

The STANDARD BEARER



A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

No one at that meeting could have anticipated the future of that organization which exists to this day. No one could have seen that the Lord would give to these men and their successors in the fifty years ahead far more than ever they asked or thought. It was a small beginning, an uncertain and hesitant step in the direction of *The Standard Bearer*, but a step taken in faith nonetheless. And how mightily the Lord blessed that faith!

(see page 32)

October 15, 1973

MEDITATION

Jehovah's Friendship Made Known

Rev. M. Schipper

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant."

Psalm 25:14



Two things stand out in the Psalm of David in the verses which precede our text, and which seem to find their ground our basis in the text itself.

In the first place, we find in the opening verses a humble confession. Difficult were the circumstances in which the psalmist found himself. He complains of surrounding enemies. And while he places his deep trust in Jehovah his God, realizing his dependence upon Him, he prays that these enemies may not triumph over him. It seems that the darker the days the more beautiful does his song become. When all appears to be against him, he casts himself upon his God and exclaims, "To Thee I lift my soul," remembering Jehovah's tender mercies which have been ever of old. But his plea is mixed with a sense of his utter unworthiness of that mercy because of the knowledge of his sins, which he humbly confesses. He is sensitive to the fact that all his life long he never deserved any of Jehovah's mercies, for all that life long he had sinned against Him. "Remember not the sins of my youth . . ." clearly indicates that now in the more mellowed and ripened period of his life when he ought to know his sin in all its hideous character with more profound spiritual insights than when he sinned in his younger days, the awful truth takes hold on him that all his live-long days he has sinned against Jehovah, even from his youth. Whoever knows the particular history through which the psalmist passed, knows also there was plenty of reason for his confession.

Secondly, we find in these verses at the same time a faithful trust in Jehovah's mercies. A true confession of sin and the knowledge of its attending miseries, always ends in the infinite mercy of God. This cannot be otherwise, for the simple reason that both are wrought by God Himself. There is no knowledge of sin nor any confession of sin, or it is all of God. And the divine end in so humbling us, is that He may reveal to us His mercy, in order that we may learn to put all our trust and confidence in Him.

Now the ground or basis for this divine operation must be found in the words of our text. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." He has established a friendship relation between Himself and His people which we prefer to call: a covenant of friendship. Of this the text speaks.

Most beautiful and picturesque is the speech of the

original text!

The term "secret" comes from a Hebrew word signifying a couch or cushion. We do not spoil the implication of this term when we picture before our mind's eye a settee or a love seat on which two lovers will sit to whisper to each other their secrets. On such a couch or love seat two do not sit who are bitter enemies, but friends, who love each other most intimately and are desirous of making known to each other their love, and friendship. Consequently the translation has "secret" because one does not tell his secrets to his enemies, but to his friends. And where secrets are exchanged, there you have the most intimate bond of love and friendship.

Now picture, if you will, Jehovah, the covenant God, sitting on such a love seat with His people in Christ, and you will see the beautiful significance of our text.

The text is composed of two parts, but in such a way that the last part further explains the first. God's covenant, therefore, is synonymous with His secret. And even as the secret of Jehovah is with them that fear Him, so also is His covenant for them whom He instructs or teaches. If, therefore, as we said, His secret is indicative of His friendship and love, then His covenant must also be a covenant of friendship.

Though friendship and love are terms which may be clearly distinguished, they are nevertheless very closely related as they proceed from God. Love is the very basis of all true friendship. Where this basis is missing, friendship may be feigned, such as it was between Ahithophel and David, or between Judas and Jesus. Of Ahithophel David wrote: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me," (Ps. 41:9). And Jesus said to Judas: "Friend, wherefore art thou come? (or, do that for which thou art come)," (Matt. 26:50). And just before that we learn that Judas kissed Him. In both of these examples it is plain that Ahithophel and Judas, his New Testament counterpart, feigned friendship which did not have its deepest root in love. True friendship, indeed, finds its basis in love. And love always seeks for and rejoices in the perfection of its object. Yea, Scripture denotes love as being the bond of perfectness, (Col. 3:14).

Moreover, where all true friendship subsists, there must be also an attraction of spiritual likeness. It would be most difficult indeed to think of two sitting

on a love seat who were spiritual opposites. Surely one would not reveal his most intimate secrets to his enemies.

Keeping the above thoughts in mind, it is easy to see how that the covenant of friendship is, first of all, eternally perfect in God, the Triune God. Apart from any consideration of the creature, God lives eternally and perfectly the covenant of friendship within His own divine essence. Here, indeed, is the bond of perfection, the tie of spiritual likeness. All three Persons in the Godhead are essentially and spiritually alike. All three Persons seek and find in each other eternally the bond of perfectness. In this sense God in Himself may be said to be the Covenant God in Whom the friendship relation of love is most perfectly and eternally realized.

Now, in the second place, what is so remarkable and wonderful is the fact that the eternal covenant God has purposed, according to His Word, to take up into His own covenant life and fellowship the creature whom He creates and again recreates in His likeness. Adam, who was made of the dust in the image and likeness of God, was so created that in a creatural and spiritual way he reflected the very image of God. With him, we may believe, God had a most intimate friendship relation of love. In the state of rectitude God walked with him and talked with him in the cool of the garden. However, it was not the divine intention to realize the perfection of His covenant in the first Adam, made of the earth, earthy. Rather, through the disobedience and fall of the first Adam, it was His purpose to raise up that covenant relation of friendship to its highest possible and heavenly realization through the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. Through the way of sin and grace, He would establish with and realize in His chosen people in Christ the most intimate and perfect relation of friendship conceivable.

It is this that Jehovah, the covenant God, makes known!

A covenant of friendship!

The covenant must not therefore be conceived of as a pact or agreement between God and man, dependent on the will of man for its fruition. Nor must it be conceived of as consisting of two parties, God and man. Rather, as our Form for Baptism so beautifully expresses it, it is a covenant of two parts, wherein man is obliged to cleave unto the Triune God, trust in Him, and love Him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength. He is to forsake the world, crucify his old nature, and walk in a new and holy life.

The covenant is God's, in which He purposes to establish a relation of friendship with His chosen people in Christ, in which they are to love and serve

Him with their whole being, while they stand in opposition to the world in which they are required to walk for a time. It is a covenant which He realizes with the believers and their seed in the line of succeeding generations, in which generations is found a two-fold seed, elect and reprobate, believers and unbelievers, righteous and wicked. And so it is that it is not all Israel which is called Israel, and he is not a Jew whose circumcision is only outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is circumcised in the heart. And so, too, it is that in the line of succeeding generations you find an Abel, but also a Cain; an Enoch, but also the godless against whom he prophesied; a Noah, but also the majority that is destroyed in the deluge; an Abraham, who is called the friend of God, who is separated from his father's house, and to whom God revealed His covenant secrets as to none other. Out of Abraham the covenant is projected in Isaac, not Ishmael; in Jacob, not Esau. And out of the family of Judah, the lion's whelp, proceeds the royal line of David, a man after God's own heart; and it is he whose generation brings forth the Christ, in and through Whom God is pleased to realize His covenant of friendship with His people forever.

In Christ and through His meritorious work of redemption the covenant of friendship is realized and raised up to its highest, heavenly, and eternal perfection.

Christ is in substance the secret of Jehovah made known!

He it is Who destroys the enmity of our natural depravity, and makes peace through the blood of His cross. By His Spirit and Word He transforms us from children of darkness into children of light. He changes us from enemies to friends, from haters of God to lovers of God. He makes us by grace to fear God.

The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear Him!

It is the fear of love! Not the fear of fright!

Where once we were haters of God and of one another, we now love Him according to the love He sheds abroad in our hearts. Where once we hid our faces from Him, and turned our stiff necks in the direction of sin and iniquity, we now seek His face, and desire to dwell in His presence.

This fear causes us also to be docile, and to listen to His Word. God, Jehovah, draws us to His love seat and whispers His secret. He informs us in no uncertain terms that in Christ He is pleased to take us up into His own covenant life and fellowship. And because we have His fear in our hearts, and know that we are most unworthy to abide in His presence, we continue to say in response to His Word of love and friendship: Speak Lord, for thy servant hears!

We are Thy covenant friend-servants!

EDITORIAL

Sequel To A Footnote

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Recently I received a letter from one of our growing number of non-Protestant Reformed readers — this one from Canada — which made plain to me how difficult it is to express one's meaning and mood clearly and concisely in the printed word. The letter is not critical; on the contrary, as will become plain when I quote part of it, it is the kind of letter an editor can frequently use. However, the writer misjudged my mood and my intent. I take the blame for this: evidently I did not come through clearly.

The letter refers to the footnote to the August 1 editorial, "Is It True? Is It Equitable?"

And all of this gives me the opportunity to repeat that footnote, clarify it, add to it, and express my thanks to the afore-mentioned letter-writer.

The appendix to my editorial of August 1 was as follows:

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

I wish to point out two items:

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

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

vanishes as the morning mist! "And the Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment."

My correspondent writes rather at length about the above paragraphs. His letter was not intended for publication; but I can quote the pertinent section without revealing his identity. Here it is:

Then, in one of your latest articles I noticed some bitterness, due to the almost hostile attitude experienced when mentioning the Protestant Reformed Church among Christian Reformed people. To console and comfort you, I would say that the special function which God in His providence has assigned to the Protestant Reformed church, viz. to warn the Christian Reformed people (not the C.R. church!), will cause this face-slapping. In the Scriptures we read again and again how those who stood up with the witness of the Spirit of God were actually slapped in their faces.

Without a doubt, "The Standard Bearer" is the most faithful, by far, to the Scriptures, of all the periodicals that I am familiar with. There is a verse in Isaiah stating that "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall raise up a standard against him . . ." I take it that the name of your magazine was chosen with this verse in mind. Well, the enemy has come in the C.R.C., and the flood waters are rising. Thousands upon thousands have perished already. Amidst this tumult you are standing, handtied, because you are lifting this "Standard" aloft. You're standing there already for 49 years, with others. In the confusion and blind stampede among the C.R. people your message sounds so different, almost foreign, certainly out of place (and time!). This makes for the people seeing you as an obstacle, so they attempt to lift you out of the saddle. So they become servants of Satan, trying to destroy the witness to *the truth*, which often, out of necessity, has to be a witness *against error*.

As long as you receive insults of this nature, you may praise God for having kept you steadfast, immovable.

Now, first of all, I want to say "thanks" for the words of encouragement. This correspondent has correctly discerned what our magazine purposes to be: distinctively Reformed. And it is encouraging to hear that our magazine, with all its weaknesses, succeeds in achieving its purpose.

In the second place, however, as far as the intent

and the mood of the “footnote” which occasioned this correspondence were concerned, the writer of this letter is mistaken; evidently I did not come through clearly. My intent was not to convey bitterness over against the Christian Reformed Church, though I do not think this is what my correspondent means. Neither, however, was my mood one of bitterness in the sense of despondency or discouragement or complaintiveness. I may have left that impression, and I surely will admit to having such feelings upon occasion. But that was not my mood at the time that “footnote” was penned.

Are we disappointed and saddened when we observe such things on the part of the Christian Reformed Church? Yes, indeed! For not only is it true in general that we rejoice to see others walk in and according to the truth. But this is especially true with respect to those who in same belong to the Reformed family of churches. And it is even more true with respect to the Christian Reformed Church. After all, historically the Christian Reformed denomination is our mother: and it is painful and disappointing and saddening to be under the necessity of reproving and rebuking and pleading against “mother” and calling upon “mother’s” children not to walk in the whorish ways of their mother. Yet, did we not do so, we would be derelict in our duty before God. And the *Standard Bearer* has from the beginning seen this as one aspect of its task. Quoting the prophet Hosea, one of our original editors in an early issue of this magazine wrote, “*Twist met ulieder moeder, twist!* (Plead with your mother, plead!)”

Personally, I must also admit to being taken somewhat by surprise when this enmity toward the Protestant Reformed Churches is displayed. Perhaps I am naive in that respect; but then there are others, I know, who share my naivete. I am aware, of course, that this enmity was displayed in the past. In the earlier years of our history it was not at all the exception that people were threatened with discipline and even actually disciplined if they so much as listened to a missionary-minister of our churches. And I am aware, too, of course, that the Christian Reformed Church has not changed its doctrinal stance with respect to the common grace issue, but has indeed developed and progressed in the direction chosen in 1924. But somehow one comes to imagine that perhaps the attitude of enmity has softened somewhat. Perhaps the sweet avowals of being ecumenically-minded have something to do with this. And then something will happen to jar one back to stark reality! I myself had this experience when, several years ago, I had opportunity – upon their invitation – to instruct a group of Christian Reformed people concerning 1924 and the Three Points. I know, as I indicated in that “footnote,” that

some have had the same experience recently. I recently heard that others are presently having the very same experience.

And I can well imagine that if I am surprised by this, others – outside of our churches – may be even more taken by surprise, perhaps shocked, and possibly even a bit frightened by such threatenings.

Well, it was partly for this reason that I wrote: so that others might not be taken by surprise, so that they might expect it, and so that they might be forewarned not to be cowed by threats of discipline and slanderous remarks about our being schismatic and troublemakers, etc.

Hence, in the third place, I wanted to expose sharply the ecclesiastical hypocrisy of this spirit of ecumenicity which can be so soft and sweet toward all the errors and erring movements of our day – including rank Arminianism, neo-Pentecostalism, faith healing, not to mention homosexuality or flagrant denials of the authority of Scripture – but is absolutely intolerant toward those who want to be and who are distinctively Reformed.

Nor is my quotation from Judge Feiken’s article an exception. Anyone who reads *The Banner* regularly will know this. But let me cite another example from the recently-resumed series of the Rev. Clarence Boomsma. He writes in the same vein. For example: “Therefore the problem we confront is how we can appreciate and be open to the valuable influences of other denominations and religious movements without depreciating our own beliefs, loyalties, and practices, losing thereby our denominational identity and loyalty.” Or again: “How much we owe other religious bodies whose example has inspired our missionary zeal and evangelistic effort. Have we not been prodded by the social concern and action of other churches to recognize our need for such obedience to the demands of the Gospel? Can we not learn from others to encourage the fellowship that mutually supports spiritual life and service within the membership of our congregations? Ought we not to profit from the experience of those who have learned how to reach the unchurched in their communities? And consider the challenge to consecrated living inspired in some denominations! I could continue, as you know. Especially in these times of massive attack on the Christian faith by the neo-paganism of modern life, it is important to understand that all Christians need each other and the contributions that all can bring to the Church of Christ.” (page 15, Sept. 28, 1973)

But you see this is the same attitude that changes the ecclesiastically condemned heresy of Dr. Janssen in 1922 to “alleged” liberalism. (And is this any wonder in the light of Report 36/44?) It is the same

sweet attitude which makes our denial of common grace in 1924 "hyper-Calvinism." And "hyper-Calvinism," you see, is a dirty word in ecclesiastical parlance.

Ecclesiastical hypocrisy!

And therefore, in the fourth place, I will now make explicit what I previously left to the reader to conclude. When discipline is employed against those who seek to maintain the Reformed faith, i.e., when it is employed to persecute the faithful, this,

according to Article 29 of our Confession of Faith, is a mark of the false church!

Hence, let those who are the objects of such discipline or threats of discipline not be intimidated. Let them rather consider it a good sign and a badge of honor, as well as a privilege of grace that they may suffer for Christ's sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

ANNUAL REPORTS, R.F.P.A.

Secretary's Report

Members and Friends of the Reformed Free Publishing Association

Dear Brethren:

Once again your Board comes to you this evening with a resume of what has been accomplished this year with the help of our Covenant God.

We have met each month at the prescribed times and we received at these meetings, encouraging and gratifying reports on the acceptance and growth of the Standard Bearer.

We first of all must give thanks to our God who has provided the means to print the Standard Bearer and then to the editors who devote many long hours in the preparation of articles. We also thank each one of our supporters for their prayers and financial gifts which make it possible to print the Standard Bearer on schedule each issue.

We can report tonite that our subscription list is growing at a faster rate than ever before. Over 150 new subscribers were added to our subscription list this year. At present, 1525 copies of each issue are printed. One hundred copies are held for bound volumes, 90 copies are sent free of charge to seminaries, hospitals, rest homes, etc, a number of copies are distributed through the mission committee, and the remainder are mailed to our approximately 1200 paying subscribers and to our 10 for 2 recipients. The 10 for 2 offer has proved to be very effective as a means of obtaining permanent new subscribers. More than 350 responses have been received to date and more are coming in each month. The 10 for 2 offer is continuous and we urge our present subscribers to use this means of spreading our

witness, by placing names of your friends on our mailing list.

Our mailing list includes 40 states, and such countries as New Zealand, South Africa, Brazil, Hungary, Switzerzland, Germany, Japan, Korea, Belgium, India and others. More than 325 books, such as Triple Knowledge, Behold He Cometh and others, have been sold by means of a combination book and subscription offer which we hope to repeat again in November. This offer too can be used as a means to increase your religious book library at reduced prices.

Our folder catalog, listing all materials and books published by our churches has been re-printed and you can pick up copies here tonite, or they will be mailed to you on request.

Retiring this year are Mr. John Kalsbeek, our president, Mr. F. Hanko, and the late Mr. John Box whom our Heavenly Father called home so suddenly this summer. We also wish to thank Mr. Gerrit Pipe who consented to remain as our mailing clerk for another year and to Mr. Henry Vander Wal for his many hours spent on behalf of the Standard Bearer, as our able Business Manager.

Beginning in October, the Standard Bearer will, with the help of God, begin its 50th year of publication. The editors and the Board covet your prayers and support during this eventful year.

Thank you,
THE BOARD

Don Knoper, Sec'y

Treasurer's Report

BALANCE ON HAND SEPTEMBER 1, 1972 \$ 6,098.45

Receipts:

Subscriptions	7,149.42
Membership	93.00
Gifts	7,086.12
Announcements	180.00
Bound Volumes	540.56
Miscellaneous	275.41
Book Sales	1,225.80
Introductory Offer	358.00
Interest earned	206.57
Receipts for the year	17,114.88
Total Receipts	23,213.33

Disbursements:

Wobbema Press	5,379.85
National Correct Color Ser.	1,199.00
Photo Composition Service	4,700.00
Postage	1,061.17
Holland Book Binding	374.00
Mr. Gerrit Pipe (travel expense)	115.00
Mr. H. Vander Wal (token gift)	500.00
Publication Committee	1,011.80
Miscellaneous	59.29
Catalog (reprint)	75.00
Advertising	34.53
Disbursements for the year	14,509.63

BALANCE ON HAND SEPTEMBER 1, 1973 8,703.70

Gifts:

Doon	183.74
Edgerton	52.47
Faith	22.90
First	785.94
Forbes	43.15
Holland	164.98
Hope	1,159.65
Hudsonville	813.32
Hull	120.12
Loveland	73.97
Lynden	65.59
Pella	24.54
Randolph	113.88
Redlands	188.92
South East	519.78
South Holland	898.70
South West	249.95
Individuals	1,527.73
Holland Mens Society	25.00
Hope Mens Society	51.79

The Standard Bearer

In Retrospect

Prof. H. Hanko



The Standard Bearer has, from the beginning of its existence, been an independent paper without any formal ecclesiastical ties, and published by an association of men. Nevertheless, it stands, in the minds of all who know it, as part of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

It is not strange that this should be so. Its origin is closely connected to the origin of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Its editorial staff has been consistently composed of members (usually ministers) of these Churches. The members of the association and Board who have had responsibility for its publication have always been part of these same Churches. It is not surprising therefore, that the pages of *The Standard Bearer* have reflected Protestant Reformed ecclesiastical life and are a sort of history of what has taken place in these Churches from 1924 to today.

This is true already of the very beginnings of this publication. If we go back some fifty years or more to the time when *The Standard Bearer* was only an idea in the minds of some men, we find that this idea grew out of the doctrinal situation in the Christian Reformed Church.

In 1922 Dr. Janssen was deposed from his position of professor of Old Testament in the Seminary by the Synod of Orange City for teaching views which called into question Scripture's infallible inspiration and authority. In support of his position, Dr. Janssen appealed to the doctrine of common grace. Though his position on Scripture was repudiated by the Christian Reformed Church, nevertheless common grace, on which Dr. Janssen based his defense, was not condemned. The result was that this view became the subject of intense discussion within the Churches.

Especially Revs. Hoeksema and Danhof wrote combatting the view of common grace and developing the truth of grace according to Scripture and the Confessions.

During the period of the Janssen controversy, Rev. Hoeksema was editor of the rubric *Our Doctrine* in *The Banner*; but when he stated his views on grace

and his opposition to common grace, his articles were met with considerable ecclesiastical disfavor. During this same period, already prior to the final disposition of the Janssen Case, two new papers sprang up within Christian Reformed circles, *Religion and Culture* and *The Witness*. Revs. Danhof and Hoeksema were on the staff of *The Witness*, along with others who were opposed to the views of Dr. Janssen and who were generally thought of as the conservatives of that day. Because Dr. Janssen had attacked his opponents especially on the matter of common grace, in the aftermath of the Janssen Case, following the Synod of 1922, Revs. Danhof and Hoeksema wanted to spell out their views further on the issues of the Janssen Case and on the common grace question. However, the editorial staff of *The Witness* was sharply divided on the subject of common grace and on the wisdom of discussing the subject in their paper. Hoeksema and Danhof wanted to be free to develop their views, and, respecting the wishes of their fellow staff members not to be classified as agreeing with Hoeksema and Danhof on the matter of common grace, they soon severed relations with this new periodical. We also learn from some early minutes of the Board which eventually began to publish *The Standard Bearer* that *De Wachter* also refused to publish a series of articles prepared by Revs. Hoeksema and Danhof in connection with the Janssen controversy and the common grace issue as raised by Dr. Janssen. These articles later formed the contents of the first brochure published by the infant R.F.P.A., *Langs Zuivere Banen (Along Straight Paths)*. Meanwhile, after 1922 Rev. Hoeksema's articles in the rubric *Our Doctrine* also abruptly ceased.

All these things took place some time before the beginning of the Protestant Reformed Churches, but they were the immediate occasion for the publishing of *The Standard Bearer*.

Apparently a group of men who called themselves simply "Publication Committee" came together to discuss the situation. The minutes of the early meetings of this group are interesting and instructive. We shall quote at some length the minutes of these

early meetings, for in them we find the origin of the paper whose fiftieth anniversary we commemorate in this volume.

The minutes of the first meeting read as follows (translated from the Dutch):

1. The first meeting was held at the home of Rev. H. Hoeksema, Eastern Avenue, Grand Rapids, April 8, 1924. (Notice that this was about five months before *The Standard Bearer* was actually begun and nearly nine months before the Protestant Reformed Churches came into existence. H.H.)

2. This meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. H. Hoeksema.

3. Fifteen brethren were present, who unanimously decided to organize as a Publication Committee and to discuss that same evening matters pertaining to the support of the brethren ministers Rev. H. Danhof, of Kalamazoo, and Rev. H. Hoeksema, of Grand Rapids, in the publishing and sending out, as well as also the bearing of expenses in connection with the publishing of brochures, and, if possible, of a paper.

The reasons for this weighty step were the refusal and return by *De Wachter* of a series of articles written by the aforementioned ministers for our Reformed people. In order to be able to answer all the various writings coming from one side — and sometimes besmudged with personal hatred — this was the only way to offer the aforementioned ministers the opportunity to defend themselves against their attackers in the eyes of the Reformed reading public.

Article 4 of these minutes mentions the names of the founding members of the Publication Committee among whom are found two who would later become ministers in the Protestant Reformed Churches. These two were Revs. Wm. Verhil and G. Vos, both of whom are now deceased.

Article 5 lists the originally chosen officers of whom two were from Kalamazoo and three from Grand Rapids.

6. The gathering decided at once to appoint a Publication Committee from their midst and to give them power to act in printing, advertising, and sending out of brochures written by the aforementioned ministers. (The late Rev. G. Vos was chairman of this committee. H.H.)

7. Because there would be expenses in the immediate future, the gathering decided to gather pledges from their own group (not loans), the funds subscribed to serve as capital. After this was done, we were all pleasantly surprised to have gathered the sum of \$425.00.

8. Since the society will need a name, it was decided to discuss this at the following meeting.

9. It was decided to hold the next meeting in Kalamazoo on April 17, 1924, at 8:00 in the

evening.

10. Since the hour was late, it was decided to adjourn, after which Mr. W closed with thanksgiving for the blessed work accomplished, acknowledging that it was done with many shortcomings, expecting that also in the future our efforts may be richly blessed, as we strive as God's Party on earth, in order again to give direction in the history of the church of God here on earth.

That we may see many fruits upon our work, inciting to comfort and hope and trust and to a holding fast to the promise of the Lord, set forth by the poet as follows:

Waterstroomen al Ik gieten,
Spreekt de Heere, op 't dorre zand.
Waar nu pelgrims smachtend gaan
Zal een hof des Heeren staan.

This final verse appended to the minutes evidently expressed the confidence which the committee felt, under the Lord's blessing, in the future of their endeavors. Translated, this poem reads:

I shall pour water streams
on the dry sand, saith the Lord.
Where pilgrims now walk languishing,
a garden of the Lord shall stand.

No one at that meeting could have anticipated the future of that organization which exists to this day. No one could have seen that the Lord would give to these men and their successors in the fifty years ahead far more than ever they asked or thought. It was a small beginning, an uncertain and hesitant step in the direction of the *Standard Bearer*, but a step taken in faith nonetheless. And how mightily the Lord blessed that faith!

We know that various brochures were published almost from the outset. But the main goal was a periodical. This became more evident in the next meeting. We quote again from the minutes.

1. The meeting was held in Kalamazoo, April 17, 1924, at 8:00 in the evening.

2. The meeting was opened by singing Ps. 68:10 (this was, of course, in the Dutch, H.H.), and prayer by the President.

4. After this, Rev. Hoeksema addressed the gathering, shedding light on what we purposed to do, and at the same time directing us to go forward in faith, let come what may.

5. Also Rev. Danhof pointed us to the chosen path, and especially expressed that we should make this a matter of principle, and besides, that we should work positively through the means of brochures.

6. After this, the following brethren became members. (A total of 65 new members were added to the rolls at this meeting. H.H.)

7. It was decided to elect a board of 5 members, of whom 2 will retire after the first year and 3 the

second year.

8. Chosen were: President: O. Van Ellen
Secretary: A. Wyman
Treasurer: C. Moerman
Vice Treasurer: R. H. Timmer
General Member: R. Wolthuis

9. Mr. G. Van Beek and G. Vanden Berg were appointed to be added to the Publication Committee.

10. The name to be given the organization will be left to the Ministers Hoeksema and Danhof and to the board.

11. The gathering unanimously decided to proceed with the publication of a paper. Further arrangements were left to the Board.

12. By the members the sum of \$792.00 was subscribed.

13. It was decided to adjourn, after which our newly chosen president, O. Van Ellen, led in a prayer of thanksgiving.

From this point on the meeting of the Board and Publication Committee was separate from the organization itself. The Board and Publication Committee met again on April 29, June 3, August 12, Sept. 10 and regularly thereafter. From the minutes of these meetings we learn some interesting facts:

A name was chosen for the organization: "The Reformed Free Publishing Association."

It was decided to write all minutes from henceforth in the English language "to prevent confusion in the future."

Plans were being laid for the publication of a monthly magazine. A proposal was adopted at the meeting of June 3 "to have a monthly paper of 12 pages at the cost of \$768 for one year for 500 copies a month, and the printing, or \$879 for 750 copies." This was to be given "to the Dalm Printing Co., on their estimation."

At this same meeting of April 29 some other interesting decisions were taken. We quoted from the minutes:

Motion was made and accepted to leave the regulating of aforesaid paper in regard to form and name to the Revs. H. Danhof and H. Hoeksema.

Was accepted to have 1000 copies printed for the first three months beginning the first part of September, 1924, and further details to be worked out by the Publication Committee.

The resolution of the Publication Committee was taken over, and decided to have such a meeting June 10, 1924 in the Eastern Ave. Chr. Ref. Church in Grand Rapids, the nature of it being a prayer meeting pleading our cause before the throne of grace.

At this meeting also the Board and Publication Committee became one organization.

Some interesting decisions were also taken at the meeting of September 10. We quote the following:

Report of the Committee appointed to regulate our future monthly gave their work which was accepted by the Board.

Name of our monthly will be "Standard Bearer." Subscription price per year will be \$1.50 and have 3000 or more printed. Responsibility of contents will be upon three editors: Rev. H. Danhof, Rev. H. Hoeksema and Mr. G. Van Beek; contributions to be divided as follows:

I. Rev. H. Danhof: Conception of things.

II. Rev. H. Hoeksema: Historical review of things.

III. G. Van Beek: Realities in world, politics, school and state.

Language to be evenly divided.

It was at a meeting of Oct. 27 that the first mention is made of the presence of Rev. Ophoff who evidently became a member of the editorial staff at this time. The minutes mention that a word of welcome was spoken to Rev. G. Ophoff by the chairman.

If we turn briefly to the minutes of the membership meetings of the association, it is striking to notice that the organization grew rapidly. At the June 10, 1924 meeting the membership grew to 196 members. Also at this meeting \$1,791.50 was pledged.

At the next meeting November 13, 1924 speeches were delivered by five different men, and ten more members were added to the rolls, and a decision was made to make the Standard Bearer a semi-monthly. At a meeting on September 22, 1925, 59 new members were added.

Even these cold minutes of distant meetings reflect something of the dedication and zeal which pervaded these early leaders of our paper; but there also shines through in the clearest possible way, their utter sense of dependence upon the blessings of Almighty God.

So the *Standard Bearer* had its beginning.

It is our purpose in subsequent issues of this anniversary volume to continue the history of the *Standard Bearer*. We hope to do this primarily by means of reprints of pertinent articles from old issues which reflect in some measure the history of our Churches and the role which our paper played in the ecclesiastical world in the years during which it was published.

We do this that our readers may join with us in thanks to our faithful covenant God for His many blessings upon us in all these years of publication, and that we may rededicate ourselves to the cause of the truth for which our periodical has stood for one-half a century.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

Eschatology – The First Period

(850 - 250 A.D.) THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

Rev. H. Veldman

We are now discussing the doctrine of the last things as taught in the church of God during the early years of the New Dispensation, in the years 80 - 250 A.D. Of course, several doctrines belong to this doctrine or doctrines of the last things. And we are presently busy with the second advent or coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We concluded our preceding article by introducing to our readers Papias, who has the credit of association with Polycarp, in the friendship of St. John himself. We will quote from his writings, in support of the fact that millenarian teachings were taught in the church of God during this early period of the church in the New Testament.

In Vol. I of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, page 152, we have the following:

(As the elders who saw John the disciple of the Lord remembered that they had heard from him how the Lord taught in regard to those times, and said): "The days will come in which vines shall grow, having each ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand shoots, and in every one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five-and-twenty metretres of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, 'I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me.' In like manner, (He said) that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear would have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds of clear, pure, fine flour; and that apples, and seeds, and grass would produce in similar proportions; and that all animals, feeding then only on the productions of the earth, would become peaceable and harmonious, and be in perfect subjection to man." (Testimony is borne to these things in writing by Papias, an ancient man, who was a hearer of John and a friend of Polycarp, in the fourth of his books; for five books were composed by him. And he added, saying, "Now these things are credible to believers. And Judas the traitor," says he, "not believing, and asking, 'How shall such growths be accomplished by the Lord?' the Lord said, 'They shall see who shall come to them.' These, then, are the times mentioned by the prophet Isaiah: 'And the wolf shall lie down with the lamb,' etc. (Isa. 11:6f.f.)."

And then we have the following quotation, in Vol. I, page 154, of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, and we quote:

Papias, who is now mentioned by us, affirms that

he received the sayings of the apostles from those who accompanied them, and he moreover asserts that he heard in person Atistion and the presbyter John. Accordingly he mentions them frequently by name, and in his writings gives their traditions. Our notice of these circumstances may not be without its use. It may also be worth while to add to the statements of Papias already given, other passages of his in which he relates some miraculous deeds, stating that he acquired the knowledge of them from tradition. The residence of the Apostle Philip with his daughters in Hierapolis has been mentioned above. We must now point out how Papias, who lived at the same time, relates that he had received a wonderful narrative from the daughters of Philip. For he relates that a dead man was raised to life in his day. He also mentions another miracle relating to Justus, surnamed Barsabas, how he swallowed a deadly poison, and received no harm, on account of the grace of the Lord. The same person, moreover, has set down other things as coming to him from unwritten tradition, amongst these some strange parables and instructions of the Saviour, and some other things of a more fabulous nature. Amongst these he says that there will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on this earth.

Turning our attention to Justin Martyr (A.D. 110-165), we may remark that he was a Gentile, born in Samaria, near Jacob's well. He must have been well educated. The writings of Justin Martyr are among the most important that have come down to us from the second century. He was not the first that wrote an Apology in behalf of the Christians, but his Apologies are the earliest extant. They are characterized by intense Christian fervour, and they give us an insight into the relations existing between heathens and Christians in those days. His other principal writing, the Dialogue with Trypho, is the first elaborate exposition of the reasons for regarding Christ as the Messiah of the Old Testament, and the first systematic attempt to exhibit the false position of the Jews in regard to Christianity. We will now quote from this dialogue with the Jew, Trypho. Notice, please, that Martyr, in these quotations, declares that many true Christians did not share these millennialistic views.

In his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, Justin Martyr writes as follows, Vol. I, page 239 of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, and we quote:

And Trypho to this replied, "I remarked to you, sir, that you are very anxious to be safe in all respects, since you cling to the Scriptures. But tell me, do you really admit that this place, Jerusalem, shall be rebuilt; and do you expect your people to be gathered together, and made joyful with Christ and the patriarchs, and the prophets, both the men of our nation, and other proselytes who joined them before your Christ came? or have you given way, and admitted this in order to have the appearance of worsting us in the controversies?"

Then I answered, "I am not so miserable a fellow, Trypho, as to say one thing and think another. I admitted to you formerly, that I and many others are of this opinion, and believe that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware; but, on the other hand, I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise. Moreover, I pointed out to you that some who are called Christians, but are godless, impious heretics, teach doctrines that are in every way blasphemous, atheistical, and foolish. But that you may know that I do not say this before you alone, I shall draw up a statement, so far as I can, of all the arguments which have passed between us; in which I shall record myself as admitting the very same things which I admit to you. For I choose to follow not men or men's doctrines, but God and the doctrines delivered by Him. For if you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this truth, and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians, even as one, if he would rightly consider it, would not admit that the Sadducees, or similar sects of Genistae, Meristae, Galilaeans, Hellenists, Pharisees, Baptists, are Jews (do not hear me impatiently when I tell you that I think:) but are only called Jews and children of Abraham, worshipping God with the lips, as God Himself declared, but the heart was far from Him. But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.

And in the same volume, Justin Martyr continues and endeavours to furnish proof for his contention as follows:

For Isaiah spoke concerning this space of a thousand years: "for there shall be the new heaven and the new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, or come into their heart; but they shall find joy and gladness in it, which things I create. For, Behold, I make Jerusalem a rejoicing, and My people a joy; and I shall rejoice over Jerusalem, and be glad over My people. And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, or the voice of crying. And there shall be no more there a person of immature years, or

an old man who shall not fulfil his days. For the young men shall be an hundred years old; but the sinner who dies an hundred years old, he shall be accursed. And they shall build houses, and shall themselves inhabit them; and they shall plant vines, and shall themselves eat the produce of them, and drink the wine. They shall not build, and others inhabit; they shall not plant, and others eat. For according to the days of the tree of life shall be the days of my people; the works of their toil shall abound. Mine elect shall not toil fruitlessly, or beget children to be cursed; for they shall be seed righteous and blessed by the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call I will hear; while they are still speaking, I shall say, What is it? Then shall the wolves and the lambs feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent shall eat earth as bread. They shall not hurt or maltreat each other on the holy mountain, saith the Lord." Now we have understood that the expression used among these words, "According to the days of the tree of life shall be the days of my people; the works of their toil shall abound," obscurely predicts a thousand years. For as Adam was told that in the day he ate of the tree he would die, we know that he did not complete a thousand years. We have perceived, moreover, that the expression, "The day of the Lord is as a thousand years," is connected with this subject. And further, there was a certain man with us, whose name was John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would likewise take place. Just as our Lord also said, "They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection.

This concludes our quotation from Justin Martyr. We will call attention to writings of Irenaeus and Tertullian. But this must wait until our following article. We understand, to be sure, that Justin Martyr places his own construction upon the passages of the Word of God he quotes. This passage from the prophecy of Isaiah is also quoted by the premillenarians of our present day. However, toward the end of the latter quotation, this Church Father undoubtedly refers to the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation. And he writes that the apostle John writes that those who believe in Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem. But this we do not find in Rev. 20. What John does write is that he saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and that they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. This can hardly refer to the city of Jerusalem, inasmuch as the apostle speaks of them who had been beheaded for the witness of Christ and for the word of God.

IN HIS FEAR

Buying The Truth

Rev. Dale H. Kuiper

With the filling of barns and silos and the putting away of our vacation gear, the time is again upon us to apply ourselves to the mental and heartfelt pursuit of the study of God's Word in a far more systematic way than we have done in the past summer months. School bells (buzzers) call eager youth to class and they come clutching colors and tablets. Young people pursue their chosen course in high school and college. And a goodly number of young men trim candle and lamp for the late hours that seminary study demands. Bulletin announcements call the youth of the church to catechism classes and the older members to Bible study societies. In short, the Church of Jesus Christ on earth prepares herself to heed her high calling of "buying the truth," a calling that comes to her in the twenty-third verse of Proverbs twenty-three: "Buy the truth and sell it not; also wisdom and instruction and understanding."

It is the case that the Church must busy herself with this calling in the midst of the world, a world which Solomon describes in this chapter in terms of stark realism. It is a world that has no place for wisdom, but rather is filled with winebibbers and riotous eaters of flesh, given over completely to the pursuit of self-satisfaction and the pleasure principle. As a whore seeks to lead men to misery and destruction, so this world of dark corruption would lead the faithful into all manner of transgression and iniquity, entice her into a compromising position, so that she knows not nor cares for the truth but makes and loves the lie. In that position, oft-tempted and precarious, the Church must hear the words: "Buy the truth and sell it not!"

WHAT IS TRUTH?

With that question Pilate responded to Jesus when our Lord stood before him and declared the truth: what is truth? The Word of God uses a term here to which the lexicons ascribe a rich meaning. The word embraces the idea of firmness, of certainty and faithfulness, of integrity, and of justice. Thus, whatever shade of meaning the word has in a given context, it always denotes that which is in opposition to falsehood and the lie, to that which is temporal and imaginary, that which is deceitful and unreal. Truth is reality; and truth is the presentation of reality, of all reality. Truth is the accurate

presentation of all things in respect to God, Christ, and man; in respect to heaven, earth, and hell; in respect to things past, present, and future.

The classic text for understanding our subject is perhaps Deut. 32:4, where Moses speaks of Jehovah this way: "He is the Rock, His work is perfect, all His ways are judgement; a God of Truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He." A God of Truth! God is Truth, He is Truth personified. And as the Rock, He is the unchanging reality, so that the Truth which emanated from Him is also unchanging. We may know this because He has sent Christ to us, Who said concerning Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This eternal Son of God Who is the Word from the beginning is the complete and perfect revelation of the Father. He came into the world, the world received Him not because their deeds were evil, yet the Church sees Him as the light, and in Him knows the truth to be unchanging and absolute.

Indirectly Solomon calls the truth very precious by telling us that wisdom, instruction, and understanding are the components that make up the truth. Truth is precious because it makes wise unto salvation, because it gives a person both the knowledge of reality and the ability to live in harmony with it. Wisdom is an ethical concept, it is a gift given only to those who are in Christ. Instruction really means correction. The word used here refers to the disciplinary aspect of the truth whereby the one who strays is corrected and brought back to the proper pathway. Understanding has the primary idea of distinguishing and separating mentally. When a person has the truth he has all these things! Hence, the truth is able to set free!

Where may this truth be found? Jesus answers the question when He confides to the Father in the garden, "Thy Word is Truth." The Bible is the source book of all truth. It is the truth because it is according to its own testimony "God breathed." The words of the Bible are the very breath of God. Secondly, the Bible is the *whole* truth in that it presents all reality in its proper perspective and relationships. In this modern age man worships in the temple of science; he will tell us that perhaps for matters of faith and doctrine you can go searching in your Bibles, but if you want to know about this world, about history and science, then you must seek out the

philosopher, the historian and the scientist. So far is this world out of joint! The believer must learn to go to the Bible for all things. I do not say there is no place for learning and even higher learning. Of course there is. But the point is that there is no area of knowledge that is not interpreted and strictly bound by the Word of God. It gives us the whole truth in all its beautiful harmony.

Not only that, but the Bible as the Word of God is the *only* truth. Everything apart from the Scriptures, every word of man that is not spoken in the light of Scripture, is the lie! There is no truth in all this sorry world except for that which God has spoken. Man as he multiplies his words in magazines and books, in lectures at universities and colleges, in seminary and in pulpit, does nothing but lie against the truth. How imperative, then, that the Word of God underlie all instruction and thought. This is what differentiates godly and godless education. The goal must be to have our children and young people instructed in the *truth* and this presupposes an environment where the truth is known and loved. It is time to make a specific recommendation and, hopefully, to plant the seed of an idea. There is a pressing need for a college that gives instruction in the truth, as the truth pertains to all things. We have numerous grade schools and junior high schools. We have a senior high school in the Grand Rapids area. Now we need an institution that will give instruction with the same emphasis on the college level. This need has been spelled out by pre-seminary students who vex their souls in existing colleges. This need has been described by many others who have wearied in their search for a college education that is Christian and Biblical. We have even been approached by those outside of our churches with the questions, "Don't you people have a college? When will you get one?" Specifically, then, a parent-controlled society ought to be established immediately to undertake this work. This society ought to provide for active or regular members not only, but also for associate members who can be informed of progress and who can thus be supporters in a prayerful and financial way. Let the lead be taken by those in the Michigan area where the college undoubtedly will be located, since over half our people reside there, and well over half of our college students as well. But let this work be done *now*, and let the labors of this society and its board be carried on with a sense of urgency. That, too, is wisdom: recognizing reality and acting accordingly!

THE FIGURE OF BUYING THE TRUTH

When Solomon commands, "Buy the truth and sell it not" he does not mean with money. For the truth is priceless. Besides, the Bible warns us against making merchandise of things holy and spiritual. He uses a figure. To buy is to take possession of something, to get a hold on it. As you stand in the generations of Reformed believers, as you have the rich heritage of the Reformed Confessions, as the truth is preached to you Sabbath by Sabbath, as the Word is the center of your home life and the education of your seed . . . take possession of it, get a hold of it, embrace it, and negatively *do not sell it!*

The plain implication is that to possess the truth is going to cost. It may even be that everything has to go for the sake of the truth. Did not Jesus say that "whosoever loveth son or daughter, or father or mother more than Me is not fit for the kingdom"? Nothing may stand in the way of our possessing the truth of the Word of God. Not family, not jobs, not name and position.

Practically this has some implications for the church institute as she reveals herself in the congregation and in the seminary. Since no one enjoys being small, least of all the office-bearers, the natural tendency is to do away with those things which seem to inhibit growth. Let us not proclaim so sharply the doctrines of double predestination, of total depravity, of particular grace and atonement. Let us relax those positions which we have taken that lead to discipline and sometimes excommunication. That way we won't refuse to let anyone in and we won't push anyone out, and we'll grow! In these days of irresponsible evangelism the Church of Jesus Christ must be reminded: *Buy the truth!* Resist all compromise by refusing to go along with the spirit of the age that cannot stand the test of the Spirit of the Truth. To be lax in this area is the quickest way to sell the truth as something without which we can well do.

Practically there are also implications for the individual, implications which come sharply into focus at this time of the year. The means by which the Holy Spirit writes the truth in our hearts are the preaching and catechetical instruction. If we neglect these means of grace we sell the truth. We must buy the truth through Bible study. There seem to be many who view attendance at men's society and ladies' society, at Mr. and Mrs.' and at young people's, as *optional*. That cannot be the case in the light of this Word of God. If we make ourselves so busy in our jobs and in our pleasures that we do not prepare for, and attend, the fine opportunities that are ours, to grow into the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, then we sell the truth, we despise it, we say we can get along without it. The truth must be bought in the home. In addition to the systematic reading of the Bible, there ought to be discussion with the children around the Bible, lessons taught in stewardship, in prayer, and in pilgrimage. And finally, a special word for the young people who are tempted in this area above all others. These are the years which form you, these are the years when opportunities are yours that will never be yours again, these are the years when decisions are made which will determine much, if not most, of your future life. Buy the truth by being faithful in all aspects of your church life. And resolve not to sell the truth by leaving it! You will be tempted to leave it, for the sake of a boyfriend or a girlfriend, for the sake of education or a job. But always remember: God wants you to buy the truth and never to sell it. Follow that command and you do not have to worry about anything in the future. He will never leave you nor forsake you.

May these lines be useful as we take up once again the Holy Scriptures in church and home and school.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Hebrews 11 : 31

In close connection with the destruction of Jericho, and the faith of the people of God exhibited in the taking of this city, the writer to the Hebrews now turns our attention to one of the citizens of Jericho. This person is a woman, a public woman, a harlot. However, at the time of the fall of Jericho she was an erstwhile harlot because the Lord had been merciful to her and called her from the darkness of her sin-steeped life into His marvelous light. She was beloved of God and must serve the counsel of God and the redemption of Israel in a marvelous and unique way. That she is later still called "the harlot" was not to dishonor her, but was intended to magnify the grace, the sovereign grace of almighty God!

Hebrews 11 shows us true faith which revealed itself in works of faith. Faith here too is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Without this faith it was impossible to please God at Jericho. That was true of Israel and is also true of Rahab and of her household. Both must believe that God is and that he is a rewarder of those who seek Him. This was true of Abraham and his faith in the sacrificing of Isaac. He was justified by a faith that revealed itself in works, the fruits of faith. And thus we must be. We must not falter in the hour of battle, which is a constant and life-long struggle.

RAHAB THE HARLOT (Hebrews 11:13; James 2:25)

Interpreters have tried to tone the epithet down and try to explain the term in the Hebrew (*zanah*) as referring to the hostess of an inn, an inn-keeper. However, the term means exactly what the KJV translates: harlot. It means a public woman, who sold her body and services for money. This was adultery in its worst, depraved form. It was fornication for the profit of money. She sold her body, which should have been the temple of the Holy Ghost, for money. So we will let this stand and remember this dear saint in Christ as one who was once "Rahab the harlot." But such is ever the merciful dealing of the Lord. He will have mercy upon whom He will have mercy. The Lord Jesus came to save His people from their sins. And harlots and sinners enter into the kingdom rather than the self-righteous. We think of that beautiful word of the Gospel, "and all the publicans and sinners came unto Him." And we think of the harlot, who, after she had received mercy and faith and confessed her sins, was forgiven so very much, and who was also thankful for so very much, (Luke 7:37-45). Such are the gracious dealings of our sovereign God, who sent His Son.

God could have chosen a "better" woman by the standards of a moralist, a self-righteous legalist. But the Lord would magnify His grace in her. She was the fit vessel for His purpose. He claimed her in grace and she became of the party of the living God of Israel. She was a friend of God and an enemy of the world. And all this by God's grace and mercy was she!

She now no longer sells her body for lust and monetary gain. She is no longer a harlot. She is reborn, called; faith is a gift of God to her; and she is justified by faith and now walks in sanctification in the hope of glory and of dwelling with Israel in the land of Promise. Her liberation is now at hand that she may dwell with the thousands of Israel. She is concerned about her father, mother, brothers and sisters. She is far different from Lot's wife who will not leave Sodom. This Rahab will deliver the entire city into the hand of the Israelites. She does this by faith in God who had exhibited his power and faithfulness to Israel in bringing them out of Egypt with his outstretched arm some forty years before, and who had now slain Og king of Bashan and Sihon king of the Amorites before Israel!

RAHAB RECEIVES THE SPIES IN FAITH (Hebrews 11:31; Joshua 2:1-3)

The reception was "with peace." (*met' eireenees*) This was no mere formal nicety, a social friendly greeting, a reception of a well-paying customer. She recognized these men for what they were. They were "messengers" of Joshua. They were representatives of a force which was hostile to the inhabitants of Jericho and of the land. They were come as scouts to case the city, to see its walls and ramparts, and to keep their ear to the ground to determine the fighting morale of the people. However, man ponders his way but the issue is of the Lord. He directed their path to the house of Rahab. And she receives them with peace. She gives the "spies" of the enemy a friendly and peaceable reception. She is wholly on their side. And she has a deep inward peace in her heart. Her heart does not "melt" within her as does the heart of all the inhabitants of the land. God is also on her side; Israel's God is really her God.

And she receives them once-and-for-all. There was no hesitancy on her part in this matter. She sees the entire plan and purpose of the Lord with Israel, and in faith she is a harbinger of good things to come for Israel, so that the spies can return and report joyfully and confidently "Truly the LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of

the land do faint because of us," (Joshua 2:24). For Rahab did not say that the LORD "would give the land to Israel," but she said in faith "that the LORD *hath given* you the land," (Joshua 2:9). Such was the reception "with peace" which was afforded the spies of Israel by this "harlot" of Jericho. This is the wondrous way of the LORD for God's people. Most sinful weaklings are used for God's powerful purposes of redemption. His strength is fulfilled in our weakness!

RAHAB'S CONFESSION OF FAITH (Joshua 2:5-16)

Night has fallen upon Jericho. The spies will retire for a while before they will be let down by the window over the side of the wall of Jericho. But now this wondrous woman, full of the power of faith which removes mountains, will utter the deep secret of her heart. No, it is not a confession of her past way of life. That she must have truly confessed to the LORD who had mercy on her. She speaks of the SECRET of the LORD for Israel and of her confidence in the salvation of Israel's God. She discloses the secrets of the hearts of the Canaanites, the fears of a people whose "iniquity is full," (Gen. 15:16). It is the heart of those who are fat for judgment; they upon whom the LORD is about to blow the trumpet of the coming of His great Day, and the pouring out of the vials of His wrath. It is an anticipation of the song of Moses and the Lamb, "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of the nations in behalf of the saints," (Rev. 15:3). This was already echoed in the Song of Moses in Deut. 33:29, "Blessed art thou, O Israel. Who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency. And thy enemies shall be found liars (be subdued) unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

In staccato tones Rahab foretells of the destruction of Jericho and of the land. One can see in his mind's eye the walls tumble, the defenses crumble in a land of men who are doomed to die. Forsooth, the land will not be utterly under the heel of Israel till the time of David the King, when God shall have placed His king on Zion's hill, in the city of God. Hear her relate it to the spies,

1. The LORD hath given you the land. . . .
2. The terror of Israel is fallen upon the Canaanites. . . .
3. The people are utterly demoralized and paralyzed by fright. . . .
4. The heart of the peoples melts within them. . . .
5. When you come save me and my house. . . .

Here is a faith which speaks that overcomes the

world!

RAHAB'S DECEPTION OF THE MESSENGERS OF JERICHO'S KING

It is a remarkable thing that the Bible passes over this in utter silence, this "deception," while both Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 speak only of Rahab's *faith*. Now I suppose that a people which are doomed to perish and are worthy of perishing because their "iniquity" is full, ought to have been informed against the "messengers" of the LORD!! Only a shallow moralism can reason thus. Rather than blaming Rahab for lack of faith we had better believe that her penetrating insight into the lot of the enemies of the Lord, their just deserving it in their "disobedience" caused her to misdirect these messengers. And the LORD Himself wrought with her in this deception. Had she done otherwise she would have "perished with the disobedient." But now in this trying hour her faith shines forth like the sun in the heavens!!

It is rather hard to explain to children, (whom we tell that they must never tell a "lie,") what Rahab did here. Yet, I believe that when we see that the LORD was going to destroy them one and all — not one lived after the destruction of Jericho — matters are different. The city and all who were in it were "devoted" to the Lord. Nothing could possibly save them from destruction. Even her walls could not be rebuilt with impunity. Is it impossible to tell this to children? Tell them that it was the justice of God and that it is the fulfilment of the Song of Moses and the Lamb. And set this "lie" of Rahab in that setting and you will see that even children, to whom the Holy Spirit is promised no less than to the adults, will understand and in holy awe look at this faith of Rahab . . . and worship!

RAHAB AND HER FAMILY IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

Rahab and her family did not perish with the "disobedient," those who would not bow before the Mighty God of Jacob in reverence, even when they heard of His mighty deeds. They had seen and heard it now for forty years. They will not repent but "fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be still as a stone; till thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which thou hast purchased," (Exodus 15:16). Rahab will pass over with the people into the rest of the LORD!

She receives a place in the number of God's people in the very center of Judah in the holy line that reaches to Christ. Here is history! It is the unfolding of the counsel and promise of God. She marries Salmon, gives birth to Boaz who becomes the redeemer husband of Ruth the Moabitess. And from

this Rahab come Jesse and David, the king! And from this David comes the Son of God, the Christ. Thus was the "Genesis" of Christ into this world. Rahab does not perish with the disobedient but she has a place in Israel and no middle-wall of partition severed her from the grace of God. She, in her generations, has a place in the tabernacle of the

LORD; yea, in thousands of generations of those that love the LORD.

She dwells no longer with her people "outside of the camp" but she is circumcised with the circumcision without hands of Christ. Rahab the "harlot," a mother in Israel!

EDUCATION FEATURE

A Covenant School*

Rev. David Engelsma

Today we are witnessing a striking thing in education in the United States: the arising of many private schools that call themselves Christian schools. In the past, only the Roman Catholic Church, some Lutheran Churches, and Reformed parents established Christian schools; the others were content with the public education set up by our government. Of late, many other churches and parents have been establishing Christian schools alongside the public schools. Many such schools have been established in the past few years in the South, but they are also springing up here and there all over our country.

It might seem that other churches and parents are seeing the light and that they are now one with us in carrying out the calling we have of educating the children of the church in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). In many, if not most, of the cases, however, this is not so. They have not really seen the light at all. They are not really one with us in the cause of Christian education. The schools, although religious, are not genuine Christian schools. This becomes plain when we note the reasons for the establishment of many of these schools.

The reason for the establishment of these schools can be expressed in one word: dissatisfaction with the education of the public schools. This dissatisfaction is very widespread. It is found among many parents who are not Christians. It is, of course, well-grounded: Mainly, it has to do with the threats to the physical well-being of the children. Through the years, these people were not perturbed by the absence of God and His Word from the public schools, nor by the presence of atheism and evolution. But now, when the physical welfare of their children is threatened, they become concerned. There are several forms of dissatisfaction. In many instances, especially in the South and in the big cities, the establishment of private, religious schools is due simply to hatred of integration. The schools are nothing more than attempts to avoid having to send one's white children to school with black children. I

submit to you that this is a mockery of Christian education and that it is an abuse of the name of Christ to call such a school a "Christian School." Others are dissatisfied because of the lawlessness within the public schools. There is little or no discipline. Drugs abound. Sexual wickedness is rampant, including the approved and official sex education by the schools themselves. The environment is that of the hippie and his culture. Parents are afraid, with reason, that their children will be ruined in the schools. Hand in hand with the breakdown of discipline and law goes the deterioration of the quality of the education, and some today are dissatisfied with the schools because the education itself is poor. Perhaps, the children do not get much individual attention. Perhaps, the instruction simply is inferior. So, churches or parents establish schools in which there is discipline, decent conduct, and superior education. However, schools established for these reasons are not yet Christian schools.

It may well be that the mushrooming of these schools will become a serious threat to our own Christian schools. The government and the majority of informed, influential citizens know the reason for the arising of these private schools. Already the State shows alarm at the evasion of integration by many private schools. It may happen that as the movement appears to threaten the public school system the government cracks down on all Christian schools, also ours that exist for reasons of principle.

Our school differs from these schools. We have established it for a radically different reason. It stands on a completely different foundation. We did not set it up to avoid integration; because we fear for the physical safety of our children; because we are terrified by drugs; or even because we saw the quality of education going downhill. Mind you, we desire discipline in the school, and we have it. We rejoice that our children are free from the temptation of drugs in the school, as well as the way of life of the hippies, sexual corruption, and, indeed, wicked schoolfellows and playmates. We require a superior quality of education. But none of these is the reason for our school.

Our school is a covenant school. We parents and other

*A speech given at the convocation exercises of the Protestant Reformed Christian School of Loveland, Colorado in August, 1973.

saints established it and maintain it in obedience to the demands of the covenant. Its existence is due to the covenant of God that He has established with us parents who believe in His Son Jesus. This makes our school a truly Christian school. Let me give a word of explanation about the covenant of God. In His free and sovereign grace, God has made Himself known to us who believe in Him through Jesus Christ. He has reconciled us to Himself and made us His friends. He has taken us for His own people and lives with us as our God. Our entire life is a life of friendship with God, a life of knowing His love and loving Him. This relationship, graciously established by God, is the covenant. It is salvation. It is the highest and only good for man. To give us this, now and forever, the Son of God in our flesh suffered and died. It belongs to the wonderful grace of our covenant God that He has bound Himself to save the children of believing parents. This is Biblical doctrine. In Genesis 17:7, Jehovah promised Abraham, the father of believers: "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." To show that neither His covenant nor Himself had changed, God had His apostle proclaim in the first sermon preached to the Church of the New Testament: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Infant baptism is based on this truth of the covenant. Because our children are included by God in His covenant, God demands that we rear them in His fear, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in accordance with the truth of Scripture. This refers, of course, to the total upbringing of the children, first of all in the home, then in the Church, but also in the school. So important is this demand, that the godly rearing of our children is the way, and ordinarily the *only* way, in which God carries out His promise to save our children.

All of this now is clearly and beautifully set forth in Psalm 78:1-8. This passage teaches that God saves His people in the line of generations. It mentions three generations that have a saving knowledge of God, the present generation of fathers ("we have heard and known," vs. 3), the fathers of the present generation ("our fathers have told us," vs. 3), and the children of the present generation ("the generation to come," vs. 4). It is not that three generations are the limit, but usually there are three generations alive at any given time, grandfathers, sons, and grandchildren. God's salvation of the succeeding generations is accomplished in the way of parents instructing their children: "our fathers have told us . . . we will not hide them from their children. God *requires* believing parents so to educate their children. According to verse 5, God has "appointed a law in Israel," and that law is the command to fathers "that they should make them (i.e., God's praises) known to their children." The goal and result of this instruction are given in verse 7: "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

Here then is found the explanation of our school. We are

called to instruct our children by showing them the praises of the Lord, His strength, and His wonderful works. We are to do this at home, in the church, and in the school. Our school is founded upon and grounded in the covenant.

Does this make any difference? Does it make any practical difference as far as the actual education is concerned that our school is a covenant school? Specifically, does it make a difference of any importance between our covenant schools and the private schools of a religious nature that are arising in our country?

It makes a radical difference.

First, if we view our school as a covenant school, we will maintain it for God's sake, for God's glory. The work of establishing and maintaining it will not be a work of self-love, the self-love of protecting our children from drugs, a hippie-life, etc. The work of establishing private schools today is in many cases nothing more than self-love. Our Reformed confession, the Belgic Confession, warns us in the article on sanctification that there is a danger that we "never do anything out of love to God, but only out of self-love or fear of damnation" (Art. XXIV). It teaches, correctly, that a work done out of the motive of self-love or out of the motive of fearing punishment is not a good work. Only a work done out of the love of God is a good work. Now we want our work of establishing Christian schools to be a good work. Our main purpose in Christian education must be that our children grow up to know and serve the Lord so that He may be praised by them. With the motive of the love of God, let us parents send our children, pay the costs, and encourage our teachers. With this motive, let the teachers labor, giving their all. With this motive, let the Board work.

Secondly, if we view the school as a covenant school, we will persevere when maintaining it gets tough, even tougher than it is now. The school is, with us, a matter of principle, not mere expediency. Our support is an act of obedience to the covenant God. Neither will we give up because of the imperfections of the school. The teachers will not, even though the imperfections hurt them. We parents will not, although the imperfections pinch us. There is a place for self-denial and sacrifice.

Thirdly, the nature of the education will be different. In many of the schools that are called Christian, instruction is given that tends to be positively harmful to our children, because there is no covenant conception. They work in their Arminian evangelism. I know, many of them claim that they do not teach doctrine. As a matter of fact, neither does our school teach doctrine. Teaching doctrine is the duty of the home and of the Church. Nevertheless, the doctrine that the school stands on necessarily comes through. Many of the religious schools regard the children as small heathens who have to be saved by a decision for Christ that the school feels itself bound to obtain. These schools urge patriotism and

decency, but they have no sense of the truth of the Heidelberg Catechism, that a holy life is a life that is lived out of thankfulness to God for His redemption of a person from sin. Indeed, many of them *cannot* give this instruction and admonition because they deny that the children share in redemption, being ignorant of the covenant. Do not say that it does not matter *why* a child lives decently, as long as his conduct is clean. Scripture tells us that there are those whose lives are outwardly impeccable, but who are an abomination to God because they are self-righteous. They are merely moral. Their motive is to earn or to do something for God or to do good for society. Many of these schools have no idea that the purpose of the child's knowing the creation and of the equipping of the child through education is to prepare a child of God for a covenant life in the world. Do not these things represent really the overthrow of everything that a Reformed parent stands for in Christian education?

In contrast, we do not evangelize; we do not teach obedience and purity of life and submission to the authority of civil government to make fine little self-righteous individuals who are doing things for Jesus and the world; we do not impart neutral wisdom in many subjects because that is

what is needed for a successful life later on in America. Rather, we instruct those who *are* God's children as recipients of the promise made to their believing parents. In our discipline and admonition, we call redeemed, covenant children to show thankfulness to God for His salvation in Christ by a holy life: "Honor your father and mother (and president and policeman)" because Jehovah brought you out of the bondage of sin and the death of hell and made you too, with your parents, His own people. We give instruction in every subject that shows the praises, the strength, and the wonderful works of the Lord. Our goal is young men and women who live *covenantally* in the world, that is, as friends and servants of God, prophets, priests, and kings under Christ, praising God.

If our school is what Psalm 78 says it is, we are engaged in a great task. There is a danger that we become tired or apathetic. We look at the beginning of another school year as the start of an old wearisome routine that stretches from September to June. We ought to take up the work again with the zeal that is fitting for an aspect of the coming of the Kingdom of Christ. It is worthy of our labor and our prayer.

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

The Lord's Case Against His Church In Israel

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

The scene in this chapter is one of misery (2-4ff), deliverance (18, 25), and thanksgiving (26, 27). Where the church, the vineyard, appears bleak and dismal, how bad and black must be this wilderness world!

I. **The Despair of Getting a Hearing with the People of Israel.** "*Hear, ye heavens, and give ear, O earth!*" Cold stars and hard-rock earth are more likely to respond than Israel when the reason given for doing so is "*for Jehovah speaks.*" The Mosaic parallel has, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of My mouth" (Dt. 32:1). Getting men to think is difficult enough in itself, but especially to think about spiritual things, about their souls' welfare, about God and eternity. They will think about anything and everything else before they will about the most serious matters. They will more readily think of man's flying to and landing on the moon than of getting to heaven. They trifle, even tamper, with history, but do not see it as a record of their crimes dogging their steps to judgment (I Tim. 5:24). Time is spent as though it were chiefly intended as a past-time. Life is wasted as though it does not rush headlong to eternity. When men do hear or read anything from the Word of the Lord they do not apply it to themselves, nor take it to heart. They will never learn until taught by the Spirit of truth the true wisdom. Here the universe is called upon to hear as witnesses and judges the Lord's complaint of Israel's ingratitude. It was He who said, "*Sons I have made great and exalted.*" The Lord did this, creating them in covenant relation

with Him. Sons are bound to God in the family relation of fellowship and friendship. This is the bond of love which ties God to His church and people, so that His elect church is called the *sons* of God. Of the nation God had said, "Israel is My son, even My firstborn; and I say unto thee (Pharaoh), let My son go, that he may serve Me; and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn" (Ex. 4:22, 23). To the nation God had said, "Ye are the children of the Lord your God," but added, "children in whom is no faith" (Dt. 14:1, 32:20). Of them He asked, "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not He thy father that bought thee? hath He not made thee, and established thee? . . . Of the Rock that begat thee, thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee" (32:6, 18). The Lord had begotten them from Abraham and Sarah, who was mother of nations; kings of people were born of her (Gen. 17:16). They spent their childhood in Egypt, their youth in the desert, their young manhood in Canaan, and their adult manhood in the time of David and Solomon, when finally it could be said, "Sons I have made great and exalted." But, indeed, how ill they requited the Lord! "If God were a demon, man could hardly be more cold toward Him," (Spurgeon).

II. **The Crime of Rebellion Charged Against Them.** "*I raised sons* (a covenantal term) *and they* (heavy emphasis being placed here) *have rebelled against Me.*" Their sin was a violent breaking away and breaking loose from God, which Adam did first of all inwardly before the outward act followed. It was

idolatry and covenant-breaking, putting themselves out of the covenant, as did Cain, Esau and Israel under Jeroboam. Here is rebellion in the church. This is true of many today who become weary of the instituted worship of God in the church where spiritual food is provided them, and rebel against it to worship God in their own way outside the traditional church structure. These outside, underground cells are audience-centered, not pulpit-centered, having no place for pulpit, preaching, minister, elders, deacons, sacraments, doctrinal statement, biblical liturgy, psalmody or hymnody. Instead of sermon-based worship, folk-songs, "dialogue" and "rap sessions" displace all serious study of the Word of God. "They have rebelled against" the Lord, against the biblically prescribed worship of the Lord and the ways and means of grace; they have forsaken the assembling of themselves together according to the due order; they have neglected the hearing of the Word and attendance at the stated services of the Lord's house. But to illustrate further the rebellion in Israel would require much more than the allotted space.

III. The Ignorance and Lack of Understanding in Them.

Israel is in contrast to the inanimate creation, for it declares the glory of God and shows forth His handiwork. In fact, Israel is not only inferior to unfeeling elements, but also to dumb domestic brutes noted for their stolid stupidity. "*The ox knows its owner, and the ass its masters*" (plur.) *crib*. Israel (with special emphasis) *knows not*." "Now Israel is a name of nobility; it signifies a prince; and . . . those who are the sons of pious parents . . . trained in the fear of God . . . Does it not disgrace you as a man of godly lineage to be no better than the sons of Belial in the matter of earnest consideration?" (Spurgeon). "Israel knows not. *My people do not discern*." Where God "has showed himself unto them" (Rom. 1:19), they have not noticed nor paid attention. Such disgraceful inhuman ingratitude is not found in the ox and ass, which manifest a natural sagacity compared to them, and a lowly dependence on their masters, and "observe the order of nature more correctly, and display greater kindness, than men themselves." (Calvin). "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle (dove) and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but My people know not the judgment of the Lord" (Jer. 8:7). They are taught more than the beasts of the earth and the fowls of heaven (Job 35:11), yet know far less. "For what sort of wisdom can be left when one does not know God?" (Lange's Commentary).

Israel became so degraded that they no longer recognized God as Father and themselves as His children. They "were not merely a nation," like any other nation on the earth, but were 'Israel,' descendants of Jacob, the wrestler with God, who wrestled down the wrath of God, and wrestled out a blessing for himself and his descendants; and 'My people,' the nation which Jehovah had chosen out of all other nations to be His possession, and His own peculiar government." (Keil and Delitzsch, Isaiah, Vol. I, 78).

IV. The Depravity and Corruption of their Church and Kingdom. The Lord speaks first as a father to His sons, then as a master to His servants. "A son knoweth his father, and a

servant his master; if, then, I be a father, where is Mine honor? and if I be a master, where is My fear?" (Mal. 1:6). "*Woe! nation sinning!*" The sinning is constant, a state of "only evil continually," (Gen. 6:5). *Goi* is a term in some contemporaneous connections used to denote a contemptible people, and then is translated *Gentiles*. But Israel was to be *goi kadōsh*, a holy nation (Ex. 19:6), yet it was the opposite, not holy, but a "sinning nation." Judah, along with Edom, Ammon and Moab, is also listed as one of the uncircumcised *goyim* (Jer. 9:26). So the remarkable expression, *hoi goi*, shows that because the nation was habitually sinning it was a nation of woe. But the Lord does not compare His people to the Gentiles. He is much more severe with them, comparing them to stupid animals. Sin had brought them lower than animals. Ours, too, is a nation sinning, so much so that it is one altogether born in sin (Jn. 9:34). Think of its deistic Declaration of Independence. Then there are the lotteries and abortions wherein the nation makes sin a real, legal trade; in fact sin is its best amusement, which is proved daily in the news media's amusement pages boasting and flaunting the vilest sins.

They were "*a people laden with iniquity*," like an ass staggering under a crushing burden. They were the boasted seed of Abraham, but had degenerated to "*a seed of evil-doers*" (cp. 'house of evil-doers,' 31:2, though it ought to have been a 'holy seed,' 6:13), *sons, corrupters*." They were not only corrupt, infected from head to foot (v. 6), but corrupters, polluting others. Take the horribly corrupt public school system, full of corrupt teachers, corrupting others, namely the children they teach, so that at a tender age they are thoroughly godless, atheistic, and, as a result of their brain-washing in force-fed "sex education," are almost exclusively sex-minded. Parents are shocked if their children become exposed to anything religious, but are unmoved by the fact that today's pupils are familiar with the details of every known sex perversion. They put their children not only in the hands of sinners, but of tempters and despoilers of youth. Such parents, then, are not only actuated by Satan, but are the hack-horse agents for the devil. A seed of evil-doers, sons, corrupters, they were children of bad parents doing worse than their fathers. First stated is their character, then their conduct. They are a bad seed and bad actors. Then follows the evidence that they were such a corrupt seed, a race of rebels. "*They have forsaken Jehovah*." This is sin and iniquity in general, and in particular, rejection of the one true religion, the religion of Jehovah. "*They have despised the Holy One of Israel*," which reveals a terrible aggravation of their sin, in that Israel knowing God as the Holy One, not only knew Him as the only God, and as their God, but as "infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth," yet treated Him with contempt. God is *Kadōsh Yisrael*, the Holy One of Israel, a word meaning "to be pure, clean," containing the primary idea of "to be bright." See 10:17, where "the Light of Israel" is the "Holy One" of Israel. "*They withdraw themselves behind*." At whatever far reach from God they find themselves, they deliberately drop behind that. The farthest they can get from Him is too close for them. To have

“forsaken Jehovah” is apostasy in essence. To have “despised the Holy One of Israel” is apostasy in thought; and to “withdraw themselves behind” Him, not following Him, but

turning their backs on Him, is apostasy in action. This made the nation wholly apostate, and so, utterly ruined, which total ruin was destined to come in a little over a hundred years.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Remembered In Grace

Rev. John A. Heys

Scripture at times moves very quickly. Sometimes it moves too fast for us, and leaps over days and weeks, and events therein, whose detail we desire to have. It leaps from Jesus' return from Egypt to the time when He was twelve years old, and it tells us nothing about His childhood. Then again it leaps from that incident, when He was twelve, until He was thirty years old and appeared before John to be baptized.

The same thing is true in regard to the day of shadows when Noah and his family represented the church of God here on this earth. We read that God closed the door of the ark, and that He sent forty days and forty nights of rain. We are told what happened shortly before their confinement of one year and ten days took place. But life in the ark is not described. How Noah and his family spent that year, what they did, how they functioned with all those animals, how they fed them, kept their compartments clean, what kind of devotional services, and what Sabbath worship they kept is not told us.

There is a good reason for all this. For the Author is not an impetuous, careless man, but He is the all-wise God. The strokes of His brush, as He paints His picture, are all carefully placed with wisdom and infinite skill. No application of color, and no line, is added that would detract and lead the eye away from the message He presents. No smallest detail is added that would serve to cause us to be distracted from the message which He speaks in this word picture, which we call the Bible.

At the same time, and for that reason, what we do find in Scripture, each and every word of it, and the smallest detail that God has seen fit to place there, ought to be noted carefully and be seen in the light of the whole. Then we will find that brief statements contain a tremendous message.

God says nothing about life in the ark during the year and ten days. But Scripture does cover this period with a tremendously interesting and extremely important statement, “And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged,” Genesis 8:1. And the point is that, although we are given no detail on mundane things, nor concerning Noah's actions and

deeds during this period, the truth we are to see, and the picture God here paints for us, is His grace that was upon Noah, and upon all things for Noah's sake.

That God remembered Noah does not mean that at the end of these months and days God again thought of Noah and sent the wind to dry up the land for his sake. He was not so busy destroying the world that He forgot Noah and his family for a time. We remember that way. There are two sides to memory in man. It is that faculty of his mind and will according to which he is able to retain and store away in his mind facts and truths. But it is also that faculty of man whereby He is able at will, or by suggestion, to recall a fact or truth, that is, to bring it back again before his consciousness.

Not so with God. First of all, God does not store away fact and truth. This implies receiving fact and truth and being able to retain it. God, however, never learns. He has no teacher. He receives no facts from outside of Himself. He is the omniscient, all-knowing God, because He decreed all that which would take place, and decreed it from eternity. There never was a moment in the eternal life of God when He did not know all that which has already happened and will yet happen in this world, and in the everlasting life that is stretched out before us. God's memory, then, is having consciously before Him at all times, all things in heaven and on earth and in hell below in all their actions past, present and future unto all eternity.

And He had Noah and his family consciously before Him every second in every hour, during all those months and days of the year and ten days while they were in the ark. He saw them. He had them in mind. And He was working for them every split second from the moment He closed the door of the ark until He had prepared dry land for them. So we must understand the statement that He remembered Noah.

And the living things and cattle He remembered too. These He had before His consciousness for Noah's sake. He told Noah to take them by pairs into the ark for the sake of the church that would need them after the flood. And He not only saw them all that time in that ark, but He also remembered them, or had them consciously before Himself, in grace

toward Noah. The cattle in the ark He remembered. The wild beasts therein were constantly before His mind's eye. But the fish in the waters and the trees and grasses and herbs under the water, hid from the eyes of man until the waters receded, were also before Him during that year and ten days. The whole earth was. And every star, from the closest to the farthest, is constantly in His infinite thoughts. In such a God we trust. This God is our God. He will be our guide unto death.

What makes it so wonderful is that He remembers in grace. Thousands there are who must tremble because He sees all and has constantly all creatures before His consciousness. These cannot hide. These in the day of Noah did not hide and were drowned to the last man. But those who are in the ark, those who are in Christ Jesus, in His Church and engrafted into Him by a true and living faith, are remembered in grace. These may be sure that God will send His "wind" again, after the fiery judgment to come, to furnish them with a new world where they shall live with Him in blessed bliss and beauty.

We were told earlier — in chapter 6 — that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. That grace rested upon him during the building of the ark, but it was there dealing with him and his family all through their days in that ark while the waters covered the earth. And to appreciate this we ought to bear in mind — and ourselves remember — that terrible judgment of God, the awful, holy wrath which sent that destructive flood upon the earth to destroy every earthly creature that was not in the ark. We ought also to remember that Noah and his family came from the same corrupt root and stock that all these people did who perished in the flood. Noah and his family had fallen Adam as their first father, root and representative head. This becomes evident in the lives of Noah and his two sons shortly after the flood. They were not holy in themselves. They were not a spiritually superior race that somehow had gotten out of the corruption and hatred of God that is in the human race because of Adam's sin and fall. They had not somehow managed to escape spiritual death and to quicken themselves to become obedient children of God. No, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and was singled out by God to be saved by grace when the flood came. *God* singled Noah out in His grace. Noah did not choose God, and so escape because of his works. Saved by grace is a theme of the New Testament Scriptures. It is also the picture that God painted all through the Old Testament dispensation.

It was the grace of God that chose Noah and informed him of the coming flood and gave him the command to build the ark. It was grace that shut the door of the ark and sealed him from the doom that

came upon all the human race outside of that ark. It was grace that preserved him and his family for one year and ten days. And it was grace that prepared a new world with dry land for them to work in as God's royal priesthood and as stewards of His goods. Grace — God's Riches At Christ's Expense — is what explains all of salvation. Not our works but Christ's bring us salvation. Grace — not works — explains every blessing that the believer receives. Works always call for punishment. "For the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God," Romans 8:7, 8. And so Noah, of himself, could not do anything to earn a place in the ark. And Noah while in the ark did nothing which made him worthy of the assuaging of the water so that he could return to a normal life on the dry ground.

This truth concerning God's grace we ought always to remember. Remember that God remembers you and has you constantly in all His thoughts. And as a believer remember that He has only thoughts of grace toward you. We know this to be true from His Word. We have that fact stored away in our minds. But we ought to recall it, to bring it before our consciousness in the midst of all of our aches and pains, in all our losses and bereavements. Just then the mind is so apt to be filled with thought of the miseries and griefs. Just then we are so apt to think of ourselves, of our flesh, of our lot and of our problems. But this is just the time when we ought to remember God and remember that He in grace remembers us.

We live in a day and age when that wrath of God against sin and sinners, which brought the flood upon the earth, is working upon this present generation. The wars that plague the world today, the confusion, the economic and social unrest and disturbances of our time are the wrath of this same God punishing sin with sin. And all man does to try to correct and remove the woes and sufferings of men only builds up to a greater confusion and worse condition. There is no more escape from that wrath of God apart from Christ and the grace of God in Him than there was for the world of unbelievers from the waters of the flood. Man, dealt with by God according to his works, must go from misery to misery until he perishes. And though men may cry bitterly in their woes, let it not be forgotten that man in his worst and most intense suffering in this life has not experienced more than a small fraction of what he actually deserves as an enemy of God. We tend to forget that, and therefore even ourselves dare to cry with Rebekah, "Why am I thus?" We fail to see that we deserve more than the aches and woes which we experience. We are at times ready to say that God does not deal fairly with us.

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News From Our Churches

Some time ago I was sent a copy of the minutes of a meeting of the Fiftieth Anniversary Committee, with the suggestion that some advance publicity be given by way of the Church News column. A fine idea, I think, especially now that our *Standard Bearer* has launched the commemoration of its own fiftieth anniversary. The fiftieth year of our churches' existence follows on the heels of that of the *Standard Bearer*, so the celebration of the latter ought to excite interest in that of the former. At any rate, though it's still some distance in the future, here are a few things to which we can look forward. March 2, 1975, has been set as "commemorative Sunday," since that Sunday is the closest to the date, 50 years earlier, of the beginning of the separate existence of our churches. And, further along in that year, October has been designated as the month during which "we have a radio observance of our anniversary." Our anniversary theme, "Covenant Faithfulness," will likely be set forth in those radio programs, which are intended also to "set the stage for Reformation Day Rallies in different areas of our country."

There will, of course, also be an Anniversary booklet. The booklet, for which much material has already been prepared, will contain a wealth of information of historical interest. Included will be the histories of our various congregations and of our Christian Day Schools. It will contain, also,

histories and information concerning our radio work, publication committees, Mission Committee, Theological School, and a Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People. And it will contain a "doctrinal synopsis, our churches and what they stand for," prepared by the faculty of our seminary.

And prior to all that, remember, the *Standard Bearer* will be observing its own fiftieth year "in some way in all twenty-one issues" of the current volume-year. Certain it is that the next two years, years of two Golden Anniversaries, will indeed be *special* ones—as well they might, marking as they do such clear evidence of the "Covenant Faithfulness" of our God.

* * * *

"A new congregation came into being last Tuesday evening in Prospect Park, N.J." So read Hudsonville's September 16 bulletin, which noted also that this was our first in the eastern states. A first-hand report of that momentous event comes by way of letter from Rev. H. Veldman, quoted in Southwest's September 23 bulletin. "Tuesday we arrived in New Jersey in midafternoon and prepared to attend the organization of the church at 7:30. It was impressive to witness a small group taking a stand on the truths we hold dear. Rev. Veldman led the service, after

(continued on back page)

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What we need to do, then, is to go to Golgotha and remember the awful agony which caused the Son of God in our flesh to cry out in intense agony of being forsaken of God. We need remember that He was suffering hellish agonies, and that this is what we deserve. Then we can rejoice in the truth that God remembers us in grace. Yea, then we can understand that it is His grace that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

We may have a hard time seeing that God is dealing with us in mercy, when His hand is heavy upon us with afflictions. But if we remember that He remembers us and sees us in Christ every step of our way, then we can, by His grace, see that His grace is upon us, can see that He is not dealing with us according to our works, and thus according to what we deserve, but is dealing with us in unmerited favour. We can see that He is giving us what we do not deserve, and the very opposite of what we, because of our works, deserve.

God remembered Noah. And God remembers all those whom He gave to Christ to be His sheep. Remember that, and you will have peace and joy in the midst of tears and suffering.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary-Martha Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands, California, extends to Mrs. Bill Feenstra, one of our members, their sincere sympathy in the death of her mother,

MRS. ROSA BIRT.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." (Rev. 14:13).

Rev. Marvin Kamps, Pres.
Anna Mae Meelker, Sec'y.

ATTENTION: The stereo record of the Easter Mass Choral Program given April, 1973, is now available. This record of the 110 voice choir, which consisted of choirs from First, Hope, Hudsonville, and South West Protestant Reformed churches, sells for the price of \$3.50 and is sponsored by the P. R. Young Peoples Federation Board. It can be purchased by filling out the order blank below. Send it with cash, check or money order to:

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which Rev. C. Hanko took charge."

Then Rev. Veldman, who was to remain in the area through the 30th of September, continued with a short account of other activities there. "Monday evening," he wrote, "an Essentials class began. Sunday after the morning service the younger children have catechism. Wednesday evening the Bible Study group meets." Rev. G. VanBaren, incidentally, is scheduled to follow Rev. Veldman, spending October 7 and 14 in New Jersey. Rev. C. Hanko was certainly giving expression to our hope, too, when he wrote, for Hudsonville's bulletin, "May our Lord look down upon this small flock in His goodness and favor, that they may be a shining light in that area."

Several other noteworthy items are these: Rev. D. Engelsma reports that there were about 80 people present at the worship services last Sunday (Sept. 23) in Houston. The Mission Committee decided that Rev. Harbach should return, September 23, to labor in Philadelphia. Then, in a different vein, last pastor-elect M. Joostens was to be examined at Classis East on October 3, and, on October 5, be ordained and installed in his office in our Jenison church. And, finally, Rev. J. Kortering has declined the call extended to him from South Holland, Illinois.

* * * *

Our schools have been in session for some time now, but perhaps it's not too late to make note of a couple of convocation exercises. In South Holland, on Thursday evening, August 30, Rev. R. Decker spoke on, "Peace, The Sword and Christian Education." In Loveland, on Tuesday evening, August 28, Rev. Engelsma spoke on "A Covenant School." On August 27, Rev. Moore spoke at the convocation exercises held in Doon Church.

* * * *

There was a program held in our Randolph Church on September 14. Nothing terribly unusual about that, I suppose. That is, not until one noticed on the printed "Program" that it featured "the Southwest Men's Quartet of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan." Besides various numbers from the quartet (Messrs. G. Feenstra, I. Kuiper, P. Lotterman, and J. Schipper), there was also a piano-organ duet by Mrs. Feenstra and Mrs. Lotterman. According to Rev. W. Bekkering, "an overflow crowd was on hand to enjoy the program."

D.D.

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