

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Augustine did, indeed, by way of concession and explanation to his adversaries, make mention of a twofold will, or of different wills of God – a secret will, and an open or revealed will – but he so represented that twofold will as to show that they are in such consummate harmony with each other, that the “last day” will make it most gloriously manifest that there never was, nor is, in this multiform way of God’s workings and doings, the least variance, conflict or contradiction, the most divine and infinite harmony and oneness.

Having laid down this solemn principle and taken this immovable stand, I will now, if thou wilt have it so, draw swords with thee in battle for the truth. Thou arguest thus: “If God forbids a man to do that which He really wills him to do all the time, or if He commands men to do that which he really wills not, He must command for the very purpose that His will might be resisted.” Now, in none of all this filth of argumentation are either myself or my doctrines the least concerned. I acknowledge nothing whatever of the profane sentiments to which it refers to be mine. On the contrary, the sum of my doctrine is this: that that will of God, which is set forth in His Law, clearly demonstrates that righteousness is His delight, and that iniquity is His hatred; and also, that it is most certain that He would not denounce punishment against evildoers, if their evildoings pleased Him. This, however, by no means prevents God from willing, by His secret and unexplicable counsel, that those things should be done, in a certain sense and manner, which He yet wills not to be done, and which He forbids to be done.

— John Calvin, *The Secret Providence Of God*,
pp. 307, 308

MEDITATION

Freedom Through The Truth

Rev. H. Veldman

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
John 8:32

Our Saviour speaks these words to those of whom we read in verse 30: "As he spake these words, many believed on him." It is very evident from what follows that there were among these "many that believed" who merely believed in an external, superficial sense of the word. It cannot be denied that several of those who "believed" opposed Him, as related in the verses beginning with verse 33.

Verse 31 gives us the test or proof of true discipleship. Do not misunderstand this passage. Jesus does not say: "If ye abide or continue in my word, ye will become my disciples indeed." Our being or becoming His disciples does not depend upon our continuing in His word. This would be impossible. Do we not read in verse 36: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed"? Jesus, and Jesus alone, makes us His disciples. But we do read in verse 31: "If ye continue in my word, then *are* ye my disciples indeed." Disciples of Jesus abide in His word; a disciple or follower of the Christ has Christ in his heart, and he must continue in His word. Hence, we are His disciples if we continue in His word, inasmuch as this is the essence and therefore proof of true discipleship.

Hereupon verse 32 follows: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." The word "shall" does not emphasize the futuristic idea, but the idea of certainty. To continue in His word will surely have this blessed fruit and result. Knowledge of the truth and freedom are inseparably connected. They can never be separated.

* * * * *

Freedom must never be confused with moral sovereignty. Freedom, then, would be independence from God. To be free would, then, mean that we determine our course of action. We can serve and love God or not serve and love Him; we are sovereignly free, are able to do either; we can, therefore, determine our course of action, our own fate.

Such freedom is impossible. Once it happened that we would be sovereignly free. Once it happened that we struck for independence from God. This happened in Paradise. We wearied of our servile relation to God, of His "dictating" to us, of being hemmed in by the

living God. We struck for freedom, sovereign freedom, would be the masters of our own fate. What folly! There is no such thing as moral sovereignty for a creature. As a creature, he is created, moves and lives and has his being in God, can never be independent. Indeed, the hearts of kings are in the hand of the Lord as watercourses; He turneth them whithersoever He wills.

God is the God of absolute freedom. Freedom implies that one lives, unhampered and unimpeded, his own life. God is free because He lives, unhindered, His own life. God is the God of infinite goodness and perfection. And, eternally and infinitely, God lives His own life. Eternally He seeks and wills and loves Himself, is never controlled or influenced or restricted by anything outside of Himself. This, of course, also determined freedom for every creature. The being or life of each creature, generally speaking, is determined, of course, by the Creator. Hence, a creature, such as a fish or bird, is not free when it can simply "do as it pleases," whether or not in harmony with its own being, but only when it is privileged to live, unhampered, its own life. Specifically speaking, man was created in God's image and as adapted to the life and communion of God. Only then does he live when he can move about in that fellowship and favour of the Lord. God alone is life for the creature, and will surely reveal and maintain Himself as such. True liberty or freedom does not mean, therefore, that we can do "as we please," — this is not liberty, but death. To be free means that we can serve God, enjoy His fellowship and communion, unhindered and unmolested.

Naturally, every man is in bondage. We read in verse 33: "They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?" The Saviour had said to those who "believed" on Him, that the truth would make them free. To this they object — how can they be made free when they were never in bondage? They prided themselves in the fact that they were the seed of Abraham, and therefore God's chosen race. They wilfully ignore their bondage in Egypt, in Babylon, and at the present time to Rome, and boast that they were never in bondage.

How true this is of the natural man, of you and of me! We are spiritually slaves. To be in bondage to sin and imagine ourselves to be free, is the worst conceivable bondage. But, we are also slaves of sin in the legal sense of the word. We are sold under sin; we are slaves of evil according to the righteous judgment of God. God has assigned this bondage to us. We are under condemnation. And we can never redeem ourselves, pay the divine penalty and deliver ourselves out of this fearful bondage of sin and darkness.

Freedom — how wonderful! How wonderful to be delivered from these chains of sin and of darkness! How wonderful to be in the service of the living God and to taste His fellowship and communion! How wonderful is this freedom, because it is an immortal relationship, an immortal, everlasting freedom! It means to be free, forever, in the service of the living God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Immanuel, God with us. Of this freedom Jesus speaks in this word of God.

* * * * *

Indeed, if we continue in Christ's word, then are we His disciples. And we shall know the truth. This knowledge is not merely intellectual, a mere knowledge of the head. This kind of knowledge does not make us free. This knowledge, however, is spiritual, experiential, a living knowledge of the truth. That truth, as experienced by the child of God, makes him free.

God is truth. Truth is the presentation of reality. God is absolute truth. God is infinite goodness and perfection. And God is absolute. God is what He is alone. Of His light and goodness all other light and goodness are but a creaturely reflection. The world is not a part of God but His creature, not a part of His goodness but a reflection of that which characterizes God alone. And that God is truth also means that He eternally lives His own life. God lives constantly in the world of absolute reality, because He constantly knows and loves and has fellowship with Himself. He alone is good, and therefore He loves and seeks Himself alone. As such He always maintains Himself and does all things for His own Name's sake.

However, this truth as such does not make us free. In fact, it is exactly this truth which seals our bondage. We are slaves of sin exactly because God is God and always maintains Himself. So, more must be added.

Christ is truth. He is that as the eternal Son of God, the Word, the eternal Logos or Word of God, eternally and essentially the Image of God, spoken and generated by the Father, in Whom, out of the Father and through the Holy Spirit, the fulness of the Godhead dwells eternally. He is the Son of God, God's eternal revelation of Himself as within the

blessed Trinity; and therefore Jesus, as the Son, is the absolute truth.

Christ is also the truth as the Mediator, Christ Jesus. He certainly revealed the truth as such. He revealed the Father, was the Party of the living God in the midst of the world. He testified of God, glorified God, was controlled and governed, in all His activity, by the love of God and the desire to do His will. He came, not to do His own will, not to seek Himself, but to seek God, caused the light of God to shine perfectly in the midst of the darkness of this world. The world loves and lives the lie; the world hates God, seeks itself, created a world without God, and therefore lives the lie. Christ lived in God's world, loved and revealed the Truth, witnessed of the living God.

This is not all. Jesus revealed the Truth as the Christ. Indeed, what a task was His! Among the children of disobedience and of the lie lay also His own who had been given Him of the Father from before the foundations of the world — they, too, were the servants and slaves of sin and iniquity. And to realize the Truth in their hearts, to redeem and deliver them from the lie and the bondage of sin, He came into this world. The Son, the Son of God came into this world; only He could make us free. And for Christ to reveal the Truth, as the Christ, meant for Him an awful way! The sins of all the elect were upon Him, laid upon Him by the living God, and assumed by Himself as the perfect Servant of Jehovah. Hence, He must reveal the Truth in the midst of hell, reveal the Father in all His terrible righteousness and justice, love God upon the bottom of hell and thus reveal God's adorable love of Himself over against all the iniquities of His own.

And this the Christ proceeded to do. That Jesus was conscious of His awesome calling is obvious from verse 28. He assumed His place in our flesh and blood among all the children of disobedience and of the lie, as the one and only Servant of Jehovah and the Party of the living God. He trod the winepress alone, descended into the abyss of hell, revealed the living God with all the sins of the elect upon His shoulders, died the eternal death of the wrath of God, tasted hell in all its awfulness, arose from the dead and is even now at the right hand of God. Christ is the Truth, not only for Himself, but also for all His own. The life of God, the living Triune God, is ours through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This also explains John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The law was given by Moses, the law of shadows and ceremonies. Salvation did not come by Moses, but the law, the law as symbol and type of that salvation. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Grace came by Jesus Christ, the grace of God,

salvation, the grace that destroys sin and grants salvation. And therefore the truth came by Jesus Christ, the truth, also as the reality over against the shadows and types. Christ came and with Him salvation became a reality. And because Jesus came the law, having served its purpose, now need exist no longer.

The truth makes us free. This is objectively true in Christ. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; He revealed the Father in His amazing suffering and death. And the Son has made us free indeed. He has redeemed us out of all the guilt and bondage of sin, has merited salvation for us, the blessed life of God, and therefore has truly made us free.

The truth also makes us free, subjectively and

spiritually. Christ, Who Himself revealed the Father, Who suffered and died in order that that Truth might also be bestowed upon us, arose from the dead and was glorified. And by His Spirit Christ comes to dwell within us. His word lives in our hearts and we become His disciples. The truth that God is God alone, is bestowed upon us, lives and becomes reality within us; and we ourselves are made free from the bondage of sin and of the lie. The truth that God is all in all, for which Christ came and suffered and died, lives within us, never again to leave us, even forevermore; and we are free to serve the living God Who alone is life eternal. And through the word of Christ, the preaching of it, we are led in the path of that liberty, unto the glory of Him Who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

EDITORIALS

Editor's Notes

Urgent Request. For the benefit of a correspondent, I am in need of a copy of the Dutch brochure written by Rev. Herman Hoeksema, *Dat Gods Goedheid Particulier Is*. If you are willing to part with a copy, please send it to me or to our Business Manager. You will find the addresses in the masthead.

Publication News. Our Business Manager has informed me that enclosed with this issue will be a handy order envelope for copies of our 50th Anniversary volume, *God's Covenant Faithfulness* (due from the press any day now) or *Peaceable Fruit*, our most recent RFP book. Get your orders in!

Note for Associate Editors. Prof. H. Hanko has graciously consented to take charge of the *Standard Bearer* for the issues of July 1 and August 1, during my extended absence. If you are on the schedule for contributions for either of these issues, please send your copy to him: 4665 Ju-Le-On Dr., S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504.

Consistory Clerks and Pulpit Committees. Pulpit supply from the seminary for the months of June, July, and August will be scheduled by Prof. H. Hanko. Requests which I have already received for those months are being referred to Prof. Hanko; and please address any additional requests to him. In due time you will receive notice of supply from him. I suggest that you contact Prof. Hanko early; it looks as though there might be a shortage in the offing.

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Our Planned Australasian Tour

For a couple of years our denominational Committee for Contact With Other Churches has been working on plans for a visit by representatives of our churches to New Zealand and Australasia. At last year's synod the committee came with a general plan for such a tour which was approved by synod; but, as matters turned out, it was necessary, in synod's view, to postpone the trip for a year. The postponement was not all bad: for it gave the committee the chance to work out plans much more thoroughly, to make advance contacts, and to lay its plans with the

assurance in advance of carrying out those plans, too. And so we are now prepared to share with our readers some of the details of the proposed tour.

Appointed as representatives of our churches for this tour were Prof. H. Hanko and myself. Prof. Hanko could not see his way clear to go, and so the Rev. C. Hanko, of our Hudsonville, Michigan church is going as alternate. Your editor, accompanied by Mrs. Hoeksema, plans to leave for New Zealand about a week ahead of the date fixed for the beginning of the tour proper — to allow room for a couple of days

of vacation on the way and to do a little preparatory work prior to Rev. Hanko's arrival. Rev. Hanko will leave, D.V., on the 23rd of June; and we hope to meet in New Zealand on June 26. And then our busy schedule begins. Our committee had informed brother Wm. van Rij (of New Zealand), who has been of tremendous help in all our Australasian contacts and now especially in helping to plan our tour, that we wanted to make the trip worthwhile and to have our itinerary as full as possible. Well, he complied with our wishes to the full; and if all the plans go through, there will not be an open date on our schedule. Speeches and meetings and conferences and preaching have been planned. We plan to be in New Zealand, D.V., until the 4th or 5th of July. Here our chief contacts will be with the young and small group of churches known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches, but also with various other Reformed and Presbyterian people. Just this past week I received a letter from an OPC brother in Christchurch who wrote: "Secondly, can I say on behalf of the OPC in Christchurch just how much we are looking forward to your visit in June. You are ever in our prayers, and we look forward to a time of real fellowship and blessing together." This same brother sent me a list of subjects suggested by the various churches; and I assure you we will have plenty to talk about. From this same friend we learned that Mr. van Rij was hospitalized for a rest; the letter said it was necessary because of rather strenuous business commitments which had tired him excessively; but I have no doubt that it was partly also due to his strenuous efforts in connection with our tour. Our prayers are with the brother, and we hope that the Lord may keep him for His cause there and that he may be well again when we meet, the Lord willing.

From New Zealand we plan to go to Tasmania, where we will visit especially the brethren and sisters of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Two of their ministers, Rev. Rodman and Rev. Lyons have been seriously ill with heart trouble; and so they could not plan for us all that they would have liked to. But we have been assured that they will do all they can and that we will receive a warm welcome there. We very much want to become better acquainted with these likeminded people of God and to explore the possibility of closer contact as churches.

After four or five days in Tasmania, we plan to go to mainland Australia. On our itinerary are Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Sydney again, and Brisbane, as well as several points between. Our schedule calls for about ten days in this part of Australia. In the Sydney area is a friend with whom we have long been in contact, the Rev. John Stafford, of the Ryde Reformed Presbyterian Church. He has assured us of a warm reception, and has already done

much to assist with plans for us in that area and in contacting others in our behalf. Besides, our Committee for Contact has long had some official contact with the denomination known as the Presbyterian Reformed Church. One of the difficulties in our discussions with them was the fact that everything had to be done by letter or tape-recording. From both sides it was felt that face-to-face contact would be beneficial in understanding one another. Recently we received word from the Rev. Dennis Shelton, their Clerk of Presbytery, that their Presbytery has appointed a commission of ruling and teaching elders to confer with us; besides, they have recommended that sessions (consistories) in the state of New South Wales try to arrange for conferences with us. From one session, that of Newcastle, we have already received an invitation (and accepted it). One of the chief subjects for discussion with these brethren is going to be the matter of common grace and the offer of the gospel.

That takes us to the 19th of July. Our committee is proposing a couple more stops — at Jakarta, Indonesia and at Singapore; and if synod approves, these will be included. This has been at the urging of Brother van Rij, who has made contacts for us in these places. And the committee is recommending this because, due to some very favorable air travel rates of which we can take advantage, we can make these visits at slight additional cost. If all of this materializes, we hope to be home again around the first of August, D.V., in time for our denominational anniversary celebration at convention time.

Why is this work being undertaken?

In the first place, because the Lord has so obviously put it on our path as churches. Only a few short years ago we knew nothing of these brethren in Australasia, and they knew nothing of us. I, for one, was taken completely by surprise when we first began to hear from "down under" and to get calls for help and support in the battle for the faith. Since that time, largely through the tireless efforts of brother van Rij and others, we have made more and more friends in those countries and have found an increasingly greater call for our literature — our *Standard Bearer*, pamphlets, Sunday school literature, and books. In the second place, it must be stressed that we have come into contact with people and churches who are apparently to a large degree *likeminded*. In many instances there are but small bands of believers called to do battle in defense of the faith over against the forces of apostasy. They have sought our help and support. And it is incumbent upon us as churches, in as concrete a way as possible, to seek fellowship with those who are likeminded and to express our unity in the truth. We have always

stressed that we are not opposed to ecumenical fellowship, but that this expression of unity must be in the sphere of and on the basis of the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. Here we are faced by the opportunity and the calling to explore such fellowship. And, in the third place, it is a simple fact that we have been urged from "down under" to make just such a trip as this.

Needless to say, we cannot predict the results of this tour. We shall, of course, report in detail upon our return, D.V., not only to our committee and to synod, but also to you our readers. That we are filled

with anticipation goes without saying — if for no other reason than that we long to see some of these brethren whom we have long known only through letters. But there is also a certain amount of trepidation connected: for the responsibility of Rev. Hanko and myself in representing our churches is not small. Please remember us in your prayers, not only that we may have a safe journey, but also that the Lord may prosper our feeble labors, to the end that His church may be gathered and strengthened and He may receive all the glory.

* * * * *

The GKN and the Wiersinga Case

From time to time we have commented on this case, which involves a denial of the truth of vicarious atonement and of reconciliation through Christ's bearing of the wrath of God in the place of His people.

We last reported that the Dutch synod had revised its original decision — according to some, *sharpened* it — and had declared that Dr. Wiersinga attacked an essential element of the confessional doctrine of atonement and did not do justice to the proper preaching of the gospel. Further, the synod in November of 1974 had appealed to Dr. Wiersinga to adhere to the confessional doctrine of atonement in his official labor. And, finally, the synod had expressed the hope of receiving a satisfactory answer to that appeal by the time of its last session, in March, 1975. A letter to this effect was addressed to Dr. Wiersinga, and a committee of three (H.N. Ridderbos, J. Verkuyl, and A. Kruiswijk) was appointed to discuss the contents of this letter with Dr. Wiersinga.

This effort failed. The committee mentioned above even prepared a mildly worded statement for Wiersinga to sign, but he refused. Dr. Wiersinga did, however, send his own letter to the synod. In this letter he agreed to say almost everything except that he is wrong and the synod right. He even insists that the difference between the synod and himself concerns the *manner* in which they present the atonement. But he does not give up his stand.

Meanwhile, it must be remembered that Wiersinga has considerable support in the churches. Those who support his right to express his ideas in the churches are also very vocal. After the last decision of synod they expressed their displeasure at synod's decision in an open letter; and they pleaded, in effect, for room in the Gereformeerde Kerken for men to express such deviating views.

And what did synod do at its March session?

To put it bluntly, they passed the buck to the next synod.

What considerations moved the synod to do this? Well, *officially* the following: 1) There are various passages in the letter of Dr. Wiersinga which are disappointing, and others which are hopeful; and the letter as a whole puts synod before questions which require clarification. 2) There is insufficient time for a careful judgment of Wiersinga's letter and for a definitive decision. 3) A more careful consideration of the committee's report is also necessary. 4) Unnecessary delay can be avoided by appointing a committee to advise the next synod concerning the treatment of Wiersinga's letter.

Those are the *official* considerations.

They can hardly be the *actual* considerations, however. If the synod were serious about its calling and serious about the crucial nature of this case, it would never have come to the above conclusions. On the contrary, the synod would have sought the necessary clarification, would have taken the time for careful judgment and a definitive decision, would have considered carefully the committee's report, and would have avoided unnecessary delay by immediately appointing an advisory committee to serve it with advice at its March session. No one can ever convince me that this could not be done. The Dutch synods can do almost anything nowadays — even have sessions all year long. Why, when it concerns such a life-and-death matter of the Reformed faith, could the synod not even put other work aside, and, if necessary, extend its session in order to finish the Wiersinga case.

The synod evidently did not have the will and the courage to do this.

Underlying this is the lack of will and courage to exercise any kind of doctrinal discipline in the GKN.

I do not know what the Dutch churches will ultimately do with Wiersinga. I cannot imagine, in the light of past actions, that they will ever have the courage to discipline him. And why should they? They have not disciplined others who were guilty of contradicting the confessions. The only factor which

might possibly make it hard for a synod not to advise discipline of Wiersinga is the fact that Wiersinga's heresy is so extreme and so obvious as to make it rather embarrassing not to discipline him, especially in the light of synod's own strong avowals of allegiance to the doctrine of atonement through satisfaction and in the light of the rather vocal opposition to Wiersinga's views.

Personally, however, I have no expectation of a sound decision from any synod of the GKN. And one can already find elements in the current decision of synod which might serve as eventual grounds for

trying to have further discussions with Wiersinga. After all, there were hopeful elements as well as disappointing elements in his letter!

Meanwhile, Wiersinga continues to propagate his views. For according to the Dutch papers, Wiersinga has *more* deviating views to which he has been giving expression. And if the reports are correct, none of what Wiersinga is writing has a Reformed sound.

Let any "daughter churches" or "sister churches" of the GKN beware. To lean on the GKN is to lean on a broken reed!

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

"Hyper-Calvinism" and the Call of the Gospel

by Rev. David Engelsma

It is the purpose of this article to give account of the Reformed doctrine and practice of preaching over against the charge that denial of the well-meant offer of the gospel is destructive of lively preaching, especially of lively preaching to the unconverted in missions, or evangelism. It intends to show that there is not one shred of truth in the charge that denial of the offer hampers missions. Hopefully, it will allay the fear of some who, having been misled, go in the direction of the offer because "otherwise we may lose evangelical preaching."

The foundation of the activity of preaching the gospel is God's eternal decree of predestination. The reason why God has the gospel preached, both throughout the world in missions and in the established churches, is that the elect may be saved, to the praise of His grace. Because of election, there are many in the fallen human race, among all nations, who are God's people and who must be saved. Preachers must go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20), so that these elect may be brought to salvation. After the Spirit has converted them and gathered them into churches, the gospel must be preached in the churches in order to feed the sheep and to build up the body of Christ (Eph. 4:12ff.). Neither mission-preaching nor any other form of preaching is grounded in a love of God for all men and a desire of God that all men be saved. All preaching is grounded in the love of God for His chosen people. What motivates the Church, what motivates a missionary, what motivates a pastor is: the gathering, defense, and preservation out of the human race of the church chosen to everlasting life

(Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 54) — and a sufficient motive it is, leaving nothing to be desired.

Scripture teaches that divine election — not a universal love of God or a desire that all be saved — is the basis and motivation of missions, indeed of all preaching. This is Jesus' teaching in John 10. The Good Shepherd causes His voice to be heard in the world — how Jesus emphasizes the importance of His voice in this chapter. His voice is simply the preached gospel in all ages. His voice, i.e., the gospel, *saves*. It leads the sheep out (vs. 3); it causes the sheep to follow Him (vs. 4); it safeguards them from the strangers, thieves, and robbers who are bent on the sheep's destruction (vss. 5, 8); it brings the sheep into the fold (vs. 16); it is the means by which Jesus gives His sheep eternal life (vs. 28), preserving them from perishing. For salvation, the Word must be preached and heard. But one thing is abundantly plain: the reason for the voice of the Shepherd is "my sheep," i.e., the gathering and preservation of those men and women whom the Father eternally gave to Jesus in His decree of election (vs. 29). Jesus does not send out His voice because God loves all men and desires all men to be saved. In the human race, among all nations (vs. 16), there are some who are sheep, in distinction from others who are not sheep (vs. 26). This is due to predestination. The Shepherd comes for the sheep, to give His life for them (vs. 11) and to call them (vs. 3).

The entire Old Testament is proof that preaching is grounded in election. God showed His Word unto Jacob, not to any other nation (Psalm 147:19, 20). The reason was not that the other nations were less likely to respond with repentance and faith. On the

contrary, Christ Himself said that if the mighty works done in the great cities of Israel had been done in Tyre and Sidon, "they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes," and that if they had been done in Sodom, "it would have remained until this day" (Matt. 11:20-24). But the reason why God gave His Word to Israel was that He had chosen Israel to be a special people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth (Deut. 7:6ff).

That the work of missions is based on election is plain from the New Testament. According to Acts 18:10, the Lord encouraged Paul to labor in Corinth by telling him in a vision: "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city." Before Paul and the gospel ever got to Corinth, the Lord had much people there by virtue of God's election of many in that city. The reason why Paul was sent there to preach and the reason why he had to remain there preaching, in the face of opposition, was the salvation of the elect in that city. Paul knew very well that God did not love all the Corinthians and that God did not desire to save all the inhabitants of that city. Nothing of the sort motivated him to preach the gospel as a missionary. But he knew himself to be the instrument by whom the Lord gathered His people.

This relationship between election and preaching is set forth in all of the passages of Scripture that base the calling upon election. Romans 8:30 teaches that God calls the predestinated, or elect. II Thessalonians 2:13, 14 says that it is those who are beloved of the Lord and chosen from the beginning whom God calls by the gospel. II Timothy 1:9 states that people are called "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

It is established, first of all, then, that the ground and motivation of all preaching, including missions, is election — not a grace of God for all. Missions, or evangelism, needs no "boost" from universal grace. Let him who still insists on bolstering missions with his fictitious grace of God for all men and desire that all be saved beware lest he, like Uzzah, be found "assisting" the ark of God — which needs no assistance — with unclean hands.

The means by which God *saves* the elect is the preaching of the gospel. The elect must be *saved*, i.e., delivered from the spiritual death into which, like all the other members of the human race, they are conceived and born (Eph. 2:1-3) and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1:13). They must have their eyes opened and must be turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18). They must be converted

(Acts 3:19); they must be drawn to Christ, in Whom is life and apart from Whom is death (John 6:44, Matt. 11:28); they must be made to believe on Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30, 31; Acts 20:21) with the true and living faith through which they are justified (Rom. 3:28) and sanctified (Acts 26:18). Having been converted, they must be converted daily (Heid. Cat., L.D. 33); nourished (I Pet. 2:1); preserved in the faith (I Pet. 1:5); and edified (Eph. 4:12).

All of this salvation, God accomplishes by the preaching of the gospel. This is the confession of the Reformed faith. The Canons of Dordt begin, in the opening articles of the First Head, by stating the good news that God in His love in Jesus Christ has determined to deliver some of the fallen, guilty, and depraved sons of Adam out of their sin, condemnation, and death (1 & 2). Deliverance from perishing and the enjoyment of eternal life come through faith (2). "And that men may be brought to believe, God mercifully sends the messengers of these most joyful tidings, to whom he will and at what time he pleaseth; by whose ministry men are called to repentance and faith in Christ crucified..." (3). Those who receive the gospel "and embrace Jesus the Savior by a true and living faith, are by him delivered from the wrath of God, and from destruction, and have the gift of eternal life conferred upon them" (4). The Canons teach that the preaching of the gospel is the God-ordained means of the salvation of the elect in the Fifth Head, Article 14: "And as it hath pleased God, by the preaching of the gospel, to begin this work of grace in us, so he preserves, continues, and perfects it by the hearing and reading of his Word, by meditation thereon, and by the exhortations, threatenings, and promises thereof, as well as by the use of the sacraments."

In viewing preaching as "the means of grace" the Reformed faith reflects the teaching of Scripture. Article 3 of the First Head of the Canons quotes Romans 10:14, 15, where the apostle says that faith is necessary for salvation; that hearing is necessary for faith; and that a preacher and preaching are necessary for faith; i.e., that the means by which God saves men is the preaching of the gospel. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and this is why Paul was not ashamed of it, but was ready to preach the gospel everywhere (Rom. 1:15, 16). It pleases God to save those who believe by the foolishness of preaching (I Cor. 1:21). The decree of election unto salvation includes that the means unto salvation shall be "belief of the truth," to which the elect are called by God "by our gospel" (II Thess. 2:13, 14). The history of the book of Acts makes plain that it is the preaching of the gospel that saves men in the sense that guilty, disobedient unbelievers become forgiven, obedient believers (cf. Acts 2:6-41; 3:12-4:4; 4:12; 10:34-48;

11:19-21; 13:38-52; etc.). Many passages of Scripture teach that it is the preaching of the gospel that saves men in the sense that the reborn, believing people of God are preserved and built up. Acts 14:21, 22 shows that, just as preaching is necessary for the conversion of sinners, so it is necessary for the confirming of saints: "... they (the apostles) returned . . . confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith. . ." In Acts 20:28, Paul charged the Ephesian elders to "feed the church of God," i.e., with the Word. In bidding farewell to these elders and to the church of Ephesus, Paul commended them "to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up. . ." (Acts 20:32). The burden of the pastoral letters of Timothy and Titus, addressed to pastors of established churches, is: "Preach the word" (II Tim. 4:2) and "speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1). By this preaching, the saints are perfected (II Tim. 3:17) and recovered if they stray (II Tim. 2:24-26).

The second principle, therefore, that undergirds the Reformed doctrine and practice of preaching, both in missions and in the pastoral care of the

churches, is that God uses the preaching to gather and preserve those whom He has ordained unto eternal life — there are elect, but they must be saved, and they are saved by preaching. Now, this is ample reason to impel the Church and preachers to preach the Word, in season and out of season, within the congregation and without. There is no need of any notion of a universal grace of God to be trumped up to stir up our missionary zeal. Hence, in the preamble of the "Constitution of the Mission Committee," the Protestant Reformed Churches confess: "The Protestant Reformed Churches believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the church, to preach the blessed Gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, it is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said churches to carry out this calling according to the measure of our God-given ability. We believe that this missionary activity includes the work of church extension, and church reformation, as well as the task of carrying out the Gospel to the unchurched and heathen. . ."

(to be continued)

ALL AROUND US

Prof. H. Hanko

Another Decision on Tax Credits

The following brief article appeared in the March/April issue of *Liberty* magazine:

The Minnesota Supreme Court in a 7-0 decision has ruled unconstitutional the 1971 law that provided tax credits or refunds to parents of children attending private and parochial schools.

The court — from which four justices disqualified themselves because of personal connections with church-related schools and to which two retired justices were added — said the law violates the First Amendment ban on the establishment of religion, as interpreted in recent decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

The court refused to decide on the

constitutionality of the law passed by the 1974 Minnesota legislature. The law provides that parents who have received such credits or refunds need not repay the money to the State if the tax-credit law is held unconstitutional.

In "Dictum" — part of the opinion not related to the issue for court, and thus not binding — the Minnesota court gave strong support to the so-called "shared time" concept in which nonpublic school children take part in classes at, and use facilities of, public schools.

According to the State revenue department, 44,308 families received tax credits totaling \$10.7 million this year.

* * * * *

Imitators of the World

The following brief article appeared on "The President's Page" of *Lutherans Alert Magazine*.

It is both interesting and tragic to note how quickly the church imitates the world. It seems that no matter upon what social issue the world embarks the church is not far behind. To this writer at least,

the church is like our old friend Gomer Pyle trying to get in step with the army. The world marches forward with its leftist ideas and the church tries frantically to get in step. Illustrations are numerous. The Supreme Court passes on the legality of abortion so the church adds its endorsement. The gay society in America demands recognition for its immoral practices, so the

church sets up "meaningful dialogues" with them at church conventions. The A.I.M. makes menacing gestures of their rights as American natives, so the church gives "mission money" to foster further racial tensions and along with Marlon Brando castigates 3rd and 4th generation Americans for violating Indian treaty rights.

Now we come to the latest in this bizarre attempt at conventionalism — women's lib! Here again the church is desperately trying to catch up with the latest fad. As a case in point, the ALC (American Lutheran Church; *Lutherans Alert* Magazine is the mouthpiece of a conservative group within this denomination, H.H.) has appointed 10 persons (8 women and 2 men) to a task force concerned for full participation of women in the life of the American Lutheran Church. Their task, which was authorized by the 1974 ALC church convention in Detroit,

Michigan, will be to make recommendations to the ALC church council on such subjects as: women as ordained clergy, the changing roles of pastors and their mates in congregational ministry, vocational potential of women in professional church service, ALC employment policies, increased frequency of divorce in American society and sexist language in ALC communications.

One does not need to be a divine prophet to predict the findings of this committee. The church will be asked to accept what the world is already accepting.

What about God's Word in all of this? It can certainly be stated with emphasis that there is no teaching of women's lib in the Bible! But, again, as has been said so frequently; when the inerrancy of Holy Scripture goes, anything goes!

Lutheran-Reformed Ecumenicity

The *RES Newsletter* of March 4, 1975 contained the following interesting bit of ecumenical news:

An international Lutheran-Reformed Joint Committee will meet in Strasbourg, France, March 17-22. One of the main items on its agenda will be proposals for the formation of a "Universal Council." The proposal has received serious scrutiny by executive committees from both the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Representatives from the Faith and Order Secretariat of the World Council of Churches will also participate in the Joint Committee discussions. Also up for discussion is the "Leuenberg Agreement" and its theological implications. In addition, Lutheran-

Reformed relations and theological conversations on national and regional levels around the world will be reviewed.

Over 80 churches have now signed the "Leuenberg Agreement" which aims to bring about full altar and pulpit fellowship among European churches of the Reformation. A Lutheran theologian, T. Bachmann, characterizing the Agreement said that it "differs from the historic church confessions in that it is not only a statement of what is central to the Christian faith but also a testimony of mutual trust among hitherto separated churches. The December '74 issue of *Reformed World* (quarterly of WARC) is devoted to an analysis of Leuenberg.

North American Presbyterian And Reformed Council

For some time we have wanted to report on this new venture in ecumenicity among Reformed and Presbyterian Churches. The occasion recently presented itself with a brief history of the movement in *The Banner*.

The movement began in Jackson, Mississippi on February 27, 1974 when a group of men decided to bring together the inter-church relations committees of their denominations to study closer relations. This meeting was held in Pittsburgh on October 25, 26, 1974. Six denominations were represented: Christian Reformed, Orthodox Presbyterian, Presbyterian Church in America, Reformed Presbyterian Church (Evangelical Synod), Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America. Observers were present from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Church in the United States (Eureka Classis). After a great deal of discussion the group decided to appoint a subcommittee "to prepare a plan for cooperation and relationship of the respective churches."

After a meeting in Chicago and one in Philadelphia, certain decisions were reached which will be submitted for approval to the respective general assemblies and synods of the participating churches. These include a constitution and by-laws for a "North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council." *The Banner* reports the following:

The Council is to consist of no more than four representatives of each of the participating churches and will normally meet once a year. Its shape is best indicated by a quotation of three articles of the proposed constitution:

"II. BASIS OF THE COUNCIL

"In commitment to Jesus Christ as only Savior and Sovereign Lord over all of life, the basis for the fellowship of Presbyterian and Reformed churches is full commitment both to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the infallible Word of God and to their teachings as set forth in the Reformed standards, namely, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt, the

Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

“III. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

“1. Facilitate discussion and consultation between member bodies on those issues and problems which divide them as well as on those which they face in common, and by the sharing of insights ‘communicate advantages to one another’ (*Institutes*, IV. 2. 1).

“2. Promote the appointment of joint committees to study matters of common interest and concern.

“3. Exercise mutual concern in the perpetuation, retention, and propagation of the Reformed faith.

“4. Promote cooperation wherever possible and feasible on the local and denominational level in the areas of: missions, relief efforts, Christian schools, church education, etc.

“IV. NATURE AND EXTENT OF AUTHORITY

“It is understood that all actions and decisions taken are advisory in character and in no way curtail or restrict the autonomy of the member bodies.”

Violence on TV

It is generally conceded among God’s people that television is a powerful instrument for evil; that, while it is not wrong to have a television set in the family living room, a Christian must use a great deal of sanctified discretion in choosing what he himself watches and what he permits his children to watch. But the fare offered on TV sometimes gets so bad that even worldly and ungodly people raise howls of protest and periodically call the networks to account for their lack of concern over what comes on the TV screen.

The March 10 issue of *Newsweek* described a recent and rising outcry concerning the violence on TV. A 1972 Surgeon General’s Report contained the findings of a group of men who studied the relation between violence on TV and crime in the streets. The conclusions of this report were inconclusive. The networks went right ahead and increased the number of shows depicting violence of one kind or another. According to *Newsweek*, “Twenty years ago, ‘action-adventure programming’ (a cherished network euphemism for ‘shoot-’em-ups’) accounted for less than 20 per cent of all prime-time offerings. Today that figure has soared to 60 percent, propelled by no fewer than 24 current crime series.”

Recent studies have been more explicit about the relation between violence on TV and crime. Those

who have paid attention to the matter claim that they have hard evidence that violence on TV has two bad effects: it increases the amount of crime and it hardens viewers to be insensitive to crime and violence even when they themselves do not actually engage in violence.

While it is all rather stupid that extensive studies have to be made about something so completely obvious, the resulting outcry has forced networks to adopt a new policy according to which the first hour of prime time (between 8 and 9 P.M.) will be reserved for shows that are “suitable for family viewing.” Then the networks can return to their blood and gore.

The trouble is that no one has defined explicitly what “suitable family viewing” is. Nor can anyone guarantee that children will not watch TV after 9. A recent survey showed that there were still 5 million children under the age of 11 watching TV between 10 and 11 o’clock at night. And no one is talking either about the effects of violence on adults.

This problem is only one small facet of the evils of TV. And it brings sharply to the foreground the question of whether a child of God can invest the kind of money a TV purchase requires in such a set and still be a good steward in the house of God.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Do you have a copy of Volume II, Number 1 of our PROTESTANT REFORMED THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL which you will donate to a good cause? To our consternation, we discovered that our Seminary Library has lost this copy of our own Journal. If you can help us out, please send this issue of the Journal to the Seminary at: 4949 Ivanrest Ave., SW, Grandville, Mich. 49418.

— Librarian

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Posture for Prayer

Rev. J. Kortering

When we pray, does it make any difference whether we kneel, sit, or stand? Why do we close our eyes when we pray? We usually fold our hands and bow our heads? Is this "custom" or does it mean something? All of this is included in the posture for prayer.

It is good for young people to be concerned about prayer. From time to time we have had the privilege to lead discussions on this subject. Usually young people show interest in this subject. I suspect one reason is that we are confronted so frequently with the need to pray. It is not exceptional for us to pray up to ten times a day. Sometimes we have to partake by listening, other times by leading. Besides this, we all sense the spiritual importance of prayer, it can be such a meaningful experience and make such a difference in our lives if we pray sincerely. The opposite is also true, nothing can make us feel more guilty than when we neglect to pray or pray out of habit, it is hypocrisy and the Lord abhors hypocrites.

The question we raise in this article is this, does the posture we assume when we pray make any difference? We believe it does. Let's see why.

THE BIBLE AND POSTURE

According to Bible encyclopedias, it is suggested that during Old Testament times the saints usually stood to pray. Quite often they would spread out their hands toward God and express themselves vocally.

Let's look at some variations in posture.

Hannah was the God-fearing wife of Elkanah. Her sorrow of heart was that she had no children. Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, had many children and even derided Hannah for her barrenness. At the temple in Shiloh, Hannah separated herself from the others and prayed unto the Lord that He might give her a son, and promised to consecrate him unto the service of the Lord. Eli thought she was drunk and reprimanded her. Her posture for this prayer is indicated in I Samuel 1:26, "And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord."

Consider King Solomon at the time of the dedication of the newly constructed temple. According to I Kings 8:22 we read, "And Solomon

stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven." In the alternate account of II Chronicles 6:12, 13 we read, "And he stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands; for Solomon had made a brasen scaffold of five cubits long and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven." We can well picture the King on his knees while he is spreading out his hands toward heaven, praying to God, expressing the thanksgiving of the people for the beautiful temple and all it meant to them.

We read of a similar event in Nehemiah 8:6. At this time, Ezra the scribe stood before the people reading from the book of the law. This was a time for confession of sin and turning from them. The response of the people was, "And Ezra blessed the Lord the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground."

We are familiar with Daniel. The princes of the Medes were jealous of Daniel and moved against him to have him killed. They succeeded in passing a law that anyone who prayed to any other God than King Darius would be cast into the den of lions. Daniel was unmoved by their threat and he continued praying. We read, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before His God as he did aforetime."

One more example of prayer under unique circumstances in Old Testament times, we find in I Kings 18:42, 43. Remember Elijah the prophet? He had prayed to God that it might not rain, James 5:17, and it did not for three and a half years. After the climatic moment at Mt. Carmel, he took his servant and, "Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea, and he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go

again seven times." Surely that posture of prayer spoke of the inner earnestness of Elijah that God would hear him.

We can also add a few references from the New Testament.

At the time of the angel's appearance to Zacharias to announce the birth of John the Baptist, we read, "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense," Luke 1:10. They would stand in the court and pray to God while the smell of the incense filled the temple.

Most familiar is the example of the publican and pharisee. Of these two men we read that they went up to the temple to pray. The pharisee, "stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess," Luke 18:11, 12. Quite a different picture for the publican, "And the publican, standing afar off, would not so much as lift his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner," Luke 18:12.

Jesus often spent the whole night in prayer. Most moving, however, is the description of his posture in Gethsemane, "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

INTERPRETING THESE EXAMPLES

We may well ask at this point, what do we learn from these references? Is there anything that we can conclude from these examples? Let's consider the following.

First, we cannot say that there is any one correct posture for prayer. There certainly was a variety of bodily positions when the Old and New Testament saints prayed. This was also true of our Lord. It is also true in our lives. There are times when we sit to pray, e.g. at the table when we are about to eat, other times we stand, as, for example, in church when we receive the blessing or at the grave during a funeral; still other times we kneel as at our bed side, or perhaps we may pray while lying on our backs in bed when we are ill in the hospital. One can hardly say there is one correct posture for us. The circumstances pretty much determine this for us.

Secondly, our posture reflects to some extent the spiritual condition of our inner selves. Consider the Old Testament saints when they stood with their faces toward heaven and stretched out their hands to God. The spiritual condition of their soul was that of praise; they sought to get as close to God as they could. They were filled with joy and thanksgiving, and through prayer they expressed this to God. Their

posture reflected this. By contrast, if the saint was filled with the consciousness of sin and its consequence, he would kneel down, he would look to the earth, his heart was heavy. Consider Elijah, the publican, even Christ as our Mediator, burdened with the consciousness of our sins and the burden He was about to bear at Calvary. There is some of this in us also. Our posture reflects the attitude we take toward God. If we sit back, slump in the chair, fail to close our eyes, we certainly tell others and especially God that our soul isn't in the right spiritual condition. It hurts me to see this happen in church during "long prayer". People will sometimes slump down, prop up their leg with a book, and publicly declare that they are about to take a nap. Their posture tells what the spiritual condition of the soul is. At other times you see one cast down, with ringing of hands, tears from the eyes, while a prayer flows from the lips toward God. You can tell their soul is being unburdened. The posture indicates this.

Thirdly, proper posture is an aid to prayer. This is true in everything that we do. If we are going to type effectively, we have to have a chair at the right level with a back support, and we have to sit up straight. Teachers sometimes weary of "harping" on pupils sitting up. The reason? A student can't do his best work while sitting hammock style at his desk. The same is true for prayer. You perhaps tried to cheat a bit in your evening prayer by skipping the bit of kneeling by your bedside, but jumped instead into bed. It's a lot cozier under the blankets. It doesn't take long, and one soon discovers that his prayer suffers. Your mind isn't alert, you may begin to get drowsy, and soon you may even skip praying altogether. It is an art to lead a congregation in prayer, one that a minister and elder has to work at constantly; but it takes no less discipline to stay alert as a member of the congregation during the entire congregational prayer. Posture makes a difference. If you are going to fight sleep or inattention, it makes a difference whether you are slumped down or sitting on the edge of your bench, or even standing up. Try it sometimes. And after all, if the congregational prayer is going to be of benefit to each of us, we need to do all we can to make it such. Think about your posture.

THE TRADITIONAL THREE

What about our hands being folded, the closing of our eyes, and bowing of our heads?

They are part of our posture and if we consider them as such, we will discover that they are not empty tradition, but definite aids in our prayer and should be considered such.

If we understand that the three-fold act of folding hands, closing eyes, and bowing of head symbolize something, we might appreciate them more. Take the

closing of eyes, this is not practiced simply to keep us from being distracted, it is that to be sure, but it symbolizes the fact we cannot look upon God except through faith in Jesus Christ. God is holy and we are sinners. By closing our eyes, we testify that it is only through faith in Christ that we can even call God our Father. Similarly, by bowing our heads we confess that God is the Sovereign of heaven and earth and we are His servants. We cannot do anything to please Him; our works do not merit our righteousness; rather we can only plead upon the mercies of Christ. By folding our hands we confess to God that He is the provider and we are the recipients of all things. Without His blessing upon us our works are vain, we are dependent upon His guidance. We confess that it is only in Christ that God will forgive our sins and provide all our needs.

It seems to me that it is generally true that by placing one's body in that three-fold position it will help us in prayer. I am well aware of the fact that the three-fold posture cannot make a meaningful prayer. The posture does not make the prayer. If we would

imagine this, we would easily slip into the error of hypocrisy; we would conveniently go through the motions of correct posture and say our prayer and conclude that such a prayer is acceptable to God. This is not true. Rather, prayer is always a matter of the heart. The condition of one's heart makes the prayer sincere (fervent), see James 5:16. Only when one is sincerely aware of his sins, his needs, of Jehovah's love and mercy, can he pray meaningfully. Yet, it also remains true that we are creatures of this earth. If opening our eyes, fumbling with our hands, looking around interferes with prayer, this should be abandoned and we should adopt the posture that best aids us in bringing our needs and thanksgiving to God.

Posture is not a hard and fast rule. There is not one position that fits every circumstance. A prayer may well be breathed to God behind the wheel of a car, while walking through the halls of the hospital to visit a sick one, or any other emergency. We are rather thinking of the special moment that we set aside for prayer.

Does your posture help you in your praying?

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

The Final Kingdom of Glory

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

"And He shall judge among the goyim and shall do justice to many peoples; and they shall forge their swords to ploughshares and their spears to pruning-knives. Goy shall not lift up sword against goi, and neither shall they learn war again.

"House of Jacob, Come! and we shall walk in the light of Jehovah!" (Isa. 2:4-5).

1. *The Glorious King.* "And He shall judge." That is, Jehovah, and when Isaiah saw Jehovah, he saw Jesus' glory, as a comparison of Isaiah 6:1, 5 with John 12:36-41 will prove. "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." It is through Christ that God makes this judgment, and His judgment is always in perfect justice. "He shall do justice for many peoples," for the many nations of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24). For His kingdom is not of this world. The government of the peoples is already upon His shoulders, for He is even now the Ruler of the Kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5). He judges them now, declaring who are condemned and who are justified. He will judge them at the last day. Then He shall be visible King over all the earth, and His dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the end of the earth.

"And they shall forge their swords to ploughshares. . ." The result of His just judgment is the bringing in of universal peace. Before that great day of peace can occur there must be a war that shall indeed end all war, the war of Armageddon. To that war God rouses the whole world so that nation destroys nation. He commands, "Publish ye this among the Gentiles; sanctify war, excite the mighty men, let all the men of war ascend, let them come up (to battle)." Then the very opposite of Isaiah's prophecy comes into view: "Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruninghocks into spears." No use is made of these articles of peace. "Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'" None are exempted from this war. There is a conscription even of the sick. "Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye nations" (Joel 3:9-11). The Lord especially gathers the Gog and Magog nations to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14). Indeed, the Lord is the Author of war, and not only of liberty and of salvation. That final war will see the total overthrow of all the enemies of Christ and His church. Then they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. But all this, according to Isaiah's vision, is now in the no longer to be

remembered past. Now Isaiah sees the day beyond when "they forge their swords to ploughshares, and goi shall not lift up sword against goi," for there will be neither occasion nor reason for doing so. There will not be an enemy remaining any more.

Therefore, Isaiah did not envision a peace obtained by pacificism. He was not a convert to pacificism. War as such is not, according to Scripture, unlawful, but the abolition of war can come only by learning the law of the Lord. But neither is that universal peace attained by the gradual improvement of the world, becoming better through the power of the gospel until a baptized utopia is reached. Nor is the prophet writing of a peace in some future, yet still limited and temporary millennial kingdom. There was a general and temporary peace in the time of Caesar Augustus, just at the time of Christ's birth. But the text has something wider, more pervading in view, reaching to that which is yet to be realized. For Jesus himself said that in this present age there would be wars and rumors of wars. Before that state of universal peace there must be a full influx of the Gentiles into the church, which has not yet come about.

2. *The Kingdom of peace.* "Neither shall they learn war." Not merely shall they cease to practice it, but they shall not know how to practice it. (J. A. Alexander) War and military tactics become a lost art. Military implements are converted to agricultural implements. War culminates in the power of the Beast, and Isaiah's view looks beyond the overthrow of the Beast to the eternal Sabbath. There remains a Sabbath-rest to the people of God (Heb. 4:9). "The fulfillment of this prophecy, therefore, in its full extent, must not be looked for on (this) earth" (John Calvin). "... sin is still present, and it will not be until the complete removal of sin at the second coming of the Lord that this prophecy will be realized in its completeness" (Edw. J. Young). It is always the purpose and effect of the gospel to make peace, to do away with all sin, to deliver mankind, in the elect, from the penalty of sin, also from the power of sin, and, ultimately, from the very presence of sin. Then this prophecy shall have been fully realized.

"Neither shall they learn war any more." "This clearly proves that this prophecy belongs to future times. For this never yet had its accomplishment in any sense; not in a literal sense. For though there was an universal peace all the world over at the birth of Christ, in the times of Augustus Caesar, yet there afterwards were, as our Lord foretold there would be, wars and rumors of wars, and nation should rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and so it has been, more or less, ever since. Nor in a spiritual sense, for though Christ has made peace by the blood

of His cross, and came and preached it by His ministers, and wherever the gospel of peace takes place, it makes men of peaceable dispositions, and reconciles them . . . to God and Christ, and . . . to one another; and it is peace the saints are called to, and, when grace is in exercise, it rules in their hearts; and yet there have been sad contentions and quarrels among the people of God . . . which still continue. But in the latter day glory . . . this prophecy will be fulfilled in every sense. For after the hour of temptation is over, that shall try all the earth, after the (prophecy) of the witnesses and their rising, after the battle of Armageddon, when the beast and the false prophet will be taken and cast alive into the lake of fire, there will be no more wars in the world, nor any persecution of the saints; and then will the peaceable kingdom of Christ appear, and all His subjects, and the members of His church will live in the utmost unity and harmony together. They shall no more envy and vex one another, and of His peace there will be no end (Ps. 72:7; Isa. 9:7; 11:6-13)." — John Gill.

3. *The Practical Conclusion* to all this: "House of Jacob, Come, and let us walk in the light of Jehovah." If the gentiles are going to be enlightened by the glad tidings of the Lord's anointed, then the house of Jacob, which already has the light, should surely prize it as above all things precious. They should imitate the gentiles in enthusiastically calling others to go in the ways and in the light of the Lord. Let the gentiles stir them up to a holy jealousy for the cause of the Lord's house. The house of Jacob is that spiritual kingdom of the elect (Ps. 135:4) over which Christ shall reign forever (Lk. 1:33), that is, for ages, meaning that "of His Kingdom there shall be no end." It is for eternity. The house of Jacob does include the natural descendants of Jacob, but not them merely, for all is not Israel which is of Israel (all is not spiritual and true Israel which is of natural Israel), for not the children of the flesh are the children of God, but the children of the promise are deemed the true seed of Jacob (Rom. 9:6-8), that is, believing Jews and Gentiles alike and together form the whole Israel of God.

So this house includes not those who are mere Israel according to the flesh, but all who are infallibly and savingly brought to the God of Jacob. They share the great light of the gospel and the glorious kingdom of everlasting peace. Isaiah's thought is, with deep longing for all his people, Shall we, who have Jacob's very blood in our veins, also enjoy the final glories embracing the gentiles? Come, let us act like true Jews and show forth the praises of Him who called us out of our natural darkness of sin and death into His marvelous light. If others claim they are Jews, yet are not, but lie, being of the synagogue of Satan, let them

go to their own place, but we will go and walk in the light of the Lord.

The *light* mentioned is the light of the knowledge of the glorious gospel of Christ, the Light of the world himself and His word which shines upon our way, given through the light of divine revelation as found alone in holy Scripture. (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4, 6; Jn. 8:12; Ps. 119:105; 2 Pet. 1:19). This light shall appear in latterday glory. Then the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold, as the light of seven days, and the whole earth shall be lightened with its glory (Isa. 30:26).

To *walk* in this light is to walk as children of light and of the day in the enjoyment of God only in Christ, in communion with the triune God, and in fellowship with one another (I Jn. 1:7; Rev. 21:23, 24). "Let us then go on our way rejoicing, and let this joy terminate in God, and be our strength (Neh. 8:10). Thus shall we walk in the beams of the Sun of righteousness." The New Testament dispensation of the gospel takes us directly to the throne of the King of Glory, and this gospel dispensation is the last. We are to look for no other.

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

Faith In The Triune God

Prof. Robert D. Decker

According to this truth and this Word of God, we believe in one only God, who is the one single essence, in which are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct, according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father is the cause, origin and beginning of all things visible and invisible; the Son is the word, wisdom, and image of the Father; the Holy Ghost is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son. Nevertheless God is not by this distinction divided into three, since the Holy Scriptures teach us, that the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost have each his personality, distinguished by their properties; but in such wise that these three persons are but one only God. Hence, then, it is evident, that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, and likewise the Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the Son. Nevertheless these persons thus distinguished are not divided, nor intermixed: for the Father hath not assumed the flesh, nor hath the Holy Ghost, but the Son only. The Father hath never been without his Son, or without his Holy Ghost. For they are all three co-eternal and co-essential. There is neither first nor last: for they are all three one, in truth, in power, in goodness, and in mercy.

— *The Belgic Confession, Art. VIII*

With this article the *Confession* begins a new section which is commonly called in Reformed Doctrine, Theology, i.e. the doctrine of God. Four articles are devoted to this subject. We ought to notice that this truth follows upon that which the Church confesses in the previous articles concerning the Revelation of God, especially that of the Holy Scriptures. What we are confessing here is not something concocted in the mind of man, not some speculative philosophy concerning the Supreme Being; but it is "According to this truth and this Word of God." We are confessing the true doctrine of God, therefore, which is according to the Scriptures. We must understand, too, that the doctrine of God must needs be our starting point. This is necessary simply because the doctrine of the Trinity stands as the foundation of the entire structure of the Christian faith. No doubt it was for this reason that this doctrine was the first to be attacked by the devil in

the history of the early New Testament Church. The earliest heresies to appear in the church were attacks against the doctrine of the Trinity. Some of these are mentioned in Article IX, and we shall speak of them in our exposition of that article. For the moment, we wish to emphasize that early in its history the church was forced to give definite expression to the Scripture's teaching concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. Early in its history, therefore, the church definitely established this truth. And it is worthy of note that the church was never seriously troubled by these heresies again, even though they reappear in one form or another throughout the history of the church. Further, there has been no marked development beyond what the early church has said concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. What we confess with Article VIII is what the church has confessed from the very beginning. Thus our confession, too, begins with this foundational truth con-

cerning the triune God. We begin with: "I believe in God," for apart from that there can be no Christian faith.

This article teaches that God is three Persons in one divine Being or Essence. As to the oneness of God we believe: "... in one only God, who is one single essence." While there are three distinct Persons in the Godhead, this distinction does not mean that God can be divided into three. God is indivisible. The three Persons are together the one only God. We must distinguish the three Persons, but we can never separate them. This is true: "For they are all three co-eternal and co-essential. There is neither first nor last: for they are all three one, in truth, in power, in goodness, and in mercy." Scripture everywhere emphasizes the fact that God is one and that He is the only God. This is plain from the Law which begins with these profound words: "And God spake all these words saying, I am the Lord thy God, which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Because that is true, the very first commandment is: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:1-3) Moses stresses precisely the same when in his addresses to Israel in the plains of Moab just prior to his death and their entrance into the promised land he says: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." (Deuteronomy 6:4) In the beautiful forty-third chapter of Isaiah we find Jehovah assuring His people: "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour." In Galatians 3:20 Scripture teaches: "... God is one." Thus with the inspired Apostle the church confesses: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:5, 6)

That God is one means there is but one divine Being to which belong all the divine attributes. There are those attributes which Reformed Theology calls "incommunicable," such as: God's eternity, omnipresence, independence, infinity, immutability. And there are what have been called "communicable attributes," such as: God's knowledge, wisdom, grace, mercy, lovingkindness, etc. In all these attributes God is not three gods or many gods, but one God. There is only one divine, eternal, omnipotent, perfect Being. God's oneness also means that He is one in nature. By this we mean that God is an intellectual and volitional Being. God thinks and knows and determines and wills. Thus, when the church confesses that God is one, the idea is that there is one divine nature: one mind and one will in God, not three. It is not that there is a will of the Father, another of the Son, and still another of the Holy Spirit. Rather the will of the Father is the will of the Son and the Spirit; and the mind of the Spirit is that of both the Father and the Son. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together are the one, only, true God.

The article teaches also that while God is one in Essence, He is distinguished in three Persons. There are: "... three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct, according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. ..." By "incommunicable properties" the creed refers to what we commonly call the "personalty properties" of each of the three Persons in the Godhead. These are those properties which cannot be communicated from Person to Person in the Godhead. The Article speaks of this distinction as follows: "The Father is the cause, origin and beginning of all things visible and invisible; the Son is the word, wisdom, and image of the Father; the Holy Ghost is the eternal power and might, proceeding from the Father and the Son." The three Persons of the Godhead are, therefore, distinguished as to their personal properties. The Father generates the Son, the Son is the only-begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. It is evident therefore: "... that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, and likewise the Holy Ghost is neither the Father nor the Son."

There are, therefore, three distinct Persons in the one divine Being of God. A person is the subject of all the actions of a rational and moral, an intellectual and volitional nature. My person is my "I" which remains the same subject of all my being. That "I" never changes, not really. I am born, I grow and mature, and that same "I" presently departs this life for glory. Now there are three Persons in the one divine essence of God. Three, if you will, that say "I". And although these are three distinct Persons, each with His own unique "incommunicable properties," they are not three Gods. God is not divided. He remains the one, only God. Hence among the three Persons of the Trinity there is no separation, division, or subordination. It is not true that the Father is first and highest in rank, followed by the Son Who is a bit lower and Who in turn is followed by the least of the three, the Holy Spirit. The three Persons subsist alike in the whole divine essence. This means that the three Persons are each the subject of all the divine works, the object of all the divine honor and glory. Creation, for example, is not exclusively the work of the Father; but, it is of the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. Yet each is involved in the work of creation in His own way and according to His own personal properties. The three are co-eternal and co-equal. They are personally distinct; but even so they constitute one complete whole, and their relationship is one of perfect friendship.

This truth concerning the Trinity is not just some abstraction, some theological subtlety with no significance for life. The confession of the child of God concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the

one, only, true God has rich significance for his faith and life. This means that we do not merely believe in some vague, impersonal, supreme Being which we call God. Nor is our faith in some force, some inevitable fate. That God is three in One means we believe in the living God! And, that we believe in the living God means we believe in the Covenant God. The late Herman Hoeksema put it well when he said: "The doctrine of the Trinity, we say, implies that God is the living God. He is life, and He lives in and through Himself. Life is energy, expressing itself in perfect activity; and it presupposes relationship, harmonious relationship. To live is to act and react normally in that relationship. Life cannot be in solitude; it is always some kind of communion of fellowship. Now, God is the implication of infinite energy; in Him there is an infinite depth of divine power, of wisdom, and righteousness and holiness and goodness and love and mercy and truth incessantly active. And in the Triune God there is also the infinitely perfect relationship and harmony for this energy to express itself into constant activity. For He is One, and this oneness is the eternal basis of the divine unity and harmony. In God there is no discord, no conflict, . . . Yet He is not alone, though He be One. Were He alone, He could not be the living God in Himself. But now the one God subsists in threeness of Persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — that sustain the

relationship of perfect harmony to one another, and that react upon one another with all the energy of the divine nature in knowledge and wisdom, in righteousness and holiness. . . The truth of the trinity means that God is the living God. . . .

"And so, as the living God He is the Covenant God. For the idea of the Covenant is not that of an agreement, pact, or alliance. It is a bond of friendship and living fellowship. Friendship is that bond of fellowship between persons, according to which and by which they enter into another's life in perfect knowledge and love, so that mind is knit to mind, will to will, heart to heart, and each has no secrets from the other. It presupposes a basis of likeness, of equality: for only like knows like. And on the basis of that equality, it requires personal distinction: for without this there is only sameness; there can be no fellowship. And both the equality and personal distinction are in God. . . For He is the Triune; the most absolute equality exists between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For these Three are one in Essence. . . The living God is the covenant God. This is the great significance of the truth that God is Triune, and that these three distinct Persons are the one, only, true, and eternal God." (*Reformed Dogmatics*, Reformed Free Publishing Association, pp. 151, 152.)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Hebrews 12: 25-28

Rev. G. Lubbers

BUT NOW HE HATH PROMISED, SAYING. . . . (vs. 26)

There is a certain contrast here in the text between that which the Lord did when He spoke on earth at Sinai and what He did when Christ came upon earth as God in the flesh to build the eternal temple of God. The one is called simply "speaking on earth," and the latter is the manifestation of the fulfillment of what God "has promised." And it is to the latter that the attention of the Hebrew Christians is called, both as a warning for them and as a great and strong consolation for them to press on in faith and hope.

The verb "he hath promised" in the Greek is in the perfect tense, middle voice, and indicative mood. It is the fact mood. God really did promise. It is a tense which indicates that this is a promise which is full, complete and actual up to the very present moment.

It has in it the Yea and Amen in Jesus Christ. It is a voice which indicates that this is a promise which God made somehow related to Himself, to His own honor and glory. He will bring it to pass. He is not a man who would lie. It is a promise which is complete up to the present moment, most relevant, now that Christ has come and God has begun really to shake not only the earth but also the heavens, and to usher in his unmovable kingdom. And, therefore, the believers of the Hebrews must be warned against backsliding; but they must also take heart and serve the Lord with godly fear and holy awe. They must worship God as He has revealed Himself in the fulfillment of the promise, and obey the gospel of Christ as the fulfillment of that promise which God has made. Then, and then only, will they give heed to Him that speaketh as the divine oracle.

We should pay a little attention and study a bit in depth the historical situation in Israel when the

LORD gave this promise of the shaking of heaven and earth. We read of this in the prophecy of Haggai. Haggai, with Zechariah and Malachi, is one of the post-Babylonian prophets. These all speak in rather clear language concerning the greater and better things which God has in store for His people who returned as the "remnant" from Exile. These had once hanged their harps upon the willows in Babylon, and could not sing the LORD'S song in that strange land. They longed for Jerusalem and could not forget her hallowed place of the temple, which had ruthlessly and cruelly been destroyed by the fierce hordes of Babylon, being made a theater and spectacle to the nations, particularly Edom. Now these exiled ones had returned as a small remnant of the multitude of Israelites which remained comfortably in their foreign land. But they had returned according to Isaiah's prophecy. (Isa. 10:21-23, Rom. 9:27) They had returned according to the prophecy of Isaiah that Cyrus would give the commandment that Israel return and rebuild the temple. (Isa. 44:28; 54:1-7) According to Ezra 1:1-5, it was Cyrus who gave this command for Israel to return and to rebuild the temple. Thus these true children of Zion, who had hanged their harps upon the willows, returned with rejoicing to Palestine to rebuild their temple.

But all was not a road of ease and leisure for the "remnant" which returned. There was much work to do; arduous tasks awaited them, and much opposition from the enemies of the temple of God. It was especially from the Samaritans, who would help them build their temple to the Lord, that they experienced their worst opposition. Howbeit, the greatest enemy of the believers in Israel was their own littleness of faith. When they came to the land of Canaan, they began to rebuild their own houses, and beautified these. Yes, they had laid the foundation of the temple; but the occasion was not one of unmingled joy. Those of the older generation, who had seen and remembered the beautiful temple of Solomon, wept aloud, while the younger generation rejoiced. It was not a pure symphony of anthems of rejoicing to God. There was deep bitterness and pain in it all. And so Israel was slow in building the temple on the foundation which had been laid by Ezra and the people. And for this cause the afflicting hand of the Lord came upon Israel. Their lands did not produce, and God kept rain from falling. It was His chastisement to bring Israel to its sense of duty. In this situation God raised up two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah. Both prophesied concerning the temple and its future heavenly reality, when the tabernacle of God would be with man, when Christ would have come. Israel must live by faith as the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; (Ezra 5: 1, 2) they must not have slack hands and

trembling knees. Such is a bit of the background of God's promise to shake not only the earth but also the heaven. Sinai and the heavenly Jerusalem will be shown in their proper perspective.

That is what God does when He gives His word of "promise" to Haggai that He will shake all things. This little temple, which in its size and dimension came from the drawing-board of Darius, (Ezra 6:3) was really not much cause for rejoicing. It was really not much more than a "shed." (See Calvin on Haggai) And Israel needed something to buoy their flagging spirits. So the Lord comes with His word of promise concerning a great house which He would fill with His glory. It will be greater than Solomon in all his glory: for a greater than Solomon will (has) come. (Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31) That temple will be such as is greater than Solomon's temple. God does not dwell in temples made with hands. (I Kings 8:27) Such was Solomon's confession at the time of the dedication of the temple. He saw the temple which he had built in its pristine newness, and confessed that it was not an adequate house for God, Who is so great that the heaven of heavens could not contain Him. Of such a temple God speaks to Israel in Haggai. Such a temple and its building requires us to understand the truth that God alone is the builder of such a temple made without hands. Such is the temple of God's promise to Israel by the mouth and prophecy of Haggai. It is the temple whose reality we see in Mt. Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, which Abraham saw from afar in faith as he dwelt in the land of the earthly Canaan, confessing that he was a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth.

Now the word of promise is: "Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory. . . . The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." (Haggai 2:6-9) This is a wonderful word of promise which is "spoken from heaven" in Jesus Christ. He is the "desire of all nations," the eternal Son, Who upholds all things by the word of His power, and by Whom the ages are made in God's special providence over His people, and Who after He has brought about the purging of our sins by Himself, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty of God.

Now the word of promise to Israel by Haggai speaks of a "little while" yet. It will not be long for Him with Whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Besides, it would indeed be soon: less than 500 years, and then Christ would come suddenly to this temple. With the funds of Herod the temple would be in the process of being

rebuilt; men would try to build the LORD an house. But that temple would be utterly destroyed by the Roman legions in the year 70 A.D. The Lord would build Himself a house. Yes, it will be earth-shaking and heaven-removing; the latter will be rolled up like a scroll. It will be such that "I will fill this house with my glory." It will be the glory of God's power, might, wisdom, honor, grace, mercy, and majesty. It will be a living temple of God, wherein the living God can dwell. It will be in the spiritual stones, in the hearts of all His elect people, from the east and from the west and from the north and from the south. Thus will God shake all nations by the sovereign power of His grace. And the temple will be a house of prayer of all nations. (Matt. 21:13; Isa. 56:3-8)

We have now "come" to this shaking of all things, of heaven and earth and of all nations. We have come to the heavenly Jerusalem. We do not yet see it all realized in its perfected form; we do not yet see all things subjected unto Christ — angels, men, heaven and earth and all things. But by faith we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor for the suffering of death. (Heb. 2:8, 9) But we do see the throne of His kingdom at God's right hand, greater than David's throne in the earthly citadel of the Jebusites. And so we do enter into an unmovable kingdom now by faith. The weeping exiles can now really dry their tears and not weep over the temple less glorious than Solomon's. We have set our feet within thy gates, O Jerusalem, the heavenly city. For we have come to the blood of sprinkling of the Mediator, Jesus. He is the Desire of all nations, and not simply of a few natural descendants of Abraham. In thee and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed. He built the temple

in three days in His death and resurrection. Wherefore, there were signs which were earth-shaking, both in His dying and in His resurrection. (Matt. 27:50, 51; Matt. 28:1, 2)

This is the ushering in of our unmovable and unshakable kingdom and inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefilable, and which fadeth not away. This kingdom we "have" now as the New Testament church. It is ours legally as heirs of eternal life. We have come to this salvation in the desire of all nations. Our walk should be accordingly. We should not attempt to turn back the clock of God's covenant dealings with His temple-building, and once more return to the status of the Old Testament, which only could lead to tears and bondage. We must worship God in an acceptable way. Not to do so after God has spoken so clearly from heaven (Heb. 1:1-3) is not innocent. Such are not serious in serving the Lord in Spirit and in truth. (John 4:20-24) They refuse to listen to Him Who speaketh from heaven.

Now over such the Lord our God is a consuming fire. He destroys all unbelievers and those who are disobedient to the Son. Israel in the desert could not enter into the land because of their unbelief. And those who do not listen obediently to the words of the gospel in Christ also perish in their unbelief. They trample under foot the Son of God, account the blood of Christ to be impure (common); and they do despite to the Spirit of grace. Let us then run the race with patience, looking unto Jesus, the Desire of all nations, the great Temple-builder of God.

The great glory of the Lord, grace for grace flows from Him into His temple, pure, pristinely clean — a Bride without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Book Reviews

Prof. H. Hanko

THE LORD OF GLORY, by Benjamin B. Warfield; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 332 pp., \$3.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

Baker Book House is in the process of publishing a series of books under the title: "Notable Books On Theology". This book is one of the series. The publisher describes the series as follows: "Christians today are intensifying their efforts to share the gospel. Ministries are being expanded to include growth groups, encounter sessions, and informal Bible study groups. These developments have given rise to an urgent call for solid leadership and clear understanding of Biblical teachings. To help to meet this need, Baker Book House is issuing a new series, *Notable Books on Theology*. The titles included have

been carefully selected to provide laymen and Bible students with reliable and readable material on basic Bible truths. All are excellent tools for preparing and illustrating Bible study lessons and sermons."

We welcome this series of books by Baker and recommend the books to our readers. We do this not so much because of the reasons given above, but because we live in an age of doctrinal insipidity. These books are meaty and conducive to doctrinal growth in the knowledge of the Scriptures.

This book deals with the truth concerning the deity of Christ. The author, the well-known Princeton theologian from the days when Princeton was still orthodox, treats this subject by paying close attention to all the names of Christ as they are used

in the New Testament. The value of the book is enhanced by a complete index of texts. This book is a worthwhile addition to our home and school libraries.

A THEOLOGY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, by George Eldon Ladd; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974; 661 pp., \$12.50. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

The trend today, in both conservative and more liberal circles, is towards what is sometimes called "Biblical Theology." This development of theology makes use of a different method than the historical method of "Systematic Theology." The latter method divides all of the knowledge of the truth of the Scriptures which is appropriated by faith into some kind of logical division — usually the six loci of Dogmatics. The former method, followed in this book under review, goes through the whole Bible or part of the Bible (Ladd treats only the New Testament, as is evident from his title) and gleans from each book or from a few books treated together the "theology" of that book or of the group of books being treated.

While we want to say something about this method of theologizing, nevertheless, first of all I want to recommend this book to our readers. It is especially valuable to ministers, but it has also considerable value for all those who are interested in a deep study of Scriptural concepts. It can be used with profit by all who are, e.g., interested in what is taught in the epistles of Paul concerning the truth of justification by faith alone.

But something ought to be said about the method. Ladd himself discusses this on p. 25 in the Introduction when he writes: "Biblical theology is that discipline which sets forth the message of the books of the Bible in their historical setting. Biblical theology is primarily a descriptive discipline. It is not initially concerned with the final meaning of the teachings of the Bible or their relevance for today. This is the task of systematic theology. Biblical theology has the task of expounding the theology found in the Bible in its own historical setting, and its own terms, categories, and thought forms."

The question is, of course, whether this is a legitimate method of theologizing.

Now it is true that all the books of the Bible have an historical setting. It is also true that proper exegesis must take this historical setting into account. Nevertheless, it seems to me that there are serious weaknesses in this method. And at the heart of these weaknesses seems to be the weakness of failing to reckon with what our fathers called the *regula fidei*. The phrase means, of course, "rule of faith". But by the "rule of faith" is meant the current teaching of Scripture with respect to Scripture's doctrines.

Scripture is not a textbook on Dogmatics; it is the organic record of the revelation of God in Christ. By means of the Spirit of Christ, the Church is led to study the Scriptures in their organic unity in order to discover there the truth of God. But this study of the Scriptures recognizes the fact that the Holy Spirit of God is the Author of Scripture, for the truth revealed there is the truth of God in Jesus Christ as the Savior and Redeemer of His people. Because of the Holy Spirit's divine authorship, Scripture is an organic unity. And because Scripture is an organic unity, the whole of Scripture must be taken together and in its entirety to discover the truth of God in it. Even though exegesis takes into account the historical setting, the authorship of the Holy Spirit is of chief importance.

Biblical Theology is a method of theologizing which does not take this truth sufficiently into account. In its emphasis on the historical setting, the divine authorship of Scripture is neglected. This is also evident from Ladd's book. There is no mention, so far as I could discover, of Scripture's divine authorship in all its pages.

And this in turn leads to a serious error. This method of theologizing leads to a "discovery" in Scripture of a "theology of Paul", "a theology of John", "a theology of Peter", etc. But once one has embarked on this course, the result is that presently one discovers that the "theology of Paul" disagrees in some respects and runs counter to in certain areas, the "theology of James", for example. Hence, one loses the organic unity of Scripture, the divine authorship of Scripture, the fundamental reformational principle that "Scripture interprets Scripture."

Ladd is not a liberal, but a staunch conservative. Nevertheless, this approach leads him in a direction which will finally end in the liberal camp. It is part of a new hermeneutic propounded by conservative Bible scholars which begins with an undue emphasis on the "human element" in Scripture, and which proceeds *rationalistically* to defend the conservative position over against liberal higher criticism, but which winds up in denying fundamental truths concerning Scripture and revelation.

Nevertheless, there is a great deal of value in this book. If it is used carefully and if our objections against Ladd's method are kept in mind, there is a wealth of valuable material for the serious student of Scripture. We do not agree by any means with all of Ladd's conclusions; but his discussions of such subjects as the kingdom of heaven, Pauline psychology, the terms used in Scripture for the atonement, justification, and many, many more are most worthwhile and helpful. While the very method which Ladd follows leads to a somewhat scattered

treatment of various concepts in the New Testament, nevertheless, his treatment of concepts is very worthwhile.

Get the book if you are able to purchase it. The price is not too much to pay.

THE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, by Arthur F. Holmes; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1975; 118 pp. \$2.65 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

Holmes attempts in this book to "unfold the idea of a Christian college" which presents "a philosophy of Christian liberal arts education written for the layman, not the philosopher" and which is intended to help "teachers and students who are trying to articulate their own thinking on the subject."

It would be interesting to examine this book in detail and discuss thoroughly what the author has to say on this subject. There are many areas of disagreement in the book, some of which we can, in this review, touch on only briefly.

Under the sub-heading, "Avoiding Pitfalls" in the chapter entitled "Why a Christian College", the author writes: "A frequent idea people have of the Christian college has been captured in the label 'defender of the faith.' Though defending the faith was certainly an apostolic responsibility, it is hard to extend it to all of the educational task, all of art and science or all of campus life. Yet a defensive mentality is still common among pastors and parents; many suppose that the Christian college exists to protect young people against sin and heresy in other institutions. The idea therefore is not so much to educate as to indoctrinate, to provide a safe environment plus all the answers to all the problems posed by all the critics of orthodoxy and virtue. This is an idea, I say — more a caricature than a reality. . . ." But the author forgets that underlying all education is the covenantal task of the people of God to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. A correct understanding of this Scriptural injunction precludes all that the author says here.

Further, the author is firmly committed to common grace with its consequent denial of total depravity, ("Man is . . . the object of a divine providence that limits evil and preserves man's personality, and he is the object of a divine grace that restores God's image and sanctifies human powers for God's glory.") and abandonment of the antithesis ("for all human sin has done to distort the scene, this world is still God's creation, of value to both God and men. The 'secular' is not itself evil; in fact, in God's world it too is sacred.")

Following along these same lines, the author holds to a concept of academic freedom which essentially reduces the truth of relativism.

But buy the book and read it for yourself. It will, at least, give much food for thought.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE AACS, by Rev. Peter De Jong (Pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in Dutton, Michigan); Reformed Fellowship, Inc. [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

Rev. De Jong sent this brochure to me asking me to give notification of its publication in *The Standard Bearer* if I felt it was of worth to our readers. This I am happy to do. Rev. De Jong has written a great deal on the AACS movement, and has always been very critical of it. His criticism, however, has always been penetrating and supported by copious quotations from the writings of the leaders of the movement.

This pamphlet, written in question and answer form, is divided into the following sections: "Introduction", "The Bible, the Word of God", "AACS Views on Doctrine and Law", "The Kingdom and its 'Spheres'", "Practical Results of These AACS Views", "The AACS Role in Christian Education", and "Conclusion". It is a very concise statement of the position of the AACS on key points with a brief refutation of these erroneous views. It is filled with many quotes from the writings of AACS thinkers, and the contentions of the author are abundantly supported. It is an extremely handy little booklet and will give the reader an overall idea of AACS thinking and of how far these men have departed from the Reformed heritage.

At the end of the pamphlet the following appears: "For additional copies order from Reformed Fellowship, Inc., Box 7383, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49510. 1 copy 40¢, 3 copies \$1.00, 10 copies, \$2.00, 100 copies \$15.00. For larger quantities write for special price. Remittance must accompany order. Cash up to \$2.00 may be sent at our risk. Checks should be made payable to Reformed Fellowship."

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 6, 1975, the Lord willing, our beloved parents, MR. & MRS. DONALD RIETEMA, will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

We, their children are thankful to our covenant God for all He gave us through them. It is our prayer that they may continue to experience the Lord's blessings in their remaining days.

Their children,
Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Rietema
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Rietema
and 9 grandchildren
2 great-grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Mich.

News From Our Churches

April 14, 1975

Rev. Heys and Mr. John M. Faber, according to First Church's bulletin, planned to leave for Jamaica on April 15, in order to spend three weeks visiting the churches there.

Rev. Harbach expects to take a vacation during the latter part of July. In connection with that, the Mission Committee has a request which might be of

(continued on back page)

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

April 2, 1975

Southeast Prot. Ref. Church

Classis East met in regular session on April 2, 1975 at the Southeast Prot. Ref. Church. Each church was represented by two delegates. Rev. G. Van Baren served as chairman for this session.

The majority of Classis's time was spent in discussing the majority and minority reports of its committee to study and make recommendations on the Hope overture to discharge the Student Aid Committee. Classis decided to send the overture to Synod with both majority and minority reports attached for information.

In its routine business, the Classis heard reports from its Stated Clerk and from its Classical Committee and its usual committees were appointed and reported. Elders J. Kalsbeek and A. Haveman served on the Finance Committee. Total expenses for this session of classis amounted to \$282.87. Elder F. Hanko thanked the ladies for their catering services. Kalamazoo again requested classical appointments for the next three months. The Classical Appointment Committee composed of Rev. R. Van Overloop and

Elder M. Klop proposed and Classis adopted the following schedule for Kalamazoo: April 13 — C. Hanko; April 27 — H. Veldman; May 11 — M. Joostens; May 25 — R. Van Overloop; June 1 — M. Schipper; June 22 — G. Van Baren; July 6 — H. Veldman.

In voting matters, Rev. C. Hanko and Rev. H. Veldman were chosen to be church visitors with Rev. J.A. Heys and Rev. G. Van Baren as alternates.

The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and satisfactorily answered and classis stood adjourned until July 2, 1975 which meeting will be held at Holland. Rev. C. Hanko closed the meeting with prayer.

The questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and satisfactorily answered and classis stood adjourned until July 2, 1975 which meeting will be held at Holland. Rev. C. Hanko closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon Huiskens, Stated Clerk

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On May 4, 1975, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. RALPH H. MEYER, will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary.

We, their children, are thankful to our God for helping them guide us in a Christian way. It is our prayer that God may continue to bless them as they go down life's pathway together.

Mr. Randall Meyer
Mr. and Mrs. G. Meyer
Mr. and Mrs. J. Jansma
Mr. and Mrs. J. DeVries
Mr. and Mrs. L. Meyer
Mr. Roger Meyer
and their 3 grandchildren

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The Lord willing, on May 4, 1975, our parents, MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM CORSON hope to commemorate their 25th wedding anniversary. We, their children, thank our Heavenly Father for the Christian home and instruction they have by His Grace and Providence given us. The earnest prayer of their children and their parents is that God may continue to bless and care for them throughout their remaining years.

Their children —
Ronald Corson
Randall Corson
Richard Corson
Their Parents —

Grand Rapids, MI

Mr. and Mrs. Otto Vander Woude

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of The Protestant Reformed Church of Doon, Iowa, extends heartfelt sympathy to Rev. and Mrs. Richard Moore in the loss of his father, MR. RALPH MOORE.

May our gracious God comfort and sustain them in the conviction that when God is for us, nothing can be against us. But also in all these things, though they are grievous according to the flesh, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. (Romans 8:31, 37).

Mrs. Henry Miersma, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of The First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, wishes to express its sympathy to our friends and former members, Jim and Nancy Decker, in the recent loss of his father, MR. PETER DECKER. "He leadeth me beside the still waters." (Psalm 23:2).

Judie Feenstra, Sec'y.

interest to one or another of our ministers. Our missionary will be absent from the group in Houston during the weeks of July 13, 20, and 27. The Committee asks that any of our ministers willing to take a three-week working-vacation in Texas at that time, please notify the consistory of our Hope Church.

* * * * *

On March 20 and 21, the people of our church in Hull celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their own particular Protestant Reformed congregation. Planned activities included a pot-luck supper, held in the Hull Community Building, on the evening of the 20th. And on Friday evening, the 21st, a program was held in the church auditorium. Rev. C. Hanks and Rev. J. Heys, two of Hull's past ministers, were on hand to address the congregation at that time. And on the following Sunday, Rev. Hanks preached both services in the pulpit he occupied some forty-five years earlier. In the bulletin that day there was an expression of hope that the "commemoration be helpful to us and our children by reminding us of God's loving care and that we may dedicate ourselves to remain faithful to those principles of God's Word as set forth by our forefathers."

The neighboring congregation of Doon, incidentally, was invited to join with Hull in the program and social hour held on Friday evening. From Doon's bulletin we quote the following lines (sentiments in which, I'm sure, we can all share): "We take notice of God's blessing upon them in the last fifty years, and it is our prayer that He shall continue to bless our sister congregation."

* * * * *

What with our churches' celebration of the 50th anniversary of our denomination this year, and our Young People's Societies' holding of their 35th annual convention, this year, other milestones might seem to fade a little by way of comparison. There is another, though, that I think deserves note. Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School commemorates this year its 25th anniversary. Professor Robert Decker, an Adams' alumnus, will speak at the commemorative program which will be held in First Church on Friday, May 16, at 8 P.M. If you live in the Grand Rapids' area, you might be interested in attending.

D.D.

THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

Department Editors: Prof. Robert D. Decker, Mr. Donald Doezeema, Rev. David J. Engelsma, Rev. Cornelius Hanks, Prof. Herman Hanks, 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

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
4975 Ivanrest Ave. S.W.
Grandville, Michigan 49418

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

Editorial Policy: Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten, and must be signed. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

Reprint Policy: Permission is hereby granted for the reprinting of articles in our magazine by other publications, provided: a) that such reprinted articles are reproduced in full; b) that proper acknowledgement is made; c) that a copy of the periodical in which such reprint appears is sent to our editorial office.

Business Office: The Standard Bearer
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P. O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Business Agent for Australasia: Mr. Wm. van Rij
59 Kent Lodge Ave.
Christchurch 4, New Zealand

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

Advertising Policy: The Standard Bearer does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st or the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

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

CONTENTS

Freedom Through The Truth	338
Editor's Notes	340
Our Planned Australasian Tour	340
The GKN and the Wiersinga Case	342
"Hyper-Calvinism" and the Call of the Gospel	343
Another Decision on Tax Credits	345
Imitators of the World	345
Lutheran-Reformed Ecumenicity	346
North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council	346
Violence on TV	347
Posture for Prayer	348
The Final Kingdom of Glory	350
Faith In The Triune God	352
Exposition of Hebrews 12:25-28	354
Book Reviews	356
News From Our Churches	359