

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

But Scripture can only be the object of faith. It will not be amenable to the manipulations of the rationalists. Scripture is a unique book, also in this sense. For if one comes to Scripture in faith, then one bows before the sole authority of Scripture and subjects himself to what the Scriptures speak. Then this wonderful book opens itself to him who comes in faith. It speaks. It speaks in all its power and beauty, in all its saving glory and blessed truth. But when one takes the Scriptures in his hands to manipulate them according to the standards of his own reason, then Scripture becomes a terrible book. It slams its door shut in the face of the one who comes in this way. It speaks nothing any more — except words of wrath and the curse. It is, to use Luther's expression, a closed book.

See "My Sheep Hear My Voice" page 713.

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MEDITATION

Contending for the Faith

Rev. M. Schipper

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

For there are certain men crept in unawares who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

Jude 3, 4.

Moved, the apostle was, to write on the theme which constitutes the heading of this Meditation. He has given all diligence to write under another theme,

namely, Of The Common Salvation; but necessity was brought upon him to change the subject. Jude, who is the secondary author of the epistle he wrote, was

subject to the Primary Author of all the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit of God. He therefore could not write as he had planned, but he writes as he is enlightened and infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit. No doubt, also here there is evidence, as the Scriptures do so abundantly make clear, that the Word of God is given by inspiration of God.

Other of the apostles also had been directed to write on this sublime subject. Jude makes mention of this fact in verse 17 of his epistle. And you need not search long to discover that he refers especially to the writings of Paul and Peter. The latter, no doubt, at this time were already deceased; and their writings had become available to the church and therefore to Jude. Fact of the matter is that some have accused Jude of copying from the letter of Peter, (II Peter 3). Though there can be no question that there is great similarity, you discover there is also a great difference. When Peter wrote concerning the mockers who would be coming into the church, walking after their own ungodly lusts, he wrote prophetically. Jude, on the other hand, informs his readers that this prophecy was already being fulfilled. Ungodly men were already creeping into the church, whose purpose was to turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and to deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Striking it is how soon the church was invaded by these invaders. The bodies of the above mentioned apostles, who had so earnestly set forth the truth in its clearest manifestation and forewarned of their coming, had hardly become cold in death, when the very wicked against whom they had so strenuously written were already making their appearance.

Jude, who was still alive and appearing as the watchmen on Zion's walls, sounds forth the alarm.

Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints!

But what does this mean? What is that faith for which there must be contention? And what is implied when the church of Christ contends for that faith?

It must be clearly understood that the faith of which the text speaks is the objective truth of the Word of God. Jude is not urging the believers to believe. He is not thinking of the act of faith, of the act of believing. He is not speaking of faith in the subjective sense. He certainly presumes that his readers are believers who act according to their faith. Does he not set them on one line with the believing saints of the past? Indeed, he reckons them on a par with all those who in their hearts embraced the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour. And though it is true that believers often are weak in their faith and need often to be encouraged to exercise their faith, this is not what Jude is urging them to do in our text.

By "faith" the apostle refers to the substance of what believers believe. This embraces and includes all the doctrine of Scripture as the church has elaborately and concisely expressed it in her Confessions. Faith, then, is what the church believes to be the truth of God's Word.

That faith was once delivered unto the saints.

The saints are those who partake of the common salvation, concerning which Jude had first planned to write. And, lest there be a misunderstanding about that expression, it must be observed that it is quite different from the hue and cry of modern evangelism which is always prating about a universal salvation. Of the latter there is no mention in Scripture. It is a philosophy concocted in the evil mind of corrupt hawkers of the gospel, who are bent on destroying the truth and at the same time the church of Christ. Though God realizes salvation in all nations, tribes, and tongues, and though the gospel must be preached universally, salvation is never common. It is always particular.

When Jude speaks nevertheless of the common salvation, he refers to the fact that those who are saved possess that salvation in common. They receive that salvation by grace along with others who also possess it. No one among them that are saved has an edge on that salvation. The grace of salvation is common only to the saints. And the saints are the beloved of God, the "beloved" addressed in the text.

Beloved saints!

Loved they were by God eternally, when He chose them to be saints in Christ Jesus our Lord. Loved they were in time, when God so loved them that He gave His only begotten Son for their redemption. Loved they were by Christ, when the Son of God in the flesh gave Himself a ransom on the cross of Calvary to redeem them from the wrath of God which rested upon them because of their sin and guilt, when He redeemed them from the world of sin and darkness, from the power of the devil. They were beloved when the Spirit of Christ called them efficaciously out of darkness into God's marvelous light, and shed abroad in their hearts His everlasting love. And make no mistake about it, Jude is not writing only to the saints to whom the epistle is immediately directed. As all the gospel writers, he writes for the ages, to the saints as they are gathered in all the ages of time.

These are they to whom the faith is once delivered. And that means not by man, but by God. Not only does He give them the grace to believe on the God of their salvation, but He entrusts the faith to them as a precious heritage, to be kept by them with extreme carefulness. The doctrines of Scripture as expressed in the church's Confession are indeed most precious. That faith is the only light the saints have in this

world of darkness. As the psalmist also expressed it: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light upon my pathway."

That we are exhorted to contend for that faith presupposes that that faith is challenged, or rather that the church is challenged for her faith. One does not contend for something unless that something is seriously threatened. The same is true also with respect to the faith of the church and our contending for it. What that is, which challenges and threatens those who possess that faith, we shall see in a moment. But first, we should clearly understand what is implied in our contending. Our contention must always assume a two-fold form. On the one hand, it implies a defensive battle. When the faith is threatened, or the saints are threatened for their faith, they rise up to defend it. No guard must be let down so that the enemy of the faith may sneak in to destroy it. This cannot mean that the faith itself is defenseless, and that the only way that it can continue is for the saints to come to its rescue. God forbid! God's Word stands as an impregnable fortress which none, the devil included, can destroy. The fact of the matter is, God's Word is the saint's defense. Let it be clearly understood, Jude is not saying here that the faith is something so frail and helpless that unless the saints fight the enemy it may be destroyed. No, the faith, like the immovable rock in the ocean, will be still standing after all the storms of the sea have passed over it. But the apostle is reflecting on the calling of the saints. They must contend. They must contend. They must take their stand over against the enemy that threatens them who stand by their faith.

Contending for the faith also implies an offensive warfare. Wars are not won simply by hiding behind our defenses. Wars are won when the battle is taken to the enemy in a great offensive. O, indeed, it is true, when the enemy attacks, you rise up immediately to defend; but shall the enemy be vanquished, he must be attacked. And all the arts of warfare must be employed and deployed until there is no more enemy to conquer.

The contention of the enemies of the truth is very real. It may never be taken lightly or for granted. The weakness of the saints and the spiritual lethargy they often evince are also very real. That is why they must be stirred up, exhorted in no uncertain terms, to contend earnestly for the faith.

For there are certain men crept in, (not: will be creeping in)!

Ungodly, impious men! Men who are bent on perverting the grace of God into lasciviousness. Men who are denying the only Master, our Lord Jesus Christ. Wicked men, who were of old written down, assigned to judgment. First of all, by God, who not

only in sovereign grace created saints, destined to eternal glory, but also created the antithesis of the saints, the wicked, whom God purposes to destroy in the way of their ungodliness. But also were they written down in the epistles of the apostles, who prophesied not only of their making inroads into the church, but also of their final destruction, (II Peter 3). Scoffers, walking after their own lusts, denying the Lord and all that is holy.

Evidently these wicked were libertines who, with their antinomian doctrine, insist that our salvation does not require holy living, encouraging self-indulgence, and saying: "Let us sin that grace may abound." O, they may appear to be pious, speaking of grace that is sovereign as freely as the saints, but turning that grace, that spiritual virtue of beauty, into a most hideous monstrosity. Their doctrine is: "Let us sin that grace may abound." An insidious, evil doctrine that will destroy the church if it is allowed to continue. It was the error of Balaam, who, when he failed to curse the people of God whom God blesses, nevertheless advised the king of Moab to send his young men and women into the camp of Israel to entice them to fornication, by which many of the Israelites were destroyed.

That these wicked crept in, does not necessarily mean that they were total strangers who crawl under the walls of Zion unawares, but it most probably means that they *were* within the gates all the time, but now suddenly revealed themselves. These wicked are found in the carnal seed born to believers. We know from the pages of sacred history the reality of this. The church's great opposition is generally not from the wicked world, but from the carnal seed that never desires to walk in the grace of salvation, but to turn that grace into an ungodly walk.

Over against them the saints are exhorted to rise up as one man and contend for the faith.

Would you like a good illustration of this contention, then you must look at Jesus when He was confronted by the devil in the wilderness. When He was tempted of the devil three times, how did He answer? "It is written!" The devil had no weapons that could pierce that armor. Nor can evil men succeed to destroy the saints when they contend earnestly for the faith.

But contention is of paramount importance. God gives us the faith which describes in detail how we are saved by grace and how we are to live out of that grace of salvation. He also gives it that the saints may withstand all the evil onslaughts of the wicked.

What must the saints hear today?

O, if there ever was a time when conditions in the church described by Jude were in evidence, it is today. O, it is true, that the world in which the saints

reside develops in sin and corruption; but, as we suggested above, our first battle is not against the world. Worldly wickedness has crept into the church. And that wickedness reveals itself in a concerted effort to deny all the cardinal doctrines of our faith. And still more insidiously that wickedness reveals itself in all manner of loose living, carnality, sensuality, which has developed so fast that the discipline of God's Word hardly takes effect. Many churches have already thrown up their hands in hopeless despair. Many saints in these churches also are in despair, even wondering how all this wicked situation came about, and with very weak voices complain that

there ought to be another Reformation.

Our calling as churches and as saints of God is to rise up, and earnestly contend for the faith. Fearlessly we must say with Jesus: "It is written!"

If we fail to do this we must not ask: What will become of the church? We know the answer. By the grace of God, therefore, ye saints, stand fast! And fight the battle of faith! Do it by your word, and by your walk!

Only so will God preserve unto Himself a people that is ready for the coming of the Lord!

EDITORIALS

Our Australasian Tour (8)

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

We had a hectic experience at the airport in Hobart on the morning of our departure, July 8. All along we had blissfully been planning on an 11:50 A.M. departure, and we had planned accordingly during our brief sightseeing tour of the penal colony at Port Arthur. Imagine our surprise when we arrived in the terminal building and were being paged! Our plane was scheduled for 11:15, not 11:50! And we still had to make some ticket changes! The TAA plane was held up a few minutes for us, and we were virtually shoved toward the waiting airliner. We did not have a decent opportunity to say farewell to Pastor Rodman.

But that was our last hectic experience for that day. We arrived at Melbourne in time for a late lunch, and we spent that day by ourselves at the Tulamarine Travelodge, close to the airport. Either bone-weariness from the whirlwind pace in our Tasmania tour or the cistern water in Taranna, or a combination of the two, made us quite miserable that day; and we were content to try to rest up and not to make any contacts. Even then we could not escape contact by telephone, however. Nevertheless, we got some much needed rest, had an opportunity to take care of our laundry, and enjoyed the quietness of simply being by ourselves for the remainder of that day. The next day we began our labors on the Australian mainland.

A little background on the ecclesiastical scene in Australia is in order at this point.

First of all, one finds all the mainline Protestant denominations in this country, even as in our own. There are the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Anglicans, the Congregationalists, etc. And just as in New Zealand, these mainline denominations are in the process of consummating a gigantic union. This, in turn, has finally given some the impetus to separate — something which, for the most part, they should have done long ago on account of the liberalism in those churches.

As far as Reformed denominations are concerned, there are two of these. One is the Free Reformed Church of Australia, the so-called Liberated Church. Numerically they are very small. We had no contact with this denomination, although we did meet one of the ministers after the Saturday evening lecture in Launceston, Tasmania. The Reformed Churches of Australia is a denomination of Dutch Reformed background which was established through immigration after World War II. This is a denomination of some 8600 members. Also with this group we had no contact. At various of our public meetings there were a few Reformed people present who had responded to the advertisements of these meetings.

It is rather striking — but, I think, not unexpected — that our contacts for the most part are not with Reformed people of Dutch background, but with Presbyterians of English and Scotch and Irish background.

First of all, there is, of course, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, which also has various centers on the mainland, especially in Queensland, far up north along the east coast of Australia. One of the churches, in Brisbane, we visited. But there are also centers in Rockhampton and Townsville, still farther north, which our schedule did not permit us to visit. Secondly, there is the small denomination known as the Free Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. I have no statistics at hand, and I will not bank on my memory; but although this church has been in Australia already for many years, it is relatively small. From what we learned from various congregations, it is, on the whole, also rather weakly Presbyterian. It has been one of the supporting churches of the Reformed Theological College at Geelong, though this support was decided upon by a very narrow margin. This is also the denomination with which the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in its earlier years tried to cooperate in the training of theological students, but with which they came to the parting of the ways over the issue of the "free offer." In the third place, there is a very small group of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. I mention them because we came into contact with a couple of their men in the Melbourne-Geelong area.

In the fourth place, there is an independent Reformed Presbyterian congregation in the Sydney area, some 500 miles up the coast from Melbourne. With these people, especially with their pastor, the Rev. John Stafford, we have been in contact by correspondence for several years. Mr. Stafford graciously assisted with many of the arrangements for the Australian portion of our tour. I shall tell more about this congregation and their wonderful reception of us a

bit later.

Finally, there is the denomination known as the Presbyterian Reformed Churches. This is a group of relatively recent origin who separated from the mainline Presbyterian Church of Australia. Our Committee for Contact for a few years has been in correspondence with a similar committee of this denomination. Originally, one of the purposes of our tour was to have a face-to-face and official conference with representatives of these churches and to discuss various doctrinal matters (among them, common grace and the "free offer") about which we had corresponded. Shortly before our tour began, however, we received notice from the moderator of their Presbytery, Rev. G. Kastelein, that the proposed meetings with some of the sessions and with a Commission of their Presbytery — meetings which had in part already been scheduled — were being cancelled. Apparently the occasion of this notice was the fact that the Rev. Stafford, who had formerly been in that denomination, and who is *persona non grata* to them, was acting as the coordinator of our Australian tour. Our Contact Committee and our Synod must still resolve various matters connected with this unexpected cancellation and with regard to our future attitude toward these churches; hence, I will not comment further at this time. We had held open the possibility of meetings even after the cancellation-notice was received; but we had no contact whatsoever with these churches.

The above will furnish some orientation with regard to the various churches which we will mention in the subsequent part of our report about this segment of our tour.

The Story of a Young Christian in Tribulation

This is a true story about a real girl suffering tribulation in heathen surroundings in the country of Malaysia. I can write about this without embarrassment to this young Christian because she will not even be able to read what I write. At present we are unable to reach her by the *Standard Bearer* or even by letter. Besides, I feel certain she would want you to know her circumstances, so that you may remember her in your prayers. We often pray for God's people who must endure tribulation and suffering for Christ's sake; but we do not often come into direct

contact with those who must thus suffer — at least, not with those who must endure this particular kind of suffering, in *heathen* surroundings.

For you to understand this story and how we came to be acquainted with this young lady, I must tell you some of her personal history.

Her name is Cecelia Lun Yong. She is of Malaysian nationality. We met her last year in Christchurch, New Zealand, when we had fellowship with the little Orthodox Presbyterian congregation in that city. At

that time we learned to know her and to love her as a sweet, somewhat reticent, but very serious-minded young Christian.

Her background is *heathen*.

We who live in nominally Christian countries do not know by experience, and for that reason do not realize, what the reality of heathendom and of idol-worship is. But in the Far East in our travels we came to a very abrupt and graphic realization of the truth of which we sing in Psalm 115:

The idol gods of heathen lands
Are but the work of human hands;
They cannot see, they cannot speak,
Their ears are deaf, their hands are weak;
Like them shall be all those who hold
To gods of silver and of gold.

This was true in Singapore, when we visited a Chinese temple in that city. At that time we were accompanied by young Ong Keng Ho, whose family was still in the depth of heathendom and who felt badly when he was reminded of this fact when he accompanied us on a sightseeing tour to that temple. Again in Bangkok, when we went on a sightseeing tour to several Buddhist temples, we were reminded of the reality of heathendom: to the Buddhist monks, to those who burned incense, and to our guide who worshipped when he entered and left the temples to which he took us — to all these, the temples were not objects of sightseeing but real places of worship! Even a country like Indonesia — in spite of the many years of Dutch and Reformed influence — is largely heathen.

From such a background Cecelia came. Her parents and her relatives and neighbors are still heathen. She was converted and became a Reformed Christian in New Zealand; in our brief contact with her we learned to know her as one who took her Christian calling very seriously. And while we were there, we also learned to know what the future held for her. You see, she was in New Zealand only temporarily to obtain an education. Her education-expenses were paid for by the Malaysian government. And this meant that when her education was completed, she was under obligation (bond) to return home and work for 5 years. Thereafter she would be “de-bonded” and be free to go elsewhere. Already when we talked with her in Christchurch, she was concerned about the future: she would be alone as a Christian in altogether heathen surroundings. When she returned, they would attempt to consecrate her to their idols; her parents would attempt to marry her off to some heathen young man; there would be no fellow Christians; there would be no sabbath, etc.

And now all this has become reality. Her education was completed in December. She has returned home. And recently we received a poignant letter from her, but *without a return address*: for she is not permitted to receive mail. I want to share this letter with you. I have omitted some brief personal references. Here is the edited version:

“Dear Prof. and Mrs. Hoeksema,

“Warmest greetings in the name of our Saviour. Oh, how I yearn and long for the earthly fellowship of the saints. It is so spiritually lonely here while I am at home. I am sure that the bond between saints in Jesus Christ is much more close and warm than even familial bonds. At least this is what I am experiencing now.

“At the moment I am at home (my true home) awaiting my employment. At the moment the period of interval before employment is indefinite, but I trust there’s a purpose (now yet unseen) in all things, even this one. Apparently there is very little hope of employment in the country, even for scholarship students. Yet because of the new law there is no limit to the time of unemployment before I become debonded. So that’s how I stand now. While I am at home, I am truly suppressed in many ways. I do appreciate and thank God for the freedom of worship and all things while I was in New Zealand.

“When I first arrived here, I was going to be offered to their gods; and so I explained why I didn’t want to. My mother assured me that the offerings did not include me, but just them alone. But as she made the offerings, I had a suspicion that she was cheating me. So I reminded her again of my stand, and again I was assured. But again I was grieved in the spirit and could not rest. In the midst of confusion I managed to slip away with my Bible. I remember reading a passage — I cannot remember where now — and I remember how I was truly strengthened. It was a good passage in that it reminded me of the jealousy of God to those that worship other gods. I well remember myself in tears pleading for strength to stand humbly. I was not keen to oppose, lest I put my father in shame. A little while later, when the ceremony took place, sure enough they wanted to offer me to idols. I was called to stand in public to be consecrated to their gods, and I refused. And to avoid causing any shame to my parents, I called my father into the room and told him again of my stand. He was not happy, but there wasn’t anything he could do to force me to sit down before every other witness. Prior to this I had already had a disagreement — the celebration was held on Sunday; and I was told that I could not hold up everyone else in the longhouse. So I could not do anything else. In the evening I managed to have a little time by myself, but I was

called out to join in with the “fun,” drinking. My heart was truly lonely spiritually. Now I don’t even have any quiet place or opportunity to have a quiet time. I long to have one, but I don’t have any privacy.

“As to my relationship with N. (her fiancé, HCH), I haven’t yet had enough courage to tell my parents — no privacy and no opportunity. There’s amazingly little communication between parents and children, and my father is a very hard man. Consequently, I cannot receive nor send any news to him. Anyway by the grace of God we will be patient with the situation. Again my trust is in Him Who is able to work all things after the counsel of His will . . .

“People here are very cold spiritually. However I

am truly thankful to be able to write this letter to you, especially when considering all my other suppressions. I cannot receive any news from anyone else, for I cannot guarantee that I’ll get it. My father throws away my letters for fear that I correspond with boys. Thus I don’t include my address here. I must close now and trust that I may have another opportunity to communicate with the rest of the saints in Christ Jesus. Till then, my greetings extend to the rest of the family and also Rev. Hanko.

“Yours in Christ,
Cecelia”

When you remember God’s people in tribulation, think of a girl like Cecelia, won’t you?

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

Hooked on Fashion (21)

Isaiah 3:16-23

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

“Now Jehovah says, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched out throat, and with ogling eyes they go, walking and tripping, and with their feet they make a tinkling, therefore Adonai will make the crown (of the head) of the daughters of Zion bald, and Jehovah will uncover their nakedness”

(Isa. 3:16-17, Heb.).

1. *Addiction of the Worldly.* Here is feminine pride showing itself in body language, stretched out neck, flirtatious eyes, sensuous walk, together with the cosmetics, make-up art and tinkling jewelry of the coquette. When also the older women in Jerusalem, experienced in sin, tried to look young with the employment of these feminine frills and wiles, they appeared more childish than fetching. They, the men also, had little more aim than the development of a sound mind in a beautiful body. They had forgotten that true beauty is to have the beauty of the Lord our God upon us so that we reflect the glories of the Lord.

Works of art are seen in the highest quality jewelry. There is nothing inherently sinful in such things. It is wrong, however, when luxury develops a feminine motif and dominance, and dress and finery evidence greed for ambition, one-upism and what is really effeminate pride in men as well as women. Isaiah is certainly *not* suggesting or saying that dress is all a matter of taste, opinion, of climate and cultural background, so that what is regarded as immodest in Israel

may not be so in Egypt or Sodom. Isaiah was not a philosopher of relativism. He reported what “Jehovah says,” showing that the Lord does notice what is to some such an insignificant thing as dress. In our country we see enough of immodest dress to know it can only be immodest anywhere it may appear in the world. We cannot imagine, with all these fripperies, figure display and body movement, that still their minds were pure and upright. They were full of voluptuous lust and shameless pride. This was evident from their too revealing attire (“the transparent garments,” v. 23), and their roving eye. The eyes of a modest woman are not wandering, nor adept at dalliance.

Hauteur, and any dress or action, such as flirting, which emphasizes and advances it, is immodesty. Isaiah is talking about women who are concerned with drawing attention to themselves. They are not concerned with the church losing its distinctive separateness from the world, nor with its being infiltrated with the carnal seed, nor with the awful apostasy and falling away from the faith so prevalent.

Women are taking a much more active part in the work of the Lord. But these women in the Jerusalem church were like Solomon's wives, Jezebel and Athaliah, leading the people away from God. This is true of the women of the world. They lead the nation away from God. Where the women of the nation do not follow the Lord, the men have long since ceased to do so, and the greatness of that nation has come to an end.

The judgment the Lord denounced on the daughters of Zion was that their beautiful hair, a woman's crowning glory, would go to baldness, and that they who delighted in flaunting their charms would experience shameful exposure and inhuman treatment in the rough hands of heathen conquerors thirsting for plunder and rape. (ver. 17).

"In that day, Adonai shall remove the ornaments of the anklets, and the hair-nets, and the crescents (v. 18), the ear-pendants, and the bracelets, and the (fluttering) veils (19), the turbans and the step-chains (attached to ankles to make women walk mincingly, in short steps), and the houses (boxes) of the soul (breath), (perfume?), and the amulet-jewelries (v. 20), the signet rings, and the rings of the nose (v. 21), the festive garments (party dress), and the mantels (cloaks), and the veils (Ruth 3:15), and the purses (money bags; v. 22), and the transparent garments, and the linen shifts, and the tiaras and the veils (v. 23)." Calvin says that women "while they are chargeable with many vices, they are most of all inflamed with mad eagerness to have fine clothes. Covetous as they naturally are, still they spare no expense for dressing in a showy manner, and even use spare diet to deprive themselves of what nature requires, that their clothes may be the more costly and elegant. So grievously are they corrupted by this vice that it goes beyond every other." Nevertheless, the Lord's gracious counsel to them is, "the women should dress themselves modestly and prudently in attire that is becoming, not adorned with braided hair and gold or pearls or expensive clothes, as is appropriate for women who profess reverence for God" (1 Tim. 2:9, 10, NBV). Clothing was divinely given to cover nakedness and the deformity caused by sin. Therefore, the leaving the breasts naked, in whole or in part, is departure from Christian modesty. Shameless impudence it is for women scantily arrayed to intrude into the presence of God in the congregation. The motivation in so doing is pride and lust, not the fear of God, and where there is not the fear of God, one cannot be kept from unclean thoughts and filthy desires.

2. *Standard in the Churches.* Our first parents were satisfied with the apparel God himself provided, which was plain coats of skins. Many of God's people, of whom the world was not worthy, "wandered

about in sheepskins and goatskins" (Heb. 11:35). Comparatively, then, we are not so bad off. We do not deserve anything for covering and warmth. We deserve no more clothing than our Lord had to cover himself on the cross. Dives, the ungodly rich man "was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day" (Lk. 16:19). His love of finery was one of his crimes, along with his gluttony and despising of the poor. Often these evils go together.

This "mad eagerness for fine clothes" will catch the guilty complaining that we rob them of their Christian liberty when we condemn their addiction to the goddess of fashion. Proper dress is a good gift of God, and should not be perverted to degrade sex. That is why the Word of God requires that "the woman shall not wear that which pertaineth to a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are abomination to the Lord thy God" (Dt. 22:5). The *kadeshim* in Israel dressed like women, and in the feasts of Bacchus men disguised themselves as women. For these abominations the Canaanites were to be annihilated.

Why should Christians swallow, as the world does, the fashion dictates of that harlot city, Paris? The Lord warns, "I will punish the princes, the kings sons, and all who are dressed in foreign apparel" (Zeph. 1:8). This underscores what God had commanded through Moses. If the Lord will punish pride in dress and the perverted use of dress on the part of nobles, princes, kings and their children, then He most certainly will in the case of ordinary people. What then? — if we are not to follow fashion, what shall be the pattern of our dress? To answer: it is neither necessity nor caution which snaps up every new fashion or wears the styles of the giddy and freaky. Nor are the so-called sophisticated to be imitated. "Be not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12:2).

Then there is the matter of long hair. The priests of Israel were not to have long hair. In hair-style they were to avoid extreme. "Neither shall they shave their heads (like heathen priests or Romish monks), nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll (trim the hair of) their heads" (Ezek. 44:20). They must not pose as Nazarites, nor get themselves up like a hippy, lounge-lizard, fop or carpet-knight. It is ruffian-like and unnatural for a man to go with long hair. "Doth not nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame to him? . . . But if any man seem to be contentious (in favor of this rebellious practice), we have no such custom, neither the churches of God" (1 Cor. 11:14, 16). Then where women will come with their nakedness into the congregation, and men will wear long hair, and then to argue that here we enter the sphere of adiaphora, things indifferent, where we have liberty in these things, the answer of God's Word is short. "We have

no such custom, neither the churches of God." Whatever is general and received custom in the churches of God ought to be law to us. It is not the world which sets us precedent and provides example, but the custom of the churches and the practice of godly Christians and their moderation.

Moderate use of facial cosmetics may not be altogether out of place. But the extreme of false eyelashes, face-lifting, gobs of mascara and paint "an inch thick" are disguisings of or attempts to improve on nature or to mend the work of God. Jezebel was infamous for face-painting. As age creeps up on us,

God gradually and continually changes our facial lineaments. This alteration is God's work. Do we dislike His workmanship? Do we consult with the Sidonian beautician to improve on it? The natural is from God; the artificial from the devil. That is all he has to work with. What face will we bring *coram Deo*? Will the Lord own the disguised face? Or will He say, "That is not the face I made?" No matter how old and wrinkled the face, the Lord beautifies the meek with salvation (Ps. 149:4). Coveting that true beauty, let us become not fashion-addicts, but as those "who have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (1 Cor. 16:15).

IN HIS FEAR

Christian Stewardship (2)

The Question of Tithing

Rev. D.H. Kuiper

Thoughts on Christian giving offered last month in this column lead one naturally to the subject of tithing and the place of tithing in the service of the New Dispensation saint. There are denominations in which this practice is enforced assiduously, and there are individuals in many other denominations (ours?) who carefully lay aside precisely a tenth on the Lord's Day. To this question the answer must be given, not simply that tithing is unnecessary, but that tithing is wrong. For the New Dispensation saint to give a tenth of all his substance or of his income, be it ever so conscientiously, is wrong. To show this in the light of Scripture is the burden of this article. But the purpose is not merely negative; God has provided some better thing for us, and thus we will also be led into an understanding of the glorious liberty of the children of God!

TITHING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The first indication Scripture gives that tithing is strictly an Old Dispensation requirement is found in the fact that the word occurs in only four New Testament passages. Three of these occurrences are in the Gospels. Since the period that the Gospels cover belongs properly to the Old Dispensation, only one passage actually belongs to the present era; this is Hebrews 7:5-9. The use of the word here is to demonstrate very strikingly the excellency of the

priesthood of Christ compared to the Levitical priesthood. Clearly, the passage can never be used to teach tithing at the present time! In fact, it can be used convincingly to show that tithing is no more, since the priesthood which had "a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law" is no more.

We read in Genesis 14 and 28 of the tithing of Abraham and Jacob. Although this tithing is basically the same as the later tithing of Israel, it had a special significance for these patriarchs. For this reason we will pass it by and consider the tithe as it belongs to Mosaic Law. At point are the following passages:

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service deemed. These are the commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai. (Lev. 27:30-34)

And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of

the congregation Thus he (the Levite) also shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest. (Num. 18:21, 28. Cf. entire passage)¹

And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hands, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: and there shall ye eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee. (Deut. 12:6,7)

From these passages we may gather: 1.) that one tenth of the produce of the soil and of the flocks and herds was to be given to the Lord by way of maintaining the Levites; 2.) that out of the tithes that the Levites received, the Levites were to give a tenth for the use of the high priest; 3.) that a second tithe was to be given periodically for festival occasions; and 4.) that every third year a tithe was to be given for the poor, which the people ate with the poor and the Levites. Whether this last mentioned tithe was a third tithe or took the place of the second tithe is difficult to determine, nor is it germane to our subject.² The point is that the giving of the Israelites was very carefully delineated by the law of God given through Moses at Sinai and modified somewhat according to Deuteronomy.

The significance of the one-tenth must not be overlooked. The fact that the ten occurs in the denominator of the fraction does not mean that the number ten has a meaning here different from the number ten elsewhere in Scripture. The steady emphasis of Scripture in regard to the number ten is that of fulness or completeness, and that according to the will of God. The Ten Commandments reveal the *whole* will of God for the moral life of man. The keeping of the law is the *whole* duty of man. This completeness and perfectness of the law was further indicated by the fact that the two tables of stone were written full on both sides. Again, the Ten Plagues express the *fulness* of the wrath of God against a people ripe for judgment. When the Israelites, therefore, were instructed to bring a tenth unto the Lord, as He was represented in the priesthood, that tenth was a confession on their part that all they had and were belonged to the Lord their God! The earth and its fulness is the Lord's! The nine-tenths that were not brought forth as well as the tenth that was, it was all the Lord's. Thus it was through tithing that Israel was holiness unto the Lord; through the tithe they dedicated their all unto Him. If a man did not bring forth his tithe, as happened often in later history, he robbed God (Mal. 3:8) and showed that he did not have a right under-

standing of his relationship to God as steward. He sinned in that he was not rich toward God.

NEW DISPENSATION GIVING

This careful, legal prescription for giving obtained from Sinai until Pentecost. Does not the "selling of possessions and goods, and parting them to all men as every man had need" by the early church members (Acts 2:45; 4:34) signal a tremendous change right after Pentecost? The trouble with those who maintain tithing today is that they grasp at a few texts, but do not have a well worked-out Biblical doctrine. All of Scripture is true, but all of Scripture does not speak to us in the same way! The church must do theology by comparing Scripture with Scripture so that the Word of God yields its riches! The result, then, is that present-day titheers see no advance in the work of salvation through the ages. They do not give a large enough place to the presence of the Spirit in the church and her members, by which presence the believer shares in the anointing of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. The church is one, but God is pleased to deal with the church under different dispensations: the *time* that distinguishes the dispensations is the first advent of Christ or the fulness of time; the *key difference* between the dispensations is that the old did not have the Spirit of Christ and the new does! God dealt with the church before Christ as with a little child. God carefully revealed to this little child, through the law, just what he might and might not do. Every possible aspect of life was circumscribed by a code. Although the law was holy, just, and good, it must not have been very pleasant for the Israelite to have his every action and relationship so strictly defined. The revelation which God sent Israel was consistent with this childhood. He taught them through types, figures, symbols, and ceremonies. But what a radical change came about when the Spirit was given. Just as Peter and the apostles suddenly had their eyes opened, so it is with all the church. In Galatians 4, Paul likens Israel to a child in bondage to all those laws, but then he says that in the fulness of time the child suddenly grows up and matures. And it is nothing less than the Spirit of Christ that gives this maturity. It is true that Paul speaks primarily against the practice of circumcision, but his argument has weight in respect to all the practices of the Mosaic Law. The child has come of age. The child is no longer in bondage to fear. He has all the rights of sonship, and that implies *knowledgeable* sonship.

Because the Spirit now fills the church, God deals with us as those who have the mind of Christ in us, who know the truth, who have the law engraved in our hearts, who have wisdom that is from above. In a word, we are free! In the proper, spiritual sense, our

liberty is that we may do as we will! We do not have the tithe-law looking over our shoulder. That simply does not fit with maturity and freedom. Besides, that is far too easy for the grownup church. God does not want us to exercise our sonship by dividing our salary by ten and giving that to Him. The moving of the decimal point one place to the left (and then some quibble as to gross or net income) is not the exercise of freedom nor of the mind of Christ. With thankfulness in respect to the past, with faith in respect to the future, we are to determine with the involvement of our heart, mind, and will what our giving shall be. How beautifully this fits with all of Christian liberty! This liberty is exercised when we exercise ourselves according to the indwelling Spirit. And that Spirit provides for a seeking of the things which are above where Christ is at the right hand of God, and for the making of sanctified judgments concerning temporal matters.

Writing to the Galatian churches, Paul is surprised, even dumbfounded, that anyone would wish to return to the weak and beggarly elements which can only lead to bondage. His language becomes strong because he sees this matter of cleaving to old rituals, ceremonies, and laws, as a fundamental error. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law." (Gal. 5:2, 3) And he has already explained that as many as are of the

works of the law are under the curse! We may certainly expand upon his statement: if a man insists on holding to *any* of the Old Testament ceremonial laws, he is a debtor to do the whole law. He places himself back in those times when Christ had not come, and thus he places himself under the curse. And then Christ, Who *has* come, profits him nothing!

CONCLUSIONS

We can only conclude that tithing is not binding on us in any sense. More, tithing is not even a nice guide for our giving, for to use it as a guide smacks of bondage.

It belongs to the freedom of sons that each one may decide for himself what part of his substance he offers to the cause of God's Kingdom. And our only guide for this giving is cheerfulness, liberality, and according as the Lord has prospered us. "Stand forth, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." (Gal. 5:1)

¹Commenting on this passage, Calvin refers to Paul's argument in I Cor. 9:14, "... as Paul correctly infers that a subsistence is now no less due the ministers of the Gospel than of old to the priests who waited at the altar." Significantly, no mention is made of the tithe by Paul or Calvin. Calvin's Commentaries, in loco.

²Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, (Chicago, 1957), p. 1103

ALL AROUND US

Reformation Church or Modern Method

Rev. H. Veldman

In an editorial in the *Banner* of Oct. 31, 1975 the editor wrote on the subject: REFORMATION CHURCH OR MODERN METHOD? We quote the concluding remarks of this editorial, page 7:

Well, especially now that it's Reformation Day once again, why not pursue this subject further for yourself? Explore the tension between the conception of the Church as Mother of Believers and a good deal of what is now called "evangelism." Compare, say, the sermons reported in the Acts with the techniques recommended by popular "methods." Ask why Paul lingered so long, "reasoned" so much, in

various places if salvation can be "given" and "accepted" in but a few moments. Compare the requirements laid upon would-be believers by Moses, the Prophets, the Gospels, and the Epistles with the easy one-step, two-step, or four-step techniques for "church growth" now being substituted for those requirements.

And then, in the spirit of the Reformers, ask yourself; which way is *my* way? Do I stand, and intend to stand, in the footsteps of those who lived and died to proclaim the Church as Mother of Believers? Or will I choose, or have I already chosen, another way?

Are there, indeed, for true children of the Reformation, two ways? *Both* leading to eternal life?

The undersigned would surely like to ask the editor of the *Banner* the question: are there, indeed, for true children of the Reformation, two ways? We surely agree with the above sentiments. But, editor of the *Banner*, are you not measuring with two measure? Do you really reject all that which is now called "evangelism"? Do you really reject the methods that are

pursued by Billy Graham? Does your church really reject these methods? Do you not believe in the well-meaning and general offer of the gospel? Have your churches not taken a stand in favor of universal atonement, in the permanent appointment of a seminary professor who believes in universal atonement and who publicly has spoken and written that he is in disagreement with the Canons of Dordt? Indeed, in the light of the Reformation, I urge you to consider these matters very seriously.

Comments on Report 44

Dr. Leonard Greenway is in charge of OUR QUESTION BOX in THE OUTLOOK. In the November, 1975, issue of this magazine, page 18, we read the following:

QUESTION: What, in your opinion, is the crucial issue facing the Christian Reformed Church today?

ANSWER: Since some readers of THE OUTLOOK are not members of the Christian Reformed denomination, this question may not immediately interest them. Yet, I feel I should answer it here because of the nature of the issues involved.

As I *now* view the matter, the crucial issue is *the nature and extent of Biblical authority in the light of Report 44* that was adopted by the Synod of 1972. Notice, I have italicized the word "now" and that carries a confession on my part. The confession is this: When Report 44 initially was under discussion in our Church, I was not alarmed by it as I am now. Perhaps I was not as alert and discerning as some brother ministers and others who flashed the red light soon after the Report appeared. Or perhaps, I was too deferential to the distinguished members of the committee who prepared the Report with obvious painstaking efforts to be thorough.

I have a different stance now. Belatedly I am coming to see Report 44 as a dangerous framework within which liberties can be taken with the Bible which formerly were not tolerated by us. I fear that the Report fosters an attitude which allows one to say that the authors of the books of the Bible conceivably on occasion could have been under influences that were in successful competition with the supervision of the Holy Spirit.

I want to do more thinking about the matter before I become more specific; but, as of now, my fear is that if we don't watch out, we are going to have a split in the Christian Reformed Church, and the split will be occasioned by current trends in the discussion of Biblical authority. The crack is already visible!

Let me add this postscript: Is it not significant that within the decade or two during which we had the discussions that eventually produced Report 44, the Christian Reformed Church appears to have passed its peak and to have gone into spiritual and ecclesiastical decline?

I am sure that this article merits our consideration. Dr. Greenway expresses fear. We too, have our serious misgivings. When does it happen that a church, having passed its peak and having gone into spiritual and ecclesiastical decline, recovers from such a decline? That church continues in its departure from the Word of God.

Dr. Greenway confesses that when Report 44 was initially under discussion he was not alarmed by it as he is now. How strange! He acknowledges that there were brother ministers and others who flashed the red light. How true! And, yet, he was not alarmed at the time as he is now. I suppose it is true that, loving a child, a parent is hesitant to notice anything that may be wrong with the child. On the other hand, it is also true that, loving that child, a parent will be very sensitive and responsive to any symptom which may indicate that all is not well. This is also true spiritually. How strange that Dr. Greenway should not have been sufficiently alarmed about Report 44, especially because Report 44 concerns the infallibility and authority of the divine Scriptures!

Finally, Dr. Greenway refers to one or two decades during which discussions were held which eventually produced Report 44. It might be interesting if that brother would pinpoint those things that led to this report. What does he have in mind? As far as the undersigned is concerned, we would call Dr. Greenway's attention to the Three Points of 1924 and emphasize the fact that it was no later than 1924 that the Christian Reformed Church passed its peak and went into spiritual and ecclesiastical decline. We only wish that the Christian Reformed Church would take this into serious consideration.

The Banner and Report 44

In the *Banner* recently have appeared editorials in which children of the Christian Reformed Church, living, so to speak, in the "Dispersion," have written letters to the Mother Christian Reformed Church in this country. We now quote from the *Banner* of Nov. 7, 1975, pages 10-11. This quotation speaks for itself. It would be interesting to hear the *Banner's* editor's comments on it:

By this time (if so be that the bearer has not had the ill fortune of falling afoul of highwaymen) you, our Mother, are in receipt of one or two missives from our hand. In both of these we make inquiry concerning the persistent reports that reach us to the effect that you are not as clear in your thinking as we would fain have it . . .

We have before us a pamphlet which you had so kindly sent us earlier. It bears the title: *The Nature and the Extent of Biblical Authority*. It is a booklet that must have cost much midnight oil to prepare as well as considerable expense to produce and distribute.

Then, after expressing that which made them glad when reading the pamphlet, namely, that it wishes to continue in the Reformed tradition, the letter continues:

But Mother (permit us to be free and open with you, as free and open as we were when we still ate at your board), if all that you say in the pamphlet is clear to you, then we are far apart — for much is everything but clear to us. We must conclude that one of us suffers from confusion, the malady that has given your city the unhappy name of "Babylon," the mixed-up city. We find that, in the pamphlet, ideas have been "mixed or blended in such a way that things cannot be distinguished," the very thing which our barber-surgeon tells us is the definitive feature of the malady we fear, its distinguishing symptom . . .

Travelers from abroad tell us that the language you use in the pamphlet reminds them strongly of the way your older sister (the one who stayed behind when you as a girl went to the New World) has begun to talk. The thought troubles us that perhaps your thinking is being affected by hers (this "older sister" refers to the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands — H.V.).

Before you frown at us for even suggesting this, may we ask you to recall how it was that you got started on this whole thing about "the nature and extent of biblical authority"? You will recall that it was this Old World, lowland sister of yours that put you up to it. This older lady, according to reports that reach us, is not in the best of health these days (reports persist that her church buildings are only half full). Was it not because she didn't know anymore what she thought of the Bible that she coaxed you to

do her homework for her, prodding you to pull the chestnuts out of the fire? (Our librarian tells us that up to the date of this writing she has herself done nothing to solve her problem — which, if true, does not speak well of her, neither of her seriousness nor of her diligence). Did not she say, and that quite openly, that what had been said previously by those of our tribe, that "Scripture speaks with divine authority and trustworthiness on all things on which it chooses to speak . . ." was no longer adequate and that a "new and elucidative confession of the inspiration and authority of Scripture" was needed?

Didn't it occur to you at the time, Mother, whom we love, that if indeed your older sister felt she needed a "new" (and therefore *different*) confession touching the authority of Scripture she should work out her problem, with you offering, at the very most, to give your opinion on that "new" formulation, if and when it was forthcoming?

This quotation is only a part of this letter as it appears in this editorial. The entire letter is very interesting. But we have not the space to quote it in its entirety. Besides, we need not quote it in its entirety. The above quotation speaks for itself. How true it is that Report 44 has been drawn up in such a way that the ordinary member has difficulty reading it. And, let us understand, synodical decisions and reports should be written in such a way that the ordinary member can read and understand it. A report, drawn up in such a way that it lacks clarity, has been intentionally composed that way. And, secondly, how true is the letter's description of the "older lady," the sister church in the Netherlands, the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands!

Know the standard
and follow it.



Read the
STANDARD BEARER!

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

The Old and the New

Rev. J. Kortering

The old and the new.

We are at the end of one year and taking our first steps in a new year. Looking back, the past year has been special for us. This is true in many ways, but especially with respect to our anniversary as churches, the highlight of our convention this past summer. Looking back makes one nostalgic, but looking ahead makes one apprehensive. It always seems easier looking back than ahead. There were great difficulties, hardships, testings of faith then, but we look back and see them as completed victories. Who looks back at the history of the church and says, there, at such a time, the church suffered *defeat*? It's a little harder to look to the future and say with conviction, the church of tomorrow will not suffer defeat! The perspective is different.

The fear of the future is aggravated by the fantastic speed of change. The wind-up Victrola has evolved into the hi-fi, stereo, and quadraphonic sound of today. The old Ford has become the super-charged turbo. The first daring surgical procedures performed on patients restrained with ropes have now become the highly skilled "operations" of transplanting organs and repairing others — something never dreamed possible. The B-29's have become the I.C.B.M.'s. All this is measured in decades not centuries.

One could go on and on.

This change has affected our lives. As kids we used to go to the local dump to shoot rats. Many a time we would discover some "treasure" and haul it home. Even the dump would reflect the times. During good times there were all kinds of cast-offs still usable; during bad times there was only junk. Our refuse today reflects our times; we live in the throw away generation: use it once and discard it. Much of what is thrown away today would be considered a real "find" in days gone by. But, alas, today it is compacted in the kitchen or at least compressed in the packer only to be buried in some landfill. We don't even have dumps today.

With the industrial revolution we shifted from a rural America to an urban society. Industry produced

every sort of convenience. People's incomes increased, the purchasing power of the average consumer grew by leaps and bounds. A maddening spiral of getting "things", success in business, finding one's place on the totem pole of economic wealth has produced a spirit of materialism. How this has changed our lives. The hard working days of manual work, walking behind the plow, have been replaced with the roar of the diesel and the electronic calculator. Physically we work less but worry more. Mothers have all sorts of push-button conveniences in the kitchen, but now we hear that most women are bored with being at home and need fulfillment in the market place. It becomes rather blasé to fill one's day with watching soap operas on television. Our progress has created a whole set of new problems in today's living.

Would we want to go back? No way! We have to learn how to live in today's world. In this world there seems to be little if anything that has not undergone change in some way.

That brings me to my main point.

What about religion? What about spiritual values? What about faith?

Little wonder that most religious leaders today insist that we need a new faith that fits our changing world. We need a faith that fits the changed person of today! We just finished mentioning how we have changed. Don't we need a new faith to meet the needs of modern man? Just think, we are now living at a faster pace; speed, speed, speed! Ours is the instant society; rip open a frozen dinner, toss it into the micro-wave oven, eat it on the run. We have to be on the links for a game of golf or at the courts for tennis. Timmy is in the little leagues; Dave is on the church softball team. Seldom is a meal eaten quietly. Television begs our attention almost every moment we are not away from home. Who quietly sits down to read and study? Who enjoys evenings home with families today? Perhaps dad even has a job that either requires long hours, or change in shifts. More disruption. Sometimes the whole family has to move from one city to another because of job demands. Our society is shifting and mobile to the extreme. People

don't sit very long, don't think very deep, don't pay too much attention to long discussions, don't read very much before falling asleep.

Don't such people need a different emphasis in religion and instructional methods to fit the change?

Some say yes.

We can discard the far-outs who come begging for support and are growing in numbers. There are more and more new cults, taking advantage of our dis-oriented society. The occult, satan worshippers, T.M.s, and what have you are always ready to move in and sooth a nerve-racked people with promises of peace on earth. The devil knows when to move.

Closer to home, however, the devil uses a more sophisticated approach, at least in terms of us. He reasons this way: we are more educated today than ever before. Spiritual truths that fit grandparents in their generation do not necessarily satisfy today. After all, we all change. Science has come up with new ideas, man has within his grasp heaven on earth. What must we say and do to people like this. Here's what we need. We need a new Bible (King James is out of date; we need a paraphrased Bible in today's language); we need a new method of interpreting this Bible (we must not draw out the meaning of the message by studying the words and ideas presented in the context; these are culturally and linguistically conditioned by different times, we must read into these words meanings that fit our generation). We need a new theology; ideas of a personal God, sovereign and holy, predestinating people to heaven and hell may have been all right for our Dutch forefathers, but today we need to emphasize a God of love that fits into the needs of a society that has to learn to love. Finally, we also need a new morality: old teachings about laws and commandments, simply don't speak to people today; it's too much "authority." We need to speak of lovingly obeying God's will; that is easier to take. Of course, all that is done lovingly is approved, whether it breaks the commandments or not.

There is one more thing. The method which must be used in getting this message across must not conform to that of our previous generation. Long-winded sermons, careful exegetical preaching making up the heartbeat of dignified worship adorned with solemn singing and reverent praying, is out! No, most agree this was all right for a quiet, sober thinking, slower acting generation of years gone by. Today we need instant messages, short and to the point, perhaps even adorned with a blast of rock music from the built in speakers, or blinking lights, or visual aids to punctuate the "sermon" and give it an additional dimension. Better yet, we should experiment with our services by allowing membership participation.

It all sounds so logical that we might even stand back and say, when do we start!!

There is one thing wrong with all this reasoning. These people put faith and the preaching of the gospel in the same category as scientific knowledge, historical facts, salesmanship, teaching, etc.

And it isn't.

The gospel is entirely unique.

Its message and method are divinely appointed, and woe be to us if we think we are wiser than God.

Listen to God tell us this Himself. "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Jeremiah 6:16. God isn't saying to us "Be old fashioned." Just having the old is not in itself good. Change is part of our life and we must accept it. One thing does not and must not change and this is our *faith*. Jeremiah was concerned about that. Judah had forsaken the God of their fathers and replaced Him with idols. They had gone after a new life-style which included abominable immorality. Jeremiah preached to them and warned them that they had to go back to their God, for God walked with them only on the *old paths*, those which He appointed for them according to the prophets.

My youthful readers, we need to be reminded of this today. Everything may change, but God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, Mal. 3:6. His Word never changes, I Peter 1:23, 25. This is the truth written upon the pages of Holy Writ and preached by faithful ministers throughout the ages of the world.

The old paths that the believers walk upon are old because they are God's paths and He is as old as eternity. They are old because the church of all ages walked upon those paths. Isn't this a fantastic thought. The figure is plain. The paths mentioned in Jeremiah have direction. They lead somewhere; they lead home! On those paths Adam and Eve walked; and Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob trod to glory on them. Our blessed Lord Jesus walked upon those paths. So did the holy apostles and faithful martyrs in the history of the church. Our Reformed forefathers loved those paths and gave us three beautiful confessions that express the faith of all truly Reformed believers. So our grandfathers and grandmothers walked before us upon those paths. They are old and well worn by the faithful believers of all ages. Each generation in the church could well say they lived in a "new generation," and many could have clamored for a "new faith." What we see today is not really new; it is just that it is now being popularly accepted by those who we would think should know better and understand what is taking place.

Yes, sometimes it gets lonely on that path. Sometimes the conflict becomes bitter. On the old paths, however, we always have our God in blessed friendship with Jesus Christ our Lord.

The preaching of the gospel has distinguished the church from all sects and vain philosophies. The power of preaching is Christ Who calls by His grace and Spirit. The Bible has been the citadel of truth for believers of all ages. Doctrine and morality have been determined by the pages of Holy Writ and not by the changing whims of fallible man.

Young people, don't be influenced by the clamor for change in the realm of the church. The enemy of God's people likes to come disguised with silver-tongued oratory and convincing logic. They want to take from you the Bible, the faithful interpretation of its pages, sound doctrine, and godly living.

All is done under the guise of necessary change.

Supposedly it is for the better.

It is sad to read in Jeremiah 6:12, "But they said, we will not walk therein." History tells us that the majority in Judah never changed, and God had to take them to Babylon. The ungodly were destroyed, and the faithful had to be purified in the way of affliction.

We look to the future with confidence. The church will always be preserved and God will never allow the enemy to destroy the path or keep those whom He loves from walking on it.

Our duty is to heed His Word, "*Stand ye in the ways, see, and ask for the old paths and walk on them. Stand in them, see them, ask for them, and walk in them.*"

They are the good way, and on that way one finds rest for his soul.

Rest in this life and in that to come.

That way leads home.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to Timothy

February 1, 1975

Dear Timothy,

I think we can probably wind up our discussion of the New Hermeneutics in this letter. We have a number of loose ends to tie up and I want to make some comments yet about the relationship between the New Hermeneutics and the preaching.

We were talking last time about the relationship between faith and proof — especially as this is related to our fundamental belief in the Bible as the infallibly inspired Word of God. And there is one more point which, I think, ought to be made in this connection. You brought the matter up yourself, and it gives me the occasion to write a little bit about it.

I made the point that faith needs no proof. This lies in the nature of faith as the means which puts the believer in living contact with Christ and with spiritual truths. The question which you, with some justification, raise, is: Is there not a time when proof, however, is important and necessary? Do not we, e.g., make an effort to prove the truths which we confess from the Scriptures? Are not we required, in Dogmatics, e.g., to memorize a large number of "proof"

texts? And when we have our oral exams before the Synod, do not our interrogators bear down on proof texts with a great deal of zeal? And even more than this, is there not some sense of the word in which we even speak of the importance of "proof" for the truth that Scripture is the Word of God? In his first epistle, chapter 3:15, Peter speaks of the necessity for the believer of always being ready to give an "apology" to the one asking him a reason for the hope that is within him. Does not this imply that his answer must be intelligent, reasonably constructed, laid out carefully as a defense of the faith? And does not all this imply that he makes an effort to "prove" his position?

This is an important point, and we ought to examine the matter for a few moments.

The whole question, I think, comes down to the matter of what one means by "proof." Proof certainly has an important place in our defense of the faith. We must use proof when we are teaching in Catechism or even preaching from the pulpit. We must be very sure that all that we say is carefully proved by the Scriptures. We must be very sure that those who are being instructed are shown clearly that

the truth is indeed set forth in the Word of God. We “prove” what we say by an appeal to the Scriptures.

This is even true of our apologetics when we debate the truth with those who differ from us on what they believe. The final court of appeal is the Scriptures. And we must always appeal to the Scriptures in support of our argument. This is so obvious it hardly needs stating. But what I mean to say is that here we have a legitimate use of proof. We must believe only that which the Scriptures teach, and we must defend our position exclusively on the basis of the Word of God.

This same thing holds true in our conversation with unbelievers. We are called to witness to the truth in the whole of our walk. When Peter writes in I Peter 3:15: “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear,” he certainly is presupposing that unbelievers, who observe our walk and notice that it is principally different from the walk of wicked men, ask us the reason for this. They inquire concerning this. And we must be ready to give an intelligent and careful defense of our hope. This means that we must be ready to justify our conduct with proof that this is the way one ought always to walk.

But here we come to the real crux of the matter. The only proof we have is, once again, the Scriptures. When we give a defense of our hope to the unbeliever, we must do this by pointing him to the Scriptures as the only authority of our faith and our life. We have no other proof than the Word of God. But we always face the possibility that our questioner will not accept the Scriptures as the Word of God. He might say to us that while he acknowledges that what we say is indeed what the Bible says, nevertheless he does not believe that the Bible is what we claim it to be. What are we to do then? Again, the only thing we can do is show him from the Bible itself that the Bible is what it claims to be. Our proof is once more limited to Scripture. Again, we have no other “proof” than that.

Hence, most basically, there is no possibility of debate with anyone on any question of the truth apart from the Scriptures. If one will not accept the Scriptures as the basis for debating questions concerning the truth, that is the end of argumentation. There is no other appeal and no more point in prolonging the debate.

Proof within that framework is valid and indeed necessary. Proof beyond the Scriptures is impossible. The only proof is appeal to the Scriptures. Outside the Scriptures there is no proof.

And all this implies the presence or absence of faith. And that faith is, above all, faith in the Word of

God as God’s record of His own revelation. If a man has faith, he will accept the Scriptures as God’s Word. If he does not have faith he will repudiate the Scriptures. And no amount of “proof” will ever bring faith into his heart. All the arguments in the world will never suffice. “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And if they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

It is here where we must part ways with the New Hermeneutics. The New Hermeneutics takes a rationalistic approach to the Scriptures. It may all have started out “innocently” enough. Perhaps one only wanted to demonstrate in some kind of rational way that the Scriptures are the Word of God. But if that rational proof carries one away from the testimony of the Scriptures itself, then it will amount to nothing. But this approach is exactly filled with all kinds of dangers. If one’s approach is, in this way, rationalistic, then one’s approach to the whole of Scripture is rationalistic. But Scripture can only be the object of faith. It will not be amenable to the manipulations of the rationalists. Scripture is a unique book, also in this sense. For if one comes to Scripture in faith, then one bows before the sole authority of Scripture and subjects himself to what the Scriptures speak. Then this wonderful book opens itself to him who comes in faith. It speaks. It speaks in all its power and beauty, in all its saving glory and blessed truth. But when one takes the Scriptures in his hands to manipulate them according to the standards of his own reason, then Scripture becomes a terrible book. It slams its door shut in the face of the one who comes in this way. It speaks nothing any more — except words of wrath and the curse. It is, to use Luther’s expression, a closed book.

So it is that, in the hands of those who profess the New Hermeneutics, Scripture can be made to say whatever they wish it to say. It becomes only an instrument to assist them in propagating their own pet ideas. It is manipulated, twisted, turned, forced out of shape, a useless book of no value to anyone. But Peter speaks of the fact that unlearned and unstable men wrest the Scriptures unto their own destruction. (II Peter 3:16)

So we come to the matter of preaching. And this is what concerns you chiefly. I do not now refer to the preaching only as you climb the pulpit on Sunday; but I refer to your whole calling to preach the Word in all your work as shepherd under Christ in the congregation. You bring that Word as you so well know, in Catechism classes, when you visit new parents, at the side of sick beds, in the cemetery, when wandering sheep must be brought back to the fold. In all these circumstances, you must remember that you must speak with authority. That is, you can never

say: "I am of this opinion"; or, "I think this is probably the wise thing to do"; or, "I suggest that you remember this as something which may be of help to you." All you can say is, "Thus saith the Lord."

You must speak with authority. You know, of course, that the very fact that you are an officebearer in the church of Christ gives you authority. It is in the nature of an office to possess authority. You come to your sheep with the authority of the office you hold. But the simple fact is that you have authority as an officebearer only when you come with the Word. Your authority, even as an officebearer, is the authority of the Word. It is the authority of Christ and of God because it is the authority of God's Word through Christ. Leave that Word behind you in your study, let it sit on your shelf, and assume the role of advisor, psychologist, marriage counselor, probation officer, or whatever, and you can no longer speak with authority.

But you come with the authority of the Word only when that Word is authoritative. And that Word is authoritative only when it is the infallibly inspired Word of God written in the Scriptures.

I am reminded of what C.S. Lewis once said to a group of higher critics: "A theology which denies the historicity of nearly everything in the Gospels to which Christian life and affections and thought have been fastened for nearly two millenia — which either

denies the miraculous altogether or, more strangely, after swallowing the camel of the Resurrection strains at such gnats as the feeding of the multitudes — if offered to the uneducated man can produce only one or other of two affects. It will make him a Roman Catholic or an atheist. What you offer him he will not recognize as Christianity. If he holds to what he called Christianity he will leave a Church in which it is no longer taught and look for one where it is. If he agrees with your version he will no longer call himself a Christian and no longer come to church. In his crude, coarse way, he would respect you much more if you did the same. An experienced clergyman told me that most liberal priests, faced with this problem, have recalled from its grave the late medieval conception of two truths: a picture-truth which can be preached to the people, and an esoteric truth for use among the clergy. I shouldn't think you will enjoy this conception much when you have to put it into practice. I'm sure if I have to produce picture-truths to a parishioner in great anguish or under fierce temptation, and produce them with that seriousness and fervour which his condition demanded, while knowing all the time that I didn't exactly — only in some Pickwickian sense — believe them myself, I'd find my forehead getting red and damp and my collar getting tight. But that is your headache, not mine. You have, after all, a different sort of collar."

With Christian love,
H. Hanko

Guest Article

The Communion of the Saints

Rev. A. Den Hartog

In the Apostles' Creed we confess to believe that the Holy Catholic Church is the "Communion of the Saints". Both from a doctrinal and practical point of view this is a wonderful and blessed aspect of the doctrine of the church as it is taught us in the scriptures. This truth views the church from the aspect of the spiritual fellowship the church as a whole has with God in Christ Jesus and the mutual fellowship that lives among the members. That the church is the communion of the saints means that the saints within the communion together have blessed covenant

fellowship with God, and because of this common fellowship have fellowship with one another.

The truth of the communion of the saints is indeed blessed for the saints of God who are pilgrims and strangers in the world, who have no friendship and fellowship with the world, who stand at enmity with the world and those who are of the world. In the world there is no fellowship possible, at least not in the sense of the communion of the saints. The world in which God has placed His church is a world characterized by darkness where there is no knowledge and

love of God. In the midst of that world man can have no true fellowship. He may and in fact does have external association for certain common ends and for the satisfaction of his lusts and pleasures. Among the men of the world there is however always the hatred of God and the hatred of fellow men that causes man to live only unto himself and unto the satisfaction of his own lust and pleasure. Men are prone to hate God and their neighbor, and thus there is strife, division, and hatred, and men are estranged from one another. I especially think of that in the great metropolis in which we live, where it becomes so very evident that everyone lives for himself and unto himself and millions of people living in close physical proximity live as absolute strangers to one another. In the midst of a world of darkness, despair, hatred, and division among men the almighty and wonderful God of our salvation was pleased to gather and establish His church. That church God calls by His sovereign Word out of darkness into the marvelous fellowship of His covenant, causing that church and her members to know and love Him and causing the members of that church to walk in that same fellowship, knowledge, and love with one another. What a comfort, a blessed dwelling place, is the communion of the saints for all of God's people!

In two articles I would like to direct your attention for a few moments to this blessed truth of the church. This subject can be easily and properly divided into two main points: the discussion of the communion of the saints as God has ordained and created it, and the calling of the individual saint of God toward that communion. The first subject we shall deal with in this installment and the second in the next installment.

The Scriptures have much to say concerning the truth of the communion of the saints. Perhaps the most beautiful and detailed passages on the subject are I Corinthians 12, Romans 12:3-8, and Ephesians 4.

The meaning of the phrase "communion of the saints" is literally the coming together of many saints of God into one. God calls His people out of sin and darkness, delivers them from the bondage and corruption of sin, causes them to be a new and holy people, and brings these saints into one spiritual fellowship. He separates them from the wicked world and calls them into the fellowship of His own covenant life and into the fellowship of life with one another. This is the communion of the saints.

We must understand, in the first place, that this is a work of God and not first of all of man. The communion of the saints is not an external society or organization formed by men for some sort of humanistic end, such as perhaps social action. When God in

eternity ordained and chose His church He ordained it as the communion of the saints. This can only be understood if we understand the doctrine of the church in the truly Reformed sense, namely, that the church is the body of the elect of God. When God chose His church He did not merely choose so many individuals scattered through time and through the nations. Rather He chose the church as one organism with all of the individual members as integral parts of that organism together making up the one glorious whole. This living organism is the communion of the saints as God has ordained her and called her into being. The communion of the saints in the broadest sense of the word includes the whole company of the elect from all ages and all nations as they are all members of one glorious body. The apostle John was given to see a vision of the communion of the saints as it shall be in perfect glory forever in the new heavens and earth. Not only, however, is it true that the church will forever in glory be revealed as the communion of the saints. It pleases God also to reveal the communion of the saints in principle here on earth. He gathers His saints together through the preaching of the Word and calls them out of the world and draws them into the fellowship of the communion of the saints. The communion of the saints exists therefore, wherever the true church is manifest even as God is pleased to manifest it. Thus when we speak of the communion of the saints we must certainly speak of that communion of the saints that God has created in our own local congregation. In each of the passages listed above, the apostle Paul speaks of the communion of the saints as it existed first of all in the local congregations which he is directly addressing.

We have already said that the communion of the saints is the gathering of all of the many saints of God into one. The center of the unity of the communion of the saints is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a truth that is beautifully described by several figures in the Scriptures. The most common figure used is that of the head which is the Lord Jesus Christ and the body which consists of the true spiritual members of the church of Christ. Scripture also speaks of the church under the figure of the vine and the branches in which Christ is the vine and the members are the branches; and also under the figure of the corner stone Jesus Christ and the members of the church as the building blocks of the temple of God. All of these figures set forth the truth that Christ is the life-center of the church and the saints draw all their life and existence out of Him. There is therefore a communion of the life of Christ among the members, and this is the whole reason of their unity. In the communion of the saints pulsates the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus Christ. The saints are united to one another on the basis of righteousness of the cross of

Christ that they possess in common. In the hearts of the saints together lives the one, same, faith that unites them to Christ. They are motivated by the same mind, will, and love of the Lord Jesus Christ. They look for the same hope of glory, to dwell with the Lord Jesus Christ forever in perfect blessedness. They live for one and the same purpose, the glory of God in Christ Jesus in the perfection of His covenant and kingdom. Christ by His Word calls the saints of God together. He gives them a desire to live together in communion and He shall unite them forever in glory. The blessedness of the fellowship that the saints of God have with one another centers around their common life in Christ.

The communion of the saints involves the coming together of *many* saints. Communion of the saints is not possible with one saint by himself. God brings together the many saints who are personally distinct and diverse from one another. The apostle Paul emphasizes this in I Corinthians 12:12: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." God calls His saints into the fellowship of the communion of the saints who are all different from one another according to their natural endowments. They all have different personalities and characteristics; they have different talents and abilities; they come from many different walks of life. All these natural distinctions are preserved in the gathering together of the communion of the saints.

In the second place the saints are diverse according to the gifts of the Spirit that each saint possesses. The apostle Paul gives us a beautiful description of this truth in I Corinthians 12:8-10: "For to one is given by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, various kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues." This does not, however, divide the communion of the saints, for Paul emphasizes that all these diversities of gifts and differences of administration and diversities of operation are all of the one and same Spirit, of the one Lord and one God who worketh "all in all."

Because of the varying gifts of the Spirit God gives to each of the members a different place within the communion. "He gave some apostles; some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." Ephesians 4:11. Paul mentions here especially the special offices in the churches. This does not mean that only these, however, receive a particular place in the communion. Each saint of God receives of God a place according to his gifts and calling.

In the third place Paul speaks of diversities in the communion because of the different measure of grace given to each one. Of this he speaks especially in Romans 12:6-8: "Having gifts differing according to the grace that is given us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the measure of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness."

All these differences are used by God through the Holy Spirit to make up the one glorious whole of the body of Christ. There are none that are superfluous. No member may say, because I am not an elder or a deacon therefore, I am not an important member of the body. "If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it, therefore, not of the body? And if the ear shall say because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it, therefore, not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing; if the whole were hearing where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members, every one of them, in the body, as it hath pleased him." I Corinthians 12:15-18. Every saint of God has received an essential place within the body of the communion of the saints so that without only one of them the communion of the saints would be incomplete.

God has set the various members in the body so that each individual member serves the whole of the communion of the saints. One does not receive the gifts and calling of the Spirit by himself to serve for his own selfish ends, but always for the sake of the whole of the communion of the saints of which he is a member. And each of the members are in need of all of the other members. If one of the members is missing or does not exercise his gifts and calling it will cause the whole of the communion of the saints to suffer lack. The members mutually satisfy one another's spiritual necessities. In I Corinthians 12:21-24 the apostle states: "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble are necessary; and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need; but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that which lacked." So God will care for all of the spiritual needs of all the members of the body so that no part shall lack. He has so wonderfully united the members of the body together that each serves the other as members of one another, so much so that when "one member suffers,

all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." Thus all of the needs of the communion of the saints are filled and satisfied. And God gives the various gifts and members to the communion so that the whole church together may grow unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the communion of the saints is a spiritual communion. This surely follows from all that we have said. The church is not a social club or society. It is a communion of *saints*. They have communion with one another because they are saints and live in their capacity as saints. Their communion is an exclusive fellowship. It includes only those who have been made to be saints by the calling and work of God's grace in Christ Jesus; they are redeemed out of the world. It ex-

cludes all that are of the world of darkness and corruption. What a blessed fellowship is then the communion of the saints. In that fellowship we enjoy the blessedness of the knowledge and love of God together with all of the saints. In that fellowship we are blessed with all of the spiritual blessings from the head of the body, the Lord Jesus Christ. And in that body the saints dwell together for their mutual edification, to befriend one another in the midst of the world, to comfort, exhort and admonish one another in the fellowship of love. All of God's saints have a place in that fellowship; it is their spiritual home in the house of God as it is manifest in the midst of this earth.

There are many practical applications that follow from this Scriptural truth of the communion of the saints. These we shall consider in the next installment.

Book Review

THE CHRISTIAN LOOKS AT HIMSELF, by Anthony A. Hoekema; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975; 152 pp., \$1.95 (paper).

The main theme of this book is an idea that is being bandied about a great deal nowadays: it is the calling of the Christian to get rid of a "negative self-image."

The first part of the book, in which the author develops this idea, is the important part. The thoughts running through this part have been presented by the author in a series of articles in *The Reformed Journal* which I criticized in our own *Theological Journal* some time ago.

In this first part of the book, the author attempts to encourage the redeemed saint of God to change his self-image so that he no longer looks at himself as a guilty sinner, but as a redeemed saint. Now this thesis, in itself, is perhaps not so bad. And the author admits that the redeemed child of God is still capable of committing sin. Nevertheless, he carries his thesis to an incorrect conclusion, for he insists that the child of God ought no longer to have any feelings of guilt, ought no longer to abhor himself, and ought no longer to look upon himself as a guilt-ridden man.

This emphasis leads to many incorrect assertions in the book. First of all, it leads to an incorrect exegesis of many different passages. (By the way, the exegesis of these passages is skimpy and superficial, something one would not expect from a professor of theology in a Reformed seminary.) He interprets Romans 7:13-25 as referring to Paul in his unregenerate state, though written after Paul's conversion. This is the same interpretation given this passage by Arminius while minister in Amsterdam, an exegesis which got him into trouble with his colleague Plancius. It is an Arminian interpretation because there is no way in which one can escape the fact that then this passage teaches the ability of the unregenerate man to will the good. Hoekema also interprets II Cor. 5:17 in such a way that the term "new creature" refers to a "new era", although it also refers to the new saint. He interprets the references in Scripture to the "old man" and the "new man" as referring to "old and new life-styles."

In the second place, by such exegesis Hoekema comes to the conclusion that the redeemed saint no longer has an old nature with which he must contend. He is only a new man in Christ who sins occasionally. This brings him perilously close to perfectionism —

although he expressly repudiates this doctrine.

In the third place, this line of argumentation leads him to the Pelagian notion that sin is only in the act. There is little discussion of the nature of man, while a great deal of emphasis is placed upon the act. This is not Reformed. All these ideas are really and essentially Arminian. And it is surprising that they are found so openly espoused in a book by a professor of Reformed theology.

One wonders what the author would do with a statement such as is found in our "Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper": "That every one consider by himself, his sins and the curse due to him for them, to the end that he may abhor and

humble himself before God." Or the statement in our Heidelberg Catechism: "That God, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, will no more remember my sins, neither my corrupt nature, against which I have to struggle all my life long." Or: "Even the holiest men, while in this life, have only a small beginning of this obedience." Or the continuous testimony of Scripture that the saints did abhor themselves, of which Job's confession is only one example: "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

The second part of the book contains all sorts of practical advice on how we may advance a positive self-image in ourselves and others [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On January 29, 1976, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. & MRS. HENRY J. SCHUT commemorated their 50th wedding anniversary. We, their children, are thankful to our covenant God for sparing them these many years for each other and for us. It is our prayer that God will bless them in the future years together.

Mr. and Mrs. LaVerne Schut
Mr. and Mrs. Perlin Schut
Mr. and Mrs. Bryce Ripley
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Schut
Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Hibma
and their 10 grandchildren.

Jenison, Michigan.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hope (Grand Rapids, MI) Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to their brother Elder, Peter Knott, in the recent passing of his father, MR. HENRY KNOTT.

"The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut. 33:27).

Rev. R. Van Overloop, Pres.
John Kalsbeek, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of Faith Protestant Reformed Church expresses its condolences to their members, Mr. & Mrs. David Ondersma, in the recent loss of her mother, AGNES HEEMSTRA.

May they experience God's comfort in this time of trouble, "... Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27).

The Adult Bible Class of
Faith Church.

NOTICE!!!

Covenant Christian High School is in need of an Administrator for the coming 1976-77 school year. Please send applications and qualifications to: Mr. Gordon Van Overloop, 3711 Hillcrest, Hudsonville, Michigan, 49426.

NOTICE

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on March 3, 1976, in Edgerton, Minnesota at 8:30 AM. Delegates in need of lodging or transportation should notify the clerk of the Edgerton consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk.

News From Our Churches

Sunday, February 8, will bring another milestone in the history of the Reformed Witness Hour. We have already witnessed two generations of program announcers and two generations of Radio Committee presidents. The 1727th broadcast of our radio program will begin a series of eight messages on the general theme of the Covenant Home, by Rev. Mark

Hoeksema. Rev. Mark Hoeksema is the third generation of Hoeksemas to speak on the broadcast. The late Rev. Herman Hoeksema spoke on the broadcast when it first began in the early 1940's. The second generation is represented by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema who has also been the speaker on many Reformed Witness Hour radio broadcasts. Printed copies of the

radio messages and a station log can be obtained by writing: The Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 1230, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501.

The 1975 Synod of our churches decided to send emissaries to Jamaica for a period of two months or so before the 1976 Synod convenes this June. In harmony with this decision, the Mission Committee of our churches asked the consistory of our Pella, Iowa, Church to release their pastor, Rev. George Lubbers, for nine Sundays in order that Rev. Lubbers might visit the island once again.

Rev. Lubbers kindly outlined some of the plans for that visit in a letter to me on January 7. Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers plan to leave Pella on Thursday morning, January 29. They plan to fly from Des Moines to Chicago and then to Montego Bay, Jamaica by early evening. Elder John M. Faber of 1st Church and his wife expect to follow the Lubbers to Jamaica about a week later.

While in Jamaica, the emissaries plan to visit, encourage, and instruct the people in the small group of native churches with whom our churches have labored for over a decade. Plans include giving a mini-course to the native ministers, some mid-week teaching in the congregations, preaching, and teaching Sunday School on Sunday. Some used clothing collected here in the states needs to be distributed among the people and the building of a little church supervised in Belmont, Jamaica. Rev. Lubbers says he would like to visit the beautiful beach at Nigril, Jamaica, a place he was able to see only twice during the four years he spent as missionary on the island.

The task which the emissaries face is a strenuous one which is not made any easier by the primitive living conditions, the warm climate, and the difficult traveling conditions experienced in the interior of the island where most of the churches are located.

Rev. Lubbers asks that we remember him and his wife along with the Fabers in our prayers. Rev.

Lubbers testifies that "Our eyes are upon the LORD who will be with us in our going out and in our coming in from this time forth even forever more!" The expected mailing address for the emissaries while in Jamaica is: Rev. George C. Lubbers, General Delivery, Montego Bay, Jamaica, W.I.

During the busy holiday season just passed, some of our ministers did a bit of traveling and pulpit exchanging. On Sunday, December 28, Rev. Engelsma of South Holland exchanged pulpits with Rev. Van Baren in First, Grand Rapids. Rev. Miersma from Isabel, South Dakota, preached in Hull, Iowa, and Rev. H. Veldman of Southwest, Wyoming, Michigan, preached in Redlands, California, where he had traveled to visit his children over the holidays. Seminarian Ken Koole traveled to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada to deliver a "word of edification" to the congregation there during the Seminary Christmas vacation.

In their December Newsletter, the South Holland Church Evangelism Committee announced that they had arranged a series of radio programs on the topic, "Fundamentals of the Reformed Faith." This broadcast is to cover primarily the area of De Motte, Indiana. It is hoped that the cost of this program will be paid for from the funds that our Mission Committee received when the assets of the Oak Lawn congregation were disbursed. The program will be broadcast on Sunday mornings between 8:15 and 8:30 A.M. over the Crown Point station, WFLM-FM, 103.9mh. The first broadcast was scheduled on December 7.

The South Holland church is no stranger to radio broadcasting. Their Sunday morning service has been broadcast on the air for some time already. It is presently heard on WLNR-FM at 2 P.M. on Sunday.

Rev. Kortering declined his call from Kalamazoo, Michigan.

K. G. V.