

# The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

A Bible that is placed on some obscure shelf, left to gather the dust is like a flashlight without batteries, a lantern without oil. It sheds absolutely no light on your path. A Bible must be used; it must be read; it must be studied diligently. The Bible that serves as a lamp unto our feet and a light upon our path is the Bible that has become worn and tattered and frayed through constant use.

See "God's Word:  
A Lamp and a Light" — Page 451

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION

## My Present Misery

Rev. C. Hanko

*Whence knowest thou thy misery?**Out of the law of God.**What doth the law require of us?*

*Christ teaches us that briefly, Matthew 22: 37-40, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and the great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*

*Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?*

*In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and the neighbor. Heid. Catechism, Lord’s Day 2.*

Misery. . . .

We plunge, as it were, from the ecstatic heights of an only, all inclusive comfort into the depths of abject misery. Our Book of Instruction spoke in Lord’s Day I of an only comfort in life and death,

both for body and soul. With hearts indebted to our God we confessed that we possess that only comfort, since we are not “our own, but belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ.” He is the Savior of our souls, the Savior of our bodies, our Savior now, in the hour of



death, and even into all eternity. The very thought floods our souls with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Now we speak not of the misery of a sin-cursed world which we see round about us, but *our* misery. Not our past misery, as some would like to think who speak of conversion as a complete deliverance from the power of sin. They say the converted sinner is now a saint to whom the very thought of sin is foreign, so that with a bit of effort he need never sin any more. But our fathers speak of our present misery, the misery we experience as believers in Christ Jesus who are still surrounded by an evil world, with sin still warring in their members. It is the misery which only the child of God can know and can confess. We are confronted with *our* misery; my misery, your misery, which created a daily tension in this body of sin and death.

The plunge from the blessedness of an only comfort into the depths of conscious misery, of which I spoke a moment ago, is actually not as great as one might imagine. In fact, we are still fully aware of that only, all-sufficient comfort, but we are focusing our attention on one aspect of it. Comfort implies misery, for even a child who has hurt himself will flee to mother for a comforting word or kiss. In the previous Lord's Day we confessed just that when we said that our comfort consists in knowing how great our sins and miseries are, as well as knowing how we are delivered from our sins and miseries, and how we shall show true gratitude to God for such deliverance.

Our Catechism makes itself very bold here. It does not ask whether we are miserable, but rather assumes that we are. It does not ask whether we have learned to understand our misery, but again assumes that we do. It does not speak of the groaning of all humanity in that broad sense of the word, but speaks specifically of your and my experience of misery. We could readily lose ourselves in a discussion of all the world's ills, considering the massive destruction of warfare with all its accompanying grief as experienced in the many war torn countries of the world. We could linger over the race problem, the woeful poverty in many lands, the crowded hospitals, the cries of anguish that arise in prisons and mental institutions, or the moanings of the dying in rest homes. We share that misery with the rest of humanity. But our misery reaches much deeper into our souls than the mere outward sufferings which are the result of sin in the world. We are concerned about the problem of sin itself, with its accompanying guilt and depravity. We cry out to God, "Against Thee have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight. Yea, I am conceived in sin, and born in iniquity." Our Catechism is well aware of that anxious cry that arises from the soul of every true believer, and therefore it confronts us with the

question: "Whence knowest thou thy misery?" Where did you obtain your information? What is the constant source of your knowledge?

The Word of God. . . .

I may be anticipating a bit, but one can hardly refrain from expressing a pleasant surprise, that here already our fathers call our attention to the Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. It is one of the outstanding features of our Catechism, that it refers so repeatedly to the Scriptures as the means whereby God bestows His grace upon us. In this Lord's Day our Catechism points out that we draw the knowledge of our misery from the Word of God. In Lord's Day 6 we are given to confess that we know the only Mediator, in Whom is the fulness of our salvation, from the holy gospel. Lord's Day 7 speaks of the contents of our faith as including "all things promised to us in the gospel." Lord's Day 21 teaches us that it is by His Spirit and Word that the Son of God gathers, defends, and preserves His church. Lord's Day 25 speaks of the preaching of the gospel as the chief means of grace. Lord's Day 31 refers to the preaching of the holy gospel as the chief key of the kingdom of heaven. And Lord's Day 33 speaks of the law of God as the rule of thankfulness, while Lord's Day 45 implies that we are taught to pray by the Spirit through the means of the Scriptures.

Pardon this slight diversion. I realize that Lord's Day 2 does not speak of the Word, but rather of the law of God. But it must become evident to us almost at once, that the mere ten commandments as given on tables of stone at Mount Sinai is not meant here. Our fathers give us a summary of those ten commandments, taken from the mouth of Jesus Himself, Who also tells us that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." This can only mean all the Scriptures proclaim the law of God, which is rooted in the principle of love to God. By the law, that is, by the Holy Scriptures is the knowledge of sin.

"The woman Thou gavest me. . . ."

We are all aware that when Adam spoke these words immediately after the fall, he did this as a subterfuge. Although he had to admit that he was guilty of eating of the forbidden tree, he nevertheless could not refrain from looking askance at Eve as the one who tempted him. It was "the woman Thou gavest to me that did tempt me, and I did eat." Let it be, that Adam revealed his depraved nature by hiding behind this flimsy excuse, there is nevertheless truth in what he said. It was, after all, the woman that God gave him who presented him with the forbidden fruit and lured him to eat. This does tell us something about sin and the law.

Adam had received a most cherished gift from the Lord. Almost immediately after he stepped forth



from the hand of the Creator into conscious life he realized that, although he was perfect, there was still a definite lack in his life. He became the more aware of this as he walked about the garden, gasping in wonder at its amazing splendor, taking special note of the animals who were all created in pairs, male and female. The animals had their mates, but Adam had none. Yet he had been created with a definite need for a mate, physically, psychologically, but also spiritually. Not another man would do; not another king over the earthly creation. He needed a wife, one who was in every way sufficiently like him to share his life with him, yet also sufficiently different, that she could be subject to him and a helper to him. He needed one whose very nature would cause her to lose herself in her husband, even as Adam found all the fulness of his life in God. This is true still today, women's lib notwithstanding. God gave him Eve, taken from his rib, under his heart. She could share his life in intimate communion of nature and of love. In her Adam's life was complete. Together they walked, and talked, and enjoyed each other's fellowship of love, so that they needed each other, as a reflection of man's need for covenant fellowship with God. And then, a short time after, the blow fell. Eve had gone her own way, to consort with the devil, with the result that the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life so completely overpowered her that her hand went out to the luscious fruit of the forbidden tree. She ate and suddenly realized that the spiritual bond as the basis for her marriage was broken by her own sinful act. A breach was fallen between her and her sinless husband, making it impossible for them to live in intimate fellowship together any longer. The helper became the temptress, a tool of Satan to draw her husband away from God into the fellowship of sin and darkness. The woman God gave him became his downfall. The great joy in his life aided to bring him into abject misery.

The lesson to be learned is that God's law is not a mere code of ethics which can be changed from time to time to suit our desires, or which can be broken with impunity. Traffic laws are often changed, and if not changed are still often broken without serious consequences, because the traffic officer did not happen to see it. God is the unchangeable God of heaven and earth. He is the living God, Whose holiness requires that He be loved, obeyed, and served. God's law is the will of God concerning every one of His creatures. For example, God laid down certain laws that a farmer must recognize and keep. The farmer must sow his seed in the springtime if he expects to gather a crop in the autumn. The soil must be prepared to receive the seed; rain and sunshine must come at the proper time and in the right amount.

God, Who controls the seasons, also controls the seed that is planted in the earth, and thus carries out His own law by bringing forth a harvest. Keeping God's law is a matter of life; breaking it brings death. The fish swims at liberty in the water, but deprived of that liberty it soon dies. Also in regard to God's moral law, the man who keeps it lives and walks at liberty, the soul that sins must die. God's law for man, who is created in the image of God, is that he shall love the Lord his God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength. We must love God as husband and wife, as parents and children, as boy friend and girlfriend, even in every relationship of life. The husband and father who provides for all the needs of his family out of the selfish motive of their temporal welfare not only makes himself guilty of sin, but becomes a bad influence for his family. The mother who fails to perform her household task in love to God, no matter how faithfully she serves her family, is still guilty of sin and influencing others to sin, even as "the woman thou gavest me." There is not a phase of our lives that God's law does not touch, always with the calling to be friend-servants of God.

Canst thou . . . ?

The very thought causes me to hang my head in shame. Do I keep all these things, applying God's law of love to every phase of my life? The answer is obvious: my desires, my thoughts, my ambitions, my words, acts and deeds, even at their best, are sinful. In fact, I find this rebel in me, that when I see a "Wet Paint" sign I have an urge to touch it. God's law arouses the lion of sin in me.

But that is not even the question: Do I? The question is: Can I keep God's law? Can I keep it perfectly? That perfectly bothers me. I might venture the excuse: I try. The law of God shakes its head, as it were, in disapproval. My conscience argues with me, because of the wrong I do, and God's law frowns on me. Canst thou keep God's law perfectly? It is perfectly, or not at all, for one single transgression against any one of the commandments reveals my lack of love to God, like the unfaithful thought of a wife against her husband. I am evil, born in sin. God requires truth within.

When I place myself before the mirror of God's law, I see myself as I really am, and am forced to cry out: "O wretched man! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" I am prone, that is, I am lying flat on my face, prone to evil, so that I only do evil continuously.

There is only one redeeming feature. That is, that this applies to me according to my sinful nature. By nature I am prone to all evil. The new man in Christ flees to the cross, to cling to the cross. God forbid that I should ever glory apart from that cross, in which is all my salvation.



## EDITORIAL

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

# "Our Song of Hope" ---A Critique (2)

In the June 1 issue we published *in toto* the provisionally adopted new confession of the Reformed Church in America called "Our Song of Hope." We suggested at that time that any Reformed person with some knowledge of our Three Forms of Unity would detect at once that the language of this proposed new confession differs sharply from that of the old creeds, and that there is an altogether different tone in "Our Song of Hope." Personally, we feel that this difference is so obvious and that the tone and the language of this document is so completely foreign to a Reformed man that critique is hardly necessary. In fact, the language is so foreign and the ideas are so "far out" that one hardly knows where to begin criticizing. But perhaps this is only an indication of how far apart churches of the Reformed family, who officially adhere to the Reformed confessions, have grown. By the same token the appearance and even the provisional adoption of such a document as this in the RCA should cause any who still love the Reformed faith in that denomination to ask themselves seriously, "What are we doing here?"

In the present article we propose to present some general criticisms.

Our first point of criticism concerns the fact that the General Synod of the RCA gave this document "provisional acceptance" in 1974, with final action scheduled for 1978. Writes Dr. Eugene Heideman on page 2 of *Our Song of Hope*:

"Our Song of Hope" was given provisional acceptance at the meeting of the Reformed Church's broadest judicatory, the General Synod, in June, 1974, with final action scheduled for June, 1978. Prior to the 1974 action, several thousand persons participated in discussions during the period 1958-1974. During the four years in which the document will have provisional status, the Reformed Church hopes that it will be widely used, studied and criticized, so that at the time of final action Our Song of Hope will not only reflect the faith of the Church and reverberate in the life of this world, but also magnify the name of our Lord. This book has been produced in order to encourage many in all the churches of Christendom as well as those beyond the

walls of the churches to participate in the process and make their suggestions

This is a telling paragraph.

First of all, the question arises as to the meaning of this provisional acceptance. Does this mean that the RCA in this document confesses its faith, but is not certain as to the precise contents of that faith? Does it mean that it is — at least in the abstract — entirely possible that in 1978 the RCA General Synod will declare that Our Song of Hope is after all not the expression of their faith? Does it mean that possibly the document may undergo radical revision in 1978? It would seem that these are fair inferences. For the avowed purpose of this method is "that at the time of final action Our Song of Hope will not only reflect the faith of the Church and reverberate in the life of this world, but also magnify the name of our Lord." And this can only mean that Our Song of Hope *does not yet* reflect the faith of the church. But this can only mean that this document is a contrived confession which is being foisted upon the denomination. And by means of this provisional acceptance the camel already has his nose in the tent of the RCA; and the danger is, of course, that in 1978 the entire camel will make his way inside the tent, crowd out whatever of a Reformed confession may be left in it, and confessionally upset the tent.

Worst of all, of course, is the fact that such contriving of a confession is contrary to the manner in which confessions come into being. Confessions are not made; they are born. They arise out of the bosom of the church. They are not artificially contrived, but are born usually out of conflict and frequently have even been written in the blood of the martyrs. They are not written so that they will *eventually* reflect the faith of the church; they express that faith *when* they are written. Go back in history to the time when the great confessional statements of Reformation times were written, and you will discover this to be true. Was the Belgic Confession written the way Our Song of Hope was composed? Were the Canons of Dordrecht provisionally accepted with a view to



possible final acceptance four years later? Were any of the great ecumenical creeds prepared in this fashion? True, very little information is furnished us as to the precise manner in which *Our Song Of Hope* was prepared. We are only informed that from 1958 to 1974 "several thousand persons participated in discussions." But I dare make an educated guess that this document is the work of some professional ecclesiastics, and that there was neither an expressed nor implied call out of the bosom of the churches for this creed. Its very language leaves this impression, too.

And what kind of ecclesiastical nonsense is proposed when it is stated that "This book has been produced in order to encourage many in all the churches of Christendom as well as those beyond the walls of the churches to participate in the process and make their suggestions"? Can Roman Catholics, Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Greek Orthodox, and even non-church members participate in the process of preparing a confessional statement of a Reformed church? Obviously the intention of this document is to make the RCA offensive to none, pleasing to as many as possible. The aim is broad-minded, colorless ecumenism. The result can only be that the RCA will become officially Laodicean, nauseating to the Lord Who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

Our second general criticism of *Our Song of Hope* concerns the language of this document. It is vague, ambiguous, lacking in precise and specific formulations, totally without anything which would identify this document as a confessional statement of a *Reformed* denomination. What is worse, this document is *admittedly* vague and ambiguous; and one can only come to the conclusion that it is *intentionally* so.

It is admittedly vague and ambiguous. For Dr. Heideman states in his Introduction, page 2, that even his commentary — and he served as secretary of the committee during 1971-74 — does not represent the only possible interpretation. He writes;

2. The official document is the twenty-one stanzas together with the prologue and prayer.

3. The other material in this book has been prepared to assist those who study the document in detail. The "Study Guide" has been prepared by the person who served as secretary of the committee during 1971-1974. *It will help many to understand the issues involved in the lines and stanzas of Our Song of Hope, but does not represent the only possible interpretation.* On the contrary, credal statements usually grow in meaning as they are used. Therefore, the interpretation of the secretary must be regarded as a launching pad rather than the last word.

Notice that *Our Song of Hope*, first of all, is not

capable of standing on its own feet. It needs interpretation in order to be understood. But a creed is already supposed to be an interpretation and setting forth in systematic form of the truth of Scripture. Here, however, we have a creed which itself needs interpretation. This is a violation of one of the fundamental requisites of a creed: it must be characterized by clarity. Instead, we have here an interpretation which needs interpretation.

If this were not bad enough, we also have a creed here which is capable of more than one interpretation! That offered in the "Study Guide" will help, "but does not represent the only possible interpretation." Still worse: this credal statement is going to grow in meaning as it is used! Who knows where this may end? It is obvious that this creed purposes to be all things to all men. The difficulty is that no truly Reformed man can be anything but totally dissatisfied with *Our Song of Hope*. For he will not be able to find the expression of his faith in it.

Later we expect to make specific criticisms by way of comparisons between *Our Song of Hope* and the Three Forms of Unity. But we wish to point out one example of the ambiguity — it could better be called gobbledegook — of this document. Throughout *Our Song of Hope* you will find the term "world" used many times. In a footnote on page 1 we are informed that *Our Song of Hope* uses the term "world" to mean "that matrix of relationships, natural and historical events, and institutional structures within which the human race lives," — whatever that may mean. I suggest that the reader take this definition and go back to the document as it appeared in our June 1 issue and substitute this definition wherever the word "world" appears. If the whole matter were not connected with the confession of the church and were not so dreadfully serious, it would be laughable.

More could be said along general lines. One might point out that the deliberate purpose of this new creed is not to separate the Reformed Church in America from other denominations; but it is exactly one of the purposes of creeds to distinguish and separate. One might point out that while the Three Forms of Unity are not being officially discarded and replaced by this new creed, yet that will be the effect, and soon the Three Forms of Unity will be totally unknown in the RCA. For "Without repeating all that has previously been set forth in credal formulae, this new confessional statement will be used in public worship, in religious education, and in re-affirming the traditional faith in the contemporary situation." (page 1) You see, the only result of the adoption of this creed will be the final and official death of the RCA as an identifiable Reformed denomination.

Next time we will turn to some specifics.



## EDITORIAL

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

# Who Were the Marrowmen?

Every now and then, both here and abroad, adherents of the doctrine of a general, well-meant offer of salvation will appeal for support of their views to the Marrowmen, as though they should be respected and considered authoritative for a Reformed view of the preaching of the gospel. Nothing could be farther from the truth, however; and to lean on the Men of the Marrow is to lean on a broken reed. They were some of the earliest proponents in Scottish church history of views which were actually a departure from the Reformed faith, and they were officially condemned as such.

For the sake of the record we wish to review this history and to show what the teachings of the "Marrow" and of the Marrowmen were. In this connection we can do no better than to quote from a brochure entitled *Universalism And The Reformed Churches*, published by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. This brochure refers to the "Calvinism" which holds to a free offer as "Modified Calvinism." And in the first part of this brochure, pp. 3 ff., there is a concise "History of Modified Calvinism." From this section we shall quote the story of the Marrowmen, as follows.

Every modification of Calvin's system of theology has taken place under the notion that God desires the salvation of all men. This notion lay at the root of the system of Arminius who was Professor of Theology at Leyden in Holland in 1603. His five points of doctrine in opposition to Calvinism were condemned by the Synod of Dort in 1618/19.

In England the notion of a universal desire in God for the salvation of all men was also the root principle of the Davenant School at the beginning of the seventeenth century. (Note: John Davenant was one of the British delegates to the Synod of Dordrecht. The British delegate was one of the weakest, doctrinally speaking, at the Synod. One of the delegates later became an avowed Arminian. HCH) This school taught that there is in the redemption purchased by Christ, an absolute intention for the elect and a conditional intention for the reprobate in case they do believe. It was the forerunner of the system of Moses Amyraut on the Continent, who better systemised the same principles under a doctrine of hypothetical redemption.

In 1645 an obscure writer, Edward Fisher, wrote

the first part of a book called "The Marrow of Modern Divinity" and its second part, which appears to be an attempt to correct the antinomianism of the first in 1649. Though it bore the imprimatur of Puritan licence, little more is known of the origin of the book, other than (that) it carried the commendatory letters of Caryl, Burroughes and Strong who were members of the Westminster Assembly (1643/49), and was also supported by Arrowsmith, Sprigge, Prittie and others, all of whom were of the Davenant School persuasion. The terms of the book are in every respect consistent with the theology of that school. The following sentences are a sample of its contents: —

1. "Christ hath taken upon Him the sins of all men."
2. Of Christ, "the Father hath made a deed of gift and grant unto all mankind."
3. "Whatsoever Christ did for the redemption of mankind, He did it for you."
4. "Go and tell every man without exception, that here is good news for him, Christ is dead for him."

In the Westminster Assembly (1643/49) the particularistic divines, led by the Scottish Commissioners, Rutherford and Gillespie, debated the question of limited atonement on the 22nd October 1645 with a strong body of Davenant divines, nine of whom are recorded by name in the minutes which record the debate in the Assembly. Both parties were agreed that the atonement contains an absolute intention for the elect only, but were not agreed that the atonement contained a conditional intention for the reprobate. The minutes reveal that the debate was entirely amicable. This attitude of the Assembly to the Davenant School was confirmed later in the same year on 4th December, when the Assembly defended the reputation of Moses Amyraut against the complaints of one Andrew Rivett.

While the Assembly did not include in its formularies any statement which entered the opinions of the Davenant School, it did not include any which specifically excluded them. It is clear that the Davenant School divines accepted the final formularies of the Assembly without protest, believing that their doctrines, while not included, were not excluded, and expecting that they would pass into the law of the Church by Act of Parliament.



The record shows that English Presbyterianism from its inception was broad in its doctrine of redemption. Not only were the doctrines of Arrow-smith and Calamy allowed, but those of Richard Baxter went unchallenged. It may be said that the School of Davenant in England was a basic reason why Calvinism did not take permanent root in England, in the same way that the School of Amyraut contributed to the decline in the theology of the Huguenot Church in France.

History provides ample evidence, that when a Church modifies her Calvinism, she loses her conviction and hold of the truth.

In spite of the 28 years of the persecuting and killing times which began with the restoration of Charles II to the English throne, and in spite of the weaknesses imposed on the Scottish Church by the Revolution Settlement in 1689/90, and the disturbed political situation which ensued during the first part

of the eighteenth century in Scotland, the Scottish Church maintained a fully particularistic doctrinal position. This, however, was disturbed during the second decade of that century when certain of her ministers, Hog, Boston, Erskine and others brought into their pulpits the doctrine of the Marrow of Modern Divinity, which, about seventy years before, had received wide support among the Davenant School divines.

The Calvinism of the Church was preserved, when the General Assembly, in its Acts of 1720 and 1722, condemned the book of the Marrow on several grounds, one of which was that its terms advocated a universality of redemption as to purchase. The Acts were a declaration of the doctrine of the Church as it was held at the time.

We will interrupt this interesting account at this point and reserve the rest of the story for the next issue.

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## TRANSLATED TREASURES

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# Acts of the Synod of Dordrecht

(Connection: In the previous section we saw that the Remonstrant party continued its underhanded maneuverings to gain "toleration" for itself. However, in several cities the Contra-Remonstrants had the support of the civil authorities in continuing to insist that the differences in the churches had to be resolved by synodical decision. Among these were Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Enkhuizen, Edam, and Purmerend.)

About this time the Ministers of the Church of Kampen, in the Province of Overijssel, who had accepted the views of the Remonstrants, with the help of the Magistrates cast out of the Ministry their fellow Minister Wilhelmus Stephani, Doctor of Sacred Theology, a very learned man who adhered to the truth, because he opposed their purposes. And by means of printed pamphlets and public sermons, full of slanders, they sought to make the Reformed Religion hated among the people.

Because of these changes and the consequent disruptions of the Churches, the Remonstrants, seeing that they were more and more hated, presented to the States a second Remonstrance, in March, 1617. In it they sought, with unbelievable shamelessness, to remove the blame for all the innovations from

themselves and to place it upon the Ministers who had remained firm in the adopted doctrine of these Churches. Over against this the other Ministers presented an extensive and pertinent reply, which they also delivered to the same States.

Since these long standing differences, both in the Churches and in the Republic, had brought about such a large number of evils, difficulties, disturbances, and confusion that every one who had at heart the welfare of the United Provinces and of the Reformed Churches in those Provinces understood clearly that the remedy of these miseries might no longer be postponed without noticeable damage to both the State and the Churches, but since the States were unable thus far to agree as to how to alleviate the situation, therefore his Royal Majesty, James I of Great Britain, according to his singular and upright devotion to these Lands and Churches, deemed it good to admonish the States-General no longer to allow this cancer to eat at the body of the Republic, but immediately to oppose those unsalutary disputes, divisions, schisms, and partisanship which openly threatened the State. At the same time he also very



earnestly prayed them that they would restore in its former purity the old and true Reformed doctrine which they had always confessed and which was established by the common consent of all Reformed Churches, and which had always been the chief foundation and bond of the very close friendship and alliance of long standing between his Kingdoms and these Provinces, and that they would root out the errors. This, he believed, could take place most properly through a National Synod, seeing that this was the ordinary, lawful, and most efficient remedy, which from of old had been used by Christians in such difficulties. Also the Illustrious Prince of Orange, Maurits, Stadhouder of the United Netherlands, did not cease to admonish the States-General, as well as the States of Holland and West-Friesland very earnestly and gravely – even as often previously, so now also daily – that as dear to them as was the preservation of the Republic and of the Church, so diligently also they should labor that these very sore evils might be remedied immediately. To this end, he also recommended above all the convening of a National Synod as an ordinary and most certain remedy; and he persisted in this, May 10. Also the States of Zeeland, through the honorable lords Maldere, Brouwer, Potteij, and Bonifacius de Jonge, admonished and begged the States of Holland and West-Friesland in their gathering, May 19, that since the disputes and disunity were becoming daily greater, to the very great danger of the Republic, and since many remedies had been tried until now in vain, they should give consent for the convening of a National Synod as an ordinary remedy for such evils, as something set forth by the Holy Ghost and always used by Christians. The States of Gelderland, Friesland, Groningen and Ommelanden in a friendly manner request the same through their Deputies.

But when the Remonstrants saw that the authorizing of a National Synod was so urgently recommended by the neighboring Kings, Princes, Republics, and Allies, yea, also by the chiefest and mightiest Cities of Holland and West-Friesland, and when they feared that the States of Holland and West-Friesland, of whom many were inclined to this and industriously promoted it, might at last be moved to consent to this, and that thus they would have to give account before an ecclesiastical tribunal concerning their doctrine and their actions, in order to escape that, they first proposed a new means to iron out the differences. They proposed that certain men, both political and ecclesiastical, of a fixed and equal number, should be chosen by the States of Holland and West-Friesland, and that these men should take counsel with one another and devise certain means of peace and unity which would be approved by the States and would thereafter be imposed upon the Churches. But when this did not succeed (since men

of understanding noted of what kind of persons this gathering would be composed and what was to be expected of it, and, besides, that such a course was unusual in the churches and was not appropriate for the removal of ecclesiastical differences of doctrine), then they considered that rather than to be driven to this necessity they had to attempt extreme measures; and on this account they took desperate measures.

For some Regents took the position that the convening of the National Synod which was then under discussion was contrary to the dignity and freedom of the Provinces, since every Province had complete power to decide in the matter of Religion as it thought good. They took the position that it was unseemly and improper to subject this their freedom to the judgment of the other Provinces; and they took the position that they ought to defend this right of supremacy in every way, yea, even if it be with weapons. Through these and similar reasons the feelings of those who were less cautious were so inflamed that the Regents of some Cities, plotting together, decided to engage city militia men who were bound by an oath of allegiance neither to the States-General, nor to his Excellency the Prince of Orange, the commander-in-chief, but only to themselves; they did this in order to protect the cause of the Remonstrants and their own authority, which they had endangered for the sake of the Remonstrants. This happened at Utrecht, in which city the States-General had a garrison, strong enough to protect against every uprising and mutiny; at Haarlem; at Leiden; and also at Gouda, Schoonhoven, Hoorn, and various other places. The Remonstrants incited the Magistrates of the Cities to do this, as can be clearly proved from various of their letters which were later captured. And thus the disunities of the Remonstrants would have brought these most flourishing Provinces in danger of an internal and civil war, unless the States-General, through their singular carefulness, and his Excellency, the Prince of Orange, through his never sufficiently praised watchfulness and bravery, had in a timely manner stamped out and suppressed this delirious madness. The States-General, seeing that the Provinces and the Churches were being brought into the greatest danger, deemed it good that the National Synod should no longer be postponed, but should be promoted at the earliest moment – the more so, seeing that the illustrious Lord Dudley Carleton, Ambassador of the royal court of Great Britain, had alerted them by a very excellent and careful address, October 6, which address the Remonstrants did not respect, but publicly slandered with a completely and shamelessly slanderous pamphlet under the title of *Weegschaal*. No one, whatever his position, even the States-General, the Prince of Orange, yea, even the Royal Majesty of Great Britain, was excluded from the slander and ridicule of their



slandorous tongue. This pamphlet the States-General condemned in a public edict as dishonorable and seditious; and they posted a liberal reward for anyone who would identify the author. Later Johannes Casimirus Junius, son of the very renowned Franciscus Junius, thoroughly refuted this pamphlet. At long last, December 11, the States-General ordered the convening of the National Synod, to be held, in the name of the Lord, on May 1 of the following year. At the same time they proposed some rules according to which they wanted the National Synod to be authorized and held. And since the Remonstrants did not appear to think much of the judgment of the

Netherlands Churches, and had always attempted to convince the people that they had no other views than did the Reformed Churches, therefore the States-General also saw fit to invite from all Reformed Churches from neighboring Lands, Principalities, and Republics certain theologians outstanding in Godliness, learning, and wisdom, in order that they should support the delegates of the Netherlands Churches by their judgments and counsel, and that thus these differences, having been investigated and judged as by a common judgment of all Reformed Churches, might be laid to rest more certainly, expeditiously, firmly, and with greater joy.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

# Exposition of the Book of Galatians (9)

By Rev. G. Lubbers

### THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL IN PAUL'S LIFE — continued (Gal. 2:19-21)

Now Paul lives an altogether different kind of life. He lives the life of one who has been crucified with Christ, and who was raised up from the dead with him. (Rom. 6:6-10) Paul's old man has been crucified with Christ. Yes, he still lives but not as heretofore. Really the subjective spiritual impulse of Paul's life is no more Paul. He is not the center of it any more. *Christ* lives in *me*. That is the difference. Paul is indwelt by the Spirit of Christ. His mind is really Christ's mind in him, and his will is Christ's desire in him, in such a way that Paul and Christ are united as Vine and branch, Head and member of the body. Without me you can do nothing. (John 15:1-5) Here is the mystic, spiritual union of a living faith. Here is that mystery of which Christ speaks when he says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." (John 15:10) Paul as the crucified one with Christ lives a resurrection-life, a newness of life. That is the positive side of Christ's life.

This he expresses as "living unto God." Here the old Paul no more lives, the one who would be justified by the works of the law, to perform works of merit. That Paul is dead forever! He can never again return to those things which he now counts as so

much loss and dung for the sake of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. (Phil. 3:7, 8) Now he serves the Lord His God with a free and good conscience. Now more dead works are his. (Heb. 9:14) He did serve sin but now he serves God, lives unto God. Yet, this life is not of Paul but of Christ. For Christ died. He died unto sin, the sin of all His people as Head of the covenant. Now he arose from the dead. He lives now as the Prophet, Priest, and King unto God. And we, Paul and all the saints, live in this life of Christ unto God through the power of the Holy Spirit. God's law is written in our hearts; we are not under law but under grace!

Yes, Paul lives *in* the flesh. This is not the same as living *according* to the flesh. In the latter sense "flesh" denotes the principle and the operation of sin and death. But living in the flesh means that Paul is still flesh and blood in this world until he dies. He must live the remainder of his earthly sojourn and pilgrimage in this flesh, this entire human nature, soul and body. He speaks of what he "now" lives in the flesh in distinction from what he will live when he will no longer live in this flesh in the ages to come. Flesh and blood and all human ties of the flesh shall then be no more. (I Cor. 15:50-52; Matt. 22:23-33) But what Paul now lives in the flesh, in every relationship in this flesh, under both tables of the Decalogue, he "lives in the faith of the Son of God." This is the faith by which he is justified in Christ. That he here



speaks of the “faith of the Son of God” does not refer to the faith whereby Jesus lived, but refers to Paul’s faith of which God is the object of all his reverence, worship, and holy expectation. His faith is in Jesus as the Son of God. That is the quintessence of Paul’s faith. God sent His Son to die for us in our flesh. Immanuel, God-with-us, is the very essence of the covenant life. All God’s promises are fulfilled in His beloved Son, in whom He is well-pleased. (Matt. 3:17) That is the essence of God’s decree. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Psalm 2:17; Acts 13:33) This is all fulfilled in Christ’s death and resurrection. By this faith Paul lives. It is the faith in the Son of God, Who is powerfully revealed to be God’s Son in the resurrection out of the dead. (Rom. 1:4)

What a rock-bottom assurance this faith in the Son is. He is the one Who loved Paul, loved all His own to the end. (John 13:1) And this love is such that it gave the sacrifice of love. It fulfilled the law of God. It was the “coin” which was necessary for payment and fulfillment of God’s justice, His just command. What the law could not do in that it was weak through sin, that is what God did in sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that sin might be condemned in the flesh, that the just demand of God might be fulfilled in Paul (in us) who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit, in the flesh. (Rom. 8:3, 4)

Yes, the Son of God was “delivered” unto death for us. Paul says, he was “delivered for me.” And this “me” is very emphatic in the text, being placed in the emphatic position in the sentence. Besides, the form of the pronoun *me* (*emou*) is very emphatic. Here is the key-note of the Gospel as it is picked up in the Heidelberg Catechism in Question and Answer 1. And, once more, here is an argument which comes straight from Paul’s believing heart. Had Paul given beautiful dialectic apology of faith in the verses 15-18, here he gives the final and most basic apology in confessing what was written upon the very table of his heart. Here are the rivers of water which flow from his bowels in Christ Jesus. He has a full and blessed heart and his lips overflow with praise.

#### **CHRIST DID NOT DIE IN VAIN (Gal. 2:21)**

There are here two alternatives given by Paul. Righteousness is either by works of the law, or they are by grace in Christ’s death. There is no in-between; it is either-or, not both-and. Works are works and grace is grace! (Rom. 11:6)

Now if salvation were possible even for one moment by law, and the law had power to save us and to make the sinfully weak man strong to keep it (Rom. 8:3), then we would not need the Son of God to love us, and give Himself for our sins on the cross. The cross would be purposeless and useless and un-

necessary. Calvary would not be necessary. The travelers to Emmaus would indeed have been on the right track when they muse that if Christ now lives, why did He have to die. Then the Cross would be in vain; Christ would have “died in vain.” We did not really need a Savior; we could save ourselves by the keeping of the law, as asserts the proud heresy of Pelagius and all who hate the Cross of Christ. Then the “grace of God” would have to be set aside for works of law. But that is what Paul will not do! He will glory in the Cross of Christ.

Well may Peter and all those in Antioch take this to heart. And the Galatian churches must not change this Gospel for another gospel, which is not another, but is mere disturbance of the faith, a great and troublesome plague under the sun. Upon those who would rob the church of her liberty the wrath of God comes, yea, abides.

#### *Chapter 3*

#### **THE THREEFOLD QUESTIONS OF GALATIANS 3:1-5**

We do well to write verbatim what these questions are. 1. O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you? 2. Did you receive the Spirit out of works of law or by the hearing of faith; having begun in the spirit are ye made perfect by the flesh? 3. Is the supply of the Spirit and the Worker of miracles in you such, that it is out of the works of law, or by the hearing of faith?

Paul now will develop on the background of these questions, questions which to ask are to give the correct answer, the great relationship between Old and New Testament, the promise and the fulfillment. And he brings in the example of the faith of Abraham, the father of all believers, both of the Old Testament and the New Testament saints, to show that justification cannot be anything else but out of the faith of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Seed. This chapter then ends in the grand conclusion “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3:26), and again in verse 29, “and if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.”

Now let us try to analyze these questions here set forth by Paul to the Galatian churches.

The first question by implication accuses the Galatians of “being bewitched.” They must have been brought under the “spell” of some charmer, even as snakes are charmed by men. They surely are not in their right mind to set aside the Cross of Christ for a teaching of salvation by “works of law” which we must perform. Did Paul have some individual man or woman in mind when he asks “who?” (*tis*) in Gal. 5:7? He asks “Who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?” At any rate, when Paul sees the



glory of the Cross of Christ, and the preaching of this Cross in all its vividness and clarity, he has reasons to doubt the spiritual sanity of these fickle Galatians.

Yes, these Galatians show themselves as those who are without understanding of the Gospel and spiritual truths of the Gospel. Paul calls them "*anoetoi*," without understanding, without a mind which perceives reality. They are not called "fools" in the sense of those who say: there is no God. It is the same term which Jesus uses to arrest the attention of the two travelers to Emmaus. There the term "fools" (without understanding) is connected with their being "slow of heart to believe" all the Scriptures concerning the truth that the Christ "must" suffer all these things to enter into his glory. (Luke 24:25) They were such who needed their mind enlightened, and they needed basic opening of all the Scriptures, beginning with Moses, the Psalms and all the Prophets. Thus it is also here with these Galatians. They need instruction in the basics once more, even though Christ had been so very clearly and powerfully preached in their midst.

Paul employs a very graphic description here in this connection, "before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been *evidently set forth*, crucified among you." Christ is "portrayed" in the midst of the Galatians. The term in the Greek is "*prographee*," to write before, to set forth in the most "graphic" manner.

When Paul was finished preaching in the midst of the Galatians it was so vivid, that the congregation had stood near the Cross of Christ itself, and had grasped the meaning for their lives that they are sinners, who were in need of this salvation, as "sinners" out of the Gentiles. But now they are "so soon" fallen away from Him Who called them to faith and hope and salvation to another "gospel" which denied the Cross and all of its implications. Truly they must be bewitched!

The second question is really the crucial question in the mind of Paul to which the correct answer determines the matter in the mind and experience of the Galatians. It is a matter of the subjective "receiving" of the Spirit of Christ in their lives to give them faith in the Son of God. What was their spiritual-psychological experience in this regard? Did they forsooth have to perform a lot of works of the Levitical law to become Christians? Did they need to pass through the door of Jewry and keep the law of the Old Testament shadows first? Did they first need to be circumcised according to the law? Is that how they experienced the operation of the Spirit in their lives and in their midst? Or, did they hear the Gospel of the Cross, and did they believe it, and was this faith the evidence of the working of the Spirit in their mind and heart? That is the crucial question which should bring them to their senses.

## MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

August 1, 1977

Dear Timothy,

I want to interrupt our discussion of I Timothy 4 in this letter. Another matter has come up which I consider to be quite urgent, and which has some practical implications, too, for your work in the ministry. I refer to the debate which is going on concerning the book of Harold Lindsell, editor of *Christianity Today*, and entitled: "The Battle For The Bible."

I hope by this time you have read this book, for Lindsell takes a strong stand for the infallible inspiration of Scripture. I do not intend to write you in detail concerning this book, however. In this letter I am more interested in the debate which is going on about it. And, more particularly yet, I am interested in the remarks which Lester DeKoster made about this book in a series of editorials in *The Banner*.

You are aware of the fact that these editorials were written a couple of months ago already. I had intended to write you about them earlier, but I put off writing because it seemed impossible to me to

make head or tail out of what DeKoster was saying.

Recently, however, I listened to a tape of a public debate between Lindsell and DeKoster in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The debate was concerning the book which Lindsell had written, and DeKoster repeated many of the things which he had written in his editorials. The result was that DeKoster's position became much clearer. In attacking Lindsell's book he stated what his own position is on this question of infallible inspiration. It is a very wrong view and filled with danger. I thought it well to discuss this matter with you in this letter.

The debate itself was rather interesting. I do not want to get into the question in this letter of who won the debate. This is always a difficult matter to decide, especially because DeKoster is something of a professional debater, and one received the impression that he was more interested in scoring points than in defending and developing the truth. Nor did Lindsell always answer DeKoster's arguments in an adequate



manner. I am not sure why he did not do this. It may have been that he was flabbergasted at DeKoster's technique and arguments and was, on the spur of the moment, at a loss how to answer them.

At any rate, DeKoster brought up points which are worth discussing. Hence, this letter.

The major point which DeKoster made, both in his editorials and in his speech, was this. The child of God, when he holds a Bible in his hand, may be sure that he holds the Word of God in his hand. It does not matter whether he holds the King James Version, the Dutch *Statenvertaling*, Luther's German translation, the Revised Standard Version, or presumably any other translation; whatever Bible he may have, he may be assured that he has the Word of God.

Now this, in itself, and with some reservations concerning more modern translations or paraphrases, is correct. But DeKoster's position on this is quite different from what ours ought to be.

Lindsell answered this point of DeKoster by saying that this was not entirely true. We may, Lindsell said, believe we have the Bible as the Word of God in our hands only insofar as the translation is accurate and only insofar as we have assurance that the Greek and Hebrew text is the Autographa (the original manuscripts which Paul, Peter, Moses, David, etc. wrote). Lindsell was referring, of course, to two things in this statement. One is that we do not have the Autographa any more, and the copies which we have possess many scribal errors in them. The second is that a translation cannot ever render with complete accuracy the original Greek and Hebrew in which the Bible was written.

DeKoster made hay out of this position of Lindsell. He reminded Lindsell that we do not have the Autographa any more, and therefore cannot really have anything to do with it. He furthermore insisted that if Lindsell's position is correct, then we need a "priesthood of scholars" to tell us what the Word of God is. Only these scholars are able to tell us, through the study of Textual Criticism, what the Autographa contained; and only these scholars can tell us what the correct translation of the Greek and Hebrew really is.

Lindsell did not, in my judgment, answer this argument very forcibly. It would appear as if DeKoster has a point here; and if there is anything which a child of God hates and fears, it is to have a priesthood of scholars come between him and the Word of God. The Reformation delivered us from this. We pray God we will never return to that slavery.

But what must we say about this?

It is true that the Autographa are long gone. It is

also true that scribes who copied the Scriptures made many errors in copying them. It is also true that the science of Textual Criticism (in distinction from Historical-Literary, or Higher, Criticism) seeks to discover what the Autographa really contained. It is also true that translations are never completely accurate. Everyone knows this.

But does all this mean that we need a priesthood of scholars to tell us what the Word of God is? This is far from the truth. Lindsell should have made this clear. What is the truth of the matter? In the first place, although it is true that there are many copying errors in the copies of the Autographa which we possess, there are a couple of other truths which should be kept in mind. In the first place, there is almost no question at all about the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. This is so true that there is not really any Textual criticism which is involved in studying the Old Testament. In the second place, although there are many errors in the copies, it must be remembered that all these errors are relatively insignificant. Why is that? That is because no less than 7/8ths of the New Testament is without any error whatsoever. In all of this we are absolutely sure we have the Autographa. Of the remaining 1/8th, there is therefore a question. But even here, the problem is not very great. Of this 1/8th, there is only 1/60th concerning which there is any real doubt. In almost all the other cases we may also be sure what the Autographa read. But what about this 1/60th? Of that remaining fraction there is only a small part which substantially alters the meaning of the text. Oftentimes, e.g., there is some question whether the Autographa reads "our" or "your." Obviously, a difference such as this cannot alter the meaning of the text. But even then, the difference in the meaning almost never touches upon any question of doctrine. There is about 1/1000th of the whole text of the New Testament where there is some question of meaning, and in these places, with a few exceptions, there is no doctrinal question involved. And, finally, where there is a doctrinal question involved, (in a few places at best), the particular doctrine involved does not rest for its proof upon these passages alone, but is taught in many other passages in Scripture.

We might well marvel at the amazing preservation of the text of the Bible. God, in a marvelous and astonishing way, preserved an accurate text over many thousands of years.

It is also true that translations, in the nature of the case, can never be wholly accurate. Nevertheless, once again, the King James Version of the Bible is remarkably accurate — so accurate in fact that a minister preaching from it need almost never question the translation in his sermons.

How is it then that we can be sure that we hold the



Word of God in our hands when we hold the King James Version of the Bible? This is an important question. God's people have to know that they possess the Word of God when they read their Bibles with their families, in their devotions, in society, in Church, etc. And they may be sure of this, too. They need never doubt that their Bible is indeed the Word of God. And when they read and study that Bible, God will indeed speak to them through and by means of that Word. You must, as I have written you before, assure God's people of this.

Does that mean that our King James Version is without any flaw? Of course not. The following illustration will make this clear. Supposing that I visit our First Church and worship in that beautiful auditorium. I may, if I arrive early enough, have an opportunity to take a tour of the building. It may also be that, as I tour the building, I discover a few flaws. Perhaps there are a few light bulbs burned out in the chandeliers. Perhaps there may even be a broken window in one of the basement rooms. I may even find the mortar coming loose and a little paint peeling in one dark corner. Does all this mean that now I come to the conclusion that this is no longer First Church? I may argue that, because the Church is no longer such as it originally was, it is not First Church. But this is patently absurd. So it is with the Bible. There may be a few flaws of a very minor nature in our King James Version so that it differs slightly from the original. But this does not mean that we do not have God's Word any more. Any one who takes this position does not know what he is talking about.

That is one point which I wanted to make.

It would seem that, up to this point, DeKoster has the better of the argument. But such is far from the case.

The second point makes this clear. The second point which DeKoster made which is of significance is that we know we have the Word of God when we hold our Bibles in our hands because of the testimony of the Spirit in our hearts. The Spirit testifies that our Bibles are the Word of God.

Lindsell answered this remark of DeKoster by saying that he did indeed believe this, but that the objective testimony of the Bible itself was also important. Admittedly Lindsell was not too clear on this point either in his book or in the debate. But he made, e.g., the remark that if all we have is the subjective testimony of the Spirit then the Spirit speaks out of two sides of His mouth because He tells Dr. Daane one thing about the teaching of the Bible and John Calvin another.

And this is a point which has to be emphasized. Repeatedly in his editorials and in his speeches during the debate DeKoster referred to Article V of the Confession of Faith which states that we believe the Bible is the Word of God "because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts, that they (the books of the Bible) are from God."

The strange and deceitful part of this argument is that not once did DeKoster read the rest of that article which adds: "Whereof they carry the evidence in themselves." Does DeKoster think that nobody reads the Confession of Faith any more? Does he think that nobody knows what Article V teaches?

What is the point?

Before I talk about this, I had better recognize the fact that this letter has become long enough and that, therefore, I had better close for this time.

Fraternally,  
H. Hanko

## THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

# Our Appeal to Scripture (2)

*Rev. J. Kortering*

The Bible has many writers, but one Divine Author.

The message of the Bible is directly from God: salvation from sin through the blood of Jesus unto the glory of God.

The Bible contains no errors; it is truth.

The Bible has withstood throughout the years every conceivable attack from unbelievers.

The Bible claims for itself Divine Authorship and its pages prove that it is the Word of God.

These statements express the faith of the believers



concerning the Bible. Our appeal to Scripture is a matter of faith.

### NEED FOR FAITH

Since the Bible is God's Word, it stands to reason that our attitude toward that Word will be the same as our attitude toward the God who revealed it. If we have a wrong view of God, we will have a wrong view of His Word; if we have a right view of God, we will have a right view of His Word.

This is crucial in the discussion that is taking place in Reformed circles concerning the Word of God. You may be somewhat familiar with this, especially the repeated reference to a battle for the Bible. In the deepest sense, such a battle is not simply for the Bible, rather it concerns the God of the Bible. If we really believe in Him, why should we question His Word? If we love God, should not this love manifest itself in our attitude toward His Word?

We can illustrate this from the home situation. Your parents often speak with you. They encourage you, warn you, comfort you, depending upon the need. Do their words mean anything to you? When they admonish you and sometimes threaten you with punishment if you should do wrong, do you know that they mean it and that therefore you had better obey? Similarly, if you are in trouble and are really mixed up and need direction and encouragement, and they talk with you, do you take their advice to heart, or is it simply their opinion and you will decide for yourself whether it is good or not? What I'm saying is this, your response to their words depends upon your respect for them as persons. If you really love them and know that they love you, you will gladly receive their advice and be thankful that they care enough to encourage you. If you question their motives and think that they are only seeking themselves, you will be skeptical of anything they say.

Isn't this same thing true about our relationship with God? If we are going to take His Word and believe it and follow it, we have to have faith in *Him*. The Bible says the same thing. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," Heb. 11:6. Such faith is described in the preceding verses: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen," Heb. 11:1. By such faith it is given unto us to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, Mark 4:11. Do you get the point? Faith in God means that we know that God has more knowledge than we do, hence we can certainly rely upon His Word. God knows far better than we do as to what is best for us, hence His instruction concerning life is worth following. God is the only source of truth. His Word is certainly trustworthy in this world of change and decay.

This is a matter of faith, not only in His Word, but in God Himself.

It follows from this that our response to His Word is more than intellectual capitulation, more than a surrender of the will. It is a matter of loving obedience. Faith joins us to Jesus Christ Who is the way, truth, and the life. He is our living Lord! Out of Christ flows forth the love God has for us and enters into our hearts. That love takes control of our hearts. Did not the inspired Apostle John express it beautifully? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," I John 4:10. This explains why we gladly receive His instruction, gladly believe all that God tells us about Himself, ourselves, and our need for salvation, as well as the way that God has brought it to pass, our life of gratitude, and our future glory. God loves us, and out of that love, we love Him. Hence by faith, a faith that is activated by that love from our heart, we respond to God and love His Word.

Moved by love for us, He gives us His Word for our good. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," II Tim. 3:16, 17. Hence our response to that Word is that we trust that Word, follow it, obey it, and rejoice in its truth.

We have faith in the God Who gave it to us.

### SOURCE OF THAT FAITH

How then is such faith obtained?

Perhaps you have already wrestled with the profundity of this question. You may have discussed your faith with someone else that doesn't believe the way you do. Maybe you even had the opportunity to talk with someone that follows strange gods, false leaders, and therefore is spiritually lost in sin. Then again you may have had contact with a person that was once within the sphere of the Christian church but fell away and no longer cares about spiritual things. No matter what the circumstances, there is the same pain that a person feels within His heart. What can be done to change such a person? How can he be led to believe in the true God and forsake his evil way?

We know the answer of course. God must give faith to that person. Faith is God's gift. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast," Eph. 2:8, 9.

A related point comes to mind, however: how does God give faith? Certainly faith doesn't just drop down out of heaven and suddenly a person begins to



love God whereas before he didn't. No, God uses means, tools if you will, by which He puts faith in the hearts of all those for whom Christ died. On the basis of His own elective love, grounded in the perfect obedience of Christ on the cross, God bestows the gift of faith upon each one of His children. This He does by the preaching of the gospel. The well-known words of Paul apply here, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. 10:17. The preceding context shows to us that this "word of God" is the preaching of that word: "How shall they preach except they be sent?" This preaching is necessary for anyone to call upon the name of the Lord and be saved, verse 13. The example of the Samaritan woman confirms this as well. After she had called the men of the city to hear Jesus, they responded, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves, for we know that this is indeed the Christ the Savior of the world," John 4:42.

In order for one to have faith in God, he must come under the preaching of the Word whereby God works faith by the Holy Spirit.

We add to this one more point. One does not simply wander into a church by chance, he is divinely guided. We may not respond to the fact that God gives faith by the preaching by saying that it is simply up to God to get them to church or to hear the preaching. God works in hearts before they come under the preaching. He works in them by making them seek, ask questions, wrestle with life's problems. Here is our calling as believers. As they begin to search, we must show them the Bible, God's Word. It contains direction, truth, hope, and salvation. As we witness to them about these things and pray with them, God works in them; and if they are truly children of God, they will also desire to learn more, especially through the preaching of the Word. It is not enough to hear believers speak about Christ; one must also hear Christ. Hence we must encourage them to come to church with us, learn more of God's Word. By these means God works according to His good-pleasure.

From this we must conclude that at every opportunity, we have to show to others the Word of God and its truth. And we must do so in obedience to Christ. Then they too will ask us a reason of the hope that is within us.

### EVIDENCE OF THAT FAITH

Every true believer reverences the Word of God. In fact, we can go so far as to say, it is a sure proof of faith. That doesn't mean that children of God do not wrestle with questions, sometimes even doubts. But through all these struggles, they learn anew that God's Word is their direction, a sure foundation for their faith.

Thus the children of God have expressed them-

selves throughout the ages of the history of the Christian church.

Did not the Psalmist declare, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my pathway"? Psalm 119:105.

You recall the heroic words of Martin Luther: "Since then your majesty and your lordship desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason — I do not accept the authority of popes and councils for they have contradicted each other, my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me." And don't forget that because of this position he literally endangered his own life. He appealed to Scripture.

Listen to the words of our Reformed forefathers.

"We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without doubt, all things contained in them, not so much because the church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts, that they are from God, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are fulfilling," Netherlands Confession of Faith, Article 7.

May you covenant young people be part of that great people of God who boldly confess that the Bible is the Word of God.

We live in times of spiritual testing.  
There are many winds of doctrine.  
There are prophets of doom.  
There are blind leaders of the blind.

God has given us light in the midst of such darkness. That light is in His Holy Word.

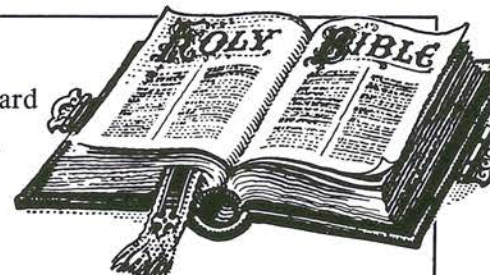
Make it a large part of your life. Read it, pray over it, reflect upon it, believe all that is contained in it, and conform your life according to its direction.

Of such is our appeal to Scripture.

And the God of peace shall abide with you.

Know the standard  
and follow it.

Read  
THE STANDARD BEARER.





*SIGNS OF THE TIMES*

# The Red Horse

*Rev. H. Veldman*

In the Lord's Prayer, that perfect and model prayer, we are also taught to pray: Thy Kingdom come. How important is this second petition of our Lord's perfect prayer when we consider our Lord's coming and the signs of that coming! We understand, of course, that this coming of our Lord Jesus Christ does not depend upon our praying of this petition. This coming will not come to a halt as soon as we stop praying for it. This kingdom will come and is coming. To pray, however, for the coming of the kingdom surely means, in the first place, that our prayers must never be in conflict with it. We must never pray for things which deny the signs of His coming. We must never pray for earthly peace, for an earthly peace that is supposed to be righteous and enduring, that wars and rumours of wars may never come, etc. However terrible these wars and rumours of wars may be, far more terrible would be a world at peace and without war! This would mean that Jesus would never come upon the clouds of heaven. Secondly, to pray for the coming of this kingdom, besides meaning that it may ever come in our hearts and minds, also means that we instruct our children in regard to the signs of our Lord's coming. How terrible it is when the Lord comes as a thief in the night, or when the Bridegroom comes and we are wholly unprepared for it as the five foolish virgins of Matt. 25! Indeed, we must instruct our children in this truth. And, thirdly, we must also pray that the Lord may come as His coming is set forth in the divine scriptures. We are familiar with the precursory signs. These have been set forth in a previous article. This, of course, does not mean that we pray for and delight in these signs as such. How would this be possible? Wars and rumours of wars, persecutions, famines and earthquakes, the antichristian kingdom with its unprecedented persecution for the faithful followers of the Lamb are not things in which as such we can delight. They must, of course, be viewed as the signs of Christ's coming. As these signs materialize and develop, we shall hear in them the footstep of the approaching crucified Man of Sorrows, now the King of kings and the Lord of glory. Besides, the people of God certainly can rejoice in them, if only we understand that they are signs of judgment. After all, our praying for these signs is strictly dependent upon our position in the midst of the world. Do we love

this world? Do we cultivate and enjoy the friendships and associations of this world? Are we pilgrims and strangers in the earth and treated as such? Do we hate them that hate God? Are they our enemies who are God's enemies? Do not the souls of the martyred saints under the altar cry for vengeance? Indeed, when these judgments of the holy and righteous God are visited upon the wicked, this is not so terrible after all. Indeed, everything depends upon our position in the midst of the world, upon our longing for the manifestation of God's righteousness and His vengeance upon the wicked and ungodly.

In this article we would call your attention to the second horseman of the Apocalypse, to him who rides the red horse. In our preceding article we called attention to the black horse. We did this because this horseman surely describes very vividly the characteristics of our present day and age. The same reason motivates us in this article. How true it is that also this horseman is riding his red horse in our present day! We read in Rev. 6:3, 4: "And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

The identity of this horseman and his horse is plain. The colour of this horse is red. Unto this horseman was given a great sword; power was given unto him to take peace from the earth and that men should kill one another. Red is the colour of passion and anger, of wrath and bloodshed. This is plainly indicated in Is. 63:1-2 and Heb. 12:29. The man that cometh from Edom is red in his apparel, like unto him that treadeth in the winepress. The sword given this horseman is the sword of the magistrate, of government; it is the government that wages war. And with this sword this horseman takes peace from the earth, causes men to kill one another. So, this second horse with its rider represents war. How characteristic this is of our present day and age!

Let us look at this horse, particularly in the light of history. Also this horseman is, of course, controlled and directed by our Lord Jesus Christ. That this horse has a rider means, we understand, that it does not run



around aimlessly, at random, but that it is controlled and directed. And this second horse is directed by the Christ. Red, we repeat, is the colour of passion, anger, and wrath. This certainly means that this passion and wrath, slumbering within the hearts and souls of men, are aroused and called into action. It is the Lamb who operates through these evil passions, so that peace is taken from the earth and men kill one another.

This horse is the horse of war. Nations have their beginning at the tower of Babel. The Lord had commanded the people to scatter upon the face of the earth. But man rebelled, and, led by the mighty Nimrod, would concentrate in one place, in the valley of Shinar, build a city there and in its center erect a tower that would reach unto heaven. Man would unite into one universal kingdom against the Lord. But the Lord confused their speech and caused the people to scatter; and here, at Babel, we have the origin of nations. And now wars have raged throughout the history of the world. Thus it was throughout the Old Dispensation. The first mighty kingdom is that of Egypt. Egypt is followed by the empires of Assyria, Babylon, of the Medes and Persians, the Greek-Macedonian, and finally Rome. Far more pronounced and world-wide are these wars in the New Dispensation, when Christ comes, ascends into heaven, takes the Book of God's decree, and causes these four horsemen to dash forth out of God's decree, including the red horse. What wars have been fought throughout the ages of the New Dispensation! Rome is conquered by heathen hordes that swept down upon the imperial city from the north and east, after Rome had conquered Greece. Throughout the history of Europe, the various nations of that continent have been at war with one another. The undersigned heard a radio sermon several years ago in which the number of these wars was stated, and it was an appalling figure. Later it is Spain against England and the Netherlands, France against England, and in this struggle between France and England these countries also struggle for supremacy in the New World, America, and the French and Indian wars are only a part of this struggle. Then it is France with England against Germany, in 1914 and again in the second world war. Our own country, ever since its beginning, has had a war in every generation: the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the Spanish War in 1898.

Indeed, these wars, instead of disappearing, are increasing, not only in number but also in ferocity. It is surely true that this Red Horse is dyeing the earth red. The First World War was world-wide; the Second was fiercer. Since 1945 the world has been at war constantly, as in Korea, and in Vietnam. We have had hot wars and cold wars; and today the world is witnessing a mad race for nuclear supremacy. And all

this, we understand, is controlled and directed by the Crucified and Glorified Lamb; directed by Him, this red horse, controlling the evil passions and jealousies of men, goes forth with his sword, slaying men by the thousands and millions.

How true this is today! Do we see this sign of our Lord's coming in our present day? Does it speak to us? And what is our answer to it? The mighty nations of the world today are constantly watching one another. The United States and Russia are ceaselessly attempting to survey each other. Of course, there is no trust between them. Whatever social injustices are committed by the U.S.S.R. are condemned by our country; yet, although condemning them, we must be careful that we do not offend this mighty power. Each country is aware of the other's potential. The leaders of the earth speak of disarmament, of controlling and decreasing the nuclear weapons, of preventing another world war. And yet, at the same time, the rulers of our government declare very plainly that we must retain our military forces, and that, to insure peace, we must continue to be the strongest nation in the world.

How unutterably sad it is, on the one hand, but also how perfectly in harmony with the scriptures, that the church today, nominally speaking, joins in this search for worldly, earthly peace! That the world clamors for peace we can understand. We can understand that they speak of curbing these destructive forces. And yet they also realize that their preservation lies in their remaining strong and powerful. Fact is, the mighty powers of the earth cannot trust one another. Of course not! Are not all men haters of God and of His Christ? And this also means that they are haters of one another. Indeed, we can surely understand the world's quest for peace.

What concerns us, however, is that the church of today is joining in this search for peace. Yet this need not surprise us. In Rev. 13 we have Scripture's setting forth of the kingdom of the antichrist. The first beast, rising out of the sea, with its seven heads and ten horns, represents this power from its political aspect. However, this chapter also speaks of another beast. This second beast, rising up out of the earth, has two horns like a lamb and he speaks as a dragon. This beast represents the antichrist from his scientific, philosophic, and religious aspect. Here we have the picture of the false church. And this second beast serves the first; in fact, together they present to us the two aspects of the antichrist. More and more today the church is engaged in a social gospel. More and more it seeks and strives to make this world a better place in which to live. It would improve the world by attempting to curb and destroy all sickness and diseases. It would rectify all social injustices and inequities. It would also terminate all wars and



rumours of wars. Already many years ago the undersigned heard a prayer that was uttered repeatedly: a prayer for a righteous, lasting, and enduring peace. How wonderful it would be if only the peoples of the earth would learn and understand the utter folly of war, if only the nations would beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks! How often we hear today the petition that we and our children may be spared the horrors and devastations of war!

Let us not be deceived. A wicked world at peace would be far worse than that wicked world characterized by wars and rumours of wars. Jesus is coming! He is coming throughout the ages. And one of the signs of His coming is the Red Horse, the horse of

war. This horse is controlled and directed by the Christ of God, the Lamb of God and of Calvary. He sends forth this horse out of God's decree. These wars must be. The wicked, saith my God, shall have no peace. It is only when the antichrist shall have established his kingdom that the world will be characterized by universal peace. However, this will not be of long duration. At the end of the ages God and Magog will rise up and attack this antichrist. That will be the last battle of the ages. At the conclusion of this terrible struggle Jesus will return upon the clouds of heaven. He will then make all things new. May the people of God, therefore, view this red horse as sent forth by the Christ, and may it comfort us with the blessed assurance that Jesus' final appearance upon the clouds of heaven is drawing nigh.

## GUEST ARTICLE

# God's Word: A Lamp and a Light

*Rev. J. Slopsema*

When traveling in your car at night, it is a good idea to turn on the headlights or you will end up in the ditch.

When walking down a deserted trail in the dead of night, it is a good idea to have a flashlight or you will become hopelessly lost.

And when following the path that leads to salvation, it is a good idea to take along your Bible or you will lose the way. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:105)

Our earthly sojourn is a passing through the darkness of a terrible spiritual night. At the fall darkness descended upon the earth — the darkness of sin and death, the darkness of God's wrath against sin. Ever since the fall man has had to make his way through the night.

But there is a path that leads out of this darkness, that leads to the light of a new day, to the glory and salvation of heaven. Take that path, follow it throughout your life and it will bring you to heaven. It is the way of salvation.

That does not mean, of course, that we are saved by what we do, by our own good works. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. All our salvation is in Christ. We are saved only because of His cross. But that does not

alter the fact that to attain the salvation of heaven we must follow the way of salvation. God does not bring us to heaven apart from the way we live and walk. He does not save someone in Christ and then allow that person to live in sin and wickedness. He rather causes that individual to love Him, to serve Him, and to walk in good works. And that is the path that leads to heaven — the way of serving God, the way of good works.

There are, however, other paths down which one can go, depending on what he really wants and desires. There are those, for example, whose one aim and goal in life is to attain earthly riches and wealth. Life for them consists in the abundance of things which a man possesses. Consequently, they set their feet on the path that leads to earthly treasures. Their whole life is aimed in this direction. They will do anything and everything for earthly wealth.

Others are interested in having fun and a good time. Their heart is set on the pleasures of this world. Their motto is "Let us eat, drink, and be merry." Consequently, they follow the path that leads to earthly pleasure. Their whole life is centered around the entertainments of the world.

Others are more concerned with friends, popularity, and social standing. Consequently, you will find



them on the path that leads to the attainment of their heart's desire.

And so there are many paths in life down which one can go, all depending on what one seeks most in life.

But principally there are only two possible paths. It is either the path that leads to salvation, or the path that leads to earthly treasures and pleasures, to popularity and social standing and to whatever else it is that the sinful heart might aspire. And these two paths are mutually exclusive. One can not walk them both at the same time. It is a matter of either . . . or. No man can serve two masters.

On which path are you?

If your heart has been touched by God's grace, if the grace of God controls your life, then your heart and affections will be set on the things which are above. Your chief desire and one purpose will be to attain the salvation of Christ. And your feet will be on the path that leads to eternal glory.

But we must be guided along that path. The way must be shown to us. Remember, it is spiritual night now. And that is what God's Word does. God's Word, the Bible, is a lamp unto our feet, a light upon our path that shows us the way of salvation. Follow the way of the Bible and you will be on the path that leads to salvation. Of this you can be sure. It will never lead you off the path. It will never give you wrong directions. You can trust the Bible. You can depend on it to show you the way. It is, remember, God's Word.

And this Word of God is the only guide that you can depend on. There are many guides other than the Bible that one could follow, and which many do. There are those, for example, who are guided by their feelings. They do what they feel like. They do what feels good to them. They do what they feel is right. Others are guided by reason. What they do and how they live are determined by what sounds reasonable and plausible, by what they think is best. Others are guided by their friends. What their friends do, what their friends like, what their friends suggest is the determining factor in their life. Others are guided by the majority. Others are guided by astrology and superstition. Others are guided by the general consensus of the intellectual community.

Take these, however, as your guide through life and sooner or later they will lead you off the way of salvation. Take these as your guide, apart from the Bible, and you will lose your way. You will become hopelessly lost in the darkness of our present spiritual night. Only one true and faithful guide there is that will show you the way of salvation. That is God's Word, the Bible.

But it can be your guide only if you use it. When you are taking a long trip and do not know the way, then you take along a good road map. A map will show you which roads to take, which turns to make. A map will guide you to your destination. But that map will not do you much good if you simply leave it in the glove-compartment and never so much as look at it. To serve as a guide it must be used and studied. So is it also with the Bible. It will not show you the way of salvation unless you use it. A closed Bible that is seldom read simply can not serve you as a guide. A Bible that is placed on some obscure shelf, left to gather dust is like a flashlight without batteries, a lantern without oil. It sheds absolutely no light on your path. A Bible must be used; it must be read; it must be studied diligently. The Bible that serves as a lamp unto our feet and a light upon our path is the Bible that has become worn and tattered and frayed through constant use.

Trouble is that this is no longer being done. It seems as though faithful, diligent Bible study is a thing of the past. The people of God are no longer studying the Bible as they ought. For the most part our Bible "study" is limited to a chapter a day, often hastily read at the supper table. There is very little meditating on God's law day and night any more. (Psalm 1:2) This becomes evident from a few pointed questions that can be asked on family visitation. This is evident from the generally poor turnout for societies and from the quite evident lack of any sound preparation. Evident it is also from the appalling lack of the knowledge of Scripture that characterizes the church today. Far too many people of God simply do not know the basic ABC's of God's Word. The reason is, no study of God's Word. The Scriptures commend the Jews of Berea in that they "searched the Scriptures daily." (Acts 17:11) Hardly could that commendation be given to many of us. There is today a sad lack of any diligent searching of the Scriptures.

Why is that?

We are too busy, we say. We have too many things to do during the day. We have our jobs. And to keep up the payments on our house, our car, our furniture, our boat, and just generally to get ahead requires that we put in long, tedious hours. Besides, there is our recreation. We have to have our recreation. What would life be without baseball, football, and basketball, without hunting and fishing, without boating, without picnics, without television, without socializing? Life is just too busy nowadays. The pace is just too hectic. Our intentions are good. We mean to take out time for the Bible. But generally when the day is done we find that we simply could not squeeze it in.

I believe it!



But then let us also give this its proper interpretation. Think about it once. What we are really saying is that we have set our feet on the path that leads to earthly treasures and pleasures rather than the way of salvation and, therefore, do not feel any real need for the Bible.

Of course!

If your feet are on the path that leads to the treasures and pleasures of this world, then it is only natural that you will find little if any time for diligent Bible study. For the Bible simply does not serve as a guide in these matters. The Bible is not a handbook on how to get ahead financially. The Bible is not filled with helpful hints on how to win friends and influence people. The Bible is no guide to earthly pleasure. If it were, perhaps it would be studied more.

But the Bible does not do this. There are other materials that serve this purpose. The Bible serves as a guide only to show us the way to salvation. It only stands to reason then, that, if our heart is set on the things of this earth rather than on the things above, we will find very little time for the study of God's Word.

Bible study is the trademark only of those whose hearts are steadfastly fixed on the things above and whose feet are on the path that leads heavenward. They alone see the genuine need for the Bible. They alone will find interest in it. They alone will find time to study it.

Let us, therefore, leave the paths of this world. And, setting our feet on the path that leads to salvation, let us diligently study the Scriptures, following its divine light as it leads us heavenward.

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## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

# Implicit Trust in God

*Rev. John A. Heys*

His long-awaited son, Isaac, had been born; and in Genesis 22:5 Abraham called him a lad, which means that he had arrived at that age which includes what we now call teenagers. Ishmael had been sent away many years before this. The pain in Abraham's soul, that the sending away of Ishmael had caused, was not so intense any more. And peace reigned again in the home of Abraham and Sarah with their son Isaac.

But peace and quietness are not always the best for us. We like to think that this is ideal, yet James shakes us up a bit when he writes that we are to count it all joy when we fall into a situation in which our peace is disturbed and we are surrounded by temptations on every side. He tells us in James 1:2 to count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations, because the trying of our faith worketh patience. Patience here is endurance. For you see, that spiritual muscle, which we call faith, must be exercised to remain in good tone and to retain its strength. And the time has come for Abraham to be shaken up a bit and to be called to exercise his faith in God.

In that light we must understand Genesis 22:1 when we read that, "After these things . . . God did tempt Abraham." God tempted him in the sense that He tried his faith as silver is tried in the fire. God led Abraham into a situation wherein he would be called upon to exercise that faith, and a situation designed

by God to bring Abraham to a greater strength of faith, to work endurance in him. God does not tempt into sin, but He does use sin to purify and strengthen the faith of His people by calling them to exercise it, at the same time giving them the strength to stand firm while the fire, which burns away the dross, rages.

Abraham is told to take his son, his only son, and to offer him up to God as a burnt sacrifice. For the flesh of Abraham this was a tremendously difficult thing to do. He had been commanded to send Ishmael away; and now must Isaac be offered up on an altar? From that point of view Isaac was his only son. Ishmael was gone. But Isaac was his only son also in that he was the only son of Sarah, Abraham's wife, and the only son in whom God had stated that He would call Abraham's seed, the only son in whom God would continue the covenant.

That child Abraham must slay! O, it is a tragedy, a heart-rending experience when a child is taken from its parents by death. How dreadful the news when parents are informed that their child was killed in an accident, by drowning, or on the battlefield. How awful when a parent unintentionally and unavoidably kills his own child who darted into the path of his automobile as he entered the yard. But how much more demanding is this command of God when He orders Abraham to kill his own son by a deliberate



act, and offer him up for a burnt offering! Try to put yourself in Abraham's place!

And God does not tell him to go ahead and get it over with at once. He must go to a mountain which God will point out, a mountain which is a three-day's journey away. That means that after three days of the most intimate fellowship with his son that he ever enjoyed, Abraham must end it all. And all that time he must carry this thing with him in his soul. He had three days to think about it, three days in which Satan could work on him to make him turn around and go back home and live with joy with his child. Three days in which strenuously to exercise his faith in God. How the aged man must have loved this stalwart young lad with whom he walked and talked and ate and slept those three days and nights! How much harder it must have been every morning to wake up and say, "Let us go on to do our duty."

And then came what cut so deeply into his soul: that son asks, "Where is the lamb for a burnt sacrifice?" They are arriving at the moment when the sacrifice must be made. The moment is very near that Isaac must be informed. But Abraham cannot do it just yet. And so he tells the lad, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." He did not himself understand fully what he was saying, but that is exactly the thing God is intent on working in Abraham. He will strengthen and purify his faith so that he does with implicit trust in God look for Him to provide the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

However, the hardest part of all for Abraham was not this physical aspect. O, his flesh cried out. It was a sore trial for his flesh. But what God demanded in Abraham — and also in this way was pleased to supply unto him — was an implicit trust in God in which he was absolutely, thoroughly convinced that God would raise Isaac up again from the dead.

This was the promised seed. All the covenant promises revolved around and centered in Isaac. That is underscored in God's words "thine only son." Hebrews 11:17 emphasizes this when it speaks of Abraham as the one who had "received the promises." These were promises that could not and would not be fulfilled in Abraham personally but in his seed after him. And he believed God and still believed Him after this command to offer up his son. Implicit trust he had in God to raise up his son after he had offered him up as a burnt sacrifice. Hebrews 11:17 therefore states that he *did* offer up Isaac.

And what makes this so amazing is the fact that Abraham had never heard of or been told of a resurrection from the dead. For us this would not be near the trial it was for Abraham. We have the accounts of so many resurrections both in Old and New Testament Scriptures. And we have the resurrection of Christ Himself after three days in the grave.

Not so with Abraham. He had to believe in a miracle the like of which he had never yet heard anything. He had to and did implicitly trust in the Almighty, ever faithful God. To use the words of Hebrews 11:19, "accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead."

What an amazing faith in God this man showed! God spoke to him, and at once he went to obey. He rose up early, we read, and started out to this mountain. He did not stall for time, hem and haw and drag his feet to prolong the joy of Isaac's fellowship. He did not have to do so, because he was thoroughly convinced that he would come back with Isaac to live with him and look for the fulfillment of God's covenant promises in him.

Take a good hard look at Genesis 22:5: "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." I and the lad, we will go yonder and worship and WE "will come again to you." He had no doubt in his soul. They are going to worship God, and their very going in that implicit faith in God is worship of Him as God. And why should Abraham say to the young men, "Abide ye here with the ass"? Is it not that his very implicit trust in God moves him to an obedience that will allow nothing to interfere with his walk of faith before God? Surely the reason for leaving behind those whom he took along all that distance is not that the event was so sacred and touching that no other eyes might see it. Rather is it that Abraham realizes that these young men might not understand what he was doing, might judge him to be disobeying God Who gave him all these promises in Isaac rather than actually walking in obedience before Him, and might interfere and not allow the sacrifice which he was intent on performing because he was so thoroughly convinced that God would raise up Isaac from the dead. Implicit trust leads to wholehearted obedience. And wholehearted obedience will not allow for any interference that it can prevent. It may even be questioned as to whether Sarah knew one item of the purpose of Abraham's journey with Isaac. We read that he "rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass." There is no delay. God has spoken, and it must be done. There is no loophole left for him to escape the difficult work he is called to do. Faith in God does not seek protection outside of God, and surely not in a way contrary to God's Word. Faith in God goes forward without looking backward. Faith in God has its eye entirely upon God and looks neither to the right nor to the left. Faith in God looks up to the everlasting hills from whence cometh our help, and from whence alone cometh our help. Faith in God is faith in God alone. Faith in God, when there is that which is at the moment lacking and is needed, says, "The Lord will provide."



And provide God always does for those who put their trust in Him. He provided His own Son as the propitiation for our sins, and gave a shadow and symbol of this in that ram caught by its horns in the thicket. He provided the pardon on whose basis we may receive all the blessings of salvation, the pardon because of which we may receive faith as God's gift to us, the pardon in whose light alone we can explain that God's covenant is with us and our children after us.

Isaac could not be a burnt offering for Abraham's sins. He could not be our Saviour, but the Lamb of God can, and the Lamb of God is. And, after all this trial is over, Abraham goes down that mountain far stronger in his faith than he was when he climbed that mountain. He told Isaac that God would provide a lamb, and he believed every word of it. That is why he kept steadily climbing higher and higher till he reached the proper place. But now when he comes down he understands in a far richer way that Jehovah will provide and does provide in a way that it costs us nothing; and his own son, whom he loved, need not receive one scratch. It costs us nothing, absolutely nothing. Jehovah provides, and provides it all. We go free. Not one little — if indeed there is such a thing — pain of hell will touch us. No smallest fraction of the

curse will touch us for our salvation. We, who deserve to be burned up, and to burn everlastingly in hell, and are bound and tied with the unbreakable cords of sin, may be let loose and go down the mountain with Abraham to enjoy the blessings of God's covenant of friendship and fellowship.

Let us lay hold of this precious truth that Jehovah provides a burnt offering for His people. His own Son was caught in Gethsemane and nailed to the tree of the cross. Let us lay hold of this truth that lets us, as Barabbas, go free. Do not say, But Barabbas did not deserve to go free. That is right. But it is also so very true that you and I have as much guilt as Barabbas, at least we have no more righteousness in ourselves than he did. We do not deserve to go free any more than he did. But Jehovah provided the way for such to go free.

Let no man boast of deserving salvation, but let all men confess that our salvation is provided by God from beginning to end. Implicit trust in God says exactly that. It sings,

All that I am I owe to Thee;  
Thy wisdom, Lord, has fashioned me.  
I give my maker thankful praise,  
Whose wondrous works my soul amaze.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 28, 1977, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. VERNON DE VRIES, celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We, their children, are thankful to our covenant God for His care of them during these years and for giving us a home where we may know the fear of the Lord.

It is our prayer that in the years ahead they may continue to experience the blessed peace and tender mercies of the Lord.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." Psalm 103:17.

#### Their children

Mr. and Mrs. Michael De Vries  
David De Vries  
Carla De Vries  
Ruth De Vries  
Tom De Vries  
and 2 grandchildren  
Jeffrey De Vries  
Connie De Vries

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On June 18, 1977, our parents, MR. AND MRS. JACOB REGNERUS celebrated their thirtieth wedding anniversary.

We, their children, are thankful for the years of love and Christian instruction they have given us. We pray that they may continue to receive God's blessing in the years which lie ahead of them.

Mr. and Mrs. Jake Soodsma  
Becky, Heidi, and Ben  
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Regnerus  
Matthew and Sarah  
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Oosterhouse  
Mary Beth  
Joan Regnerus  
Rich Regnerus  
Sandee Regnerus

**URGENT NEED!!!** The Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School, Hull, Iowa, is still in need of a teacher for grades 3, 4, 5 for the 1977-78 school year. Application can be made by writing to or calling Mr. Alvin Kooiker, R.R., Boyden, Iowa 51234 — Phone 1-712-725-2491.

### NOTICE!!!

The annual meeting of the R.F.P.A. will be held on Thursday evening, September 15, 1977, at 8 P.M. at the South West Protestant Reformed Church. Rev. B. Woudenberg will speak to us on the topic: **TO BEAR OUR STANDARD HIGHER,** a consideration of how THE STANDARD BEARER can be used more effectively in church extension work.

Mark your calendar now and plan to attend.

The Board of the R.F.P.A.  
Wm. De Kraker, Sec'y.

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Pella, Iowa, on September 7, 1977, at 8:30 AM, the Lord willing. Material for the agenda should be in the hands of the stated clerk thirty days prior to Classis. Delegates in need of lodging should inform the clerk of the Pella consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk  
Classis West

The consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its heart-felt sympathy to elder Harry Zwak in the loss of his brother, MR. JOHN ZWAK who passed away a short time ago in Florida.

May he say with the Psalmist: "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help . . . The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore. Ps. 121:1, 8.

The consistory of the Hudsonville  
Prot. Ref. Church,  
Rev. C. Hanko, pres.  
Elder P. Schut, Vice-all.

The Ladies society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church herewith expressed its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Simon Ondersma in the loss of her father, MR. MARTIN SWART.

May the bereaved family be comforted in the hope: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." Psalm 17:15.

The Ladies Society of the  
Hudsonville, Protestant Reformed Church,  
Mrs. B. Bruining, sec.



## News From Our Churches

The July 3rd bulletin of our Hope Church (Walker, Michigan) reported on the return of our Home Missionary as follows, "Rev. and Mrs. Harbach returned from the investigative trip which they made to the area of Canada just north of Lynden, Washington. He expects to make a report of this trip to the next council meeting and to a Mission Committee meeting on July 12. We thank God for their safe trip and pray He might have used these efforts to further the cause of His kingdom."

In other mission activity, the Mission Committee of our churches asked Professor H. Hanko to go to Birmingham, Alabama, to inquire into the interests of some four families there.

The consistory of our church in Randolph, Wisconsin, has organized a Church Extension Committee "to help us better share the glorious truth with those in our area." The committee will function under a constitution adopted by the consistory.

At a special congregational meeting held on June 13 in Hudsonville, it was decided to build a new parsonage on the southeast corner of the property on which the new Hudsonville Church is already located. Plans for the new parsonage were presented and adopted. The cost of this project will be approximately \$55,000. This will allow Hudsonville's pastor, Rev. C. Hanko, to move out of the old parsonage which is adjacent to the old Hudsonville Church, now used by another congregation from another denomination.

Apparently our church in Holland, Michigan, is one of the churches in the denomination which schedule their Sunday School classes during the summer months. As of the middle of June, however, Sunday School classes were canceled until further notice. Due to the fact that the Holland Church building is in a state of construction and destruction all at the same time, there is no place to hold classes. Walls are being knocked out and an addition being put on the building to give the church a larger meeting place and more classroom area.

Hope Church in Walker scheduled a special congregational meeting on June 15. The congregation approved purchase of a drapery to cover the rear windows of the sanctuary. This will take care of a problem which ministers on the pulpit at Hope have been complaining about since the construction of the

building. It seems that the evening sun comes through a window in the rear of the building, shining brightly in the face of the minister — almost to the point of blinding the pastor at times, according to some reports. The Hope congregation also decided to add about 20 parking spaces to the church parking lot. It seems that the lot has not, for some time, been large enough to accommodate all the autos.

Both the men and women of our congregation in Randolph have been busy of late. The ladies were asked to come to the church on Saturday, May 14, to help with a spring cleaning of the church. On the same day and for some subsequent Saturdays, the men were asked to help with scraping and painting the parsonage. Sounds like quite a work bee.

In the Isabel, South Dakota area, the Reformed Witness Hour Radio program is now heard over KBHB at 12:15 PM on Sundays.

The ladies' society of Hudsonville Church provided a picnic luncheon for the senior citizens of the congregation in Hager Park on June 14. The young people of 1st Church sponsored a similar activity this spring. The "senior citizens" were given invitations to a luncheon and program held in the "church parlors." It is well that we do remember those in our congregations who are advanced in years.

Rev. Slopsema, of our church in Edgerton, Minnesota, led the chapel service at Edgebrook Rest Center on Sunday afternoon May 22. A special number was provided by a group of preschoolers from the Edgerton congregation.

During the past two months, most of our congregations have scheduled their annual congregational picnics. Many of our western churches schedule these picnics on the 4th of July.

The various ladies' groups in our schools and churches come up with all kinds of clever activities which not only provide good Christian fellowship, but also raise funds for church and school. During the past year, novel activities have included "bakeless bake sales" and a number of "tasting bees." The Ladies' Guild in Hull, Iowa, has scheduled another event which needs some explanation for those of us outside the area. They are having "Bean Walks" to raise funds. What do you suppose a "Bean Walk" is?

K.G.V.