

The
Standard
Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

WE WISH YOU
A
BLESSED NEW YEAR

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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Editor-in-Chief: Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Rev. Robert D. Decker, Mr. Donald Doezeema, Rev. David J. Engelsma, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Kortering, Rev. Dale H. Kuiper, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

Church News Editor: Mr. Donald Doezeema
1904 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

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Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
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Business Agent for Australasia: Mr. Wm. van Rij
59 Kent Lodge Ave.
Christchurch 4, New Zealand

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Meditation

The Saint's Need For Quickening

Rev. M. Schipper

"Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

Psalms 119:37

New Year in an old world!

All that is changed is time!

Time, the succession of moments, like an ever rolling stream, taking its starting point in the beginning, meandering through the centuries that are past and marching on unto the end. Ever changing, and bearing all its sons away, — such is the nature of the creature we call "time. It has its beginning, because it is creature, and therefore also it has its end. And always under the direction of the Almighty it rushes on to its end. Its seconds become hours, and the hours

become days, and the days become years, and the years become centuries, — but when it comes to its end, its terminus is the last moment, — a twinkling of the eye.

But the world is the same!

The sun which God set in the heavens at the beginning is still in its orbit, while the earth, also created in the beginning, continues to revolve about it. Nothing in the world under sin is changed. Murder, deceit, backbiting, stealing, adultery, and all of the rest of corruption still go on at their regular pace. Wars,

and rumors of wars, mothers travailing in pain to deliver, morticians as busy as ever, all go on today as they did yesterday.

The wise man of God, were he to speak today as he did long ago, would say the same thing: "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity."

Though the time is changed, for we are now in the year of our Lord 1973, yet we are still in the same old world of vanity.

In that world of vanity the saint is troubled especially by two things. He senses that that world of vanity is very strong, and he is very weak. Not only must he be delivered from the vanity of the world, but he must be delivered in it. Shall he persevere to the end, he must be constantly quickened. And so he prays:

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity!

And quicken thou me in thy way!

The occasion for this need of the saint is the fact that he dwells in the world of vanity.

Perhaps none among mortals, apart from the secondary authors of Scripture themselves, portrayed so graphically the vanity of the world as did John Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress*. To him, as to the saint he describes, the world is a veritable vanity fair. To him, as it was to the psalmist who penned the words of our text, vanity was a lying thing. Vanity was (is) a lie, not only opposed to the truth, but seeking to replace it. Vanity assumes such a pose that it tries to entice you into believing that it is good to embrace it. Vanity is the imagination of an evil heart. Vanity is as old as our first father, who was enticed to believe that it was good to transgress the commandment of God not to eat of the forbidden tree, imagining himself to become through transgression as God knowing good and evil. From an auspicious beginning in which man would continue to be in the image and likeness of God so long as he walked in obedience, he, through vanity, the lie that he would be like God if he transgressed His commandment, became vain in all his thoughts, and his heart was filled with lust. And this depravity he passed on to all mankind. And the world in which he lived became filled with vanities. With the help of Satan man began to create lying vanities. Though it appeared that with the deluge God had cleansed His world of all lying vanities, it soon became evident after the flood that this was not the case. And since that day of judgment the vanity of the world has multiplied exceedingly, and will continue to increase until all the vanities are destroyed in the final conflagration.

In this world of vanity the saints of God are required to walk in this year of our Lord 1973.

In this world the saint prays: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity!

Everywhere he looks, he sees vanity! Vanity riches, vanity philosophy, vanity glory, and vanity pleasure. All is vanity!

Though the saint, through grace, is become estranged to that world, this estrangement he experiences only in principle. He still lives in the flesh; and his old nature, which belongs to this world, is still with him. As we suggested above, the vanity of the world is strong, and he is often so weak. Out of new, regenerated heart, he expresses his need: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity!

This negative expression of his need is so necessary because he senses his natural inability to withstand the allurements of vanities. He senses, too, that all his senses are naturally attracted to these vanities, and especially the sense of sight. He understands the word of Jesus: "The light of the body is the eye. If, therefore, thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." As the periscope to the submarine, so is the eye to the body. Though all his senses are affected by vanity, none more than the sight of the eye.

But does not the saint here pray for the impossible? Is there anywhere he can go in this wide world that his vision can escape the sight of vanities? Supposing that his eyes were turned, where would he not see vanities constantly surrounding him? And isn't it precisely the will of the Lord that His saints should see the vanities of this world?

If we may answer the last question first, it should be evident from all Scripture that the Lord would not have His saints to go out of the world, even if that were possible. Jesus prayed: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil (or, the evil one)." And we must understand well that the prayer of our text is not that of an ascetic who would flee the world. There have been those who made this attempt, and history shows that when they secluded themselves in some desert place, or in the caves of the mountains, they took along with them the very vanities they had endeavored to escape. All Scripture points to the fact that it is the calling of the saints of God to be in the world, though not of it. Their calling is to live antithetically, that is, choosing always the good, and rejecting always the evil. And this answers also all the other questions we raised above. If the saint really realizes his calling, therefore, there is no way that he can escape seeing the vanities.

Let us understand it well, the prayer of our text is the prayer of the saint who walks in the mist of the world and observes all its vanities. However, by the grace of God, and according to the new principle of life in him, he has no desire for those vanities. Nevertheless he realizes that he has but a small beginning of the new obedience, and that often the eyes of his flesh are attracted to these vanities. So his prayer really is: Cause my eyes to see more and more the vanity of these vanities, and to set my heart and

whole being with all of its affections on those things which are above and beyond those vanities, — those things which have an abiding value.

This is especially emphasized in the last part of the prayer in its more positive aspect.

And quicken thou me in thy way!

Literally, in thy ways cause me to live!

The way or the ways of Jehovah!

And the way of Jehovah is the way of His statutes, of which every verse in the Psalm speaks. Listen to what the psalmist says in the immediate context. "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments: for therein do I delight. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." And then you have the prayer of our text: "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

It should be abundantly evident that the saint would have his whole life directed by the Word of his God. Cause me to live more and more that way, not in the way where all the vanity of the world would lead me and to which I am attracted by nature.

Understand well the prayer of the saint is one. The two parts of his prayer belong together. They are inseparably connected. His sense of need is one. What good would it be if he should have his eyes turned from vanity, if he had not the grace to walk in Jehovah's ways? None whatsoever. But together, so long as he is in the state of imperfection, God's

preserving grace will enable him to persevere faithfully unto the end.

And the supply of his need is to be found in his God alone!

He is the living God, and He alone can impart the life which the saint needs. Only as his God imparts unto him His grace can the saint continue to live. Only as that grace of God quickens him can the saint continue to walk in the fear of his God according to His precepts.

Such a prayer the Lord will surely hear!

My reader, shall we not also take upon our lips this prayer as we enter into the new span of time?

Remember, the time is changed; but we are still in an old world that has not changed. It is still full of vanities, vanities to which we will be attracted according to our flesh, in which we still dwell. If we are not able to look beyond these vanities and set our eyes on the heavenly verities, we will surely be swallowed up by the world. Pray then earnestly, and daily, as you walk through vanity fair, for the grace of life, that you may walk faithfully in the light of His Word.

No confidence can we have in our flesh that we shall be able to withstand the enticement of vanity. Boasting in the flesh we shall surely be overcome.

Our victory is in prayer for God's indispensable grace!

With this prayer rising constantly from our hearts, and constantly offered by our lips, we shall never be ashamed.

World without end!

Amen!

All Around Us

A Letter To My Son

Prof. H. Hanko

Dear Son,

It seems as if the end of an old year and the beginning of a new year have a way of putting me into a reflective frame of mind. I suppose, when I stop to think about it, that this lies in the nature of the event itself: the last day of an old year when one quite naturally looks back on the days so quickly gone by; the beginning of a new year when one cannot help but look ahead.

But Scripture seems to suggest something of this to us. You know that quite often, at an Old Year's Eve service, Psalm 90 is read as being particularly

appropriate; and Moses writes there of the need to count our days that we may set our hearts upon wisdom. And we know that God Himself created the years which go and come, for He set the heavenly bodies in their courses in the sky for "signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." Yes, also for signs. It must be then that the end of a year speaks to us of the end of all time; and the beginning of a year speaks to us of the beginning of the new age which shall dawn when our Lord comes back again.

What is time? How difficult the question is to answer. Philosophers have tried to give it definition

over the years. So have theologians. You probably recall that already more than a millennium ago, St. Augustine asked these questions: "For what is time? Who can readily and briefly explain this? Who can even in thought comprehend it, so as to utter a word about it? But what in discourse do we mention more familiarly and knowingly, than time? And, we understand, when we speak of it; we understand also, when we hear it spoken of by another. What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not: yet I say boldly that I know, that if nothing passed away, time past were not; and if nothing were coming, a time to come were not; and if nothing were, time, time present were not. . . ."

But it is not my purpose to engage you in a long and wearying debate about what time is. We know, of course, that God created it when He created all things. Before creation there was no time. We know too, from bitterest experience, that in a sinful world time is an enemy. After all, we still sing Psalm 90 in church — mostly on Old Year's eve: "Time like an ever flowing stream bears all its sons away." Time is an irresistible force to drag us bit by bit, through a long and often agonizing series of illnesses and weaknesses, out of this world into the grave. This is because the curse of God rests upon this creation, and time too is cursed as a part of the world. Time is an enemy. Time ties us in chains which we cannot break, dragging us along to an untimely death. For God will not have wicked men in His world. And time is the means to carry him out of the creation through the door of death into the grave.

But Paul tells us that we have the solemn obligation to "redeem the times." You may find this in more than one place in Scripture. Look them up yourself. One such place is Col. 4:5. Another is Eph. 5:16. But how is this possible for us? It has got to be because Christ Himself has redeemed the times; i.e., He has redeemed time. He entered into our time to live in our world's history. And His cross and resurrection were a mighty victory by which He redeemed all things, time among them.

I do not intend to "preach" to you in this letter; but surely it is important for you to understand that this has great significance for us. Among many other things, it means that Christ, from His exalted position high above all creatures rules sovereignly over all time. He controls time, makes it serve His purpose, uses it to gain for Himself and His (and Our) God the complete victory He won on the cross. Now the point is then that all time will be used by Him in such a way that His own everlasting kingdom will gain the victory. We need have no doubt or fear about this; we may look confidently ahead on this new year's day to that victory which will certainly come about.

And, of course, the altogether wonderful thing is that Christ has called us to be a part of that kingdom and He has given to us to participate by grace in His

victory. Time is redeemed for us!

The urgent calling to redeem the times comes to us breathing victory and hope for the future.

We are to redeem the times, Paul says. And we are to do this because the days are evil. It is especially this that I want to talk about for a few moments with you. It is not a long look back through the year so swiftly gone by that is needed to conclude that Paul's words are surely true. The newspapers and broadcasts throughout the year kept drumming into our minds how evil these days really are. All of these evils we need not speak of. But there are some of special importance to you because they have a lot to do with our calling to redeem the times in the year ahead.

I sometimes shudder when I think of how incessantly you are bombarded with every form of immorality. We are told that in some parts of the country over half the adult population live in fornication so habitually that it has become *a way of life to them*. The young people of our day live so completely in adultery and fornication that there is scarcely any voice raised in protest. They are permitted to do so openly and publicly announcing to the world their challenging defiance of God's sacred word. The most revolting crimes of sex are not only openly practiced, but are no longer condemned as sin. Churches are even organized for homosexuals. Sexual clinics are set up to teach people by means of "clinical adultery" to find their happiness in sex. And unwanted babies are murdered before they see the light of day. If the heathen in Israel's time and some of Judah's worst kings sacrificed their children to Moloch, today's generations sacrifice their unwanted children on the altars of lust to the idols of sex in the abortion clinics of the land. The crime is really no different. And the Supreme Court seems to have cut the word "pornography" out of its dictionary.

There is a point here that I must mention to you. There is a growing trend in this country which you must have noticed which effectively does away with all sin. It starts this way. There is some sort of practice in this country which is legally forbidden but is increasingly common. Maybe it is gambling. Then again it is abortion. Or perhaps it is the use of drugs — especially marijuana. But whatever it may be, the laws, for some reason, seem ineffective in combatting this particular evil or sin. The problem increases in size and grows in seriousness. At last, with a great deal of hand-wringing and an outpouring of pious platitudes, a solution is found to the "problem" so that it exists no longer. That solution is simply to make the sin legal. Is gambling beyond the control of the law-enforcement agencies? Well, legalize gambling. Then there is no problem, and the state has devised a new way to fill its money-hungry coffers. Is abortion a problem too great to cope with in the courts? Well, make it legal. And you not only solve the problem, but at the same time

take a long stride in the direction of ZPG. You know what that is: Zero Population Growth. Has it proved impossible to control marijuana smoking? Well, quite obviously the solution to the problem is to make it legal. Not only does the problem disappear, but there is the added benefit of making it easier to help those on dope who have had "bad trips" when they go to harder drugs.

There is a tremendous appeal in all these things. Pondering it the other day the thought came to my mind that, at least in part, the appeal is to be found in a more basic trouble that plagues this society. There is no longer any conception of obedience to authority. I have talked with you often about this. I need not repeat here what we have frequently discussed. But there is one point that needs to be made — especially for our young people. You and they are in that time of life when you must become independent. You must stand on your own two feet. You must test your own wings and presently fly the nest. You must leave the shelter of the parental roof and build your own home. It seems that time comes altogether too swiftly for us. Yet we have tried to make you independent. But sometimes there is some misunderstanding about the matter. Perhaps we have not made the point clear enough. It is true that your obedience to your parents never ends; but the point that needs so much to be made is that you always, in all your life, owe unquestioning obedience to the Word of God as the rule of your faith and life. It is this which lies at the basis of all the evil in our day. And, I must warn you, the Churches are, in many instances, taking the lead in robbing people of the infallible rule of the Scriptures.

The days are evil. 1972 was proof of how evil they are.

But Christ rules over all. And, among other things, this surely means that all these evils too are but so many signs of the fact that Christ is returning. Jesus Himself told us that one of the signs of His coming was to be that lawlessness would abound.

There are other matters though which I must mention. I am talking now about religion in general and our calling to worship God. The last year was marked with some notable developments in this respect. For one thing, innovations in worship continue to be introduced in many Churches — even in Churches which seem close to the one to which you belong. These innovations in worship are often characterized by that much abused word "relevancy." And the idea, I see, is to make worship more attractive and appealing to young people. Film strips, musical groups playing the latest hits, sensitivity sessions, rap sessions, dramatic productions — these and many more are among the substitutes for worship being tried and practiced.

For another thing there is still a lot of tongue speaking going on; and we are still being told that some

such thing as this is not only a legitimate way of worshipping God, but is also the one proof of the presence and gift of the Holy Spirit.

And then there are the "Jesus people." We hear and read a lot about a national revival especially among young people. It turns out to be in some way or another related to various Jesus movements. And it all seems so pious, so genuine, so attractive, so worth our emulation.

But is it?

I cannot remind you strongly enough that in these matters also the Word of God is our rule of faith and life. I am sometimes reminded of Christ's words — again a sign of His return: "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. . . ."

This was true also of Explo '72 as well. Everyone is shouting: Lo, here is Christ. But do not believe them.

All of these things are, I am afraid, reason to be downhearted and discouraged. The times seem so utterly evil. The temptations so many are great. The tendencies to drift along with the times so strong and irresistible. It takes special watchfulness to avoid all these many pitfalls.

But, from another point of view, these are also exciting times. You must not miss the significance of this. It all has to do too with redeeming the times.

While it is true that the world sinks deeper into the darkness of sin, and while it is true that church after church goes the long road of apostasy with increasing swiftness, nevertheless, there are faithful people of God in many places throughout the earth. They are never very many. But Scripture reminds us that the elect are only a very small remnant, a hut in a garden of cucumbers; and — let us never forget it, a besieged city.

But they are there. And more and more they are protesting the ungodly evils in their own denominations and churches. They are seeing how horrible it is when churches, once strong defenders of the truth, compromise that truth at every turn and sell their birthright for a mess of worldly pottage. And, in their concern, they are seeking each other out, looking for those who still love and maintain the truth, and eagerly desiring fellowship with them of like faith.

This makes the times in which we live exciting. God is taking care of His Church. And there is, before our eyes, the evidence that there are always 7000 who do not bow the knee to the Baals of our day.

We have a calling in this respect. And the calling is urgent. We may not shrink back from it. But, surely, that calling, if it means anything at all, means that we must, without compromise and without equivocation,

speak loudly of the truth of the Scriptures. Let the sounds of the trumpet on the walls of Zion give a clear note. Let the faith of our fathers be our's in all truth and purity.

And so the time comes when I must bring this letter to its close.

A new year lies before us. We cannot tell what the year will bring — either for ourselves or for the cause of Christ. We cannot tell what personal burdens will have to be borne, what problems will have to be solved, what joys or sorrows await us in the year of our Lord, 1973. We cannot tell yet precisely and in every detail what our calling will be in the coming year or what is the exact nature of that calling. The Lord always has a way of surprising us, for His ways are not our ways. But though we do not know, Christ is in heaven and the times are inescapably in His hands. And we belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

I must leave a personal word with you. Work your very hardest in the place God gives you now. Pray often and make prayer a regular part of your life, for the kingdom needs praying saints above all else. Read the Scriptures. Read your Church papers. Read good literature. Read much. How does Paul put it to Timothy? "Give attendance to reading." Devote yourself with all the strength of your youth and the energies of your present strength to the work of the kingdom. Be ready always to give an answer to those who ask of you a reason for the hope that is in you. Let your light so shine before men that others may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

The victory is ours.

May the year ahead be filled for you with the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit.

With love,

From Holy Writ

Pure and Undeiled Religion (5)

An Exposition of the Epistle of James

Rev. Robert D. Decker

Chapter 1:9-11, The Exalted Poor, The Perishing Rich:

The Word of God stands in direct, sharp antithesis to the whole "way of life" of the world — especially the American world and "way of life." To go from rags to riches, from a log hut to the "White House," to make something of one's self, power, influence, money: these are the ideals of life, while the poor are at best pitied and more often condemned. God, however, exalts the poor and despises the rich! That is, God exalts the poor who are poor indeed. He exalts the Seekers of His Kingdom, the church in the dispersion. The rich, the lovers of money who are covetous and who trust in uncertain riches rather than in the living God are made low by the righteous Judge of heaven and earth.

James speaks of the "brother of low degree." There is no difficulty in understanding him to be the child of God, the Christian brother. He is said to be "of low degree." This term is used in two senses in the Scriptures. Sometimes it refers to one's natural condition; one is poor, lowly because of a lack of the necessities of food, clothing, shelter; or because of some natural adversity. Other times the Bible speaks of this in terms of the spiritual grace of humility, the antithesis of which is pride. Jesus uses this word "low degree" in this sense when in Matthew 11:29 He

describes Himself as "meek and lowly in heart." We find the same idea in James 4:6 and I Peter 5:5.

Both senses of the term apply in this text. The brother of low degree is one who belongs to the elect in Christ, the redeemed. He has been raised up to new life by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the pride of sin has been broken in his heart by the regenerating work of the Spirit of Christ. He is, therefore, a saint in the world of unholy wicked, a friend of God in a world of God's enemies. All his hope and trust is in the God of his salvation, so that in daily repentance, fervent prayer for the wisdom of God, fighting the battle of faith, he counts it all joy in divers temptations and patiently waits for the coming of the Lord and the glory of the New Jerusalem.

For this reason he is "of low degree" in the world. He is persecuted and despised for his faith. That was stark reality for the "twelve tribes in the dispersion" to whom James wrote. They literally had no place in the world. They had to flee Jerusalem for their very lives, suffered loss of possessions. Many were fed to the lions, slaughtered, imprisoned, burned and sawn asunder. So it has been, is, and always will be for the brother of low degree in this world. And this is something we apparently have a hard time understanding living in our pleasure-mad, hell-bound

world. This life is not a playground but a battle ground for the Christian. It is that today. And it is that in Grand Rapids, South Holland, Iowa, California in just as real a sense as it was that in the Roman world of the first century. The Christian brother is of low degree because he seeks the things which are above and sets not his affection on the perishing things which are below (Col. 3:1ff). He labors not for the meat which perishes but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life. He seeks God's Kingdom first rejecting the service of Mammon and does not worry about tomorrow or what he's going to eat, drink, or wear, trusting that his heavenly Father Who clothes the grass of the field, adorns the lily with a glory greater than Solomon's, and feeds the little sparrow, will also clothe and feed him, for he is of more value for Jesus' sake than many sparrows (Matt. 6). Thus he is of low degree because he presses all that he is and has in to the service of God's Kingdom. He educates his children in the fear of God, supports the ministry of the gospel, helps the poor. Besides, his ability to earn a living is somewhat limited. The better-paying factory and construction jobs are closed to him because he will not compromise the Biblical principles of master-servant relations by joining an anti-Christian labor union. Some professional fields are closed to him because they would take him away from the church which preaches the true gospel, administers the Sacraments and administers Christian discipline in the name of Christ. He finds it difficult and in many cases impossible to climb the "ladder of corporate success" because he cannot be a friend of the enemies of God at the cocktail parties.

James says to him; "rejoice in your exaltation." Boast, glory in your exaltation. The brother of low-degree must not complain of his poverty, his limited resources and influence. He must be content with his lowly position in the world, thankful and even glory in it. His exaltation is his salvation. While now for a little while he is despised and lowly, a fool for Christ's sake, he must glory in his deliverance from the power and guilt of sin. In his victory by the grace of God in Christ Jesus over every temptation he must rejoice. He must rejoice in the fact that he shall never die, but only pass through death into his Father's house of many mansions. And, ultimately he must rejoice in the fact that his light affliction which is but for a moment works for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, to be revealed in the new creation (II Cor. 4).

"But," and here is the contrast, "the rich in that he is made low." To take "the rich" as the rich brother as most commentators do is to miss the whole point of the text. This is not the godly rich but the ungodly rich. There are rich children of God and it is not impossible for them to be saved, as Jesus' disciples once erroneously concluded (cf. Mark 10:17-27). There are examples of rich Christians in the Scriptures;

Abraham, Job, Solomon, Barnabas to mention a few. Riches are not wrong as such. But that is not the point here. The contrast is between the poor child of God and the ungodly rich.

The grounds for this position are:

1) The passage itself says of this rich man that he shall pass away and fade away in his ways. That cannot be said of the child of God.

2) The text does not address him as "brother," but simply calls him "the rich man."

3) The context of the entire Epistle indicates that this must be a reference to the ungodly rich. In chapter 2:5-7 the rich are presented as the persecutors of the church and in chapter 5:1ff James announces the just judgements of God upon the rich in the most graphic of terms.

4) This same contrast is generally found throughout the Scriptures. Jesus contrasted the poor child of God and the ungodly rich in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19ff). In Luke 12:15ff the Savior warns us that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" and to drive the point home He gives us the Parable of the Rich Fool. The Apostle Paul warns, "they that will be rich (wish to be rich - R.D.) fall into temptation and a snare and into many hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Why is that? Because the love of money is the root of all evil. Hence, the man of God is to flee these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love etc. and the rich are not to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God (1 Timothy 6:9ff).

5) There is truth (I Cor. 1, James 2) that God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, the base and despised to destroy the wisdom of this world. And the purpose of God in this is that no flesh should glory in His presence.

James means, then, the ungodly rich who are consumed by covetousness and greed, the lusts of the flesh, eyes, and the pride of life. There is a word of God to this rich man and it is: "Let him rejoice in that he is made low." Literally in that he is humiliated. There is holy irony here! The ungodly rich boasts in himself and rejoices in his sin, and that amounts to rejoicing in his being humiliated. He gains the whole world but loses his own soul.

His perishing is illustrated by the figure of verses 10b and 11. "... because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away." Just as the flower of the grass flourishes for a while and then passes away so the rich man shall utterly perish. Not a trace of him shall be left. He becomes after all his striving for earthly gain but a quickly fading memory. But James extends the figure in verse 11: "For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth (the beauty of its appearance is destroyed

— R.D.): so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways." There is frightening power in these words! The sun rises with burning heat and dries up or withers the grass, with the result that its flower falls off and the beauty of its face, appearance is destroyed — that is literally what the Word says.

Thus, in that same manner, the rich man fades away in his ways. "In his ways," literally "in his journey, pursuits, or goings!" Think of that! The rich man in all his feverish pursuing of uncertain riches, in which he has no time for God, His Church and Kingdom, in all his home life, pleasure-seeking, fades away. His entire life is geared to self-satisfaction, his own security apart from God, amassing a fortune — those are his ways. And in those ways he "shall fade away." That verb

really means "shall waste away." It does not appear that way to the natural eye. Observing the ungodly rich it appears that they prosper in their ways (cf. Psalm 73). Go, into the sanctuary of God, brother of low degree, and see how God places them in slippery places and casts them down into destruction! The rich come to a miserable end. They perish in their ways. They waste away under the "burning heat" of the righteous wrath of God. Hell is the final end of them. I don't want to call that common grace, do you?

Let us be warned. Seek the Kingdom! First! Trust in the living God, not in uncertain riches. Rejoice in your exaltation, brother of low degree. It will not be long before it's realized in the new creation. "Behold I come quickly" is the word of the Savior.

The Strength of Youth

Divorce and Remarriage [3]

Rev. J. Kortering

In this article we will pay close attention to the argument put forth by those who believe that the Bible allows for divorce and remarriage. Our emphasis is upon their Biblical reasoning. We will not deal with many of the emotional arguments involved in divorce and the sad consequence it brings upon an individual who has to either live alone or raise the family alone. These are indeed difficult experiences and we will have something to say about this later. For now our interest is in what the Word of God teaches. Are the arguments put forth by those who advocate divorce and remarriage true to the Word of God?

Rather than put words into the mouths of those who teach that divorce allows for remarriage, we will let them speak for themselves. In fairness to this position, we will pay attention to Rev. Guy Duty who expresses his views in his book, *Divorce and Remarriage*. According to the cover insert, he was "ordained in 1931 and has continued his pastoral and teaching work in Virginia, etc." There is no indication of church affiliation. This work is published by the Bethany Fellowship Inc. of Minneapolis, Minn. We admire this work, because it deals with an exegetical study on this subject. Attempting to decide issues on the basis of the Word of God is all too rare today. This work is the best attempt to do this that we have read, even though we will criticize much of it in a later article.

Rev. Duty defends the position that Scripture

teaches that adultery is grounds for the dissolution of marriage through divorce and that the parties are free to remarry afterwards. This, to say the least, is a conservative position; many in the church today want divorce and remarriage for all kinds of reasons.

MOSES' DIVORCE LAW

Any discussion of divorce soon leads to Deut. 24:1-4. Look this up in your Bible. This text deals with the Mosaic law as it applied to the remarriage of husband and wife who were divorced and subsequently had remarried someone else. Often just verses 1 and 2 are quoted, and then one gets the distorted view that Duty has. Listen.

All a Jew had to do to divorce his wife was to give her the divorce bill in the presence of two witnesses. The marriage was then legally dissolved and both parties were free to remarry. This "writing of divorcement" is recorded in Deut. 24:1,2, page 22.

Rev. Duty explains the "uncleanness" which gave rise to the divorce as anything which aggravated the husband.

Some argue that this "uncleanness" was immorality, but this could not be true because the unfaithful Jewess was stoned to death. When the Jewish theologians brought the divorce dispute to Jesus, they argued from this Deuteronomic law that divorce was allowed for "every cause". Jesus conceded this, but explained that it was allowed for "hardness of heart". Jesus would not have said that

this divorce was for hardness of heart if the woman had been immoral. This is proved by the fact that Jesus allowed divorce for fornication, Matt. 5:32, Matt. 19:9, page 23.

The main point is that he contends that the bill of divorcement referred to in Deut. 24 was a dissolution of the marriage. The text seems to teach this, "Let him write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house she may go and be another man's wife." Concerning this he writes,

We are here mainly concerned with the fact that the divorce dissolved the marriage and the woman could "go and be another man's wife". If the second husband divorced her, then the second marriage was dissolved and she was free to marry the third time; but God specified that she could not return to her "former husband". When the woman married the second time, she did not have 2 husbands because God spoke of the first as her *former* husband, page 23.

The author insists that "divorce" means dissolve by virtue of the Greek and Hebrew words used.

Read any book by those with the opposite view on divorce and you will see that not one of them has quoted a Hebrew or Greek authority on the teaching that divorce means, "separation from bed and board". There is none. Every lexicon I have searched has the same meaning of dissolution.

In all Jewish divorce history, divorce was called "a cutting off". The Mosaic divorce bill was called by the Jews, A Bill of Cutting Off. The Hebrew word for divorce (put away) is *Kerithuth* and signifies "a cutting off" . . .

The Greek word for divorce (put away) in the New Testament is *apoluo*. It is the exact equivalent of the Old Testament *kerithuth*, and it has the same precise meaning of absolute dissolution, page 40.

If one honestly studies the references made to lexicons, it cannot help striking the reader that "to cut off, to set free, to loose" is not in all instances the same as to *dissolve*.

In summary he teaches that the law of Moses allowed "for every cause" a dissolving of the marriage union and remarriage for anyone but the "former spouse."

CHRIST'S TEACHING ON DIVORCE

In Matt. 19:3-12, Christ deals with the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament concerning divorce. The Pharisees were involved in a dispute concerning lawful divorce and came to Jesus for His ideas. Christ summarized it, "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery," Matt. 19:9.

In commenting on this Rev. Duty observes,

Here Christ met the Jewish theologians on the issue of divorce. It was, as we have seen, the hotly

debated question between the rival Rabbinical schools of Hillel and Shammai.

The subject matter of this Scripture was the lawfulness of the Mosaic divorce for "every cause." These Jewish scholars were able and clever men. They wanted to know if it was *lawful* for a Jew to divorce his wife for all the trivial causes that their famous Rabbi Hillel allowed. *They did not mention remarriage because that was not the point at issue.* There was never any question about this. It was allowed by both Hillel and Shammai," page 63.

From this and the previous quotation, it is obvious that Rev. Duty concludes that Christ took the position of Shammai. This we believe to be a basic error which we will show later.

Because Duty believes that Deut. 24 teaches the dissolution of marriage for the Old Testament times, we should notice how this leads him to make the same conclusion for New Testament times. He reasons this way,

In verses 3-9 the legal term "put away" was used four times in this discussion — twice by the Pharisees and twice by Jesus. Three times, in verses 3,7,8 on both sides, this term meant dissolution. Then by what word-magic does it become "separation" in verse 9? Jesus didn't use double talk. The meaning was not shifting back and forth from dissolution to separation, page 69.

The trouble is that Duty begs the question when he assumes that he has proven that the "put away" used by Moses and subsequently by the Pharisees means "dissolution."

In support of his conclusion that Christ taught that the dissolution of marriage was applicable only to one which involved fornication, Duty writes as follows:

Why didn't He (Christ) say, "It was not so from the beginning and it shall not be so now?"

There is only one reasonable answer, fornication was an exception to all that Jesus taught about marriage and divorce. What we learned about "except" comes into play again . . . the exception signifies to exclude from the scope of statement or enactment — to exclude from an aggregate under consideration. Like this:

1. The original male-female purpose in marriage remains in force, except for fornication.
2. The man must forsake father and mother and cleave unto his wife, except for fornication.
3. What God hath joined together man must not put asunder, except for fornication.
4. It was hardness of heart for a Jew to divorce his wife, except for fornication.
5. A Jew must not use the writing of divorcement, except for fornication.

The significant question is this, does the "except for fornication" apply only to the preceding clause "whoso shall put away his wife," or also to the following clause, "and shall marry another" as well? This changes the picture entirely and Duty claims that it applies to both.

PAUL'S TEACHING ON DIVORCE

There are especially two passages in the Pauline Epistles that bear upon this question. The first is Rom. 7:1-4 quoted by those who believe that divorce does not dissolve the marriage. To this Duty responds,

Paul said a woman is free from the "law of her husband" at his death. The husband by right of marriage law, ruled over his wife by the power invested in him. She was in subjection to his marital authority. The husband's death released the woman from her husband's power over her and the legal connection was broken. The dominion of a law ceased when the one who exercised the law died. It is fundamental with Paul that "where no law is, there is no transgression," Rom. 4:15. When a marriage is dissolved for adultery, the "Law" of the husband no longer exists," page 85.

The second passage referred to is I Cor. 7:10-15. "Let not the wife depart from her husband, but and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife." Of this he writes,

The woman in the case of verse 11 had obtained a divorce according to Greek law, which was easy to get but Paul refused to recognize the validity of the divorce. The fact that the woman had obtained a divorce is indicated by his command for the woman to remain "unmarried". She was commanded to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband because the decree she obtained did not dissolve the marriage. She was still the wife of the man she divorced. The divorce had left the marriage undissolved as in the case of Matt. 5:32. If she had divorced her husband for adultery, the case would have been different, page 91.

In trying to present concisely and fairly the argument of those who teach a dissolution of marriage by adultery and subsequent approval of remarriage, we learn one outstanding thing. The entire argument for this position hinges in a large part on a proper understanding of "divorce" referred to in Deuteronomy 24. If Moses granted "dissolution" for almost any cause, the argument seems convincing. This however, is the Achilles heel. We shall examine this next time, D.V.

The Day of Shadows

Defection and Translation

Rev. John A Heys

Even as Adam and Eve brought forth a Cain as well as an Abel, so Seth and his sons brought forth unbelievers as well as they, those whom God was pleased to make believers. We always bring forth unbelievers. We give to our children a depraved nature and cannot give them anything else. When they have spiritual life, it is not because they had spiritual parents, but because God caused them to be born again. Spiritual life never comes to us by any physical connection we have with our parents, but by a spiritual union with Christ by His Spirit.

This fact, that some of the children of Seth and his sons were not given this new spiritual life, explains the sad truth that also in the covenant community, in the little band that stayed there at the gate of paradise, sin developed. All the sin in the world is not to be found in heathen nations. Much is to be found in the so-called Christian nations. On Sunday all the sin is not committed by the unbeliever out on the lake or golf course, but much is committed right in the pew and on the pulpit of the church. And we only add to sin, and prove the point, when we deny this.

What happens when, in the covenant sphere, unbelievers appear (and believers often are enticed along with them) is that the ungodly in the world and the wicked in the covenant sphere seek each other's company. And it did not take long before Cain's wicked descendants and the unbelieving element of Seth's descendants began to seek each other's company. We read of that in Genesis 6:1, 2, "And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." As we said, the unbelievers in the covenant sphere often enticed along with them those who were weak in the faith. And it became quite a common practice for the two camps, which once were quite distinct, to seek each other. Defection had definitely set in also in the covenant community.

Cain and his descendants were still in their city in the land of Nod, and far outnumbered the little band that lived with Adam near the paradise from which he and his wife had been ejected for their sin. But sin was

practiced in both areas; and the flesh of the covenant community sought the joys of the worldly city of Cain's building.

It was on such a background that God raised up for Himself a prophet, a preacher of righteousness by the name of Enoch. And we may believe that his preaching was to the wicked in both communities. He rebuked the sin in Seth's descendants, and he spoke out openly against the rapidly developing sin among the descendants of Cain. We read of him in Jude 14, "and Enoch also the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

Genesis 5:21-23 states of Enoch that he walked with God, and was not because God took him. Hebrews 11:5 speaks of his translation which prevented him from seeing death. The passage also speaks of him not being found because of this translation, and it tells us that before the translation he had the testimony that he pleased God. And although we find his name mentioned in other places in Holy Writ, these three passages, in Genesis, Hebrews and Jude, give us all the information that we have about his life and God's dealings with him.

It would not be out of order to say that Enoch was the prediluvian John the Baptist. He, above all others, stands out in that period before the flood as one who called for repentance and spoke of the coming wrath of God. It does not take a great deal of imagination to see Enoch stand and use the words of John the Baptist, "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." One can just imagine Enoch, as well as John the Baptist, crying to the wicked, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Jude says that he was a preacher of righteousness, and that he rebuked ungodly men of their ungodly deeds. He, no less than John the Baptist, struck out at the evil doers with severe condemnation. He, as well as John the Baptist, cried out of a coming judgment.

For this his walk with God was essential.

And on the background of this fiery preaching of righteousness and judgment we can also understand that phrase that he "walked with God." It certainly indicates quite clearly that he did not walk with those whom he condemned so severely. He, living in the community of the covenant, walked in harmony with the condemnation which he voiced concerning all the ungodly deeds which men had ungodly committed. These ungodly were walking with Satan. Enoch was walking with God.

We do well to bear in mind that fact, and to live in

the consciousness of its awful reality. Either we walk with God and turn our backs upon Satan, or we walk with Satan and we turn our backs upon God. No, we state it better by saying that either we turn our backs upon Satan and walk with God, or else we keep our backs turned against God and walk with Satan. For we are born that way! Ever since Satan turned Adam and Eve around by the lie, what is brought forth every time a child is born is one whose back is turned against the living God, and one walking with Satan. "There is none that doeth good, no not one!"

It is for that reason that Scripture speaks of conversion, which literally means to "turn with," and thus indicates a change of direction. That is also why the call appears upon the pages of Holy Writ so often, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" It also explains Asaph's cry in Psalm 80, "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."

Enoch walked in the way of God's commandments. Enoch walked in love toward God, and that is what infuriated the ungodly of that day, both those in the covenant community and in Cain's city.

All this is to be understood and not to be thought of as being strange. Walking with God means walking where He walks, that is, walking in the path of righteousness, walking in love and seeking to glorify Him. Enoch in word and in deed showed himself to be of the party of the living God. To see Him walk was to see God's righteousness reflected in the life of a man. It was to see a friend-servant of God, a seed of the woman in whose heart there was enmity against the serpent and his brood and all their ungodly deeds which they ungodly committed, and all their hard speeches against God.

Yes, they spoke hard speeches against God, and not simply against Enoch. Enoch uttered pure speech. Speech that praised God. No wonder then that this infuriated those who had not been delivered from their enmity against God and against the seed of the woman that represented Him. No wonder was it that they in their fury intended to silence that voice by bringing Enoch to his death. But their hard speeches were first of all against God. Cain's sneering contempt for God, which he expressed upon hearing his punishment, was a hard speech against God. Lamech's boast to his wives and his ridicule of God's vengeance upon the murder he committed, again, was hard speech against God. And sin develops! Men became bolder and bolder in their blasphemy, in their mockery of things spiritual and in their words of defiance against the living God. They did not simply break the second table of the law and commit murder and adultery, violence and deceit. One never breaks simply the second table of the law. His breaking of it reveals that he has already broken the first table and has another god whom he worships and serves.

Their hard speeches against God brought forth powerful speeches from Enoch of condemnation and warning. Hating God and hating this one who walked with God and kept reminding them of the God they hated, they plotted to kill him in order to have freedom to walk against God without being told off, and without being exposed as ungodly in their wickedness.

That only can be the meaning of Hebrews 11:5, when it states that he “was not found.” He was not simply missed. And it was not his dead body that was never found. *He* was not found, and Genesis 5:24 says that he was not. Hebrews 11:5 speaks not only of his translation, but adds “that he should not see death.” Combine the two: Enoch was not found, which means that they looked for him, and he was translated that he might not see death, and you have nothing else than the work of God whereby He snatched His faithful prophet away from those who were looking for him to make him see death.

And this little notice in Genesis 5:24 that he walked with God and was not; *for God took Him* is placed here for our comfort as well as instruction. Not that you and I can expect to be snatched away from the viper’s brood and their hatred towards us, because we represent God’s cause in the midst of the evil world. No, but it does show us His concern for His people. It does underscore what the psalmist says when he says that “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.” It does show us that there is a reward of grace for a stand of faith. It teaches us not to fear the enemy, even when you do have to stand alone. For you never do actually stand alone. Enoch walked with God, and that means that God was right there beside Enoch. God was upholding Him in His grace to make that walk possible. And God was there in His grace in Christ, Who walked not only with God, but was God

walking with us, was God in our flesh walking all the way to Calvary and down to the depths of hell, so that when this righteous judgment of God of which Enoch spoke comes to pass, Enoch and all who walk with God will escape every bit of that holy wrath.

It means that when, by God’s grace, in the midst of the ungodly with all their ungodly deeds, we as the godly who with godly deeds witness, testify, and hold forth the banner of Christ our King, we are already more than conquerors.

For Enoch did not simply escape the sword or the fists of the ungodly against whom he testified. He was translated. God did not hide him in some corner of this earth that still is under the curse. He was translated to glory. We are again reminded of the words of the psalmist — and how true it is that God’s word is one, and that these first eleven chapters of Genesis are fact, not fiction and belong to infallible Holy Writ — “Thou wilt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.” Asaph said that after he was sorely tried. But Enoch could have said it, and does say it today in the glory to which he was translated.

That assurance we have in the midst of the fight. God will guide us not only, but afterward will receive us to glory, translating us from the whole world of the curse to the whole realm of glory.

Cain’s descendants, together with the defectors from Seth’s children, walked against God, and they will not only see death but the awful woe that follows it. Those who walk with God may see death, but surely will enjoy a life of glory with God to walk with Him in the new Jerusalem. If now you walk with God, you will walk with Him in a more wonderful way when life is over, and in a still more delightful way when His Son returns to translate our bodies from the grave and death into the kingdom of light and glory.

Contending for the Faith

THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT THE REFORMATION PERIOD THE SYNOD OF DORDT THE CANONS

H. Veldman

In Article IV of the Rejection of Errors of Head II of the Canons of Dordt the fathers of Dordt present the Arminian view of the atoning suffering and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to these fathers of Dordt, the Remonstrants set forth the condition prescribed by God in His dealings with the sinner unto his salvation. They believe that faith is a condition

which man by his free will must be willing to meet in order to be saved. God does not save the sinner because of the work of Christ upon the cross but because of his faith. The Lord will accept the imperfect faith of the sinner as that sinner’s righteousness. So, the sinner’s faith has become a work-righteousness, a work or activity of the sinner

which renders him righteous before God.

In our preceding article, we had begun to call attention to the fathers' appraisal of this position of the Arminians. And we called attention to the fact that the Remonstrants surely violate the justice and righteousness of the Lord, inasmuch as the Lord would evaluate as perfect that which is very imperfect. We now continue with the fathers' appraisal of the position of the Arminians.

In the first place, the fathers of Dordt declare that this position of the Arminians is contrary to Scripture, and they refer to Romans 3:24 and 25, and we quote: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." This passage certainly teaches us that we are saved out of grace through the work of Christ. The Arminian separates the faith of the sinner from Christ's work upon the cross, teaches that the Lord saves the sinner, not because of the blood of Calvary, but because of the faith of the sinner, which faith, although imperfect, the Lord is willing to accept as the sinner's righteousness. But in this passage of Romans 3 the apostle emphatically declares that we are justified freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and that faith takes hold of that righteousness of Christ Jesus. Paul, therefore, connects the salvation and righteousness of the sinner with the cross of Jesus Christ and the atoning suffering and death of the cross of Calvary.

In the second place, the fathers of Dordt, in this fourth article, identify the error of the Arminians with the heresy of the wicked Socinus. The history of the church and of doctrine speaks of two men who bore the name of Socinus: Faustus Socinus and Laelius Socinus. The latter was the uncle of the former. They were both antitrinitarian. Laelius Socinus died at Zurich May 16, 1562 and Faustus Socinus died at Luckawice, near Cracow, March 3, 1604. The nephew is the more prominent of the two. As far as Laelius Socinus is concerned, his candid intelligence and pleasant manner were the cause of much homage from the leading German and Swiss Reformers. We have this information from the New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia. Later on, though he did not expressly deny the doctrine of the Trinity, suspicion arose against him, and he needed the assistance of Bullinger to appease Calvin, and to turn aside the doubt as to his belief. Thereafter he abstained from controversy, and kept his opinions more to himself. So, he "covered up" his feelings and opinions. He was clever. Arminius, too, was clever, did not come out into the open with his beliefs, although he did work underhandedly with his students when he became a professor.

It was Faustus Socinus who elaborated the system

that is associated with his name. In 1579 he proceeded to Poland, where the name Socinus had acquired fame from his uncle's two sojourns there, and where the Unitarian movement was gaining in political influence. Here he made an earnest effort to unite the divergent parties into one organization. In Cracow he endeavored in vain to join with the Polish Brethren, a society of Unitarians, but was hindered by his refusal to be rebaptized. As stated above, he died near Cracow in 1604.

Faustus Socinus was a Unitarian. He denied the Trinity. He denied the personality of the Holy Ghost and also the Godhead of the Son. As far as his conception of Scripture is concerned, he believed that the Old Testament is practically superfluous and only of historical value. According to Socinus the sacred writers were inspired in respect to the content of religious truth only; in secondary matters even the apostles might err. His two criteria for the critical elimination of the ungentle and for judging what is of divine content are (1) accordance with reason, and (2) moral significance and utility. This is striking. is it not? Today the church is also playing with the truth of Divine Inspiration, deeming certain parts of the Scriptures to be Divinely inspired whereas other parts of the Word of God are of human and secondary importance. And also today the church is confronted with the task of differentiating between what is Divinely inspired and what is simply the work of man. So, to deny that the Scriptures are Divinely inspired throughout places one in very dubious company.

Socinus also denied the doctrine of the Trinity. This conception of God, of course, affects all other doctrines. Socinus denied that God created the world out of nothing, and he believed in a preexisting matter from which God formed the world. Today, too, the church of our day is denying the Scriptural account of the creation of the heavens and the earth; that is, the denial of this Scriptural truth has advocates in the Reformed church world of today. And, again of course, the denial of the Trinity certainly does and must affect the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This lies in the very nature of the case. Socinus held that the Scriptures deny to Christ the Divine nature. This means that the work of Christ could not possibly have been atoning, because atonement is possible only by the eternal Son of God. Only the eternal Son of God could bear the eternal wrath of God upon sin. Only the eternal Son could merit everlasting life and glory. Only the eternal Son of God could possibly pay for the sins of others and Himself be without sin. Only the Person of the Son of God could enter into the sin and guilt of the human race and Himself be exempt from it. All this work of our Lord Jesus Christ is rendered impossible if one deny that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. Denying these fundamental truths, one must reduce the work of Christ upon the cross to that

of an example. Denying the truth that the death of Christ is vicarious atonement, the Socinians taught that salvation consisted in the self-improvement and self-development of man, with the assistance of Divine influences.

With this the Arminian conception of faith is in harmony. Denying the truth of vicarious atonement, the view of the Remonstrants led to two other theories of the death of Christ: the moral and governmental theories of the sufferings of Christ. The moral theory denies the idea of expiation or of the satisfaction of justice by vicarious atonement, declares that there is no vindictory justice in God which renders it necessary that sin should be punished, and sets forth the true purpose of the death of Christ in connection with His teachings as exerting a salutary, reformatory influence upon the moral condition of man. The governmental theory of Christ's death seems to lay emphasis upon the righteousness of God. The death of Christ upon the cross is a vivid display of the righteousness of God upon sin. God presents to us in Christ a vivid example of what He could have done to us had He treated us according to our sins and trespasses. To use an illustration, let us assume that a regiment of soldiers is guilty of a violation and has rendered itself liable to punishment. Now the commander could punish the entire regiment. But a soldier steps forward and offers to free his company from that punishment by offering to bear the wrath of the commanding officer. This, according to the governmental theory, is what Christ did. Had the Lord visited His wrath upon mankind then all mankind would have died the eternal death. But now Christ offers Himself as that victim of the righteousness of God. Christ's death is an example of what God could have done to us had He treated us and our sins according to His righteousness and justice. And if we now only believe in that Christ, confess our sins and trespasses, acknowledge this righteousness of the Lord and our worthiness to have suffered that eternal wrath of the alone living God, we will be saved. This is the governmental theory of the death of Christ. The fundamental fallacy of this theory is that it does not set forth, but denies, the righteousness of God. Christ

is merely an example of God's righteousness of God. But He does not actually pay for the sins of mankind. According to this theory, God uses an innocent Christ to display His righteousness. However, for an innocent man to suffer does not emphasize righteousness but unrighteousness. According to Scripture and the Reformed fathers, Christ is not innocent but guilty. Only, He is guilty, not because of His own sin, but because the sins of others, His elect, were upon Him.

When, therefore, the fathers of Dordt declare that the Arminians proclaim, as did the wicked Socinus, a new and strange justification of man before God, they are surely correct. The Arminians also denied the vicarious atonement of Calvary. They also taught that all a sinner need do is to believe in Christ, confess his own sin and undoneness, and then that sinner would render himself acceptable before the living God. Notice, please, that the fathers of Dordt speak here of the "wicked Socinus." So, these fathers do not hesitate to "call a spade a spade." And in this we must never hesitate to follow in the footsteps of these fathers. The Scriptures, too, surely mince no words when they set forth and condemn heretical doctrines. The apostle, in Eph. 4:14, declares that these winds of doctrine are born in the sleight of men who lie in wait with the purpose of deceiving the church of the living God.

One more thing. In this fourth article, the fathers conclude with the remark that the Arminians proclaim a teaching which is against the consensus of the whole church. How true! O, it may be true that the churches of the Reformation were not fully agreed on all points of doctrine. We know of the difference that existed between the Calvinistic and Lutheran views of the Lord's Supper. But they were certainly in agreement upon one thing: the vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. When, then, the Remonstrants deny the vicarious atonement of the cross, teach that the Lord accepts the faith of the sinner as his justification, substitute this faith of the sinner for the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, then they certainly introduce into the church of God a teaching which is against the consensus of the whole church. And may our churches ever have the grace to maintain the wholly particular character of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Editorials

Decision in the Kuitert Case

Our readers will recall that ever since the Synod of Sneek, 1969-'70, the matter of the views of Dr. Harry Kuitert has been pending in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* of the Netherlands. There has been discussion between

him and a committee, with no final decision until now. Now, apparently, the discussion has been ended, and a decision has been reached. A lengthy report appeared in the *RES News Exchange* of December 5, 1972.

Before offering our explanation and comments, we will simply reproduce this report from the *RES News Exchange* in full. It is as follows:

The General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands decided November 23 that the views of Professor H. M. Kuitert do not deviate from the confessions to such a degree that special measures have to be taken. The Synod and the professor together expressed their agreement in a 'further testimony' which will be sent to all the congregations. When the final decision was taken, only one negative vote was cast. As one member of Synod expressed it, the boat of Professor Kuitert has safely been piloted through the storm of unrest in the Reformed Churches.

The agreement was reached on the basis of a decision taken earlier by the Synod in January 1972. In that session the Synod requested its commission to consider the relationship between Kuitert's theological ideas and the confession of the church and to advise whether Kuitert's ideas regarding a 'consistent horizontalization of faith' and the 'latent kingdom' as a fruit of the 'anonymous word of promise' do not need correcting and deepening since these ideas do not sufficiently express the incomparable 'overvalue' of God's salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

From this statement of the Synod two discussion terms were distilled: (1) the humanity of man as an expression of the full saving acts of God and (2) the realization of the Kingdom of God within earthly reality.

The commission and the teaching staff of the Free University submitted to the Synod a consensus statement which contained the following five points:

- 1) The meaning of history is determined by God's saving acts for the redemption and renewal of this world. In this man is involved in his full human responsibility. Therefore the church calls all men to faith and repentance.
- 2) The completion of the history of salvation lies in the period prior to our present existence. In this connection the following of our God and Saviour up to the consummation of the messianic Kingdom bears the mark of a pilgrimage.
- 3) The revelation of God's salvation does not occur outside our earthly knowledge and world of experience; and yet not in such a way that God and his salvation are limited thereby.
- 4) It is true that in our life in our world we have to suffer deeply under evil. This meaninglessness in our existence puts our faith to the stress of temptation. But God tells us that He one day will triumph powerfully over all the forces of darkness. He will cause the fullness of salvation to dawn and so we are able nevertheless — without

acquiescing in evil, or succumbing to fatalism — to persevere in our struggle to attain salvation.

- 5) Overagainst the dark power of evil, we encounter also in the world outside the church the phenomenon of 'humanity' that often shames us all. We believe that this fragmentary human goodness is in some way related to the saving acts of God. This however does not deny that the Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ, that is entrusted to the church, is the only way in which the whole world must be saved.

The commission added what they called a 'common conviction of faith': that various related questions should be thought through in a scientific way as a "service which theology should show to the church and to human society."

An ad hoc committee of the Synod reported after studying the consensus statement that it appeared that Professor Kuitert, in regard to the questions that had arisen from his publications, finds himself completely in accord with the confessions of the church. There was no complete unanimity in the ad hoc committee, however, the Rev. P. Van Til submitted a separate report in which he granted the thrust of the ad hoc committee report but asked, "What answer shall we now give to those who had objections and asked concrete questions on specific passages in the books and articles of Professor Kuitert?" Some delegates called the consensus statement a 'curtain of smoke.'

At the close of the debate Synod issued the following statement:

The synod has ascertained that the continuing discussion has brought clarification regarding the theological thought processes of Dr. H. M. Kuitert in regard to the question about Genesis 2 and 3 in the following points: a) his firm rejection of the thought that sin is a necessary phase in the development of man, b) the fact that he does not want his views on Genesis 2 and 3 to be characterized as being only an illumination of the present existence of every man, c) his acceptance of the reality that from the beginning man has turned away from God and therefore is fully responsible for the guilt of his sin, d) the fact that he — although he considers the attempt to localize in time or in one or other way to describe precisely, the fall of man from God's intention is not a matter of church confession but of a theological conception — views this willful disobedience of man as a core element of the confession that may not be relinquished.

The Synod has further determined that nevertheless there remain differences of opinion regarding the questions about Genesis 2 and 3.

The Synod judges that in view of the debate in the meeting its discussion on this matter should be terminated at this time.

The Synod decides:

1) to maintain the declaration of the General Synod of Amsterdam 1967-68 and of Sneek 1969-70 in regard to the questions on Genesis 2 and 3,

2) in agreement herewith to issue the following 'further testimony' to the churches: as the church of Christ, listening reverently to what the Holy Scriptures reveals in the first chapter of Genesis we declare:

- a) that God created the world good;
- b) that man, who was also created upright, has turned away from his God in willful disobedience;
- c) that this fall and disobedience of our first parents, as this event is revealed in Genesis, occupies a fundamental place in Scripture and the confessions and is of essential importance for the proclamation of the Gospel;
- d) that man can be liberated from this guilt only through the redeeming saving acts of God in

Jesus Christ, the second Adam, His Son and our Lord,

3) to communicate this statement to all churches with the expectation that all office bearers will take serious account hereof in the fulfillment of their official work.

The Synod requested of the theological faculty of the Free University that in order to avoid needless misunderstandings in making known the results of their theological inquiry, they keep in mind the necessary concern for the churches. The Synod also asked the commission that confers with the theological faculty to continue its discussion in order to promote the fruitfulness of the teaching and activity both in word and writing for the confession of the church in the present time. These talks will occur within the framework of the normal discussions between the commission and the faculty.

Background of the Kuitert Decision

As we stated in the beginning of the previous editorial, this matter has been pending for a long time. And to understand this most recent decision it is necessary to view it against the background of previous developments.

That background is, first of all, the decision of the Synod of Amsterdam, 1967-'68, by which the binding character of the doctrinal declarations of Assen-1926 concerning the paradise-account was removed. Briefly, the declarations of Assen-1926 (in connection with the case of Dr. Geelkerken) concerned the literal reality and the historicity of the narrative concerning the fall of Adam and Eve. And Assen adopted the formula that the garden, the trees, the serpent, etc., were *zintuigelijk-waarneembaar*, i.e., sensuously perceptible. It was this decision of Assen which was made non-binding in 1967-'68. True, there had been considerable propaganda made and many views expressed already prior to 1967 which were contrary to the stand of Assen. But by this decision the door was officially opened to views concerning Genesis 1-3 other than the literal interpretation.

At the Synod of Sneek, 1969-'70, there were many protests, more than 200 of them, which had to do with the so-called "new theology." Some of these were specifically directed against the views of Dr. Harry M. Kuitert. These protests concerned "the honoring of the authority of Holy Scripture, the interpretation of the first chapters of the book of Genesis, so-called horizontalism and the Christian expectation of the future, the being bound to the creeds, the nature of the preaching, and other items." The Synod of Sneek took what we characterized at the time as a decision

worthy of Laodicea (cf. *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 47, pp. 125-127). It attempted to straddle the issues. It attempted to satisfy the *verontrusten* (concerned) by publishing a pastoral letter to the churches, though it refused to accede to the requests that the binding character of Assen-1926 be reinstated. And at the same time it upheld Dr. Kuitert though it admitted that he had deviated not only from Assen-1926, but even from Amsterdam, 1967/68, and therefore had deviated from the confessions even in the weak form in which the *Gereformeerde Kerken* maintained them.

Specifically, the Synod of Sneek decided as follows with respect to Dr. Kuitert (cf. *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 47, pp. 126, 127):

"The general synod of Sneek decided in its session of November 5, 1970 with respect to the protests against Dr. H. M. Kuitert regarding his views of Genesis 1-3 and Romans 5 to express:

"1. that the protests filed have a fragmentary character and as such have little cogency (*bewijskracht*);

"2. that the synod nevertheless must affirm that the denial by Dr. Kuitert of the historicity of the fall as man's turning away from his God at the beginning of human history is not in harmony with that which the synod of Amsterdam 1967/68 has indicated in its declaration sub 3 (Acts, art. 209): 'that meanwhile that which is expressed in the confessions of the church (Lord's Day 3 and 4 of the Heidelberg Catechism; Art. 14 and 15 of the Netherland Confession of Faith) about the origin of sin and the results of the fall clearly sets forth the fundamental meaning which Scripture in the Old and New

Testament (among other passages, in Romans 5) ascribes to this history, and therefore also as being of essential importance for the preaching of the gospel by the church must be maintained as authoritative;

"3. that meanwhile it has appeared that Dr. Kuitert also at synod does not stand alone in his opinions;

"4. that in this situation, however unsatisfying this may be with respect to the mutual unity, it may nevertheless also be asserted with joy that all the members of the synod hold fast to the confession that God created man good and for the fellowship of love with Himself, but that man in wilful disobedience refused and refuses to live in this fellowship, that all of humanity is alienated from God, is fallen into the slavery of sin, and can only be saved by God's gracious intervention;

"5. that she (synod) therefore judges that the unity of the ecclesiastical confession must not be considered to be at issue in such a manner that at present more specific decisions ought to be taken concerning this;

"6. that she appoints a committee to carry on the discussion (consultation) in this situation, in an earnest seeking after mutual unity, also in those matters in which clear difference of opinion has been manifested."

Since that decision of the Synod of Sneek there has been considerable consultation between Kuitert and

the committee appointed. And as the *RES News Exchange* reports, the matter was back in the lap of the Synod of Dordrecht in January of 1972. At that time there was progress reported, but a final decision was put off until the fall of 1972. And the Synod decided that the committee should "consider the relationship between Kuitert's theological ideas and the confession of the church" and should "advise whether Kuitert's ideas regarding a 'consistent horizontalization of faith' and the 'latent kingdom' as a fruit of the 'anonymous word of promise' do not need correcting and deepening since these ideas do not sufficiently express the incomparably greater worth of God's salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord." About these items we reported in great detail in our graduation address on "New Theology and Old" (cf. *Standard Bearer*, Vol. 48, pp. 437-442). Anyone who wishes to refresh his memory as to the grave implications of this new theology may consult that article.

Now, apparently, from the above instruction of Synod to its committee two items were distilled — the two mentioned in the *RES News Exchange*, namely: "(1) the humanity of man as an expression of the full saving acts of God and (2) the realization of the Kingdom of God within earthly reality."

Against this background the recent decision must be viewed.

Evaluation of the Kuitert Decision

Apparently this is the end of the Kuitert matter as far as the Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* is concerned. True, there will be on-going talks. But these will take place "within the framework of the normal discussions between the commission and the faculty." And this means that there is no more Kuitert case as such. There is a standing commission for contact between the Synod and the faculty of the Free University, due to the fact that the Free University (of which Kuitert is a faculty member) is not an ecclesiastical school, while its theological faculty nevertheless prepares candidates for the ministry in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. Hence, these on-going talks will be nothing extraordinary; there is always a certain amount of discussion between the synod's deputies and the faculty. Besides, the Synod "judges that in view of the debate in the meeting its discussions on this matter should be terminated at this time." Hence, this is plainly the end of the Kuitert matter as far as Synod is concerned. The Synod has apparently spoken its last word on the matter. Moreover, it has spoken with a large degree of unanimity. There was only one negative vote cast when the final decision was taken. And according to a letter from the Netherlands by W. Feenstra in the Christian Reformed *De Wachter* (Dec.

19, 1972, p. 15), even one of the members of the editorial staff of *Waarheid en Eenheid*, a Drs. Meeder, was happy with the decision. On the other hand, it is difficult for me to imagine that *Waarheid en Eenheid* and the *verontrusten* (concerned) can be satisfied. In fact, in private correspondence from the Netherlands I was told that one of the concerned complained, "Mother has forsaken me," referring, of course, to mother church, and that one of the influential leaders in the Netherlands had given advice that "*nood-gemeenten*" (emergency congregations) be established. If this is true, and if this advice is followed, it could conceivably mean a split. However, it could also mean only the further polarization of the liberal and conservative wings in the GKN, wings which will ultimately agree to live together in a modalities church, such as the *Hervormde Kerk* already is. Time will tell. At any rate, this seems to be all that we may expect from the GKN on the Kuitert case.

In the second place, it seems evident that Kuitert is justified, that he goes scot-free, that he is at liberty to continue to teach all that he has been teaching. It is not clear from the report in *RES News Exchange* whether it was a literal decision of Synod "that the views of Professor H. M. Kuitert do not deviate from

the confessions to such a degree that special measures have to be taken,” or whether this is simply an interpretation of the implications of Synod’s decision. The report in *De Wachter*, rather strikingly, makes no mention of this. While we have the impression that the Synod actually declared this, it nevertheless makes no real difference whether they did so or not. Kuitert is cleared. The Synod of Sneek had declared that Kuitert deviated from the decision of Amsterdam, and therefore also from the confessions; but Sneek had refrained from any disciplinary measures, recognizing that if they disciplined Kuitert, they would have to discipline many more who agreed with Kuitert even on the floor of Synod. Now the Kuitert case is ended. No disciplinary measures have been taken. It is perfectly plain – whether Synod literally decided this or not – that the Synod does not consider that Kuitert deviated from the confessions sufficiently to warrant any special measures.

In the third place, it is perfectly plain in this light, too, that officially, by Synodical decree and Synodical default, there is “*leervrijheid*” (doctrinal liberty) in the Netherlands as of 1972 – if there was not already before this date. Again, the correspondent in *De Wachter* rejoices that Synod avoided both extremes, that of “doctrinal liberty” and that of a split in the GKN. But he is simply dreaming. What else is it but doctrinal liberty when a man can teach that which according to a Synod’s own decision is contrary to the confessions (Lord’s Days 3 and 4 and Confession of Faith, Articles 14 and 15) and can do so without being disciplined? And no synodical testimony to the churches mitigates this in any way. In the first place, the content of the Synodical testimony (compare the two as they appear in Editorial No. 1 and Editorial No. 2) is not different from what the Synod of Sneek already declared in point 4 of the 1970 decision. In the second place, the decision is obviously vague enough and general enough that the pro-Kuitert forces, including Kuitert himself, can live under it. And the *ad hoc* committee of the Synod also reported, in connection with the so-called consensus statement, “that Professor Kuitert, in regard to the questions that had arisen from his publications, finds himself completely in accord with the confessions of the church.” Hence, we may cast the entire situation in the form of the following propositions, which show conclusively that there is “doctrinal liberty” in the GKN:

1. There was a confessional issue before the GKN in connection with the teachings of Prof. Kuitert concerning Genesis 1-3 and Romans 5.

2. Prof. Kuitert did not retract one word of his teachings, but asserted that he finds himself completely in accord with the confessions of the church.

3. The Synod of the GKN literally declared that

Kuitert’s teachings deviated from the confessions, Sneek-1970.

4. The Synod of the GKN, Dordrecht-1972, while maintaining the decisions of Sneek-1970, nevertheless refused to take any disciplinary measures with respect to Prof. Kuitert’s deviations from the confessions.

5. The Kuitert Case is ended.

6. Prof. Kuitert (and any others like him) are free to propagate in the GKN their views which deviate from the confessions.

If this is not “doctrinal liberty,” then I do not know the meaning of that term.

In the fourth place, now that the Kuitert matter is supposedly finished, the picture of the dilatory dialogue-tactics of the liberals is complete. One must almost admire these liberals for their firm adherence to their game plan and for the large measure of success that they achieved. Here is a clear illustration of the devastating effects of this process of delay-and-dialogue, of two steps forward and one step backward, of upholding heresy and leaving the impression on the churches of still adhering to the confessions. The liberal forces have obviously been completely victorious. Kuitert has admitted no wrong. He has come through smelling clean as a rose. Mind you, there was only one opposing vote! Indeed, the remark reported by the *RES News Exchange* is correct: “The boat of Professor Kuitert has safely been piloted through the storm of unrest in the Reformed Churches.” It took a few years. But the liberals adhered to their game-plan. And their perseverance has been rewarded.

There is a lesson of history to be learned here. Simply stated, the lesson is that no church can afford to tolerate heretics and heresy – no, not for a moment. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump! Let him who will learn take heed!

Finally, there is a lesson in the history of doctrine to be learned here. In our graduation address on “New Theology and Old” we proposed that the root of the new theology as there described is to be found in the Kuyperian theory of common grace. This claim is substantiated by the report in the *RES News Exchange*. True, common grace is not literally mentioned. But did you notice point 5 of the “consensus statement” of the commission and the teaching staff of the Free University? This is obviously “common grace.” There is “fragmentary human goodness” in the world outside the church! Note the statement: “Overagainst the dark power of evil, we encounter also in the world outside the church the phenomenon of ‘humanity’ that often shames us all. (How glorious is the fruit of common grace! It even shames the people of special grace, the church! HCH) We believe that this fragmentary human goodness is in some way related to the saving acts of God. (“latent kingdom” and “anonymous word of promise” – HCH)

This however does not deny that the Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ, that is entrusted to the church, is the only way in which the whole world must be saved."

Common grace and its "good that sinners do" is inseparably related to the new theology. The latter is the outgrowth of the former.

We have often asserted that common grace is still

the issue, and that there can be no real reformation here or in the Netherlands unless and until common grace is relinquished, eradicated root and branch from the thinking of Reformed people.

Let those who have eyes to see (also, for example, among the "concerned" in the Christian Reformed Church) learn this lesson! Before it is too late!

And it is, indeed, later than you think!

Further Delay in the Wiersinga Case

Many of our readers will recall that there is also pending before the GKN the case of Dr. H. Wiersinga. The latter, in a doctoral dissertation approved by the Theological Faculty of the Free University, openly and blatantly contradicted the Reformed view of the atonement and of reconciliation.

A preliminary decision in that case was reached early in 1972. On this we reported in Vol. 48, pp. 338-341. We characterized that decision as a Laodicean decision. It was another one of those delay-and-dialogue decisions.

Perhaps you will recall that part of that decision also was "To appoint a committee which shall speak with Dr. Wiersinga for the purpose of coming to more clarity concerning his views and to seek a solution for the problems which are raised in the church by his publications and by the protests filed on account of them." Further, the Synod decided to request "Dr. H. Wiersinga to declare himself ready to conduct the discussion about his published objections against the confessions with this committee, in the expectation that during this discussion Dr. H. Wiersinga and all concerned will preserve the pastorally required reserve and self-control."

Now the Wiersinga case is following the pattern of the Kuitert case, i.e., delay and dialogue.

In the same issue of *RES News Exchange* which reported on the Kuitert case there appears this item: "The commission reported that it had not had sufficient time to complete its work and that if it would report at the present time it would contribute to a 'blurring of the existing problematics.'" The news item continues: "The Synod noted with appreciation that progress had been made in reaching clarity in regard to Dr. Wiersinga's view and appointed a commission for continuing consultation with him. The commission will report to the next session of the Synod which will convene in May 1973."

Anyone who trusts that anything good will come out of this case is trusting in a broken staff!

Can the GKN which tolerate Kuitert refuse to tolerate Wiersinga?

And will Wiersinga show any more inclination to forsake his new theology than did Kuitert?

We think not.

And we think that the handwriting is on the wall!

Taking Heed To The Doctrine

A Defense of Calvinism As The Gospel (4)

Rev. David Engelsma

Defending Calvinism is simply a matter of defending the gospel. Therefore, we do not defend it apologetically, or defensively, or even as if its fortunes were doubtful, dependent on our defense. As the truth of God, Calvinism stands and will stand — victoriously and gloriously. God Himself maintains it, and God Himself sends it forth on an irresistible course of

conquest throughout the world. Calvinism is the gospel for every age. It is the truth for which and by which the Reformation of the Church of Jesus Christ took place in the 16th century. The gospel has not changed since that time; Jesus Christ in His truth is the same today as yesterday. But the truth of the gospel is largely lost and buried in the Protestant Churches in

our day. This includes many who pride themselves on being "evangelical." The gospel is perverted by a message that is essentially the same as that message against which the Reformation fought and which on its part bitterly opposed the Reformation. In those days, the Roman Catholic Church preached a salvation that had to be earned by man's own works; it taught that men were righteous before God, in part, by their own works, a teaching that Rome holds still. In our day, the overwhelmingly prevalent teaching in Protestant Churches is that salvation depends on man's will, man's free will. No matter how the Protestant Churches are otherwise divided, they are almost all united in proclaiming that a man's salvation depends upon the decision for Christ that he must make and that he can make of his own free will. Of this teaching, they are not ashamed. Indeed, it is supposed to be the very essence of the gospel. No sermon is complete without this message. This "gospel" of much of Protestantism and the "gospel" of Rome are one and the same. Essentially, there is no difference between them. This is the reason why many so-called Protestant Churches and ministers find it possible already to co-operate closely with the Roman Catholic Church, especially, in the work of "evangelism," and this is the reason why a great reunion with Rome on the part of many large Protestant Churches is in the offing. Rome says that salvation depends on man's works; modern Protestant Churches say that salvation depends on man's will. What both are saying is this: Salvation depends upon man; man must save himself. Paul lumps both of these variations of the same basic doctrine together in Romans 9:16 and condemns them: "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Here, the apostle plainly denies that salvation has its source in, or depends on, man's will, for he says, "it is not of him that willeth." He also denies that salvation has its source or basis in man's works, for he says, "nor of him that runneth," and "running" means "working." It makes no difference whether one teaches the one or the other, for both of them make man the ultimate source of salvation, both of them make salvation depend ultimately upon man himself, and both of them ascribe the glory of salvation to man. Having condemned these teachings, Paul declares that the source of our salvation is God alone and the basis of our salvation is the mercy of God alone: "but of God who sheweth mercy." God in mercy elected us to be saved, us who were by nature totally depraved and totally devoid of any worth on account of which we should have been chosen. God in mercy sent His Son to redeem us by His death. God in mercy regenerated us, who were dead, by His Spirit and called us by His Word. God in mercy sanctifies us, preserves us, and glorifies us. By teaching this, Calvinism, with Paul, ascribes all of glory of salvation to God alone. Since Calvinism is the gospel of grace

and since its foes are the enemies of the gospel of grace, our defense of Calvinism is a bold, unashamed defense. We say of Calvinism what Benjamin B. Warfield once said of it: "the future of Christianity — as its past has done — lies in its (Calvinism's) hands."

In our defense of Calvinism today, we must reject and refute the false accusations laid against it and the caricatures that are made of it. Men say of Calvinism that it is destructive of good works and of the law of God, that it produces careless Christians. Men say that it is destructive of zeal for preaching and missions, especially, because of its doctrine of election. Men say that it is terrifying to poor consciences, that it is cold and hard, and that Calvinists are all head and no heart. These are old, old charges. You will find them, almost word-for-word, in the book of Romans, brought against Paul and against the gospel of sovereign grace that he preached (cf. Romans 3:8; Romans 3:31; Romans 6:1ff.; Romans 9:19ff.). Would that men might not so readily accept the caricature of us wickedly presented by our foes, but that they would let us ourselves explain the truth of Calvinism by reading our confessions. Read the Heidelberg Catechism, and see for yourself whether Calvinism (or as we prefer to say, the Reformed faith!) is hard and cold and cruel, or whether it is warm and comforting. Read the Belgic Confession, and see whether Calvinism goes lightly over the law of God and over the good works of the Christian man, or whether it trembles before the law of the God Who has saved in grace and stresses sanctification and the necessity of good works. Read the Canons of Dordt, the Reformed confession that is unsurpassed in its statement of eternal sovereign predestination and its defense of salvation by grace alone, and see whether Calvinism cuts the nerve of a lively preaching of the gospel, including the serious call of the gospel to all who come under the preaching. See also the tenderness of the Reformed faith in the Canons and its deep pastoral concern for afflicted consciences. At the same time, we Reformed people and churches must refute the caricatures of Calvinism by our deeds and by our life. We do well to take heed to ourselves in every area. We must take heed that we are zealous for good works, not only as individuals, but also as churches. We must take heed that we preach the gospel to every creature and give an answer to every man that asks us a reason for the hope that is in us. We must take heed that we manifest ourselves as joyful, hopeful, confident saints. And this we will do, by God's grace, if we live out of the truth of Calvinism, if that truth is preached and believed and obeyed.

We have a powerful motive for defending Calvinism. For one thing, as the gospel, it is the only hope for men; the only power of God unto salvation; the means of the gathering and preserving of the Church. But even beyond this, our motive for defending Calvinism is our desire that God be glorified. Calvinism glorifies

God. The glory of God is the heartbeat of Calvinism and the heart of hearts of a Calvinist. Calvin's enemies have always seen this, and so they have sneered at him as "that God-intoxicated man." But the glory of God is the ultimate purpose of the gospel and of salvation. So we read in Ephesians 1:3-6: "(God) hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings . . . He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world . . . (He hath) predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ . . . to the praise of the glory of His grace . . ." So we read in Ephesians 3:21: "Unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages." So we read in all the Bible: Salvation is of the Lord. Therefore, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. This is the life-principle of the Calvinist: To God alone be glory. This governs not only his confession, but also his entire life. Therefore, the Calvinist *cannot* be a careless man. He is an utterly humbled man. He is a man totally dependent upon God. Just for this reason, he is a man of courage, a man ready to speak

and to do the right, that is, glorify His Savior-God.

It is the one, great need of the Church today, and of God's people in these wild, fearful, Godless times, that we hear, believe, and confess the gospel of God's sovereign grace in Jesus Christ.

It is the one, great calling of the Church today, as it has been the calling of the Church always, that she confess, with adoration, with wonder, with thanksgiving, with awe:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor?

"Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to Whom be glory for ever. Amen."
(Romans 11:33-36)

Studies in Baptism

The Mode of Baptism Established

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

Previously three articles appeared dealing generally, and for the most part, with the mode of baptism. The first, *Various Baptisms*, appeared in *TSB*, Vol. 47, No. 11, Mar. 1, 1971, p. 261; the second followed in *Various Baptisms Exemplifying One Baptism*, Vol. 47, No. 20, Sept. 1, 1971, p. 477; and the third was *The Mode of the One Baptism*, Vol. 48, No. 8, Jan. 15, 1972, p. 181. The first proved there were many baptisms in the Old Testament, and all, every one of them, were by sprinkling and pouring. None were by immersion. It was also shown that the word *dip* as related to *sprinkle*, is never, in that connection, "dip or sprinkle," but "dip and sprinkle." Ten instances of this action show that the dipping was not the baptism, but was instrumental to baptizing by sprinkling. Whatever dipping there was, it did not happen to the baptized. The second article showed that always in all dispensations of God's covenant believing parents and their elect infant seed were included in it. The prophets continually proclaimed the baptism of the Spirit in the promise that God would pour out His Spirit upon *all* flesh, including nursing infants. The

New Testament doctrine of baptism, we saw, proves to be in harmony with all this, sharply distinguishing between immersion and baptism. The third in the series entered upon the eleven recorded cases of baptism in the New Testament, in which it was shown that sound exegesis reveals neither immersion nor the idea the subjects were even *in* the water. As to our intended aim in these articles, it is expressed now in the title word *Established*, using it in the sense of "put beyond doubt."

Continuing with the recorded cases of baptism in the New Testament, we look at that of Paul's baptism. In Acts 9:18 we read, "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened." This is interesting. For the brief, concise account has no hint of Paul making a change of clothes, no mention of going out anywhere, no going down or coming up, no mention of Abana or Pharpar, nothing of what one German scholar imagined, a *Badezimmer*, or a *Vollbad*. His rising up, John Gill thought, had to be in order to

go out and be immersed, for it was not necessary to arise to be baptized by sprinkling or pouring. But Paul was commanded to arise with a view to being baptized, and to "wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). The King James text is plain enough. However, the original in the commonly received text reveals nicely and at a glance the grammatical structure: "And immediately such as scales fell off from his eyes. He recovered sight on the spot! And having risen, was baptized; and having taken food was strengthened." The two participles in the last statement describe not an act preparatory to baptism, such as going out to a river, but how, in what manner, he was baptized, and how strengthened. (Cp. *how* "He emptied himself," Phil. 2:7: "taking the form of a servant.") The meaning is, "having risen and still standing, he was baptized, and having taken food and still partaking, he was strengthened." Just as he was strengthened while and right where he had been eating, so he was baptized right where he rose up (Acts 5:17) and stood. There is nothing in the text like "having risen" he was taken out to the Abana and immersed. That would be eisegesis, not exegesis.

Then there is the case of the baptism of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-48; 11:15-17). The question we raise here is, Does this case throw any light on the matter of mode? Let us see, noting the added emphasis. "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit *fell on* all them who heard the word. And they of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Spirit . . . Then answered Peter, 'Can any man forbid *water*, that these should not be *baptized*, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?' And he commanded them to be *baptized* in the name of the Lord . . . And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit *fell on* them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John indeed *baptized with water*; but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Spirit*.'" After reading this, isn't it rather natural, and not at all surprising, to

feel and agree that the passage indeed *does* seem to throw light on the question of mode? After all, what was it which suggested to Peter that these Gentiles ought to be baptized? Why, it was simply the fact that they, too, had received the Holy Spirit. Then what was the *manner* of their receiving the Spirit? He *fell on* them and was *poured out* on them. When Peter saw the pouring out and the falling on them of the Spirit, he saw that the baptism with the Holy Spirit was the real baptism (of which water baptism is the sign), and it was accomplished by pouring! This pouring out of the Spirit on the people suggested to Peter's mind John's baptism. Remarkable! Would that pouring out of the Spirit suggest to the mind of an immersionist John's baptism? How did John baptize? and how were these baptized, after Peter commanded it to be done? Could it have been in any other manner but in harmony with the outpouring and falling on them of the Spirit?

The remaining cases are of household baptisms, except for one, which was of some disciples of John Baptist. Of the Philippian jailer it is said that he "was baptized, he and all his, straightway." The last word there means *forthwith* (as in chap. 9), or *on the spot, immediately, instantly!* Not somewhere outside the prison, but right there where he was, the jailer was baptized *on the spot*. Scripture plainly teaches the unity of the *mode* and *action* of baptism. What is true in this connection of the baptism with the Holy Spirit must also be true of baptism with water. In Scripture you do not find different modes of baptism. How could there be baptism with the Holy Spirit by one mode and baptism with water by another mode? The baptism with the Holy Spirit was by the shedding forth, i.e., the pouring out or falling on of the Spirit. Nothing is more positively clear in Scripture than that baptism signifies the washing away of our sins by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ and the pouring out of His Spirit. It signifies the cleansing of the soul from sin by the blood of Christ, and regeneration of the heart by the Holy Spirit.

(To Be Continued)

NOTICE!!!

The Congregation of Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Walker, Michigan, has decided to dispose of the parsonage. Sealed bids from members of the denomination will be accepted through February 14, 1973.

Contact — Peter Zandstra
1420 Su-Lew S.W.
Walker, Michigan
49504
Phone — 453-3609.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Randolph Protestant Reformed Church of Randolph, Wisconsin, extends its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. John Westra in the death of her husband

JOHN WESTRA.

"And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." (John 11: 26)

Rev. Wayne Bekkering, Pres.
Dewey Alsum, Clerk.

News From Our Churches

For the news column of this issue of the *Standard Bearer*, the mailman was hardly cooperative. During the past two weeks he brought not one single church bulletin. Bulletins have been slow in coming on occasion in the past, but this is the first time I've had *none*. None that are *new*, that is. Without my little box, I would be in bad trouble. Just imagining the predicament in which I could otherwise find myself, is enough to give me gray hair — which, come to think of it, would be a vast improvement, on a head as smooth as mine.

* * * * *

Before I turn to The Box, however, let's check on Rev. Lubbers. As you know, our missionary to Jamaica was granted a six weeks' vacation to rest from his arduous labors on the island. During his stay in the states, he undoubtedly had quite a number of speaking engagements. He led chapel exercises, for example, for the students of Adams and Hope schools. He spoke at a society after-recess program at Southeast. And, after conducting a Sunday evening worship service in First Church, he gave an account, to those who remained after the service, of his work in Jamaica. At this last meeting, Rev. Lubbers stressed again the fundamental importance of the training of future ministers on the island, and of the importance, therefore, of our school there. And, in that respect at least, our missionary is greatly encouraged. Two years ago, he said, the students had difficulty even writing a complete sentence. But they have learned well — not only in their command of the language, but also as far as their knowledge of the truths of Scripture and the Confessions is concerned. He sees the makings of ministers in these young students.

The labors of our missionary on that island are sufficient to drain the energy of a strong man. There is "the teaching, the driving, the heat, and the loneliness of Jamaica." After listening to the account of some of his experiences on the island, we can well agree with his assertion that one needs the patience of Job, the courage of David, the meekness of Moses, and the persistence of Paul.

During the two and one-half years that he has spent on the island, he has put 44,000 miles on his car — and it's the type of driving which requires two hours to travel forty-five miles. Through it all he has had the indispensable support of his wife. Mrs. Lubbers recently suffered a sprained knee, as a result of a fall. Despite considerable pain, she insisted that she accompany her husband on his trip to school — 140 miles round-trip rubbing linament as they drove. "I can understand," said Rev. Lubbers, "God's choice of a wife for me, since I could not imagine any other woman going with me to Jamaica."

But it's the separation from friends and family which can be particularly depressing. Rev. Lubbers noted that there is a "loneliness there that creeps in on

one's soul." And it was especially with respect to that, that he made a plea for our prayers and letters. "When you send a letter," he said, "somehow the day is made. When the mailman let's us down, we go home feeling glum." Another remark of his deserves repetition here, I believe — "Don't think that you have nothing to say. Just write, 'We're thinking of you, and praying for you,' and, perhaps, mention something that happened during the day — as, for example, 'The baby is sick and vomited all over the floor.'"

The address:

Rev. G. Lubbers
General Delivery
Montego Bay
Jamaica, West Indies

* * * * *

Things are looking up. I just received a welcome contribution from our Business Manager. Welcome it is, not only because it's a ready-made, well-written item for a news column hurting for news, but because Mr. Vander Wal's observations are always of interest. This one is no exception.

"The Business Manager of our *Standard Bearer* has reported that 'hunting in Utah' for new readers of our magazine has proved very successful. At this writing (Dec. 11), not one, but *five* names have been submitted by our readers. Three of those suggested reside in Salt Lake City, one in Ogden, and one in Brigham City, Utah.

"We thank our subscriber in Wayland, Michigan, and the Dominee in Baldwin, Wisconsin, for submitting the names and addresses of the new recipients of our magazine, and for their generous gifts in helping to pay for the printing and mailing of the *Standard Bearer* to these people in Utah.

"Our next 'hunting ground' is — 'Poor Little Rhode Island.' Not *one* subscriber there! Our readers in the eastern portion of the U.S. can, no doubt, furnish us with a few names and addresses in that part of our country. New Jersey, Massachusettes, Maine — are you 'hearing' us?

"A free three-months' subscription will be sent to any resident in the State of Rhode Island whose name is submitted to our Business Office.

"Horace Greeley once said, 'Go West, young man, Go West!' Well, we are going EAST! We hope our 'hunting trip east' proves as successful as our 'Western Trek.'"

* * * * *

Well, what do you know about that! It wasn't even necessary to dip into my reserve material. I had put together a couple of paragraphs dealing with the work of South Holland's Evangelism Committee, but it's apparent that it'll never fit. So, till next time . . . back into The Box.

Meanwhile, keep those bulletins coming, please.

D.D.