with a volume and read it for his edification. Anyone will admit that this is far from the truth. Even trained theologians have difficulties understanding what Berkhouwer means. This is evident even from the reviews of this book which have come out. Not all are by any means agreed concerning the position which Berkhouwer holds. To read the book is just plain hard work, and even a trained theologian finds the whole thing rough going. If it is true as Daane writes, that "authentic Christian theology is the point where theologians and babes meet," then this book is anything but authentic Christian theology.

This is not to disparage Berkhouwer's vast learning. One stands amazed at his knowledge of theology in the past and present and his familiarity with the thinking of all the theologians of the centuries. One cannot help also but be impressed with Berkhouwer's penetrating insights into difficult theological problems and his ability to jump to the heart of an argument. For these and other reasons, Berkhouwer's books are always stimulating and provocative.

Before I proceed, however, to some comments on the book itself, there are a couple of points which ought to be gotten out of the way at the outset. They are, to me, troubling points; indeed, points which all but make Berkhouwer's theology suspect from the outset.

In the first place, Berkhouwer has a knack for asking a long series of questions concerning some particular point of a truth long held by the Church. Now, of course, it is not in itself wrong to ask questions concerning these points even. But Berkhouwer has a knack for asking them in such a way that the questions

themselves leave doubts in the mind of the reader concerning these points of the truth. This may be, in Berkhouwer's mind, a mere pedagogical device to force the reader to "think through" theological problems; but there is always serious danger in framing questions in such a way that the small seeds of doubt and suspicion are sewn. This becomes especially important in Berkhouwer's writing because oftentimes Berkhouwer, as we shall see below, takes a position at odds with the historic Christian faith. The following quote will illustrate what I mean. It is taken from p. 425, where the subject of original sin is introduced. It reads:

The question, then, is this: In confessing the doctrine of original sin are we really obliged to adopt a view of "arbitrariness" or a concept in which the guilt of one man is merely "imputed" to another? (Notice that the use of the word "arbitrariness" and "merely" suggest already that there is something "arbitrary" and "simplistic" about the traditional view of original guilt. H.H.) Is it the meaning or the thrust of this doctrine to give us a causal explanation for the existential plight of the human race by pointing to the guilt of "someone else"? Are the results of that guilt with us today in a very uncanny manner, and to such an extent that they are really considered *our guilt*? All the objections to this doctrine center in this "great presupposition" which its critics say must under lie its confession: the concept of an *alien guilt* or a *peccatum alienum*.

Reformed theologians have never been afraid of discussing openly and frankly views which were at odds with the Scriptures. Nor have they shied away from treating in their writings all the objections which have, over the ages, been brought against the truth which the Church maintains. But they have never dealt with these objections by asking questions in such a way that the very formulation of them leads to suspicion and doubt concerning these matters in the mind of the reader. Berkhouwer often does this — not only in this volume, but in all of them.

In the second place, it is often difficult to glean from Berkhouwer's writings what his own views are on a matter — at least his positive views. He often discusses a particular problem of theology at length and from every conceivable point of view, sometimes in chapter after chapter. He discusses objections against the traditional view; he discusses other views; he brings in the writings of many other theologians; he faces difficulties of every imaginable sort. All the while one is wondering what Berkhouwer himself is going to say as his position. You have to be alert to find it sometimes. It can happen that, after a discussion of some fifty or sixty pages, Berkhouwer's own position is found in a sentence or two in a paragraph. That is all. One can almost read over it without realizing that he has now had Berkhouwer's own statement about the matter.



This is disconcerting. Theology has been, above all, positive development of the truth. While Berkhouwer may have many fine things to say about various theological questions, there is a paucity of positive development.

In the third place, Berkhouwer is a representative of the "New Theology" in the Netherlands. Daane, in the review mentioned above, recognizes this and, in his enthusiastic endorsement of the book, points out that the book is so soundly orthodox that we here in this country need not fear the "New Theology"; it is obviously and genuinely Reformed.

It is true that Berkhouwer is not nearly as outspoken as, e.g., Kuitert. It is also probably true that Berkhouwer is not nearly as radical as Kuitert and does not reject as many of the historic Christian doctrines as Kuitert does. Nevertheless, Berkhouwer is all the more dangerous just for this reason. It never ceases to amaze me that, in the reviews on Berkhouwer's book, there have been, for the most part, songs of praise sung to Berkhouwer and his theology. This is by men who claim to be Reformed. It is true that they have some minor criticisms here and there on certain points. But on the whole, the reviews have consistently endorsed Berkhouwer's position. The fact remains that Berkhouwer, in all his books, and in this one as well, has made fundamental departures from the Reformed faith. Our survey of the contents will bear this out.

We are not able, in this review, to give a complete analysis of all Berkhouwer's thoughts. The book itself is nearly 600 pages long. We can but skim over the most important points which Berkhouwer makes and briefly treat them.

Nor can we discuss in this review the all-important question of Berkhouwer's theological method. If any of our readers are interested in this subject, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema has made some comments on this subject in Volume I, No. 2 of *The Protestant Reformed Theological Journal*. Unfortunately, this issue is out of print, but it can be obtained on a loan basis from the Seminary Library.

To turn now to the contents of Berkhouwer's book, it seems to me that the principle departure which Berkhouwer makes (and which determines the course of the entire book) is his refusal to recognize the sovereignty of God over sin. There are several points which Berkhouwer makes in this connection, for this subject is the main subject of the first section of the book.

In the first place, Berkhouwer emphatically insists that God is not, in any sense, the cause or author of either sin or the fall. He spends a great deal of time on this subject and, in fact, belabors the point unnecessarily. I say that he belabors the point unnecessarily because, to my knowledge, there has never been a genuine Reformed theologian who has taken this position; and one gets the feeling that

Berkhouwer is beating straw men over the head. Already our Canons of Dordt specifically reject this position: "The cause or guilt of this unbelief as well as of all other sins, is no wise in God, but in man himself ..." (I, 5). "And this is the decree of reprobation which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy) ..." (I, 15). Berkhouwer's preoccupation with this idea seems to stem from the notion that anyone who holds that God is sovereign over sin falls into the error of making God the cause of sin. And it is in this way that Berkhouwer prepares the way for a rejection of this view.

In the second place, he points out that to make God the author of sin is rooted in man's attempt to excuse himself for his sin. This is, no doubt, true. And this theme of "self-excuse" is a theme which runs throughout Berkhouwer's entire book. In fact, he returns to it again in his discussion of original sin, and uses it as a jumping off point to reject the historically Reformed position in this matter. But once again, the Scriptures see no problem here — although, admittedly, Scripture is not interested in solving all our theological difficulties. Nevertheless, to cite but one example, we read in II Samuel 24:1: "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." While this surely indicates beyond contradiction God's sovereign control over sin, we read in vs. 10 of the same chapter: "And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." Scripture does not see the problem which Berkhouwer sees.

In the third place, in discussing the origin of sin, Berkhouwer insists that there cannot be an explanation for sin. He insists that sin, in its very nature, is irrational and unintelligible. Sin is therefore, its own cause. Any attempt to explain the origin of sin is Biblically wrong.

The problem of the origin of sin is, of course, a difficult one. Nevertheless, through Berkhouwer's process of reasoning he succeeds in putting sin outside the will of God entirely. This is an involved question, and one into which we cannot enter in detail in this review. Berkhouwer's chief point is, however, that sin cannot be included in the will of God's decree; and, although it can perhaps be said that sin belongs to the revealed will of God, even in the latter it is revealed only in such a way that the law of God opposes sin and Christ triumphs over sin by His cross. In other words, Berkhouwer steadfastly resists the idea that God has determined the entrance of sin into the world and that He controls sovereignly sin.

This is a critical and extremely important part of



Berkhouwer's book. There are several objections against this which we ought briefly to mention. 1) Although in his book Berkhouwer resists adopting the position of dualism (the position which holds to sin being a separate and independent power in the world apart from God), we cannot understand how Berkhouwer escapes this position. Sin is either under God's control, or it is not. If it is not, it is a force and power independent from God. This is dualism. 2) Berkhouwer takes a position which is contrary to all Reformed and Calvinistic theologians. While the difficulties in the problem have been freely admitted, our Reformed fathers have always insisted nonetheless, that Scripture teaches God's sovereignty over sin. 3) And it is indeed true that this is precisely the teaching of Scripture. We refer to the following passages among many others: II Sam. 16:10, Prov. 21:1, Is. 6:10, Acts 2:23, Acts 4:27, 28.

There is some indication in the book that after all, Berkhouwer would like to maintain some idea of sovereignty in this matter. I refer, e.g., to a passage such as appears on p. 30:

Various confessions refer to God's power in and over man's sin. But this sovereign utilization of sin (or this divine reversal of evil for good) in no way threatens the *Deus non causa peccati*. (God is not the cause of sin.)

But it is clear that Berkhouwer means something quite different in this statement than that God is the sovereign of sin.

It is, I am convinced, this that leads Berkhouwer astray in other important areas of the truth.

Although Berkhouwer rejects the Reformed view of predestination and discusses his position in detail in his book on "Election," there are passing references to this subject in this book. In his chapter on "Sin and the Law," Berkhouwer writes:

In opposition to *this* law, with *this* content, the sin of man is now "Exceeding sinful." For sin misleads a man by radically reversing and confounding the meaning of that law which God has now "added." The issue here is not the general "*deteriora*" of Ovid but only the *deteriora* of a central and total transgression of God's most holy law. Therefore we see that sin, in fact, *did increase*. Sin completed itself within the realm of history and within the circle of God's activity in and over Israel. This increase resulted from Israel's antagonism to God's gracious election. For election was manifest in that command of God which was raised up for his own people.

No Reformed man would speak of the doctrine of election in this way.

It is not surprising that there appears in this book an Arminian conception of the gospel. The gospel "compels man to make a choice." (p. 176). The cross is "the invitation — God's final invitation — to be saved." (p. 417). And:

The preaching of the Gospel will show us that only in the *rejection of God's good invitation* can we possibly see that "border" from which we are constantly called forth, no matter what our offense, back into the promised land. (p. 345).

While these ideas are not, of course, discussed in detail in this volume, they describe the preaching in Arminian terms and within an Arminian framework.

Also eternal forgiveness of the sins of the elect is denied:

This "forgiveness of sins" is not a declaratory pronouncement from the depths of eternity but a real actuality in the midst of history. For that reason it is totally impossible to cast a wary eye on the apostles and to say that they "complicate" the message of forgiven sins. (p. 394).

This position is entirely in keeping with another idea of Berkhouwer which is discussed more in detail. This idea concerns the whole question of God's immutability. Berkhouwer denies this immutability of God in the sense that God cannot show real wrath and then withdraw that wrath in order to show His love and mercy. He argues that God's wrath is not an attribute. It is a *response* to men's conduct. Hence, it is conditional. Nor, says Berkhouwer, is grace an attribute. It, too, is a response to what man does with the gospel. Man's response to the gospel changes the situation and this involves a very real change in God's response.

Daane, in his review referred to above, claims that this is not Arminianism, but a rejection of God as the cause of sin and a rejection of a philosophical view of absolute sovereignty. That is, it is a rejection of a sovereignty defined in terms of itself, not in terms of a response. This is, of course, a hobby horse of Dr. Daane.

What is striking in this discussion of Berkhouwer, however, is the fact that he nowhere properly distinguishes between wrath and hatred. In fact, he rarely, if ever, speaks of hatred. It is certainly true that God is wrathful towards His people. We even sing in our Psalter: "In thy wrath and hot displeasure, chasten not thy servant Lord." But this is something quite different from saying that God hates His people. He hates the wicked with an eternal hatred. He hated Esau. Cf. Rom 9:10-13. But He loves His people with an eternal love. This love for His people does not preclude His anger with them for their sins. Indeed, when His people walk in the way of sin, they experience that wrath of God which fills them with fear and brings them to the sorrow of repentance. This was certainly true of Christ Himself. Never could it be said that Christ was anything but God's beloved Son in Whom God was well-pleased. But on the cross Christ experienced the full depths of God's wrath; so much so that He anxiously cried out to ask why He was



forsaken. We have an earthly picture of this. A godly parent certainly loves his children. But this does not preclude the possibility that he becomes angry with them. Indeed, his anger is a manifestation of his love; for he desires to see his children walk in the ways of the Lord.

Berkhouwer has a changeable God. This God is not the God of the Scriptures: "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." (Malachi 3:6).

There is one other important matter that needs discussion in this review. This is the matter of original sin — a subject which Berkhouwer treats at length in the second part of the book. In fact, his discussion of this subject covers no less than five chapters.

The discussion ranges freely over the entire problem. It discusses not only original sin in the sense of original guilt, but also in the sense of original pollution. It discusses in detail the key passage of Rom. 5:12-14. It discusses the views of the Reformers on this subject as well as the position of our Reformed creeds. And all of this is once again within the general context of Berkhouwer's fear that we shall fall into the error of using the doctrine of original sin to excuse ourselves.

There are several aspects of this question which deserve some brief attention.

In the first place, Berkhouwer rejects both the position of "Realism" and of "Federalism." The former is the view that all men are "co-sinners" with Adam in the fullest meaning of that word." The latter teaches that all men are guilty for Adam's sin because Adam *represented* all men and sinned as federal head. We shall return to this in a moment.

In the second place, Berkhouwer rejects the idea of original guilt, in part because, in his opinion, the creeds of the Reformed Churches do not adopt this position. His argument is therefore, that the Reformed Churches have never dared to assume this position. This is incorrect. In the first place, while it is true that our Reformed Confessions do not speak specifically about original guilt, it is also true that the idea is nevertheless suggested strongly. E.g., in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q. and A. 56, the Church confesses that she believes that the truth of forgiveness of sins means, among other things, "that God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember . . . my corrupt nature." This surely implies personal responsibility and guilt for the nature which I possess from the moment of birth. In the second place, the reason why our creeds which deal with this subject are silent on the matter is because the whole federal conception of the legal union of Christ and His people as well as of Adam and the human race was not developed in the theology of the Church till later. This is especially true of the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dordt. Berkhouwer claims that Calvin denied that we are guilty for Adam's sin. He writes:

It is not by chance that we never find in Calvin the later rigid distinction of "inherited guilt" and "hereditary corruption." Certainly there is a more adequate reason for this than that Calvin did not reflect "deeply enough." That reason can be found in his consistent repudiation of every appeal to the *alienum peccatum*. (p. 483).

While it is true that Calvin, in the same way and for the same reason as our Confessions, does not speak explicitly of a federal union between Adam and mankind, nevertheless, Calvin does write, e.g., in his *Institutes*: "And his guilt being the origin of that curse which extends to every part of the world, it is reasonable to conclude its propagation to all his offspring." (II, 1, 5).

The emphasis in our Confessions falls upon original pollution. But even here Berkhouwer has reservations. In more than one place, although he seems to accept the doctrine as such, he derides any attempts to explain the pollution of the human race in biological terms. In fact, he concludes that we really can never know just how it came about that all men partake of the corruption of Adam's nature.

It is significant in this connection that nowhere in this book does Berkhouwer give any attention to the doctrine of *total* depravity. One would think that a man who claims to be a Calvinist and to be Reformed would devote some time to the second point of Calvinism in a book on sin. But apart from passing references to the doctrine, there is no explicit discussion of the subject.

However that may be, the question is, precisely what does Berkhouwer mean by a biological conception of sin? If he means that the propagation of the sinful nature cannot be adequately explained by the science of genetics alone, no doubt this is true. After all, sin infects the soul and heart as well as the body. But if he means that there are no biological implications at all in the doctrine of original pollution, he is flying in the face of Scripture and the Confessions. David writes in Psalm 51:5: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Nor does one need to worry about this Scriptural teaching leading to self-excuse. For this very verse in Psalm 51 is part of a confession of sin on the part of David. He is pleading that it is his fault, that he is to blame for being shaped in iniquity and conceived in sin. Furthermore, our Belgic Confession defines the "original sin" which is "extended to all mankind" as "an hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof." In fact, that corruption of the nature, the creed says, "is sufficient to condemn all mankind" apart from any of their own personal sins.

And so Berkhouwer inadequately treats both original guilt and original pollution. It is especially his



inadequate and apparent denial of original guilt which is particularly troublesome. Not only is this truth taught in vss. 12-14 of Romans 5, but it is the entire thrust of Paul's argument throughout this chapter. Cf. especially vss. 15-19 where Paul speaks of many being dead through the offence of one; of judgment to condemnation coming by one; of death reigning by one man's offence; of many being made sinners because of one man's disobedience.

This is a very serious matter. A denial of these fundamental doctrines concerning sin in relation to Adam and total corruption is an undermining of the whole truth concerning salvation and the relation in which the elect stand to Christ both federally and organically. This is Paul's whole point also in Rom. 5, for he is constantly comparing the Second Adam with

the first, and the relation in which we stand to the first Adam as being analogous to the relation in which we stand to the Lord from heaven. Cf. I Cor. 15:21, 22.

And so it is not true that we need not fear the "New Theology" as Daane avers. It is probably true that Berkhouwer does not go nearly as far as his colleagues in the Gereformeerde Kerken who are popularizing and developing this new theology. But the foundation is laid in Berkhouwer. It is all there as a basis for the views of Kuitert *c.s.* If Reformed men condemn this new theology (as it ought to be condemned), they must also assert that Berkhouwer is not biblical and is not Reformed in his theology, for Kuitert and his ecclesiastical companions are the spiritual children of Dr. G. C. Berkhouwer.

## Mission News

# News From Jamaica

*Rev. G. Lubbers*

There was a time when the apostle Paul wrote his famous "nevertheless" in II Timothy 2:19. He had had to contend with Hymenaeus and Philetus, who had erred concerning the truth and were overthrowing the faith of some. It was at this point that the great apostle, a man tried in fiery afflictions, uttered the well-known words, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

It is not our purpose to write an exposition of this rich and meaningful text at this time. We only wish to write in this news-item concerning the work in Jamaica that it is in good and purposeful hands. It is not at all in the hands of the Mission Committee, nor is it in the hands of undersigned as missionary. It is firmly and securely in the hands of our almighty God and Father in whom we believe.

We have written very realistically concerning the work and the conditions in the island of Jamaica. And we would add that every word of it stands as reflecting certain objective facets of the work. However, it was not meant to be a complete picture of what is going on in the field. Our work there is not for nought. We are always more than conquerors both in those which perish and in those who are saved.

Preaching the Word is not faith in the field in the first instance, but faith in God and in the power of the Gospel, a power of God unto salvation in those who

believe. And such there are in the churches of Jamaica, even though there are many difficulties and frustrations. Satan, too, is working very industriously with his prophets of the Pentecostal-Holiness lies. Yet the power of the Gospel and of the Holy Spirit working through this means of grace is mightier than all. As many as are ordained to eternal life believe. That is the "nevertheless" of the above quoted passage from II Timothy.

There is also evidence of such power of God in the Gospel on the island.

The first evidence of this power is the fact that the congregations have not all left the Protestant Reformed Churches in Jamaica. There has come a distinction between those who are "for" and who are "against." Even when we preach, the word is received by those in whose heart God works through the preaching. Not to see this makes any activity of mission work impossible, and it also would be a denial of the sure promise of God "that the Lord knows who are his own." A preacher of the Gospel lives by faith and not by sight, even though often a preacher has the fainting spells that all seems hopeless. A mighty prophet such as was Elijah would rather die than live when he sees the seeming victory of the powers of hell exhibited in the adulteress Jezebel. The broken reed must not be broken, and the smoldering flax must not be extinguished. We must not deny the evidence of the presence of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The second evidence is that the Lord is preparing



young men there for the ministry of the Word. Fact is, that, during the summer months, four students are sent out by our school to supplement the preaching power of the ministers, Revs. Frame and Elliott. Rev. Heys gave some very basic and thorough instruction in Hermeneutics and Homeletics in the classes for a period of five months. Although these students need more practice in sermonizing — which candidate for the ministry doesn't? — they are now at a point where they are fledgelings in sermonizing, and with approved sermons can go out and preach a word of edification. Undersigned was also present at the classes when the sermons were heard and criticized in class and suggestions of improvements in form and content were made. At any rate this, too, is an evidence of the work of the Spirit, we do believe. And even though many have left us, nevertheless there is ground for hope resting solely in the work of God.

The third evidence is that during the past three months we might witness three weddings in the churches, and two more are yet to come in the next two months. No one can live in adultery and concubinage in the churches and be members in good standing. During a past year an elder in one of the churches was put out of office and barred from the Lord's supper for leaving his wife and living in adultery with another woman. That, too, is fruit of the Holy Spirit in the Gospel on the island. And it is an approximation of the goal set before us to seek to establish the true church which may be recognized by the threefold earmarks: Pure preaching of the Word, proper administration of the Sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline. With this framework we also greet the weddings and Christian marriages as evidence that God's work is pressing on; the Lord knows who are His own, and let every one who nameth

the name of Christ depart from iniquity. It may be well to point out that these young people who are seeking marriage are those who were under the concentrated teaching of our island Seminary. One of the leading elders called these weddings: pattern-weddings for the churches.

We have passed through a year of crises the past year. What the future holds we do not know. But we do know who holds the future. The Lord knows them that are his! And so we may boldly say that we will not fear, but pray to the Lord of harvests for faithfulness which is required in stewards. More people may still leave us, others may revile us and hate us and corrupt the truth, nevertheless we press on, keeping our eye and hope upon the living God.

Let this "nevertheless" also motivate us in our prayers for the work of God in general and for the work in Jamaica in particular. We must not easily stop praying; we must not allow the despondency of littleness of faith to cause us to cease to acknowledge in prayer that God is for us! Do pray for us and also for Candidate Mark Hoeksema and his help-meet who will accompany us for six months. May the Lord bless these united efforts in the field. Brother Hoeksema will preach and teach. He will teach in our school both English and New Testament History, while the undersigned will teach Old Testament History, Doctrine (Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dort) and Church History.

Hopefully after one more year of instruction the students can be graduated. What the Lord then has in store for our churches in laboring in these indigenous churches we will need to seek to ascertain then. But whatever the Lord has in store, *He* has it in store. May we ever seek to do His bidding.

## Contribution

# Rhymed Version of the Ten Commandments

(from the book, *The Church of our Fathers*,  
by Bainton)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Thou shalt have no more gods than Me. | 6. Take heed that thou no murder do.         |
| 2. Before no idol bow thy knee.          | 7. Abstain from words and deeds unclean;     |
| 3. Take not the name of God in vain;     | 8. Nor steal, though thou art poor and mean; |
| 4. Nor dare the Sabbath day profane.     | 9. Nor make a wilful lie nor love it.        |
| 5. Give both thy parents honour due.     | 10. What is thy neighbor's dare not covet.   |



## *The Strength of Youth*

# Divorce and Remarriage (7)

*Rev. J. Kortering*

We now bring to a conclusion our discussion on the subject of marriage and divorce. In summary form we would remind each other of the duties we have within the marriage relationship in order that we may serve God properly.

### MARRY IN THE LORD

What we consider here is the positive aspect of the problem of separation and divorce. There are many heartbreaking problems that are involved in marital difficulties. Let's begin on a positive note.

Christian young people should realize that they have the only power by which marriage can truly succeed and this is love. Paul explains it this way, "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; *only in the Lord*," I Cor. 7:39. Marriage in the Lord means marriage in the sphere of Jesus Christ. This Paul further explains in Eph. 5 where he describes our relationship with Christ as that of marriage. When we are united to Christ by faith, we are married to Him. This constitutes the proper sphere for human marriage. By this union with Christ, a Christian husband and Christian wife have the power of love, God's love, which enables them to consummate their own marriage to the full extent which God intended by creation.

We suggest that young people consider this seriously during courtship. At the wedding you stand before God and vow before many witnesses that you take to yourself your lawful husband or wife *for life*. You promise to live together within the bonds of marriage faithfully and understand that only God has the right to terminate this marriage by death. How can you vow to live your whole life with someone who is a virtual stranger to you? Even though you may have dated each other for years, you still are strangers in many ways. The answer is this: you both are one in Christ, and this union with Christ will enable both of you to keep your vow. I would shudder if I had to vow before God to marry someone for life, if that someone were not one with me in the faith of Jesus Christ. How trustful and confident we can be when we are one in the Lord and therefore have the basis upon which to pledge our love to someone for the rest of our earthly lives.

This should have primary consideration in your marriage plans. It happens all too often that young people become engaged to be married and have not even resolved this most important question for their

marriage: can we be married in the Lord, or not? This must be settled early in courtship in order that when you become engaged, which is a promise to become married, you can do that without any reservations.

If Christian young people take this to heart, they have the God provided deterrent for problems of separation and divorce. Marriage without the love of God in Jesus Christ has no foundation. With that love of Christ, nothing can possibly shake it or separate the ones who love each other in the Lord.

### HANDLING DIFFERENCES

It would be humanly impossible for two individuals such as a husband and wife not to have differences. A young couple beginning their marriage must expect them. Every now and then we come into contact with a tender young bride whose imaginary balloon has burst because her husband said something harsh to her. Suddenly her "idol" has appeared human, and that's more than she can take. Or you have the same thing with a husband: he has built such a mental image of his future wife that there cannot possibly be anything but utopian bliss as he sees it. Then she sits across the table at breakfast, sullen and bedecked with curlers, and the poor fellow realizes that his wife is like any other woman. Young lovers soon come to earth and begin to face the realities of married life together. More and more differences appear, and sometimes little annoyances become great chasms of separation.

How must we handle these differences?

First, one's attitude is of paramount importance. A Christian may not enter marriage with the attitude of trial and error. The unbeliever marries a person and says beforehand: we will try to make a go of it, we can always get a divorce if worst comes to worst. This attitude is forbidden a child of God. Little wonder that many marriages fail with such a weak approach. We, rather, begin marriage with the assertion before God that we will work out differences. Christian young people must realize that forsaking one's spouse is not an alternative for them. They promise to work out differences with God's blessing. Both must resolve that differences may not separate them; they have to learn to deal with them in love and resolve them.

Secondly, the resolution of differences is only in the way of facing them. All too often a young husband or wife does the "slow burn" and tries to put up with something the spouse does which makes them angry. This is sure to lead to trouble. Such avoidance of issues



builds pressure until the escape valve blows; and that often has dire consequence, whether in verbal or physical violence. It is amazing how little differences have ways of contributing to such a crucial breakdown.

Little differences have to be talked out on a daily basis. If a couple learns to express their disappointments with each other, they help each other overcome them. This is the basic principle of love; it seeks to remove anything that divides and encourages all that which unites. In a Christian marriage there has to be much confessing and forgiving of one another. Young married couples do well to learn this early in marriage.

One other thing, if this sort of communication is difficult, and a young couple realizes that they are not doing this properly, it is best to get help through counseling. As a minister, one of the greatest frustrations in dealing with marriage problems, is that the minister is contacted as a last resort, out of a spirit of desperation. By then communication is often so broken down that picking up the pieces is terribly difficult. If a young couple feel that they are drifting apart because of differences, and they are not able to handle them, it is best to seek counsel from one's minister immediately.

Often times differences present themselves as opportunities for a couple really to get to know each other better. If the spirit is that of love and the guide is that of Christ and His Word, such differences provide an opportunity for a husband and wife to do some soul searching and praying for God's guidance. All marriages cannot be on the same spiritual plane. There are some children of God who are thoroughly content in the blessings God gives them through their marriage. There are other children of God who seem to have a difficult time of it. The reasons may be as varied as the people involved. One thing we must avoid is being satisfied with the status quo, when a little more effort might bring the marriage to a higher plane. According to Ephesians 5, we are to make our marriage more Christ-like every day. By doing this, divorce will be out of the question.

## SEPARATION

Sometimes, all the effort in the world cannot save a marriage. It may be because of one of the marriage partners, most often it is because of both. What then?

As we have pointed out in former articles, divorce, as it is legally understood in our land, is out of the question for a Christian. Marriage is a lifelong union, ended only by death. Adultery is the only ground for a separation granted by law. The Scriptural reason for this is love. If a husband or wife is sinned against by his or her spouse, love seeks repentance and forgiveness. Divorce closes the door to such forgiveness. Separation impresses upon the guilty one that adultery is a serious sin and makes love within marriage impossible unless it

is repented of and forgiven.

In our day of easy divorce, the guilty spouse often times breaks the marriage bond permanently by remarrying another person. Even this does not free the obedient child of God. Such an one continues to pray for the one who is walking in sin and waits upon the Lord to lead him to see the error of his way and, if possible, that they can be forgiven and received back within the marriage relationship. While waiting, which is agonizingly lonely and a trying time, the faithful child of God has this assurance that being a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. 19:12, he is in the will of God, and God will give grace to sustain in every need. What is impossible with men is possible with God.

The problem of separation is not limited however to adultery alone. What happens if a married couple have difficulties which seem to make living together impossible. There is constant fighting, tension, and maybe even threatening of life. Should they separate?

The answer is that such a separation is in place provided that it is used as a means to heal the breach. It is not right for one to run away from his or her husband or wife because living with them is difficult. Parents should not encourage children to come home and live with daddy and mommy once again. The only reason someone may leave his spouse temporarily, is that it will help them resolve differences and clear the air so that they can communicate without fear for life and safety.

This, too, must be brief if at all possible. Paul's warning concerning incontinency of a husband or wife who refrain from sexual relationship in order to pray and meditate, I Cor. 7:5, would certainly apply here as well. Satan would like to use such a situation to lead such marriage partners into greater sin and perhaps even adultery. Separation should never be taken lightly, but only with a deep conviction that this is the only way to heal a marriage. It places a great deal of responsibility on the part of the husband or wife who leaves the home to live somewhere else.

## MARRIAGE IN HEAVEN

From an earthly point of view, marriages last only while we live here. Death terminates the legal aspect of marriage, so that one is freed to marry another upon the death of one's spouse. This is proper, for such a relationship serves the purpose of God while His people still live on the earth. There is no need of marriage in heaven; we will be like the angels in glory who neither marry nor are given in marriage, Matt. 22:30. Our fellowship in heaven will not be of the earth earthy, but will consist of the glorious fellowship we have with God in Jesus Christ.

From this point of view the future of the child of God is most blessed. Our marriage to Christ makes our earthly marriage to a husband or wife most precious.



Yet, when this earthly life is over, that relationship ceases to exist. It vanishes away with all the things of the earth. That is not disappointment. In its place, we will have the privilege to enjoy the perfect marriage of Christ and His church. We will then enter into the

glory of heaven as the perfect bride of Christ, adorned with our white marriage dress, made ready as the bride for her husband, Revelation 19.

God grant that our marriages prepare us for this eternal marriage.

## *Studies in Isaiah*

# Introduction, II

*Rev. R. C. Harbach*

Most Christians are not disturbed by the attacks of radical critics upon the Book of Isaiah, nor are they particularly interested in the so called critical problem relative to this prophecy. When you walk through an orchard there is really more to it than the admiring of the beautiful out-of-doors and enjoying the fragrance of the trees and the benefit of their fruits. There is also the realization of all the labors the farmer must have expended in his constant battle against destructive insects. There must be an appreciation of that labor, for without it there could be no orchard and no fruit. And as it is profitable to know something about tree and fruit pests, so it will be profitable to know something of the position of the "higher critics."

*German destructive higher critics* assume that this book is the product of numerous authors and editors who have actually added to and subtracted from the facts, transposed, combined and garbled them so badly by their own inventions that only these self-styled critics can re-arrange the whole mess in any kind of order understandable to the ordinary reader. As to his evaluations of these critics, we agree with Dr. J. A. Alexander, himself a scholar equal to, and actually far above, any of them. He calls their tamperings, "idle guess-work or fantastic child's play . . . the morbid subjectivity and capricious mania of German unbelief . . . the reveries of Teutonic criticism . . . conceited and multifarious curiosities." He reproves this modernistic school "for the boldness of its ultra-rationalistic doctrines, and the juvenile flippancy with which they are expressed." The more familiar we become with this school, the more we will agree that "the modern German mode of dealing with the text of Isaiah, and of settling the antiquity and genuineness of its several parts, is wholly untenable, because capricious, arbitrary, inconsistent with itself, and at variance with analogy, good taste and common sense." Rationalistic scholars have mutilated and misplaced the parts of the book so badly that, "We need look for no invention beyond this, unless it be that of reading the book

backwards, or shuffling the chapters like a pack of cards." For there is "the reader who knows better," the believer in the God of revelation. Therefore, with regard to these "learned" attacks on Isaiah, he will "certainly pronounce them 'trifles light as air.'" Unbelieving Bible study does not begin with the assumption or presupposition that the Bible is true, because its basic presupposition is that there is no such thing as truth, at least, not to begin with. We begin with what we have at the outset, which may be the worst, the false, and we proceed, as a result of our "scientific findings," to the less false. Then we reason onward to "possibly," upward to "probably" and, maybe, through a cloudy, muddy morass, eventually of sifting the "facts" to "certainly." The difference between the believer's and the higher critic's approach to the Bible is that of the principle of old English law, that the accused is accounted innocent until proved guilty, and the method in the criminal proceedings of a dictatorship, where the accused is held guilty until he proves himself innocent.

A bit of the history of this hypothesis is in order. Although it is called German destructive higher criticism, its origin is not, strictly, German or Teutonic, but rabbinical and Talmudical. The German and, later, English liberal scholars, such as Eichorn, Hitzig, Ewald, S. R. Driver and George Adam Smith, as well as the neo-orthodox in the Netherlands today, got their critical ideas from the Talmudists and certain rabbis turned skeptics, such as Aben Ezra and Moses Maimonides (of the 12th century), Levi ben Gerson and a heretic who shocked Judaism, Hasdai Crescas. None of these German, Dutch, English (and later, American) modern scholars have developed or produced anything as to their critical position on Scripture that is uniquely or originally their own. Their thinking was already pretty well thought out in the above mentioned apostate rabbinical school. This goes for anything of S. Parkes Cadman, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Henry Sloane Coffin, Reinhold Niebuhr, E.



Stanley Jones, men like Prof. R. Janssen and Kuitert. Also to the same school of freethinkers belong those named on the back flap of the RSV Bible's cover jacket, which see. They are all in the line of such radicals and rationalists as Dacosta, Spinoza, Bergson, Freud and Marx. Spinoza was a product of the Talmud, Aben Ezra, Plato, Aristotle and Descartes, with his thinking pointing to Rousseau, the French Revolution and the theology of Renan. Jetting out of this treacherous channel are all the neologians, neo-modernists and social-gospelists of today.

At the heart of rationalistic textual criticism is the denial of the infallibility and inspiration of Scripture. There you have its congenital disease. Divine inspiration is that which characterizes the prophets. They were directed and carried along by the very breath of God, so that their writings, as to the nature of their inspiration, were of a divine, verbal, plenary, infallible and inerrant inspiration. All Scripture is God-breathed. That means all Scripture is equally inspired. Not all Scripture is of equal importance, but all is plenary inspired. We cannot say Moses' writings are most inspired, the prophets less inspired and the poetical books least inspired. Different degrees of inspiration is an idea of skeptical rabbinicalism, foreign to Scripture, dangerous to the biblical position and inimical to the claims of Scripture itself. It is safe to say that the Bible is either not inspired at all or that it is so inspired as to be infallible. It does not require very much reading of the Bible itself to see that its own claim is the latter alone.

Both Jesus and His apostles recognized the infallible inspiration and authority of the Book of Isaiah as well as its *Isaianic authorship*. The critical school rejects all this, especially the Isaianic authorship of the second section of the book, 40-66, but also of certain parts of the first section, 13:1-14:23; 21:1-10; 23; 24-27; 34-35. They assign the second section to a much later but unknown writer. But the Scripture itself, the Holy Spirit himself, nowhere records any other name than Isaiah's as the instrument He used in the writing of the book. The New Testament writers recognize Isaiah as having the authority of a prophet (Matt. 3:3; 4:14; 8:17). They expressly name him twenty-one times in their writings. They appeal to his writings as inspired, settled and binding (Mark 7:6; Rom. 9:29); teach that his words are the words of the Holy Spirit (Acts 29:25); that his prophecies were fulfilled in Christ (Matt. 8:17), and that Isaiah saw Christ and spoke of His glory (John 12:41). Isaiah is quoted or referred to more than 200 times in the New Testament, and in Chapters 40-66, more than 100 times. These quotations are drawn from the first, sixth, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twenty-ninth, fortieth, forty-second, fifty-third, sixty-first and sixty-fifth chapters. In twelve New Testament books there are six

direct quotations. Only seven of the twenty-seven New Testament books seem to have no reference. The New Testament recognizes only Isaiah as the writer. Matthew (12:17-18) and Paul (Rom. 10:20) declare him the writer of Isaiah 42. Luke (Acts 8:28, 32) declares the writer of Isaiah 53 to be Isaiah. Luke also (Luke 4:17, 18) declares he is the writer of Isaiah 61. Paul also (Rom. 10:16, 20, 21) calls him the author of chapter 65. The Lord Jesus named Isaiah as the writer of the first part of the book (Matt. 13:14; 15:7; Mark 7:6), and as the author of the second part of the book (Matt. 12:17, 18).

The following outline, we believe, will allow the Bible student to take in and trace the substance of the book at a glance.

### Outline of the Book of Isaiah

- I. DENUNCIATORY: The Holy One of Israel Provoking, Rebuking and Judging, 1-39
  - A. Jehovah's Case Against Judah and Jerusalem, 1-12
    1. First prophetic discourse: arraignment before God's judgment bar (1)
    2. Second Prophetic discourse: glory and blessing promised through chastening (2-4)
    3. Third prophetic discourse: the parable of Jehovah's vineyard (5)
    - Paraphrase: Isaiah's Vision, His Call, Cleansing & Commission (6) (Jotham)
    4. Fourth prophetic discourse: Immanuel and the Assyrian power (7:1-9:7) (Ahaz)
    5. Fifth prophetic discourse: Immanuel's comfort under Assyrian oppression (9:8-12:6)
  - B. Jehovah's Case Against Surrounding Nations, 13-23
    1. Babylon (13:1-14:27), 2. Philistia (14:28-32), 3. Moab (15-16), 4. Damascus & Ethiopia (17), 5. Egypt (18-20), 6. Edom & Arabia (21), 7. Jerusalem (22), 8. Tyre (23).
  - C. Judgment of the World and the Last Things, 24-27
    1. Judgment upon the whole earth (24)
    2. Salvation of the Nations After the Fall of the Wicked (25)
    3. Song of praise and thanksgiving for deliverance (26)
    4. Proud oppressors of the Church (Satan's kingdom) overcome (27)
  - D. Book of Woes — Warnings to Judah Against Unholy Alliance — Encouragements to Faith, 28-35
    1. First Woe: Judgment & consolation for both Ephraim & Jerusalem (28)
    2. Second Woe: Oppression & deliverance of Zion (29)
    3. Third & Fourth Woes: Warning against Egyptian alliance against Sennacherib (30, 31)
    4. Fifth Woe: Against Assyria — Glory & deliverance of Jerusalem (32, 33) The Coming of Messiah & His Righteous Reign
    5. Final Judgment on the World & Final Redemption of God's People (34, 35)



- E. The Holy One of Israel Delivering from Assyria, 36-39
1. Assyrian invasions & threatenings (36:1-37:7)
  2. Assyrian force & Zion's deliverance (37:8-38)
  3. Hezekiah's illness & recovery (38)
  4. Hezekiah's folly leads to Babylonian captivity of Judah (39)
- II. CONSOLATORY: The Holy One of Israel Comforting, Redeeming, Enriching, 40-66
- A. Contrasts Between Jehovah & Substitutes for Him, with Release from Captivity Foretold (Cyrus the Servant) COMFORT, 40-48
1. Assuring the true church that judgments on the reprobate shall not destroy it. Jehovah's power, willingness & determinate counsel to protect & save the elect (40)
  2. Contrast between God's control of the world & of the church (41)
  3. The Mediator of Israel (the Servant of the Lord) & Savior of the Gentiles (42)
  4. Israel's election according to the sovereign will of God alone (43)
  5. Contrast between the ridiculous gods of the nations & the God of Israel (44)  
The Promise of the Spirit
  6. Contrast between God & His attributes & the senselessness of idols (45)
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**TEN for TWO: A trial subscription of  
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**Write the Business Office.**



*RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY*

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, mourns the loss of a faithful member,

MRS. DENA VANDER WAL

whom the Lord took home on the 9th of July, and hereby express our sympathy to the bereaved family.

"Thanks be to our God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor. 15:55).

Mrs. T. Newhof, Pres.  
Mrs. Chas. Pastoor, Sec'y

*TAKEN TO GLORY*

On Monday, July 9, 1973, it pleased our Heavenly Father to take to Eternal Glory our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

MRS. DENA VANDER WAL

at the age of 83 years.

Through many days of sickness and affliction her hope steadfastly grew in the sure promise of her Covenant God and expressed the prayer of the righteous as found in Psalm 17:

"When I in righteousness at last  
Thy glorious face shall see,  
When all the weary night is past,  
And I awake with Thee  
To view the glories that abide,  
Then, then I shall be satisfied."

Henry and Dorothy Vander Wal  
Dick and Angeline Vander Wal  
William and Lois Versluys  
14 grandchildren  
19 great-grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Mich.

*WEDDING ANNIVERSARY*

We, the children and grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. Dewey Engelsma, are grateful to Jehovah that on July 30, our parents celebrated their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary.

We are reminded on this happy occasion of one of their favorite Scripture passages found in Psalm 16:5

"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

It is our prayer that Jehovah will continue to care for them as He hath done so graciously in the past.

Their children,

Rev. David and Ruth Engelsma  
Mr. Lammert and Mary Beth Lubbers  
Mr. Donald and Lenore Cook  
Mr. Michael and Brenda Engelsma  
Mr. Timothy and Lois Pipe  
Ruthanne  
Jonathan  
Mark  
Elizabeth  
Kenneth  
Sara  
Jordan  
And seventeen grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Mich.

*NOTICE*

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Loveland, Colorado on Wednesday, September 5, 1973 at 8:30 A.M., the Lord willing. Material for the agenda of Classis must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk thirty days before Classis convenes. Delegates in need of lodging should notify the clerk of the Loveland consistory of their need.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk

## News From Our Churches

*REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST*

June 27, 1973

First Prot. Ref. Church

Classis East met in regular session on June 27th, 1973 in the First Prot. Ref. Church. All the churches

were represented by two delegates. Rev. G. Lubbers, on furlough from his work in Jamaica, was also present and was given advisory vote.

Rev. G. Van Baren led the classis in opening devotions and Rev. R. Van Overloop was given the



privilege of chairing Classis East for the first time.

Most of the business of classis was considered "routine" but there were two notable exceptions. The first was a report of a study committee appointed in the January 1973 Classis. After considerable discussion of this report and the attendant church political questions, the classis decided to refer this report to the consistories for study and response by the January 1974 Classis. The other non-routine business was an overture from the consistory of Hope requesting classis to declare itself on the propriety of membership in the Consolidated Independent Union, Local 951 (commonly known as the Meijer Union). Classis, however, declared this overture to be out of order since it violated Article 30 of the Church Order.

The reports of the Stated Clerk and the Classical Committee were heard, but the anticipated report of the church visitors was not to be heard since the church visitors had all been active either in Jamaica or home mission work in the eastern states. An extension of time was given the church visitors and they are to report at the October Classis.

The Finance Committee, composed of Elders D. Meulenberg and P. Lotterman, reported expenses of \$18.28 for this session. Faith Church and Kalamazoo Church both requested classical appointments — Faith for the obvious reason of having no minister and Kalamazoo because they will be releasing Rev. Harbach from July 22-September 23 to work in the Philadelphia area. Rev. J.A. Heys and Elders D. Dykstra and R. Pastoor served on the Classical Appointment Committee and the following schedule, after much date-swapping, was adopted: KALAMAZOO: July 29 - R. Van Overloop; August 12 - G. Van Baren; August 19 - H. Veldman; September 9 - C. Hanko; September 23 - M. Schipper. FAITH: July 15 - M. Schipper; August 5 - C. Hanko; August 19 - R. Van Overloop; September 2 - H. Veldman; September 16 - J. A. Heys; September 30 - G. Van Baren.

There was an interesting sidelight to this session of classis. Elder John Van Baren was appointed to thank the ladies for their catering services; but in trying to fulfill his mandate he could find no ladies, for it so happened that classis had the distinct privilege of being catered to by a waiter, Mr. Art Bult. Mr. Bult very capably handled his duties and did indeed merit the thanks of the classis.

The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and satisfactorily answered, the chairman in his closing remarks asked God's blessing upon the decisions taken in this session, and Rev. Lubbers

offered a prayer of thanksgiving to close this session of classis. Classis East stands adjourned until the 3rd of October when the next regular session will be convened in Hudsonville.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jon Huiskens  
Stated Clerk  
Classis East

\* \* \* \* \*

Rev. Woudenberg has declined the call he received from Faith, Jenison, congregation. Rev. Decker declined the call which he received to serve as home missionary. Rev. Decker is considering the call to serve as third professor in the seminary, as that call was declined by Rev. Engelsma.

\* \* \* \* \*

Good news from Rev. Bekkering, pastor of our Randolph congregation: "We are finished with the foundation and basement and are beginning with the superstructure." He was referring, of course, to the construction of Randolph's new church building. This summer will no doubt be a memorable one for that congregation.

\* \* \* \* \*

And we have a little radio news this month. A member of the Radio Committee of our Reformed Witness Hour has submitted the following:

"The Lord willing, Rev. R. Decker, pastor of our South Holland Prot. Ref. Church, will occupy our 'radio pulpit' for a while. His series of radio sermons, entitled 'JESUS, REJECTED BY HIS OWN IN NAZARETH,' begin on Sunday, August 12. The first three have already been taped — and what powerful and inspiring messages they are! One Sunday, August 19, his topic will be, 'WILL YOU ALSO GO AWAY FROM JESUS?' (Don't miss this one!) Then on August 26th, Rev. Decker's theme is, 'GOD'S PEOPLE DESTROYED FOR LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.'

"We remind our readers that printed copies of these messages are available (free of charge), and also that the sermons can be obtained on taped recordings at a small charge. Address your requests to — THE REFORMED WITNESS HOUR, P.O. BOX 1230, GRAND RAPIDS, MI. 49501."

D.D.