

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation

Unmoveably Steadfast

Signs of the Times

“De Facto” Church Union

Editorials

Key ‘73’s False Ecumenism

“Quo Vadis”

A New “Book of Praise”

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Meditation

Unmoveably Steadfast

Rev. M. Schipper

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.”

I Corinthians 15:58

Therefore!

And immediately you ask: Wherefore?

First of all, the apostle points up that a triple monster has been overcome: Death, Grave, and Hell.

An invincible enemy if we stand alone!

Death, with its biting jaws, stands before every man, ready to devour!

The grave, which has the power to gnaw away at your flesh, to consume it completely!

And hell, the extreme portal of death and the grave, demanding every victim who stands alone!

Though legions of men should be summoned to deliver us from this horrible monster, are they not all like you and me? Would they not all succumb to the same devastating power?

But we know that our Redeemer liveth, and He is not only able to deliver; He has overcome!

Death is swallowed up in victory!

Death, grave, and hell are wholly impotent through the superb strength of the risen Lord!

Therefore, my beloved brethren . . . !

But there is more!

The apostle has been speaking of the hope of a complete change. Flesh and blood, so he informs us, cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

That we shall inherit the kingdom, there can be no doubt. Indeed, we shall possess it, walk in it, abide in it. We shall see it, and enjoy it forever. All our senses shall be filled with the beauty of it. As God's covenant friends we shall eternally drink in the glories of His heavenly kingdom.

But the question is: How?

That kingdom is wholly spiritual, other worldly, incorruptible and eternal. But we are natural, corruptible, temporal.

O, indeed, there must be a change!

Whether that change take place through death and the grave, when we shall shed, as a garment, the natural, earthly flesh and blood; or whether we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump, — we must be changed.

And changed we shall be!

Therefore, my beloved brethren . . . !

Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord!

O, to be sure, there was occasion for such an exhortation to the church which was in Corinth. Was this not the church which had been rocked by unholy partisanship? Had not this church, scarcely organized, been well-nigh rent to pieces by wrangling, division, and debate? And did not the apostle find it necessary to rebuke this church sharply, reminding them that Christ is not divided, and emphasizing the glorious truth that all things are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's? Was not also this the church, though hardly called out of darkness into God's marvelous light, yet apparently sinking back into that darkness, when they condoned moral corruption? Had not this church been thoroughly shaken with errors concerning the doctrine of the resurrection? Had not the apostle explained at great length the seriousness of this error? Did he not point out to them that if there is no resurrection, then is Christ not risen? And was it not in detail stressed that if Christ be not risen, then all is vain, their faith is vain, they are still in their sins, and they are without hope in the world?

Remembering all this, the apostle, before he closed his epistle to them, felt the need to admonish . . .

Be ye stedfast, unmoveable . . . !

But is not this exhortation also necessary for the church of Christ at any time? Also today?

Is it not true that the Church is always beset by much opposition? And do not the Scriptures forewarn that as time goes to its end, the perilous times shall increase, when there shall be ill winds of doctrine, and many shall be deceived? When there shall be a great falling away?

To be sure, the Church of Christ in the world is

always in need of such an exhortation!

Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord!

But what does this mean? What does it mean to be stedfast and unmoveable? And what are we to understand concerning the relation of these two?

Stedfastness expresses the notion of strength to stand; while unmoveableness emphasizes this strength as it is tested by opposing forces. Stedfastness has its figure in the natural, but also proverbial, Rock of Gibraltar, jutting up above the sea on the southern coast of Spain. Or, for those who are more familiar with it, stedfastness has its figure in the Rockies, stretching across our country from the south to the north and up into Canada; appearing not only as a huge spinal column holding the nation together, but as a symbol of strength. Unmoveableness, on the other hand, has its figure in that same rock formation as it stands in the midst of the sea, battered by the waves and the tempests. Nothing moves the rock from its mooring, it stands immoveably stedfast, though it be beset with much opposition.

This figure of immovable stability, the apostle urges upon the church. She must stand so immoveably stedfast that no powers of opposition can move her from her place. Though she be assailed with many forces of attack, their raging is all in vain.

And this implies, in the first place, that the church must have a place to stand. That place must be the truth as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and revealed in the Scriptures. This is, indeed, a sharply defined position. There is nothing vague about the truth. It is not undefinable, nor is it impossible to distinguish it from the lie. Nor does it contain contradictions, as higher criticism would have us believe. It is readily discernible, easily distinguishable, and the sole basis for faith and practice.

Secondly, and in close connection with the foregoing, it implies that you know the truth. That you be convinced of it, and carry that truth in your heart, and love it. When vain philosophy entices you and false doctrines would lead you astray, how shall you be immoveably stedfast if you do not know the truth, and are unacquainted with the very place on which you must stand?

Thirdly, however, we hasten to add that it is not sufficient merely to know the truth; but you must be rooted and grounded in Christ Jesus, Who is the central revelation of the truth. It must therefore be not merely an intellectual acumen, but a spiritual knowledge of faith. The truth must be very precious to you, more precious than anything else. So that you will be willing to lose everything, your possession, your liberty, your life, than move one inch from your position in the truth.

Finally, to be immoveably stedfast, you must also know the forces of opposition, those powers of

darkness that are many and strong, and their method of attack. Not always do these powers of opposition appear in their proper garb, and reveal their vicious nature. Vain philosophy, for example, one of the more potent enemies of the truth, does not always come to you as a lie, but with a semblance of truth. Shrewdly, but deceitfully this opponent approaches you with the doctrines of men, pretending to teach Christ. Often it looks like the Lamb, while it speaks like the Dragon. Shall you stand immoveably steadfast therefore, you must discern sharply and distinguish unerringly the light from the darkness, the truth from the lie. Then, too, you must know the vanity of the world which, with its many allurements, will seek to draw you away from your position. It will offer you its favor, honor, power, and glory, if you will but be persuaded to leave your place. And you must know also that these forces of evil, if they do not succeed to move you from your stand in the truth, will persecute you unto the death. They will frown on you, make your way difficult, cast you out, mock and deride you, imprison you, and even kill you.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and immovable!

Always abounding in the work of the Lord!

So, and not otherwise, shall you remain steadfast and immovable!

Be sure, however, that you take particular notice that the apostle is speaking here of the work of the Lord!

Not your work, nor even your work for the Lord! Not our work must abound. But the apostle is saying emphatically that we must abound in the work of the Lord. Never should this be interpreted to mean that we are God's little helpers, co-workers with God, as many, no doubt, would explain.

Emphatically, it is the work of the Lord! The work which He has done, and is still doing as the God of our salvation. And that work of salvation is entirely His work from beginning to end. That work is the work of His counsel, according to which He has chosen His people in Christ from everlasting. In that counsel He also ordains the Christ, His only Begotten Son, to be our Mediator and Saviour. That work of the Lord is also manifested in time, when He comes into our world, assumes our nature, under the curse of the law, in order to redeem us who are under the curse. That work He performed in His suffering and death on the cross, and in His resurrection and ascension to God's right hand, where He received the Spirit without measure. That work of the Lord is the work of the Spirit as He operates in our hearts, regenerating us and raising us up from spiritual death unto eternal life and glory. That work He accomplishes when He makes us to become partakers of all His saving benefits, justification, sanctification, faith, love, and grace; when He makes us righteous as He is righteous, and

holy as He is holy, when He illumines our understanding so that we also are able to discern spiritual things spiritually. That work of the Lord causes us to mortify the old man of sin in us, and to put on the new man. It so powerfully operates in us that we are able to know and to love the truth once more, and to take our stand on the basis of that truth of His Word in the midst of the world. And when that work of the Lord shall be finished, we shall be raised from the dead, and transformed completely into His perfect image; for we shall see Him as He is, and know Him even as we are known.

In that work of the Lord we are to abound!

That means that consciously and spiritually we respond to that work of the Lord inwardly and outwardly. It means that we experience that work overflowing in our lives. So that we desire it with all our hearts, speak of it and sing of it all the live long day, and all the days of our lives. We act as those who cannot get enough of it, not only on the day of the Lord in His house, but all the years of our pilgrimage.

O, how radical is the Word of God here! It leaves no room for our works, not even our works for the Lord. It wants us to embrace only the work of the Lord, nothing else!

And abounding in the work of the Lord constitutes our labor!

And we know that our labor is not vain in the Lord!

That expresses the motive for our always abounding in the work of the Lord, and for being steadfast and unmoveable. O, yes, we labor! We are not mere robots upon whom the Lord works, or in whom He so works that we mechanically respond to His manipulations. Not so does the Lord save us. But He works in us in such a way that we will and do of His good pleasure.

Note the term "labour"! Labour is work that is characterized by hardship, toil, wearisomeness, much difficulty. Evidently the apostle is reflecting on the difficulty, the wearisomeness, that is connected to our remaining steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. As we suggested above, to remain unmoveably steadfast, always abounding in the work of the Lord, is demanding; it entails much hardship, the loss of all worldly things, the reproach and persecution of the world. The child of God who remains steadfast, knows of the billows of life, and often, in distinction from the insensible, unfeeling stone, experiences in his soul the bitterness of the taunts of the wicked, the testing of the temptations of the world to remove him from his place. This is labour, work with toil and wearisomeness.

But the apostle hastens to add: this labour is never vain, idle, without positive fruits, when it is "in the Lord." This we know from experience. Does not this same apostle in another of his letters write: "Work out your own salvation with *fear* and *trembling*: for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his

good pleasure?" (Phil. 2:12,13)

That our labour is never vain in the Lord is due to the fact, not that you and I are so faithful, so steadfast and unmoveable, so always abounding in the work of the Lord; but in the fact that the Lord, the mighty, loving, gracious, Lord, Who died for us and in our stead, is alive, is risen from the dead. That risen and

glorified Redeemer keeps us in His sphere, and upholds us by His right hand.

So, we never labour in vain!

So, we are encouraged to remain unmoveably steadfast!

Always abounding in the work of the Lord!

My beloved brethren!

Voice of our Fathers

The Belgic Confession, Article 14 Creation, A Biblical Truth

Rev. J. Kortering

Having dealt with the two main attacks upon the doctrine of the creation of man, viz. evolution and theistic evolution or progressive creationism, we now proceed to demonstrate that the Bible teaches that God created man.

GENESIS, A TEACHING MODEL?

We take the Scripture seriously. When the Bible speaks concerning the origin of man, it does so with divine authority. The Genesis account is historical, it describes what God did in bringing forth the first man and woman. We insist that this is an *a priori* of faith for which we make no apologies. Unless we are willing to take this position, we will be influenced and swallowed up by the tide of Scientism, Historical-critical Hermeneutics, and Word-Revelations that are sweeping over the church world today. This tide brings one inevitably to the position of Dr. H. M. Kuitert in his book, *Do You Understand What You Read?*

It has become impossible in our time, in the light of all sorts of scientific data (we shall not talk about theory here) to insist on what we called the literal-historical interpretation of the first chapters of Genesis. Whatever these chapters of the Bible intend to tell us (and we said something about that in previous chapters) they do not intend to teach us that the world is about 6,000 years old, and that in this young and complete world an original, human, created couple lived alone in the Garden of Eden. It might be possible for Orthodox Protestantism to abandon this concept, because among other reasons it is in conflict with the data that we come to know through normal, legitimate methods. That is to say, even as faith does not ask us ever to call white black, faith does not demand that we dig in our heels, and contrary to all scientific evidence, insist that the original human couple of Genesis is a literal and historical pair of people. (page 101)

We might ask, what good is God's revelation in Genesis? He adds,

If we say, for example, that the first chapters of Genesis are not meant to provide us with scientific information about the origin of man and his world, we certainly do not mean that those chapters could be sliced away from the Bible. They form a chapter in the Godgiven message of the Bible that we never could do without. They proclaim that Israel's God is the creator of heaven and earth — and they keep doing that even as we understand them to be teaching models rather than stories of actual history. (page 103)

Our approach to the Scriptural account is the very opposite of Kuitert's. The Belgic Confession cannot be harmonized with Kuitert's view nor Kuitert's view with the historic Reformed position. Article 14 of the Belgic Confession expresses the fact that God created Adam and Eve and that they lived in the Garden of Eden in perfection. Later the devil came and tempted them to sin and the act of disobedience brought upon them and all man-kind a horrible depravity by which he is incapable of performing that which is truly good.

GENESIS-HISTORICAL

The Genesis record is a historical account of the work God did in creating all things, man included. The creation of man was not a continuation of the animals, as evolution would teach, but a separate divine act. Of the animals we read, "Let the sea bring forth abundantly the moving creatures . . . let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind," Gen. 1:20-25. As a distinctive creative act God brought forth man, for He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping

thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them," Gen. 1:26, 27. To this is added, "And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul," Gen. 2:7. Of the creation of Eve we read, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man," Gen. 2:21, 22. This is an inspired account of both the fact and the manner whereby God created Adam and Eve. Because we believe in the authority of the Word of God, we believe this to be true.

THE SOVEREIGN CREATOR

There is a close connection between creation and sovereignty. God Creator has the right to determine and control the lives he has brought into existence. This is true for all of time and even unto all eternity. God Himself expresses thus in Isaiah, "Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands, command ye me. I have made the earth and created man upon it: I, even my hands have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded," Is. 45:11, 12. This is mentioned in connection with the role Cyrus would play in the release of the captives in the future. Because God made man, He uses all men for His purpose. That central purpose is the salvation of His church unto the glory of His name. Thus Jehovah said earlier, "Fear not; for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up: and to the south, Keep not back, bring my sons from far and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him: yea, I have made him," Is. 43:5-7. The sovereign Creator is able to work all things for the salvation of His people.

THE CREATURE'S RESPONSE

As children of God, we do not deny God's having created man, but gladly acknowledge this. This was the attitude of the inspired writers who reflected upon this great wonder. In exhorting Israel, Moses reflected upon the significance of God having spoken to them from the Holy Mount. He declared to Israel, "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such things as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?" Deut. 4:32, 33. Moses believed that God created man and that this was the original great wonder which became a point of

reference to put into focus the present wonder of God speaking from the mountain.

In pleading with Job to hearken to his words, Elihu reasoned, "My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly. The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up. Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay," Job 33:4-6. Recognizing his origin, Elihu was both humble and bold: humble because he was fashioned out of the clay, bold because the Almighty God gave him his life.

Paul was bold to preach the God of creation upon Mars Hill when he declared, "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," Acts. 17:24-26. He didn't argue with the historicity of creation: it formed an integral part of the message, God's greatness in creation demands recognition by the creature. Thus Paul also declared to the church at Corinth, "And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul: the last Adam was made a quickening spirit," I Cor. 15:45. If we question the existence of the first Adam, we call into question the existence of the last Adam.

Our divine origin influences our life. In the Old Testament, Solomon wrote the beautiful words, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them," Eccl. 12:1. The humble response of every child of God to his divine origin is that we gladly give God the glory for our whole life. We exist not for ourselves, but to praise our God. Those who deny the creation of man become proud and show this by exalting man's word above God's own testimony. Then everything goes wrong. For us, our creation influences our Christian conduct. Because man was created before woman, something all of evolution rejects, Paul tells us that man is the head of the woman, I Cor. 11:9, 12. Similarly, in I Tim. 1:13-15, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

ONE TRUTH

All of this teaches us that the truth of God given in the Bible is one whole. We speak of God's revelation as

being organic, that it is a living whole, each part directly related to every other part.

If we deny one part of that divine revelation, we distort and confuse the whole. Unbelievers deliberately do this; they delight in changing the Word of God to satisfy the evil intent of their depraved nature. Today we see this happening about us on every side. Those who are so proud that they rather trust the theories and seeming invincible proofs of radioactivity, archeology, and science are quick to discard the Word of God as a "teaching model" wholly unreliable for telling us where we came from or whither we are going. This leads them to deny creation and claim that they still believe in the creator-God. However, if we deny God, and those who deny creation deny God the Creator, we lose the pivotal center of all truth. This explains the confusion in the church world today. When man drifts from the Word of God and denies creation, he denies God's sovereignty over all life, he denies that God has the right to determine the future destiny of all man-kind as well as controlling history

for His own purpose. He denies that the only hope for fallen man is to be reconciled to God by the death of His Son; rather he speaks about a Jesus who is a good man, who can give everyone a new lease on life. A confused church loses her calling to preach the Word, finding herself on the bandwagon of social action. When man is substituted for God, his end is near, for the height of such presumption is for him to stand in the temple and claim that he is God, II Thess. 2:4. Then his measure of iniquity will be full.

Our Reformed confession is based upon the clear teaching of the Word of God. The inspired writers gratefully acknowledged that God was the Creator of man and as such calls us to acknowledge this and praise His name for it.

In response to this calling, we maintain the Belgic Confession as a beautiful statement of faith and join the church of all ages in saying, "That God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image," Article 14.

From Holy Writ

Pure and Undeiled Religion (6)

An Exposition of the Epistle of James

Rev. Robert D. Decker

Chapter 1:12-17, The Blessedness of Enduring Temptations . . .

This passage takes us back to a thought expressed in verses five through eight. James there instructed us in the truth that if we are to "count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations" we need the wisdom of God. We established the point in that connection that if we are to rejoice in temptations by the power of the wisdom of God we must "keep on asking for wisdom from God." And we must ask "in faith, nothing wavering." The question we faced in that connection obtains once more. Are you unhappy? Do you find generally in your living from day to day no real, genuine, lasting satisfaction and joy? Is your life perhaps characterized by a lack of peace and assurance, by discontent, fear, or anxiety? Perhaps you are even deeply depressed? The troubles loom large and appear insurmountable, the pressures unbearable, and maybe the horrible thought has more than once crossed your mind; "I feel like ending it all?"

The Bible, The Word from God Himself, points us to the root cause of such unhappiness in these verses. It does so in the bluntest of terms — God never pulls

punches with us — but never forget that the Word of God, the gospel of Jesus Christ, comes out of the immeasurable mercy (pity for the miserable) and love of God. The trouble with us who are characterized by unhappiness is S-I-N! And this is the sin; we are not enduring the divers temptations of the Evil One. We are being tempted and we are yielding to the temptations and what is worse we are saying; "I am tempted of God." Rather than acknowledging our sins and confessing our transgressions, we are hiding our iniquities and keeping silence. It is no wonder "our bones wax old through our roaring all the day long." (Perhaps you recognize this as a paraphrase of parts of Psalm 32 — read that Psalm: it expresses exactly the thought.) Rather than confessing our sins we are saying, "I am tempted of God"; we are then shifting the blame — and that, too, to God! Sin is our Lord; we are drawn away from God and enticed to evil by our own lust, and lust brings forth sin, and sin when it is finished brings forth death. Death is experienced here and now, alienation from God. This is why we are unhappy. Do we really want to: "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice . . . and shout for joy" in every experience of life? (Ps. 32:11) Then we must not blame God for

our sins, but we must acknowledge and confess them all, and we shall find that He is our hiding place, the God Who preserves us from trouble and Who compasseth us about with songs of deliverance (Psalm 32:7). Then we can pray for God's wisdom, count it all joy in divers temptations, rejoice in our exaltation and look forward to glory. This is the message of these verses. We consider them as they stand, one by one.

verse 12:

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." Literally translated, the text reads: "Happy the man who continues to endure temptation," or "who keeps on enduring temptation. . . ." The verb "endure" is the root from which the term "patience" (vss. 3, 4) comes. It means "to stay under" and implies the bearing of a burden. Not in a passive sense must we understand this enduring, "staying under." Enduring is not a stoic acceptance of the inescapable fact of temptations or a mere acquiescence. Enduring is the expression of a vibrant, active, joyful faith. It is obedience, yielding to the Word of God, which does not succumb to the enticements of the Devil. He who endures, stays under in the sense that in all the temptations he encounters, he remains undaunted, faithful to the end.

THAT man is blessed, truly happy. This is the reason: "For when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." "Having become tried, tested out," purified as silver by fire, that man shall receive the crown of life. (cf. vs. 3) The man who endures temptations is he who has been put through the trying or purifying process and thus been molded into the image of Christ. When that process is finished he shall receive "the crown of life." Scripture speaks often of this crown. It is promised to the faithful church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:10), it is called the "crown of glory" and promised to faithful elders (I Peter 5:4) and is sometimes called the "crown of righteousness." This is not the royal crown, the diadem; but the victor's crown. The figure was familiar to the Church of James' day. In the Grecian games the victor received a wreath or garland symbolic of his winning the race. Thus the child of God, having been tested out and approved by the fire of temptations, receives the crown of life. Life is that crown. The life that never dies, everlasting life, resurrection life, the life of Jesus Christ is that crown. Life which is to be in the fellowship of God through Jesus Christ — that is the crown. Life in glory in which there shall be no more temptations, no more sin, neither sorrow, nor crying; life in which we shall forever praise Him Who sitteth upon the throne and the Lamb, in the company of the innumerable multitude, gathered out of every nation, tribe and tongue (cf. Rev. 7:8ff, 21:1ff.).

The receiving of the crown is absolutely certain,

because the Lord has promised it to them that love him. Them that love Him are those whom God loved first and for whom He sent His Son to be the propitiation for their sins (I John 4:10, 19). To these, His elect in Christ Jesus, who love Him with all their heart and mind and soul and strength and reveal that love by loving their brothers and sisters in Christ (cf. once again I John 4!), God has promised the crown of life! And God's promise is sure, it cannot fail! Hebrews 6:13ff. grounds the certainty of God's promise in the immutability (unchangeableness) of God's counsel and in the fact that when God made promise to Abraham saying: "surely blessing I will bless thee," God swore by Himself, because He could swear by no greater! Therefore we who love God and who have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ have strong consolation, and we have hope as an anchor of the soul. God cannot lie!

Indeed then! Blessed, happy the man who keeps on enduring temptation! He is happy even in his deepest sorrows, even when the tears of grief are streaming down his face. He knows that nothing can be against him and that all things are for him. He is assured that God, Who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all will also freely give us all things in Him (Romans 8)! Thus in anticipation of the crown of glory which God has promised him he possesses a joy which can never be diminished or taken from him.

verse 13:

Here is the antithesis: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." Let it be understood that the text refers not to the fact of temptations as such but to falling into sin as a result of temptation. We might paraphrase it this way: "Let no man say when he is tempted and yields to that temptation, I am tempted of God (literally *from* God)." No one may say when he yields to temptation, falls into sin and as a result suffers the evil consequences of sin; "God tempted me: it's God's fault."

But this is precisely what sinful man does. This is what makes sin and the depravity of man so frightening. Not only does man sin, and not only is it written on every page of Scripture that man according to his natural birth can do nothing but sin, but man has the effrontery, audacity, to blame God, to say that God is the source of his sinning. This is at once the very depth of depravity and the height of blasphemy. It all began immediately after the fall of the human race into sin and death. Consult Genesis 3. Remember that after eating of the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve knew that they were naked and futilely attempted to cover their shame with fig leaves? Remember how they hid themselves in the garden from God, Who came to talk to them in the cool of the day? When God questions Adam concerning all this; "Adam, . . . where art thou?", Adam answers; "I heard thy voice . . . and I

was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." God asks; "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" What does Adam say to that? Does he say, "Yes, Lord I sinned"? O no! Listen, "The woman whom *thou gavest to be with me*, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." (emphasis mine) Adam did more than shift the blame to Eve, he blamed God! "God," Adam was saying, "You gave me that woman, therefore it's your fault that I sinned." Adam was saying; "I am tempted from God." The woman does the same. When God turns to her with the question; "What hast thou done?" her answer is; "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Eve says, in other words, "It's not my fault that I sinned, God, you created the serpent, it's you who are to blame."

Sinful man has been doing the same ever after. Sin develops also in this respect. According to the world's educators, philosophers, sociologists, psychiatrists, etc. no one is a sinner. People are not to be blamed for their sinful behaviour. Guilt is only a bad "feeling." No one is to be held accountable to a righteous and holy

God, Who *forgives* His sinning children in the blood of Jesus. Man is insane, a victim of his environment or circumstances, his parents failed badly in providing him with "healthy attitudes" when he was young, or man is sick, or ignorant. The drunkard (the Bible's terminology) is afflicted with the disease, "alcoholism. Young people are on drugs because of the pressures of modern day life. It all amounts to saying: "I am tempted from God." That is total depravity! And, it's the very anti-thesis of "enduring temptations" and experiencing the happiness of God's blessing. The bitter fruit of that sin is all too obvious in these "perilous times" in which we live.

But the fact that the Spirit inspired these words indicates that the church needs to be admonished at this point. The Word, after all, the gospel, is particular; it is addressed not to mankind in general (though they hear the sound of it — Romans 10:18) but to the church in the dispersion. Very simply put, it is our natural and sinful inclination to say when tempted; "I am tempted from God." With that we continue, D.V., in the next issue.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement (Reformation Period)

Synod of Dordt
The Canons

Rev. H. Veldman

Discussing the Rejection of Errors of the second head of the Canons of Dordt, we now quote Article V:

Who teach: That all men have been accepted unto the state of reconciliation and unto the grace of the covenant, so that no one is worthy of condemnation on account of original sin, and that no one shall be condemned because of it, but that all are free from the guilt of original sin. For this opinion is repugnant to Scripture which teaches that we are by nature children of wrath. Eph. 2:3.

In this article, according to the fathers of Dordt, the Arminians teach three things. In the first place, they teach that all men have been accepted unto the state of reconciliation. Secondly, they teach that all men have been accepted unto the grace of the covenant. And, in the third place, they also teach that no one is worthy of condemnation on account of original sin, and that no one shall be condemned because of it, but that all are free from the guilt of original sin. We do well to understand this Arminian view of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. We do well to be fully informed about the teaching of the Remonstrants. We do well to be acquainted thoroughly with our confessions, and

this also includes those parts of our Canons in which the fathers of Dordt set forth the errors of these Remonstrants. These confessions have been composed for our instruction. They have been sealed with the blood of the saints. We must not ignore them and be ignorant of their content. In these articles the seriousness of the Arminian error is held vividly before us. We must bear in mind that these heresies of the Arminians follow inexorably from their teachings.

We must bear in mind that Arminianism and the Reformed faith have nothing in common. They are as far apart as the two poles. Sometimes one hears the remark, when we set forth and condemn the Arminian error, that we are speaking of the worst Arminians. That there are many Arminians who are not that bad and that these Arminians subscribe to the fundamental truths of the Word of God. This last assertion is not true. Arminianism is that system of doctrine which departs from the Reformed faith, is wholly opposed to it, has nothing in common with it. If we analyze Arminianism, we shall discover that it violates every fundamental truth of Holy Writ. I realize that the

Arminians use Reformed terms, would leave the impression that they believe the Scriptures. This is not unusual. Do not the Scriptures teach that the wolves walk about in sheep's clothing? Of this fifth article of the Rejection of Errors of Head II of our Canons is a clear example. Do we not read in this article of the state of reconciliation and of the grace of the covenant? Also the Arminians speak of the love of God, of the death and atonement of Christ upon the cross of Calvary, of sin and of the preaching of the gospel. Do not the modernists of our day speak of the birth and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ? And so we could go on. This means nothing. When heretics use these Scriptural terms they certainly do not use them in the Scriptural sense of the word. And this means that we must always be doubly on our guard.

There is, first of all, according to this fifth article, the Scriptural concept of reconciliation. Concerning this concept, we would remark, in the first place, that God is always the Subject of reconciliation and never its Object, and that the elect sinner is always its object and never its subject. God always does the reconciling and is never reconciled, the sinner is always reconciled and never does the reconciling. As we read it in 2 Cor. 5:19: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." The Scriptures never express it any other way. It is true that we read at the close of verse 20: "Be ye reconciled to God." But this expression must never be interpreted to mean: "Become ye reconciled to God." This is evident from the fact that we read in verse 19 that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. So, the Lord does the reconciling and the elect sinner is always its object.

Secondly, the Scriptural concept of reconciliation contains three elements. First, this concept presupposes a relationship. This is naturally true. Strangers are not reconciled. Only people who stand in a certain relation to each other are reconciled, such as husbands and wives, parents and children, employers and employees, etc. This is also Scripturally true. Reconciliation presupposes a relationship between God and His people, in which God has known them in everlasting love, has willed them to be His people, His covenant friends, with whom He has willed to dwell in everlasting communion and fellowship.

Secondly, this concept of reconciliation presupposes that this relationship has been disturbed. Mind you, it has not been broken. This, too, is naturally true. A husband and his wife who have been divorced are not reconciled. Their divorce ends their relationship. Reconciliation is attempted as long as the bond has not yet been severed, broken. This is also spiritually true. O, yes, this relationship has been broken as far as we are concerned. We have certainly severed connections; we have turned our backs upon the Lord. And we have

placed ourselves in a position in which this relationship, as far as we are concerned, can never be restored. We cannot pay our guilt of sin, satisfy the unchangeable righteousness of God, and this satisfaction of God's justice is absolutely necessary if we are to return into the favor and fellowship of the Lord. And neither are we able to break these bands of sin and darkness and call ourselves out of death and darkness into the life and light of God's covenant. But, although we can and did turn our backs upon the Lord, the Lord has not broken connections with us, has not turned His back upon us. This is the wonder of Divine love. The sheep may turn their backs upon their shepherd, but they can never compel the shepherd to turn his back upon them. Do we not read in the Scriptures that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son? However, this relationship has been disturbed. Something has happened that makes it impossible for God to exercise covenant fellowship with us. We have sinned and God is holy and righteous and good. Sin, therefore, must be paid, His justice must be satisfied. And until our sin is paid, His justice satisfied, and we are holy even as He is holy, God cannot exercise covenant communion and fellowship with us.

Thirdly, the concept of reconciliation implies that this relationship has now been restored. Notice again: we are reconciled, not God. The Scriptures never teach that the Lord is reconciled. The love of God toward His people has never been broken. And we must also note that God does the reconciling, never we. We have here the death of the Son of God, of God Himself, in our flesh and blood. God was in Christ reconciling the world, His world, unto Himself. So, this relationship has now been restored. The idea of reconciliation is a legal concept, concerns our judicial relation to the law of God. The basis has now been laid, according to the righteousness of the Lord, whereby God can again enter into fellowship with us. This basis has been laid in the blood of Calvary. All this is implied in the Scriptural concept of reconciliation. Of this, this fifth article of the Rejection of Errors in Head II of our Canons speaks.

Now the Arminians teach, according to our fathers in this fifth article, that all men have been accepted unto the state of reconciliation. They were, of course, compelled to teach this. Of course, we understand that when they speak of all men being accepted unto the state of reconciliation, they mean something which is quite different from the Reformed conception. It is, we understand, very true that all men have been restored into the state of reconciliation. The Scriptures surely teach this. Do we not read in the Word of God that God reconciled the world unto Himself, and that the crucified and glorified Lord draws all men unto Himself. When the Arminians, however, teach that all men have been accepted unto the state of

reconciliation, they mean all men in the sense of every man, head for head. And we will in due time call attention to what they mean when they speak of all men having been accepted unto the state of reconciliation. But the Arminians were surely compelled to teach this. Do not the Scriptures speak of the blood of Christ as the blood of atonement and of reconciliation? Do we not read in 2 Cor. 5:19 that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself? And does not the apostle, in 1 John 2:2, declare that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins? It is, therefore, evident from the Word of God that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ is the blood of reconciliation. But the Arminians also teach that Christ died for the whole world, for all men, every man, head for head. So, they were compelled to teach that all men have been accepted unto the state of reconciliation.

Secondly, the Arminians teach that all men have been accepted unto the grace of the covenant. Again, this is true enough in itself, provided that we understand all men to mean all men as out of every tribe, nation, land and tongue. But, of course, we understand that the Remonstrants mean all men in the sense of every man, individually. And they were also compelled to teach this. This follows from their teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ died for the whole human race and every individual of that human race. If all men have been accepted into the state of reconciliation, then it follows inexorably that all men

have also been accepted into the grace of the covenant. This means, according to the Remonstrants, that all men have been accepted into the love and friendship of the Lord, that the Lord now enters into friendship relations with all men and every man. Of course, the Arminian places his own construction upon these words. We understand, of course, that if it were really true that all men have been accepted into the grace of the covenant, into the love and friendship of the living God, according to the Scriptural meaning of the love and friendship of the Lord, then all men would surely be saved. But we know that the Arminian explains everything as dependent upon the free will of the sinner. Besides, what a striking similarity there is between this Arminian conception and the conception which is so prevalent today! But, the Lord willing, we will have to wait until our following article before we call attention to this. And we will also wait until our following article before calling attention to what we also read in this article, namely, that no one is worthy of condemnation because of it, but that all are free from the guilt of original sin. This view of the Arminians is also completely in harmony with their conception that all men have been accepted into the state of reconciliation and into the grace of the covenant. And this heresy of the Remonstrants is also very prevalent in our present day. But to this we will call attention, the Lord willing, in our following article.

Studies in Election

Its Proclamation [continued]

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

The Bible is the Book of Election, not a book of Jewish fables, nor a collection of tribal myths, nor a collation of ancient moralisms. It is full of election from Genesis to Revelation. The Book of Beginnings is full of it. The Lord had respect to Abel, but not to Cain. The Lord was called upon among the Sethites, not among the Cainites. The seed of the woman continued in the sons of God, not in the daughters of men. God established His covenant, not with the wicked world before the flood but, with Noah and his family. The Lord blessed the sons of Noah, but cursed Canaan. The Lord distinguished between the King of Salem and the King of Sodom, between Lot and the men of Sodom, between Jacob and Esau, and between Joseph and Pharaoh. In Exodus, God distinguished between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. The Passover

lamb was for Israel, not for Egypt. Israel, not Egypt, was baptized with the cloud and with the sea. The law of God was given to a redeemed people, not to the heathen nations. The altar was at the foot of Mt. Sinai, not at Mt. Seir. In Leviticus, the atoning sacrifice was for the people of God, and was not so much as offered to the neighboring heathen. The feasts of the Lord were those to which Israel was commanded, but to which the heathen were not called. In Numbers, the heathen were made to see Israel as "*the* people who shall dwell alone" and who were "*not* reckoned among the nations" (23:9). In Deuteronomy it is said that "*the* Lord's portion is His people: Jacob is the lot of His inheritance," and although He "*will* render vengeance to His adversaries," nevertheless He "*will* be merciful to His land and to His people" (32:9, 43). In

Joshua, Israel enters the land while the Canaanites are expelled; the heathen Rahab is chosen and spared, while her whole city was ordained to destruction. In Judges, God chose weak and unlikely instruments to gain victory for His people. Seven in number and forever memorialized in His armory, they are, a left hand, an ox goad, a woman, a nail, a millstone, a pitcher and trumpet combination, and the jaw bone of an ass. In Ruth, God continued the covenant line in her, but not in Orpah. In First Samuel, David is chosen to be king, while Saul is rejected from being king. In Second Samuel, the covenant, house, throne and kingdom of David were established. In First Kings, Solomon began his undisputed reign, and Elijah was sent for the salvation of one widow out of many. In Second Kings, God blessed the Shunammite and cursed Jezebel; condemned all the kings of Israel, but saved some of the kings of Judah. First Chronicles depicts the victorious reign of David, with Israel viewed as God's servant and Jacob's children His chosen ones (16:13). Second Chronicles records the glorious reign of Solomon, various reforms, revivals and marvelous grace in the conversion of Manasseh. The remainder of the Old Testament is full of this truth. It is also detailed throughout the gospels. Especially do we find it in the preaching of the Evangelist Supreme. He was no more disappointed when men did not believe in Him than He was surprised when they did. He rather attributed either outcome to the sovereignty of God. "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . Depart, ye cursed . . ." "It is given unto *you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but unto them that are without (the pale of election), it is not given." "Ye believe not because ye are not of My sheep." "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you." "I know whom I have chosen." The epistles are full of this truth, especially in those of the greatest of the apostles. He speaks of children of God as "the called according to His purpose." They were foreknown and predestinated conformed to the image of His Son. Men like Jacob are vessels of mercy before prepared unto glory. Men like Esau are vessels of wrath prefitted to destruction. Peter says Christ verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last days for us. He says that we were elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, that we are an elect race, and that our calling and election are evidenced by faith, virtue, godliness, love etc.

From this brief survey it may be seen that the truth of election is the heart of the gospel. It simply is not

possible to scripturally proclaim the gospel without it. The richness of the gospel is lost when it is not presented in the light of this golden sunbeam which shines all throughout the length and breadth of the Word of God. The reason this is not widely understood is because not only the relation of the part to the whole is not understood, but the relation of the heart to the whole is not understood. Few see that there is any relation of predestination to the gospel. They do not understand the meaning of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The majority think that the heart of the gospel is found in John's Gospel, chapter three, whereas, it is found in chapter seventeen. More particularly, the *heart* of the matter is not found in John 3:16, but in John 17:2, "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." In the light of this, it is plain that in attempt to preach the gospel apart from election, there is no penetration to the heart of it. The best that is so often done is to present a very thin, man-centered version of the gospel, which amounts to little more than a re-stating of certain pet texts of Scripture. The main stream of Scripture is not followed. The effect of the death of the Son of God is so conceived as to leave undetermined the person and uncertain the number of the saved. Not understood is the meaning of, "for the transgression of My people was He stricken."

The gospel is usually presented today as confined to the divine work in connection with the sacrifice of Christ. Little or no attention is ever given to why the "gospel of Christ" is also called "the gospel of God." The river of grace is rarely traced to its source in the heart of God, or followed on down to its end in the tabernacle of God. The beginning is often taken to be at Calvary, or at Bethlehem, rather than in the eternal counsel of God. The blessings of salvation are not seen as flowing out of and communicated from God's covenant. They are not seen as "the redemption of the purchased possession" reserved for "a peculiar people," or a people for His own possession. The preaching of the age is hardly in harmony with the first chapter of the New Testament, where it is explicitly stated that (1) Jesus "*shall* save, (2) namely, "*His people* from their sins," and *not* (3) that He hopes, aims, wishes, attempts or proposes to do this, but actually *shall* save them. It is not in the interest of a *simple* gospel to omit the essential truth of election. Such a serious omission will leave one with prattling language which even those who utter it do not understand.

Study the doctrine of grace in Scripture and it shall become apparent that the grace of God cannot *be*, apart from election. The chosen remnant is saved "according to the election of grace." Never can the grace of God be exalted while sovereign predestination and unconditional election are denied, nor, either, while salvation is conceived of as provided for all, but

not actually purchased for any. We hear continually that God wants all men to be partakers of salvation, and so, to that end, by the preaching of the gospel He makes an offer of salvation to the free will of all who hear it. An offer is understood to mean the privilege of accepting or rejecting Christ. This is palmed off on men as pure gospel. But it is neither gospel, grace nor privilege.

Between grace and merit there is a whole sky of difference. But this is not so with the "grace" of the Arminian and the free will of man. If grace can be offered, and must be accepted before it will do the sinner any good, then the acceptance of it is a commendable act, calling for praise and reward. For if some refuse the offer, while I accept it, then I either have better sense than the others, or am more tenderhearted than others, or less obstinate, or am a better sport to a pleading Savior. Then the question, "Who maketh thee to differ?" must be answered according to the Arminian boot-strap philosophy, I made myself to differ! At that, I would split the crown on my Savior's head to wear half.

So it is plain that the Bible is the Book of Election, from cover to cover. Both the Old and New Testaments are full of this truth; in fact, it is the very heart of the gospel. Many who would preach the gospel, never get at the heart of the matter, since they

do not see the relation of the truth of election to the truth of the gospel. This is evident in the beginning they make in their thinking. They begin with the crucifixion or the incarnation, rather than with God's eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is never to the praise of the glory of God's grace when that laudation is made apart from election. For grace and every aspect of it flow from the fountain of election (Ephesians 1). As soon as grace is separated from election we have divine favor conditioned by the activities and contingencies of men. With election eliminated from the picture, grace is no more grace. For what, then, is taken to be grace is not grace. Some imagine that because they reject the idea that salvation is entirely dependent upon the will of man, that they exalt grace when they advance the following. (1) The natural man is depraved, spiritually sick, half dead and almost incorrigibly stubborn. (2) But God by His Spirit convicts men of sin, or righteousness and judgment, and enlightens them with the Light of Christ, so that they need not walk in darkness, but have the light of life. (3) Yet they must respond to these influences of the Spirit, and co-operate with His operations. For the reason men are lost is that they refuse such working of the Spirit. Saving grace is experienced as the result of acquiescence to the purpose of God. At bottom, this brings us down to human effort, not grace at all.

Studies in Baptism

The Mode of Baptism Established (continued)

Of those eleven cases of New Testament baptism, three are baptisms of single individuals with no children, — Jesus, the Ethiopian Eunuch and Paul. Three other cases were the disciples of John, the three thousand at Pentecost and the Samaritan converts. The remaining five were family baptisms. Since at Pentecost the promise was to the families of Israel *and their children* (Acts 2:39), then over half of all these cases were family baptisms. That in itself is quite significant. What if we cannot prove that in these families there *were* children? No one can prove that there were no children in them. What if we could not prove from these cases that the mode of baptism is sprinkling or pouring? No one will prove on the basis of them that the mode is immersion. But if the immersionist cannot prove his mode from these instances of baptism, what will he do for support of his position on mode? Really nothing at all; it goes lost. He needs these cases for his so called "proof." But the elimination of the eleven cases from the debate does not

annihilate the argument for the mode of sprinkling or pouring. That stands intact. That argumentation does not need these eleven instances for its survival. As we have already shown, there is an abundance of Scripture support for it much elsewhere in the Word of God. But if you believe in the unity, continuity and perpetuity of the covenant, you will not need proof that infants were baptized as well as their Christian parents.

Then there is the passage which is appealed to in support of the "burial theory" of baptism, as in Rom. 6:3-4 (Cp. Col. 2:12), which reads, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore, we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." The American Standard Version, more exact, reads, "Or are ye ignorant that, all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? We were buried, therefore, with Him through baptism into death . . ."

The original could be better translated, as, "Or are ye ignorant that, all who were baptized in Christ Jesus, in the death of Him were baptized? We were buried, therefore, together with Him through the baptism in the death . . ." Paul is certainly not dealing here with any water baptism a thought which loses sight of the real meaning of the passage. Here the subject is, The Objective Incorporation of the Entire Church into Christ, in His crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection. The whole elect church is viewed in its identification with Christ crucified, dead, buried and risen. They *all* were baptized in Christ Jesus. It was a baptism in His death. It is as plain as can be that His death was a baptism of blood. (Cp. Matt 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50 with Luke 22:20). When He died we were incorporated, identified with Him, so that the once-for-all settled fact of the matter is, "We died! We were buried!" (Notice the tense of the verbs.) It is perfectly clear when this took place. We died with Him on the Cross. We were united together with Him

in all His redemptive acts. Our position, then, is one of identification with Christ. We were, then, positionally buried together with Him through *the* baptism, that is, the true, historical baptism, of which water baptism is the sign. It is all an accomplished fact for the church through *the* Baptism (there is only the one baptism) in *the* death (there is only the one atoning death). So then, Paul wrote here not of individual water baptism, nor even of regeneration, but corporately of *the* Baptism in *the* Death. Paul's object is not to show that Christians ought to walk in newness of life because *figuratively* raised from a *watery* grave in symbolic ritual, but because spiritually, objectively, historically, unitedly, corporately and representatively raised from *the* grave through *the* death. There is nothing of mode here, and to introduce it is to reveal lack of understanding of the passage. Peter refers to that baptism through His death when he mentions the "Sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:2) and the pouring out of His Spirit (Acts 2:17-18).

Signs of the Times

"De Facto" Church Union

Rev. G. Van Baren

On the basis of Rev. 13:11-18, II Thess. 2:3-12, Matt. 24:24-26, and other passages, we believe that near the very end of time there will be established the great church of the antichrist. This church will claim to be following the mandates of Christ. On the basis of the Scriptures, it will insist upon unity. It will claim to be the only legitimate church and insist that all the "godly" belong to it. This will be the time of severe trial for the true child of God who will not be deceived by these false prophets.

One sees in the past years developments which suggest that the time may be near when that antichristian church will be established. Most of us are aware of the efforts being made toward formal church union. Some large denominations in this land and in others have already become united. There are movements such as COCU (Consultation on Church Union) which seek formal union of several large denominations. And, of course, there are the W.C.C. and N.C.C. which, though they do not claim to be any sort of super church, nevertheless encourage and work for church union.

However, in the past year or so, it would appear that formal union between differing denominations is no

longer so popular as it once seemed to be. Several denominations have withdrawn from the COCU movement. It might seem that "ecumenism" is on the decline.

But it is not. There are yet attempts made toward formal merger of denominations. But increasingly there is seen what might be called a "de facto" church union. By this, I mean that the churches do not formally unite into one large denomination (which has often been opposed at the "grass roots" level), but that denominations increasingly cooperate together *as though they were one doctrinally*. I suspect that this will be increasingly seen in the days to come. Formal union takes too long to work out; perhaps it genders too much opposition within denominations; and it might cause segments to break off from the church if formal union took place. So — instead of formal organization into one denomination, there are increasing evidences of cooperation among the different denominations.

Such "de facto" union has been seen in several instances recently in our city of Grand Rapids. The *Standard Bearer* has earlier given reports concerning a convocation of non-public school teachers (Roman

Catholic, Lutheran, Christian Reformed) which was openly advertised as "ecumenism in action." Reports have appeared on several aspects of the "Evangelism Thrust" program in the Christian Reformed Church, a program which is tied in with the "Key 73" project of evangelism in which over 150 denominations and other organizations are participating.

In this article, I would point out how that the "Key 73" project is promoting "de facto" church union in Grand Rapids, (and, I presume, in other cities as well). I strongly believe the "Key 73" project will accomplish more toward "de facto" church union than it will bring "converts to Christ."

I want to state emphatically that I am not opposed to mission labors — I believe these must be carried out. I *do* oppose such cooperative efforts which can surely serve the purpose of the antichrist when the lines of truth must be blurred and unity established in spite of doctrinal and confessional differences.

But allow me to show how "de facto" union is happening in Grand Rapids under the "Key 73" project. This "Key 73" project is the attempt of over 150 denominations and organizations to reach every person "for Christ" in the year 1973. A general plan of action has been laid out. Individual churches can "do their own thing"; yet cooperation is emphasized. In a recent paper from the Christian Reformed Board of Evangelism of Greater Grand Rapids (issue No. 5), the following appeared.

Many of the Churches of Grand Rapids are cooperating in a year of evangelism in 1973. Church leaders from Roman Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Reformed, Christian Reformed, Methodist Presbyterian, Church of Christ and others have been meeting together to plan cooperative evangelistic outreach for the year 1973.

Some of the areas where cooperation is being discussed are:

1. The noon prayer call (Christmas 1972-January 5, 1973) is a specific Key '73 emphasis for Christians all over the North American continent to pray for the success of Key '73.
2. Bible Distribution and Bible Study (Thanksgiving 1972 to Easter 1973). The churches are discussing a cooperative Bible distribution to every home in Grand Rapids.
3. A Palm Sunday or Easter Parade is a possibility as a public testimony and witness of concern and commitment to make the Good News of Jesus Christ live in our city.

Notice first *two* above: "The churches are discussing a cooperative Bible distribution to every home in Grand Rapids." However, this cooperative venture involves more than just Bible distribution. Subsequent literature from the interdenominational "Key 73" committee points out the following:

5. On September 7, Mr. Ken Cochran was our host at Eastminster Presbyterian Church. Here we further confirmed the decisions that seemed to be evolving

at the June 27th meeting that the NUMBER ONE PRIORITY that we would suggest for S.E. churches would be Visitation, Survey and Scripture distribution and that this (we felt) could best be accomplished by groups of neighborhood congregations *visiting together in interdenominational teams*, locating prospects and *inviting them to Christ*. (italics mine — G.V.B.)

Or from another letter:

Don and Ken (Rev. D. Griffioen of the C.R.C. and Rev. K. Lindland of the Methodist Church) are both amazed as we go around and see the excitement that is building as we get together. The only thing more exciting than the excitement is the love (Agape) which we sense in the groups. Our prayer circles and the very conversation says, "They will know we are Christians by our Love."

In every section of the city and area where Don and Ken have visited we have rejoiced to note the wonderful participation of our Roman Catholic brethren, both lay and clergy . . .

Mixed teams (Christian Reformed and Roman Catholic; Reformed and Lutheran; etc.) are to confront the people of the city with the Christ. How is this mixed team to present the Christ? Is this Christ to be presented as the One Who loves all men and dies for all men (as the Arminian would insist) or the Christ Who dies for His people alone (as presumably a Reformed man would insist)? Is this Christ to be presented as One whose sacrifice must be daily repeated (as the Roman Catholic teaches) or as One whose sacrifice is fully and finally accomplished on the cross itself (as presumably a Protestant would teach)? You see, the only way for mixed teams to present Christ, would be to present Him in a way in which all would be agreed. And to which church would this mixed team urge an inquirer to attend? The "church of their own choice"? (Besides, I, as a Reformed man, would be extremely embarrassed to bear witness with a Roman Catholic while I am aware what my confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, has to say in Question 80 about his views on the cross and the repeated sacrifice of the mass.) I can only wonder, too, what sort of alliances will be formed by those of different denominations as a result of this cooperation. There is suggested a "de facto" union which can only lead toward ever closer cooperation, without agreement on the truths of God's Word, and eventually formal union as well.

That there are intentions on the part of some for using "Key 73" to promote greater actual unity and union of churches is evident, according to the published schedule of events for "Key 73", when the Burton Heights Ministerial Association of Grand Rapids plans:

During the WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY (Jan. 18 to 25)

1. There will be a Corporate Ecumenical Service held in one of the churches.

2. During that week there will be Daily Prayer opportunities to which both pastors and Laymen are invited.

The cooperation which is being proposed involves various other projects which, to say the least, are of very questionable wisdom. In order to supplement the "noon prayer call," sunday school buses will be stationed in various highly visible locations where people will be encouraged to offer their noon prayers to God for the repentance of the nation. Now I know that there is place for public prayer; we have such in our gatherings and church services. Yet the arrangements being made for the "Key 73" project resemble the very thing, it seems to me, which Christ condemned so emphatically in Matthew 6:5-8. Surely there is no Scriptural warrant to have all pray precisely the same hour of each day and openly in this manner. This is not being done certainly to persuade God, but to be seen of men.

I have grave reservations about another proposal which seeks both to promote the appearance of unity of churches but at the same time, it seems to me, breaks the Sabbath. The plan of action suggests:

NUMBER SEVEN – The proposed PALM SUNDAY –
 "PARADE OF JOY AND AFFIRMATION"
 (Calling our city to Christ)

This idea, with four Banner Bearing columns, entering the Calder Area from four sections of the city really seems to be catching on; three

sub-committees (Parade, Program, and Publicity) are being formed. If you have a good suggestion for a member of one of these committees contact Don Griffioen

Though it might be premature to pass judgment on an event which is not yet entirely planned, one can not help but have the impression that this can only be a breaking of the fourth commandment in the name of Christ and His church. What else must be the result of such a large, public, ostentatious display for the eyes of men at the very time that God requires us to worship Him in sincerity and truth in His house of prayer?

I approve, of course, of some of the recommendations made in the "Key 73" project – especially the recommendation toward greater personal and group study of Scripture. This is good. But I am deeply concerned that this project can very truly be used to serve the purpose of the final establishment of the antichristian church. Its emphasis upon unity and union, apart from unity of doctrine, can only work in that direction. So I would warn concerning participation in this activity – lest, while believing ourselves to be fighting for God's Cause (as Paul did before his conversion), we in reality be assisting the cause of the antichrist. Yet, let us know that these events too serve as a reminder that the "Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5).

All Around Us

Christmas Made Relevant

Prof. H. Hanko

There is a lot of talk nowadays about making the gospel relevant. It must be made relevant to our times so that it addresses people in this Twentieth Century, this modern scientific and technological age. It must be relevant especially to young people so that the gospel comes to them in their present problems and life. And, more particularly yet, it must be made relevant to those young people who go to college.

As often as not, however, the attempt to make the gospel relevant has resulted in so altering the gospel and its contents that there is little or no resemblance any longer between the truth of the Scriptures and the relevant gospel which is brought to the people of our modern day. Relevance has become only an excuse to corrupt the gospel and introduce all kinds of heresy.

This was forcibly brought home to me once again

when perusing a recent booklet distributed to the students at Grand Valley College in Allendale, Michigan. The pamphlet was intended, apparently, to make Christmas relevant to the students at that college. It is not the work of some fly-by-night evangelist; it is not a student publication – in which one can expect to find almost anything; it is not even an independent publication. It is a monthly publication of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions. It is therefore, an official publication.

We shall quote most of it, for it is not very long. What we omit are a few Scriptural quotations (from a modern translation) and two "evangelical cartoons."

It begins with a page entitled "The 'Live' Manger Scene."

Some of us kids portrayed another "live" manger

scene this past week. Many people in cars came by to peek and see how cold the shepherds looked and how many were still holding out.

It's always amazed me, Lord, that in the live manger scenes of today the only person not "real" in these scenes is You. You are usually portrayed by a Raggedy Ann, a Baby First Step, or a Tippy Tumbles doll.

But that's really not true either, is it, Lord? Because You are alive in Cindy, who is playing Mary, and in Bob who is Joseph, and in Bruce, Doug, and Jane, who are decked out as the shepherds tonight. That's where You come alive — not in the crib but in people!

You make it truly a "live" manger scene! Help me to see You "alive" in the middle of my life whether I'm at Bethlehem, Calvary or Chicago.

Now, forget for a moment the use of "You" and the questionable propriety of a creche. What does this opening paragraph really say when one attempts to understand its meaning? Although it says very little of any worth, and does not say that little in a very clear way, it does assert that Christ comes alive, not in a crib, but in people. Whether the authors intended this or not, certainly the very strong impression is left that "The Divinity" designated by "Lord" and by "You" is alive today only in people. It does not matter whether this vague and nebulous divinity came alive in Bethlehem; nor presumably, whether "He" became alive in any resurrection. The important thing is that He comes alive in people. Not only God's people; just people. And what it means that he comes alive in people is not said. There are no modernists anywhere in the world who would not subscribe to that kind of language.

But to go on.

Impress by bigness, statistics and brute power, we tend to think God must be big — Real big. It takes Christmas to remind us that the bigness of God is not a matter of size. Look how quietly God entered human history, which is the best side of Christmas. The birth of Jesus is a fact of history; not a pious legend. You'd expect a big God to crash into the life of this disturbed planet with tough anger and force.

Jesus came to save, His humble means of entry is the best clue to His greatness. God enters His world in humble circumstances, lives life on the same terms as He expects all human beings to live it, accepts no special privileges, no protection, and in the end, is betrayed and executed. No tricks, no hookers to prevent it from happening at the last moment.

Christmas: the humble birth of the Man in whose flesh God chose to live, to die, to live again.

Here apparently there is some kind of an attempt made to bring into relevant terms the truth of the incarnation. But this is very vaguely and even heretically expressed. For one thing, this truth of the incarnation is especially expressed in the words: "in whose flesh God chose to live." Not only is this almost

an exact description of several ancient heresies related to Arianism which were condemned by the Church hundreds of years ago; but it is also crassest heresy. God did not choose to live in a man. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. That is something quite different. A virgin conceived and bore a Son because the Holy Ghost came upon her and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. Therefore her child is the Son of God. The pamphlet's expression too can surely be interpreted (and is most naturally interpreted) to mean that God dwells in this man in some way similar to the way He dwells in every man.

And that, I suppose, is why the whole point is made here that God came in a quiet way. He really did not, of course. When the apostle John speaks of the Word becoming flesh, He adds that "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And the whole life of Christ was not quiet but world-shaking, for He came in judgment to destroy.

Two thousand years ago you'd have said that the life of a carpenter-turned-rabbi Jesus was insignificant. Yet, today there are millions who gladly serve and worship Him, and many who have demonstrated their willingness to die for His sake. The greatness of God, the greatness of Jesus, is quite different from the greatness which men usually notice: The greatness of a pure life humbly offered to give each person the opportunity to become a child of God.

A prayer is interspersed at this point:

CHRISTMAS UNOPENED

Confirm Christmas

Among the distant descendants

Of kings and shepherds

Before we send Christmas back

Because we can't get it to work.

O God, what have we done

If we have to justify why

We still keep Christmas?

Why must we make such excuses as

We have always done it or

We do it for the children?

Send us searching through

Our attics and our trash

Lest in our blindness

And bad judgment

We left our treasure there,

Unopened.

Amen.

Then this:

There was no advertisement, no press conference, no publicity. God just slipped in through back door Bethlehem. In fact, the entry of God into His own world was incredibly humble. There is little romantic or beautiful in the thought of a young woman having labor pains in an animal shelter inlaid with wall-to-wall straw. Sad commentary on a political power that would not give up a bed for a girl in labor

— and that the Son of God must be born in a stable.

Yet the political power in which He was born utterly collapsed; all that remains — slag heaps. Yet the little baby, born in such pitiful humility and cut down in His prime, commands the allegiance of millions all over the world. You meet them in a ticket line, on a subway, over a sledding hill, during a coffee break at a rest stop, after a frigging, before a big decision.

He has become friend and companion. Jesus of Nazareth, this unique person, has become the ironing board for all the crumpled programs and aspirations of the ages. A most astonishing phenomenon in human history. A solid rock of evidence.

The Christ described here is no different from the Christ of a thousand modernists. True, he is called “the Son of God”; but Arius called Him this; so did Servetus; so did hundreds who denied His divinity and who deny the blood of atonement. This is the Christ of a good example; a loving, caring Christ Who is but a leader among men, a pointer to a way of morality all should walk. He is the Christ of heresy, not the Christ of the Scriptures. There is no word of a Christ Who comes to take peace from the earth, Who comes as a refining fire, Who comes as God’s eternal Son with the burden of the guilt of the sins of His people upon Him. There is here no Christ Who is exalted in the highest heavens as Ruler of all, whose eyes are as a flame of fire and whose feet like to fine brass and whose voice is as the voice of many waters; Who has in his right hand seven stars and out of Whose mouth comes a sharp two-edged sword; and Whose countenance is as the sun shining in his strength.

Finally, the pamphlet is concluded with this:

WAS CHRISTMAS NECESSARY?

Someone suggested that Christmas was necessary because “God had a lot of knowledge, but *lacked experience*.” Not a bad place to start thinking about

the true meaning of Christmas. For although God knew the human condition, it was necessary to enter the planet in order to experience it. God was in Christ experiencing temptation, difficulty, ingratitude and disappointment. Intensely He felt the vibes of heartlessness, exploitation and stupidity. He hammered out undated maxim to last for the remainder of the planet’s life: words that have changed human life and history as no other words ever have.

Without flinching from His announced goal to save by loving, He confronted opposition and misunderstanding. He lunched with the arrogant and hypocritical. He spent mornings listening to prostitutes. He went on walks looking for the failing, the anxious ones; He waited in a line to help the hurt ones.

After all that and more, He experienced hell. And came back loving.

Proof that God is not some vast impersonal power, but is the God who, “because He wanted to,” experienced all those things for our sakes. Get the message? Open Christmas and discover a God who cares. Be sure of this. He cares.

But there is no Christ here Who comes into the hearts of His people with the irresistible power of His Spirit to create in them a new creature, freed from sin and guilt, holy and righteous, heir of heaven.

It is all so sad.

Supposing that one student would be “converted” by this pamphlet — something really impossible; what then? He would be converted to a Christ of man’s imagination, to a gospel upon which Paul pronounces in holy anger, his anathema.

But this is not the Christ God’s people have worshipped in adoration beginning with the shepherds and wisemen. He is not the kind of Christ before Whom we bow in awe and praise. Thank God it is not our Christ!

Editorials

Key '73's False Ecumenism

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From various quarters Key '73, of which Evangelism Thrust is the Christian Reformed Version, has met with criticism. The *Standard Bearer* has more than once engaged in criticism of the movement; and elsewhere in this issue you will find an article by Rev. Van Baren which once again points out some of the real dangers of this attempt at “ecumenical evangelism.”

One of the very serious errors of Key '73 (and of Evangelism Thrust) is its ecumenism. This is rather graphically pointed out in a little leaflet published by the Fundamental Evangelistic Association and entitled, “Explo '72 + Key '73 = Confusion '74.” In this leaflet Key '73 is called the “Trojan Horse” of ecumenism to penetrate the evangelical camp.” Now while we are not so concerned with what is vaguely called the

"evangelical camp," and while we most likely would not agree with the conception of evangelism held by the Fundamental Evangelistic Association, yet we may well pay attention to some of the evidence produced in this leaflet. The leaflet makes a point of producing quotations from various leaders in the Key '73 movement, so that by means of these quotations Key '73 ought to stand condemned in the judgment of a Reformed man out of its own mouth. For this reason I will quote some of the information and quotations contained in this leaflet.

Key '73 has been called "A Smorgasbord of Ideas" and "An umbrella high enough raised so that under it we can all gather without sacrificing our particular heritage." These expressions used by leaders of Key '73, are most revealing. ECUMENISM is indeed a "smorgasbord" and an "umbrella" but EVANGELISM is not. ECUMENISM IS OF THE DEVIL. EVANGELISM IS OF GOD. They are opposites. It is a sin to join them together!

Key '73 offers a "Do Your Own Thing" Evangelism. Key '73 director, Dr. T. A. Raedeke, in his report to the Central Committee in October 1971, made this very clear. He emphasized four principles of Key '73 evangelism: 1) Do your own thing — your way, 2) Do your own thing — but share, 3) Do your own thing — simultaneously, 4) Do your own thing — together. What could be more unscriptural — what could be more deceptive — what could be more dangerous than to encourage everyone to DO YOUR OWN THING and then call it EVANGELISM?

Here is a sample of this do-your-own-thing-evangelism with which a church is necessarily cooperating when it cooperates with Key '73.

Key '73 has the endorsement of the United Methodist Church — one of the most liberal of all Protestant bodies. They are represented on the Key '73 Central and Executive Committees. But do apostate Methodists preach the one true gospel? Of course not! Dr. George Outen, in his presentation of Key '73 to the United Methodist Conference in Atlanta on April 25th, said, "To protest war — that's evangelism . . . to work for open housing — that's evangelism . . . to combat racism — that's evangelism . . . to be engaged in the political process — that, too, is evangelism." Outen made it clear he would have nothing to do with a "Bible-thumping", revivalist kind of evangelism — yet, he is a strong supporter of Key '73 and will be "doing his own thing" in the name of Key '73 evangelism.

And here are the ideas of the staff executive for Key '73 of the American Baptist Convention, Dr. Jitsou Morikawa, who told the delegates:

Key '73 appears to be a decisive event in the religious history of America. In unprecedented degree of scale, religious forces of the right and left are reaching out toward each other in a common, corporate evangelistic enterprise . . . There is an amazing mixture of fundamentalists, conservatives, liberals and ecumenists, spanning the whole religious spectrum of America.

Recently *De Wachter* made reference to some of this anti-Key '73 propaganda of the Fundamental Evangelistic Association. But instead of answering the claims and justifying Christian Reformed participation in Key '73, the snide comment was made (I translate): "And some people slick this up like cake." That, of course, is no answer. It is either "whistling in the dark" on the part of one whose Reformed conscience tells him that this cannot be answered and that Christian Reformed participation cannot be justified, or it bespeaks a haughty and self-righteous conceit.

The fact of the matter is, of course, that as soon as a Reformed man would speak up for his Reformed principles of evangelism and would begin to insist on reaching America with the gospel according to our Reformed confessions, the cooperation and ecumenism of Key '73 would disappear like a morning mist. Imagine, if you will, what would be the reaction of men like Dr. Raedeke, Dr. Outen, and Dr. Morikawa (all mentioned above) if a representative of Evangelism Thrust — let us say, the Rev. Wesley Smedes — would inform them that Evangelism Thrust would begin its campaign at their addresses!

The trouble is, of course, that the brand of "evangelism" for which Evangelism Thrust stands is itself far from Reformed. In fact, it fits right in with the ideas of men like Dr. Outen. You think a statement like this is extreme, perhaps radical? The evidence is at hand — for anyone who is willing to see it. Exhibit No. 1 you will find in *All Around Us* in this very issue of the *Standard Bearer*. The sad fact is that the brand of "evangelism" represented in the pamphlet about which Prof. Hanko writes is an evangel-less evangelism. It is pure modernism. And Exhibit No. 2 can be found in the unholy mixture of Hudnut, Bonhoeffer, and Calvin which Editor De Koster presents as a "Pattern For New Year" in the *Banner* of December 29, 1972. It is readily understandable to me, when I read such samples, that the Christian Reformed Church can cooperate with Key '73.

There are two things, however, which I cannot understand.

The first is this: how is it that some who have valid criticisms of Key '73 and of Evangelism Thrust and who have voiced these criticisms in writing and orally nevertheless cooperate, even in a measure? Do they not realize that they are doing the same thing as are all of the participants in Key '73? That is, they are attempting to "do their own thing" but in the name of Evangelism Thrust. They disagree seriously with Evangelism Thrust, but they purpose to evangelize as participants in Evangelism Thrust. This is dishonest. It is deceitful. It can only be detrimental. These critics of Evangelism Thrust's materials ought to make it their first business to *convert*, if possible, their own leaders who are publishing this rot. And I am purposely using the word "convert" here. I seriously believe that men

who write stuff such as that cited by Prof. Hanko are in need of *conversion*! In other words, let the Christian Reformed critics of Evangelism Thrust begin with their evangelism *at home*, in their own denomination, among their own champions of evangelism, before they attempt to evangelize North America!

And the second is this: why is there so much preoccupation with the question what is *wrong* with Key '73 and Evangelism Thrust? To my knowledge, no one, either among the critics or the protagonists of Evangelism Thrust, has attempted to furnish a sound, thorough-going, confessionally based, Scripturally based, Reformed answer to the very proper question: what is *RIGHT* about Evangelism Thrust and Key '73?

You understand, it is all right for non-participants to point out and to warn against the evils and the dangers of Key '73. But those who participate cannot take the approach represented in the question, "What is wrong about it?" To justify participation one must have something *positive*. One must confront the question, "What is right about it?" And especially in our day, when it is becoming so extremely difficult and so very rare to maintain a distinctly Reformed stance, this is essential. We must ask: what is right, i.e., what is *REFORMED*, about it?

If this question is honestly confronted, the answer will be, I am convinced: ZERO!

"Quo Vadis?"

In the December, 1972 issue of the *News Bulletin* of the Association of Christian Reformed Laymen the above question (which means: "Whither Goest Thou?") is addressed to the Christian Reformed Church in connection with the recent synodical whitewash of Dr. Willis De Boer's heretical views of Genesis 1-11. It is asserted in the article referred to that the Christian Reformed Church has reached the point of no return. But then it is added — as though it is possible to return from the point of no return: "To retain many committed members an immediate reversal of position must be shown by the leadership of our denomination and the members of the Boards of our institutions, to make it possible for thousands of concerned members to continue their affiliations with the Christian Reformed Church."

Now it is not my intention to comment at this time on the Willis De Boer whitewash, except to remark that there is no essential difference between De Boer's position and that of Dr. Harry Kuitert with respect to Genesis 1-11, and that it is evidently not true, therefore, that Report 36/44 (The Nature and Extent of the Authority of Scripture) excluded such views.

Nor is it my intention to comment on the apparent inconsistency pointed out in the first paragraph of this editorial.

Rather, I want to suggest a plain answer to the question, "Quo Vadis, Christian Reformed Church?"

That answer is two-fold:

1) The Christian Reformed Church is becoming a "modalities church." For those who might wonder what this term means, let me explain that this means a church in which two or more wings, liberal and conservative, live together (whether by explicit or by tacit agreement) under one denominational roof in so-called peaceful co-existence. It is a church such as

the state church (the *Hervormde Kerk*) in the Netherlands has long been, and such as the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands are also becoming.

2) In inseparable connection with this, the Christian Reformed Church is becoming (or should I say: has become?) a church in which there will not be and cannot be a heresy trial.

The above two statements may seem blunt — almost unbelievable — to many. I assert that they are indeed blunt, but that they are not unbelievable. I assert, moreover, that it is high time that serious-minded Christian Reformed people see the present situation exactly in such blunt terms, and that they make up their minds whether or not they want to be members of such a "modalities church" and to accept the responsibilities of such membership for themselves and their children.

Furthermore, I claim that the evidence of the events of especially the last 10 or 15 years points to the reality of the above two propositions. The case of Dr. Willis De Boer, cited by the ACRL, is but one link in the chain of evidence; and the ACRL has brought into the open much of the same kind of evidence in the years of its existence.

Still more: I believe that in the above two propositions is represented the thinking of responsible leaders of the Christian Reformed denomination. For my own part, I have no doubt about this. But if the men of the ACRL hesitate to accept my judgment, I suggest that they ask some responsible leaders whether or not this is their thinking, and perhaps, upon occasion, their speech. Let them begin, say, by directing this question to Editor De Koster, of the *Banner*.

A New "Book of Praise"

From the Committee for the Publication of an Anglo-Genevan Psalter of the Canadian Reformed Churches I received a review copy of their *Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter*. I hereby express my sincere thanks to the Committee, and I gladly comply with their request for a review. Because I deem this publication to be especially significant and worthwhile, I am placing these remarks in the editorial columns of our magazine, rather than in the *Book Review* section. Before I proceed with this discussion, let me add the information (for any who may wish to purchase this book) that it may be purchased for \$3.00 from the following address: Committee for the Publication of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter, P.O. Box 661, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Perhaps I can best acquaint our readers with the origin and nature of this worthwhile publication by quoting some of the introductory material. First of all, I quote the "Preface," which informs us briefly of the origin and purpose of this book. (By the way, the Canadian Reformed Churches — for such as may not know — are sister churches of the so-called 'Liberated Churches' of the Netherlands.) Here follows the explanation given in the preface:

The appearance of the *Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter* is an event of considerable significance in the life of the Canadian Reformed Churches as well as a landmark in the history of psalmody. All 150 Psalms are here published for the first time in English metrical versions that can be sung to the sixteenth-century Genevan melodies.

This book of praise is evidence of the desire of the Canadian Reformed Churches to preserve their rich Calvinist heritage. Already in 1954 their first Synod appointed a committee to study the problems connected with the versification of a Genevan psalter in the English language. In 1956 this committee published a report entitled *Op weg naar een Engelse Reformatorische Psalmboek*, and in 1958 the second Synod appointed a new committee with the mandate to produce an English psalter according to the guidelines offered in this report. In 1961 a provisional edition of the *Book of Praise* appeared, followed in 1967 by a Supplement.

The Synod of 1958 also urged that, in addition to the Psalms, "other hymns of the Scriptures" be incorporated in the proposed psalter. The results can be seen in the Hymns and Paraphrases that follow the Psalms in this edition (61 of them, HCH). The melody of Hymn 45 (the *Credo*), to which the committee holds the copyright, was composed especially for the *Book of Praise* by Mr. J. Schouten. The text of Hymns 10, 17, 18, 30, 46, 47, 48, and 49, and the metrical versions of the Psalms are copyrighted as well.

Since the various authors whose work has been adopted for publication are generally not identified in

this psalter, it should be mentioned that in the archives of the committee their individual contributions are duly recorded. To Messrs John Cozens and K. F. Ettinger the committee expresses its thanks for many useful suggestions regarding matters of versification. Grateful acknowledgement is hereby made also to all those who gave permission for the use of their copyright material.

English translations of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort — the Reformed doctrinal standards — are included in this edition, along with the ecumenical creeds, prayers, and liturgical forms, for the *Book of Praise* is intended to serve as the "churchbook" of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Included in the introductory part of this book is also a section of "Notes on the Genevan Melodies" as follows:

The Psalm melodies can be divided roughly into three groups:

(a) the melodies of the 50 Psalms in the Geneva edition of 1551, for which Clement Marot provided the text. Louis Bourgeois is usually considered to be the composer, but there is as yet no certainty on this point.

(b) the melodies of the 34 Psalms for which Theodore de Beze (Beza) provided the text and which also appeared in 1551. Although the details are not yet clear, it is assumed that Bourgeois composed or edited these tunes as well.

(c) the 40 remaining melodies, which appeared in the completed edition of 1562. They are usually ascribed to a certain Maistre Pierre, but it has not yet been established whether he composed or merely copied them; his identity also remains unsolved.

Since 124 melodies are used for the 150 Psalms, some of them are repeated; 15 melodies occur twice, 4 occur three times, and 1 occurs four times. (Here follows a list of the repeated tunes, HCH)

Eight of the Genevan Psalm melodies have been assigned to ten of the Hymns and Paraphrases. (Here follows another list, HCH)

Furthermore, the Hymns and Paraphrases include six hymn melodies used in the original Genevan psalters (Here follows a third list, HCH).

Harmonizations (lacking in this book, HCH) of the Genevan melodies are available e.g. in Jac. P. Bekkers and Jac. Kort, *Orgelbegeleiding bij het Psalmzingen* (The Hague, 1947), and J. Worp, *Melodien der Psalmen en Lofzangen*, arranged by George Stam (Groningen, 1956).

(A booklet with harmonizations of the other melodies used in the *Book of Praise* has also appeared. Those interested in further information are invited to write to the Committee for the Publication of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter.)

To the above I may add that the final section of the book contains the confessions and liturgical forms of

the Canadian Reformed Churches. Preceding each of the Three Forms of Unity is a brief statement of the origin and history of each confession. The prayers which occurred in the Dutch *Psalmboek* are also published; I do not know whether they are in regular use in the Canadian Reformed Churches, however. I may also note: 1) That the language in parts of this section has been modernized somewhat. 2) That the Canadian Reformed Churches use a Form for Public Profession of Faith different from ours. 3) That the Canadian Reformed Churches have a "Form for Excommunication of Members Who Have Not Yet Made Profession of Faith," something which we do not have among our Liturgical Forms. 4) That the Church Order is not included in this book — a regrettable omission, in my opinion.

The above will furnish our readers with somewhat of an idea of this *Book of Praise*. If you are interested in these matters, I strongly recommend that you purchase a copy.

And now for some comments.

In the first place, I believe that the Canadian Reformed Churches are to be congratulated for this accomplishment. They are a rather young denomination, established in Canada (I think there is only one congregation in the U.S. — in Grand Rapids) after World War II. In the space of some twenty years they have produced their own *Book of Praise* — in fact, their own complete "churchbook." This in itself, even apart from the contents of the book, is quite an accomplishment. I cannot refrain from expressing a bit of jealousy (and I think it is holy jealousy) when I think of the fact that the work of our Protestant Reformed Psalter Revision Committee and our Committee for a Revised Translation of our Liturgy has fallen by the wayside during that same period. Personally, I am of the conviction that the work of both committees should be revived; and I hope that this accomplishment of the Canadian Reformed Churches will provoke us to emulation!

In the second place, — and this is in reference to the contents of the *Book of Praise* itself — the Canadian Reformed Churches are to be congratulated on the publication of a sound, usable, Scriptural, Reformed book of praise. This does not mean that I have checked all of the psalms and hymns in this book for their accuracy and faithfulness to Scripture and the confessions. But this is an over all judgment. And especially in a day when there is a clamor of unholy revisionism with respect to the church's worship and a clamor for innovations in the music and singing of the church, this is noteworthy and commendable. What you find in this book is "solid stuff!" And this is true both of the metrical versions of the Psalms and of the Hymns and Paraphrases. The material of this book is certainly in the spirit of our rich Calvinistic heritage.

In the third place, this is also true, I believe, from a

musical point of view. I am no musician; in fact, for some criticisms from a musical point of view, I had to consult others. But I love good music, and I think I can recognize good music to a degree. And while I am well aware that the Genevan melodies are held in disrepute and even despised by some (These are melodies such as those found in the chorale section of our *Psalter*.), I think it cannot be denied that melodies of this kind and calibre represent what is recognized as good music, also outside of Reformed circles. Moreover, it is what I would class as "church music" in distinction from music which does not at all lend itself to the purposes of worship.

I almost hesitate to express any negative criticism in this day when there is in many quarters a totally negative attitude toward the type of work represented in this book. Hence, when I do make a few negative comments, I want it clearly understood that the favorable remarks made above stand.

My negative comments are as follows (and I cannot take the time and space to document them at present; perhaps I can add some details later):

1. Personally, I would not like a steady and exclusive diet of the Genevan melodies. I know our forefathers were limited to this kind of music in the *Psalmboek*; and I still love some of the Dutch psalms which I learned in my youth, both for their music and their words. But there is other good music, too; and I believe that a *Book of Praise* for a Reformed church in the 20th century need not be restricted to these 16th century melodies. Perhaps the Canadian Reformed Churches, who are not long out of the Netherlands, can succeed in transplanting the exclusive use of these melodies to Canada; I do not know. But I am convinced that in our churches, for example, it would never work. Whatever demerits our *Psalter* may have — and it has not a few — I do not believe that it would be practical to cut down the wide variety which we now have to the very limited variety represented in this *Book of Praise*. Nor do I believe that to limit a book of praise to these melodies has any special merit.

2. In connection with the preceding, it seems to me that on the whole these are rather heavy, ponderous melodies. Not only does the maxim hold that "variety is the spice of life," but, in my opinion, there is a lack, for example, of plaintive tunes to go with Psalms which are very definitely plaintive in tone.

3. It is regrettable, in my opinion, that only the melodies are printed in this book, rather than the 4-part music. Is it the intention that there shall be unison singing in congregational worship? If not, it would seem better to print the music in its four parts, especially in this day when so many are able to read music and to sing a part. I would hope that a future edition would include this change.

4. The rhythms of the Genevan melodies as here presented are not above reproach. I find many of them

abrupt and unnatural; in our own circles we are more accustomed to singing these tunes as plain chorales. Some of the Genevan melodies can well be sung with half and quarter notes. But many of these tunes would require a goodly amount of practice, and some of them would, I think, never go very smoothly. In some cases, I would prefer the plain chorale; in some cases I would prefer to adjust the rhythm somewhat. And in not a few instances the rhythm and the versification do not fit; this results in incorrect accent of words and faulty emphasis in the thought.

5. One more criticism of the musical aspect — and here I confess that I am over my head, though I understand what is meant. There are no accidentals written in the music. This results in what I would call an unnatural (and also difficult) flow of the music.

Perhaps some of the points criticized above will be the subject of difference of opinion. Perhaps the fact that some of the music appears in this book as it does is due to the fact that the authors adhered strictly to the original Genevan tunes. I know not. But these are my criticisms.

As far as the versifications are concerned, I have the following criticism:

1. Some of the versifications are characterized by rather stilted, awkward language and by forced rhyming. I know that to prepare versifications like this is no easy task; but there is room for improvement. When I compare the versifications in our *Psalter*, I find these to be, on the whole, warmer, more singable, and smoothly flowing.

2. There is considerable use of the heavier, more mechanical, Latin-derived portion of our English

vocabulary. Less of the latter and more of the sparkling, expressive Anglo-Saxon-derived English would be an improvement.

There are deeper questions involved in the production of a *Book of Praise* such as this. I cannot enter into these in detail at this time. One of these questions is this: when the church of the New Testament day sings the Psalms, is it necessary and advantageous to sing them literally — almost literalistically — even to the figures of speech? And if the Psalms are rather literally versified, do we not tend to lose our New Testament perspective as we sing them? Is it not true that this “New Testament perspective” on the part of those who sing them must be *assumed*, rather than being expressed, when we attempt to sing the Psalms rather literally? Moreover, true that when you sing isolated stanzas, you tend to jerk that stanza out of the context of the Psalm — unless, of course, the stanzas are very skillfully composed, and thereby become, I would think, less literal?

But these questions go to the very heart of psalmody and of what constitutes proper psalm-singing by the church of the New Testament. And, by the way, let no one construe these remarks as constituting opposition to Psalm-singing. I am a dedicated Psalm-singer!

But let me end on a positive note. Some of the Psalms in this *Book of Praise* I found to be especially attractive. Let me mention Psalm 68 and Psalm 81 as examples in which the music and the words are well-suited. And I also want to make special mention of Hymn 47, a paraphrase of Lord’s Day 1.

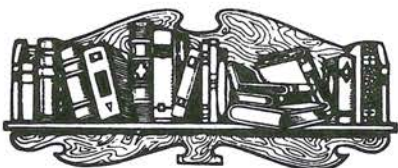
Once again, congratulations to the Canadian Reformed Churches and especially to their Committee.

Book Reviews

LIFE IN CHRIST

LIFE IN CHRIST, by Norman Pittenger; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 128 pp., \$1.95 (paper). [reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

This is a devotional book on what it means to live “in Christ” in all of life — in the communion of believers, in the community at large, and in the personal life of the child of God.



WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 19, 1973, the Lord willing, our beloved parents,

MR. AND MRS. HENRY BRANDS, SR.

will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

We thank our Heavenly Father for preserving them for each other and for their covenant love and guidance they have given us. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless them in their remaining pilgrimage together.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Schuiteman (Alice)

Mr. and Mrs. Henry J. Brands

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Vande Vegte (Grace)

10 grand children

1 great grandchild

News From Our Churches

According to an October 29 bulletin from Randolph, the Reformed Witness Hour "Will again be broadcast in this area beginning November 5, at 3:45-4:15 P.M., over WBEV, 1430 AM and 95.3 FM." The November 5 bulletin was accompanied by a newsletter, the contents of which pertained to that radio broadcast. The part of the letter which dealt with the matter of financing was of more local interest, but I'm certain that the remainder could be repeated with profit in this column. Here it is:

"Today, for the first time in quite a while, we can hear the Reformed Witness Hour. That is good for us as Protestant Reformed people who love the Truth and who want to make use of this opportunity to be edified, instructed, and comforted. It is good also that those outside of our churches have this opportunity to hear the Truth as it is set forth in the Scripture.

"There is much emphasis these days on witnessing, outreach, and evangelism. The sad part is that, by far the majority of it is false witnessing because it does not make known the Christ of the Scripture. It is also our calling as a church to be engaged in missionary work, in church extension, and in personal witnessing. Our calling is to make known the Christ who is the revelation of the God of our salvation. The God who sovereignly realizes His counsel for His own glorification and for the salvation of His people. We must be thankful for the means of the Reformed Witness Hour to assist us in one aspect of our calling to make known the Reformed Truth."

* * * * *

A newsletter distributed to the members of our South Holland congregation indicates that the Evangelism Committee there is also continuing to make use of the air waves, for the purpose of extending our witness. The letter is some three months old already, but interesting nonetheless. The first paragraph concerns the Sunday afternoon broadcast of one of the church services. According to the committee, the "radio broadcast continues to be a blessing to many. It is our desire to improve upon the airing of our broadcasts so from now on we will be using announcers chosen from our own congregation. A name, too, has been selected for our broadcasts: 'The Living Word.' We go forward in the confidence of faith that God will bless it 'and cause it to prosper in respect to that for which I have sent it' (Isaiah 55:11)."

The radio broadcast is not the only project of this obviously active committee. Their pamphlets, according to the newsletter, "have had wide distribution." As evidence of that: "the *Good News For the Afflicted* booklet is in its second printing."

And, "our supply of the booklet on *Pentecostalism* is completely gone and a second printing has been ordered. We have received many requests for this booklet from outside our circles."

Another of the paragraphs in the newsletter puts these efforts in proper perspective. "While the Evangelism Committee was preparing these booklets, it was our prayer that God would use this humble means to strengthen the faith of His children. Let us rejoice in the fact that He is doing that! To know that He is answering our prayers is a source of encouragement to us. Our constant prayer is that God may deem us worthy as a congregation to be used of Him for His name's sake."

* * * * *

Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers expected to leave for Jamaica from the Kent County Airport at 7:50 in the morning of January 3. We could, using the following lines from First Church's bulletin, "express our thanks to them for the fellowship and communion we might enjoy together these past weeks, and we wish them God's richest blessings as they resume their labors in Jamaica. We commend them to the care of Him of Whom Jesus said: 'Not even a sparrow falls without the will of your Father Who is in heaven.'"

That same bulletin went on to report that "the Rev. and Mrs. J. Heys expect to join them a week later for a five-month stay to assist Rev. G. Lubbers in the work." A Holland bulletin also made note of the fact that the Mission Committee and Synod had requested that Rev. Heys return with Rev. Lubbers in order to give assistance in the school. Rev. Heys "would be giving instruction in Scripture interpretation and sermon construction," as well as, no doubt, serving as guest preacher in various of the churches there. Holland's consistory granted the request, and their pastor planned to leave for Jamaica from Chicago on January 8.

Rev. Heys requests that any announcements intended for Holland's bulletin be sent to the Church (290 East 18th St. in Holland), or, if still sent to his home address, be "clearly marked on the OUTSIDE of the envelope that it is a bulletin announcement. "Otherwise," he adds, significantly, "it might not be read till sometime in JUNE!"

In Jamaica, incidentally, Rev. Heys will be staying in a rented house only a couple of blocks from Rev. Lubbers. Rev. and Mrs. Heys have, on a previous occasion, made an extended stay in Jamaica. Not without good reason, then, certainly, he adds his Jamaican address — Montego Bay, Jamaica, West Indies General Delivery, c/o Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers. Airmail is 17c per half ounce.

D.D.