

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Sit glued to your TV set hour after hour and it will entertain you. But it will also educate you. Place your children in front of the TV. They will love it. And while they are enjoying themselves, they too will get quite an education.

But what kind of education?

see "A House Dividend?" — page 304

CONTENTS:

Meditation —	
Our Only Comfort	290
Editorial —	
Reformed Thought on Baptism (4)	293
Studies in Isaiah —	
National Destruction for Abandoning God ...	296
Guest Article —	
The Canons of Dordrecht:	
An Historical Perspective (2)	299
Taking Heed to the Doctrine —	
A Reformed Look at Pentecostalism	301
Guest Article —	
A House Divided?	304
My Sheep Hear My Voice —	
Letter to the Members of the	
Church at Philadelphia	306
All Around Us —	
“The Battle for the Bible”	308
Ashamed of being Dutch?	309
Life Enrichment?	309
Report of Classis West	311

THE STANDARD BEARER

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

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

Department Editors: Prof. Robert D. Decker, Rev. David J. Engelsma,
Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach,
Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Korterling, Rev. M. Hoeksema, Rev.
George C. Lubbers, Rev. Meindert Joostens, Rev. Marinus Schipper,
Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Mr. Kenneth G. Vink.

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

Church News Editor: Mr. Kenneth G. Vink
1422 Linwood, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

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

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

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

Australian Business Office: Reformed Literature Centre,
P.O. Box 849,
Rockhampton 4700,
Queensland, Australia

New Zealand Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
c/o OPC Bookshop,
P.O. Box 2289,
Christchurch, New Zealand

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

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

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

MEDITATION

Our Only Comfort

Rev. C. Hanko

What is thy only comfort in life and death?

That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Savior Jesus Christ; who, with his own precious blood, hath fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil, and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by His Holy Spirit, he also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him. Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day I, Question 1.

Credo! This is the first word of our Apostolic Creed. I believe!

Faith is the truth of the Holy Scriptures as it is

divinely revealed throughout the ages to the saints in Christ Jesus. It is the light that shines into our present darkness to reveal to God's church the One Who is

the Truth and the Light, in Whose light we see the Light.

Faith is that truth of Scripture as it lives in the heart of the believer, who is drawn by the power of that Word, even by Christ Himself through that Word, to the Fountain of living waters. That Fountain quickens them and refreshes their thirsty souls with life, with eternal life in the midst of death.

Faith finds its certainty in the objective Word of God, the inspired Scriptures. The faith of the believers is founded on that Word, appeals to the Word as a final authority on all matters, is strong, even powerful to resist every foe through the power of that two-edged Sword. Enlightened by the Spirit of Christ, with the life of Christ in my heart I can say with conviction that defies all opposition, conviction worth dying for: "I believe."

That is our *confession*.

The Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the church, guides the church into all truth. Especially in times of strife, when the devil is doing his utmost to undermine the foundation of our faith, the church is led to formulate the truth of the Scriptures in Confessions. The believers need that formulation to retain their own unity of faith. Those of like persuasion have their common ground in the Confessions. The church needs that to witness to the world round about, testifying, "This I believe." The saints in Christ need that as their banner, their distinctive uniform, as they fight the battle of faith against all the onslaughts of the devil with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The Body of Christ needs that witness to draw others to the truth of Scripture, to unite in their common cause, especially in these last days as we prepare ourselves for the tribulation still to come. Today, these Confessions are being challenged as outmoded, outdated, irrelevant to our advanced, scientific age. Therefore, we hear the voice of Jesus powerfully exhorting us: "Hold that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

We, as believers in Jesus, have the more sure Word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in our hearts. (II Peter 1:19). We have the strong consolation of the Spirit that unites our hearts and minds in the faith of the fathers still living; the faith that has survived fire, dungeon, and sword. Our fathers died for that faith. We, their children, cherish it as we equip ourselves to be ready at all times to give account of the hope that is within us, applying God's Word to every walk of life. We cling to that faith as the heritage delivered to us from the past to be preserved and passed on to the generations to come, unto the day when our Lord returns.

Our Heidelberg Catechism is one of those Confessions, known to us as a part of the Three Forms of Unity of the Reformed faith. The first question of the first Lord's Day quoted above strikes the keynote of the entire Book of Instruction.

"What is thy only comfort in life and death?"

An annoying question.

I can imagine myself taking this first Lord's Day in hand, with my finger on this first question, and starting down the avenue of some shopping mall. Suppose I would stop the first man I met and confront him with this question, "What is your only comfort?" If he did not tell me to mind my own business, he would likely ask: "Comfort. What is that? My theory is that I can brush away any thought of misery by telling myself that 'I'm OK, even as everyone else is OK.' Or if that does not do the trick, I have my liquor, my golf, my vacations; yes, many things by which to run away from the realities of life." After that I might venture out to a hospital where someone lies in mortal agony. Hesitantly I might ask her about her comfort in life and death, only to hear her say that her friends have overwhelmed her with all sorts of comforts, none of which take away the sting of pain and death. "An only comfort? I am reminded that there should be many comforts, such as, my troubles could be worse; as long as there is life there is hope; I have the best doctors in the city." Yes, and many similar sage remarks. So I wander off to a funeral home where the air is saturated with mourning. I ask about comfort, and am told that there is actually no spot in all this great wide world where mortals weep no more.

No, I am not getting very far with my Heidelberg today, but it was not intended for that anyway. The question is a very unique question that finds response only in the heart of the believer. I notice that it is addressed to me. What is *my* comfort, my only comfort, my all sufficient comfort, that changes my darkness into light, that sustains me in every affliction, that changes my mournful dirge into a song of praise in the night, and when death comes to release my soul from this prison house of death, this comfort is still my strength and song, even into eternity.

Even so it is an annoying question. In the first instance I might try to deny that this applies to me. I must admit that it does not always live clearly before my consciousness. It requires some prayerful soul searching before the face of God.

The word "comfort" in the active sense means "to strengthen." It is taken from the Latin, "to be brave by some outward support." In the passive sense, as it is used here, it means "to be strengthened," to have someone at my side who takes up my cause, who pleads my cause for me as my advocate, and who delivers me from all my miseries. Thus the word

implies that I experience a certain great misery. This misery fills my day with bitterness and my nights with anxious restlessness. The fear of death and the beyond floods my soul with bitter pain. All human comforters are vain; they only make my troubles worse. But there is One Who comes to my aid, Who understands my deepest woe, Who has the solution for every problem. He pleads my cause for me, so that I begin to sing with the inspired Psalmist, "This my comfort in affliction, that Thy Word hath quickened me."

We think of the prodigal son in the parable, who had found that the pleasures and treasures of sin end up in the mire, where he had to outwit the swine to share their slop with them. He "comes to himself" and says, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy servants." Maybe the prodigal did not realize it, but already a ray of comfort was penetrating into his weary soul; it was the thought of father, the one person in the whole world who cares, who, though sorely offended, would yet show mercy to his son. He is Father's son, for whom Father's love never changes. To that love he must appeal, even as the woman who spoke of the crumbs that fell from the table for the dogs. When he is yet a great way off, Father sees him, runs to meet him, throws his arms about him and listens as he stammers the confession of his sin, nothing more. The prepared speech goes unspoken, for Father must have his say: "This my son was lost and is found, was dead and is alive again!" The angels in heaven join in the chorus.

An only comfort! In the ears of the unbeliever this sounds so ridiculous, so entirely impossible. In our unbelief we are guilty of what Paul calls in II Corinthians 5:15 "living unto ourselves." We clamor for our independence. We want to make our own mark in the world, take care of ourselves. We want to be somebody. We are willing to take the consequences of our independence. Yet when the Spirit of Christ enters our hearts to convict us of sin against the Most High Majesty of God, we realize that we have wasted Father's goods, the gifts, the talents, the possessions which God had entrusted unto us to be used to His glory. We realize that we have grossly transgressed all God's commandments and kept none of them. A two-fold burden rests upon us. There is the guilty conscience that beats me with just accusations. How could I be such a fool, such a sinner? There is the deep awareness that my "independence" is nothing more than slavish service of the devil, the power of sin driving me headlong into hell under God's just wrath. As long as I am "my own" I stand responsible for enormous debt of sin, which I can never wipe out, but only increase. I am, as long as I am "my own," sitting in the prison cell of sin with the sentence of

everlasting death upon me.

Only when I realize that as the cause, the root of all my misery, can I experience the *only* comfort. It is the assurance that "I am not my own." My former boast is now my shame. Alone I perish! Now triumphantly I can say, "I am not my own. I belong." I belong to none other than my faithful Savior Jesus Christ. As the peace of that glorious salvation floods my soul, I realize that I belong, not by personal choice, but because my name is eternally written by the loving hand of Father in the Book of Life. What a comfort that doctrine of election and predestination! I belong because Christ laid the seal of His blood, which was shed upon Calvary, upon that name in the Book. I know that I belong to Jesus, for the Spirit of Christ assures me that I am adopted to be God's son, heir of salvation, to bear the likeness of Father before His throne forever. Once I was bound, now I am free. Once I was blind, now I can see, Once I was dead, now I live, for Christ lives in me.

My comfort is an all sufficient comfort. I can sum up at least five benefits which apply to my physical life as well as my spiritual life, which sustain me in all the trials and sufferings of my daily existence, which strengthen me in the hour of death, and accompany me, as it were, into Father's House with its many mansions. The first of these is that my Savior has purchased me unto God by paying the price far exceeding all the gold and silver of this world, the price of His own precious blood. Second, He delivers me, not once, but every day from every new attack of Satan who is determined to drive my soul to hell. Third, He is faithful, He carries out God's eternal purpose in our lives, since we are God's workmanship, each a masterpiece of divine wisdom and power, to accomplish those good works which God has eternally prepared for each of us to carry out in this life. We never live for one second in vain. Even when all things seem to be against us, God is still for us, Christ intercedes for us that our faith fail not, so that not one of those insignificant hairs of our heads can fall unless God carries out His purpose with it. That far exceeds my understanding, yet it is true. Fourth, He assures us day by day that tribulations work patience, patience makes us well-experienced, fully equipped saints, in order that our hope may continually grow brighter. For hope never makes us ashamed, since the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts. (Rom. 5:1-5). The God of consolation, Who blesses us through the Son of Consolation, sends His Comforter, the Holy Spirit of Christ, to make us sincerely willing and ready to live, no more unto ourselves, but unto the God of our salvation in true thankfulness.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." (Psalm 116:12,13).

EDITORIAL

Reformed Thought on Baptism

(4)

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In his *Systematic Theology*, III, Charles Hodge writes at length on the subject of baptism, giving a separate treatment to adult baptism and infant baptism. In both instances he connects baptism with church membership. Taking his starting point in the Westminster Shorter Catechism he writes the following concerning the subjects of baptism, pp. 540, ff.: 'Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him: but the infants of such as are members of the visible Church are to be baptized.' (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 95)

"The question, who are the proper subjects of baptism? is determined by the design of the ordinance and the practice of the Apostles. It has been shown that, according to our standards, the sacraments (and of course baptism) were instituted, to signify, seal, and apply to believers the benefits of the redemption of Christ. The reception of baptism, so far as adults are concerned, is an intelligent, voluntary act, which from its nature involves (1) A profession of faith in Christ, and (2) A promise of allegiance to Him.

"This is clear, —

"1. From the command of Christ to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. A disciple, however, is both a recipient of doctrines taught, and a follower. Every one, therefore, who is made a disciple by baptism, enrolls himself among the number of those who receive Christ as their teacher and Lord, and who profess obedience and devotion to His service.

"2. This is further clear from the uniform practice of the Apostles. In every case on record of their administering the rite, it was on the condition of a profession of faith on the part of the recipient. The answer of Philip to the eunuch who asked, What doth hinder me to be baptized? 'If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest,' discloses the principle on which the Apostles uniformly acted in this matter.

"3. This has in all ages been the practice of the Church. No man was admitted to baptism without an

intelligent profession of faith in Christ, and a solemn engagement of obedience to Him. . . ."

In this same connection, in commenting on the qualifications for adult baptism, Dr. Hodge describes how catechetical instruction was instituted in the early church for those persons who wanted to be baptized and thus to join themselves to the church:

"1. Faith supposes knowledge of at least the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. Some may unduly enlarge, and some unduly restrict the number of such doctrines; but no Church advocates the baptism of the absolutely ignorant. If baptism involves a profession of faith, it must involve a profession of faith in certain doctrines; and those doctrines must be known, in order to be professed. In the early Church, therefore, there was a class of catechumens or candidates for baptism who were under a regular course of instruction. This course continued, according to circumstances, from a few months, to three years. These catechumens were not only young men, but often persons in mature life, and of all degrees of mental culture. Where Christian churches were established in the midst of large heathen cities, the Gospel could not fail to excite general attention. The interest of persons of all classes would be more or less awakened. Many would be so impressed with the excellence of the new religion, as to desire to learn its doctrines and join themselves to the company of believers. These candidates for baptism, being in many cases men of the highest culture, it was necessary that their teachers should be men thoroughly instructed in discipline. We accordingly find such men as Pantaenus, Clemens, and Origen successively at the head of the catechetical school of Alexandria. These schools, although primarily designed for converts from among the Jews and heathen, on account of their high character, soon began to be frequented by other classes, and especially by those who were in training for the ministry. When Christianity became the prevalent religion, and the ranks of the Church were filled up, not by converts of mature age, but by those born within its pale and baptized in their infancy, the necessity

for such schools no longer existed. Their place, however, was supplied by the systematic instruction of the young in preparation for their confirmation for their first communion."

Notice that at this early stage in church history already the church was certainly not hasty about baptism. And notice, too, that the catechetical instruction described in the above paragraph led not only to baptism, but along with baptism to church membership. At the conclusion of this discussion of adult baptism, Dr. Hodge identifies the qualifications for admission to the Lord's table, the qualifications for adult baptism, and the qualifications for church membership:

"The question, although thus simple in its general statement, is nevertheless one of great difficulty. As it is almost universally the fact that, so far as adults are concerned, the qualifications for baptism are the same as those for admission to the Lord's table, the question, what are the qualifications for adult baptism? resolves itself into the question, what are the qualifications for church-membership? The answer to that question, it is evident, must be determined by the views taken of the nature and the prerogatives of the Church. . . ."

In connection with his discussion of infant baptism, Hodge writes, pp. 546, ff.:

"The difficulty on this subject is that baptism from its very nature involves a profession of faith; it is the way in which by the ordinance of Christ, He is to be confessed before men; but infants are incapable of making such confession; therefore they are not the proper subjects of baptism. Or, to state the matter in another form, the sacraments belong to the members of the Church; but the Church is the company of believers; infants cannot exercise faith, therefore they are not members of the Church, and consequently ought not to be baptized.

"In order to justify the baptism of infants, we must attain and authenticate such an idea of the Church as that it shall include the children of believing parents. The word Church is used in Scripture and in common life, in many different senses, (1) it means the whole body of the elect, as in Ephesians v. 25, and when the Church is said to be a body, or the bride of Christ, to be filled by His Spirit, etc. (2) It means any number of believers collectively considered; or the whole number of believers residing in any one place, or district, or throughout the world. In this sense we use the word when we pray God to bless His Church universal, or His Church in any particular place. (3) It is used as a collective term for the body of professed believers in any one place; as when we speak of the Church of Jerusalem, of Ephesus, or of Corinth. (4) It is used of any number of professed believers bound together by a common standard of

doctrine and discipline; as the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Lutheran Church, and the Reformed Church. And (5) It is used for all the professors of the true religion throughout the world, considered as united in the adoption of the same general creed and in common subjection to Christ.

"It is evident that no one definition of the Church can include all the senses in which the word is legitimately used; and, therefore, that we may affirm of the Church in one sense of the word, what must be denied of it in a different sense; and the same person may be said to be, or not to be a member of the Church according to the meaning attached to the word. In the present discussion, by the Church is meant what is called the visible Church; that is, the whole body of those who profess the true religion, or, any number of such professors united for the purpose of the public worship of Christ, and for the exercise of mutual watch and care. With regard to infant baptism the following propositions may be maintained.

"First Proposition. The Visible Church is a Divine Institution.

"Concerning the Church in this sense, it is clearly taught in Scripture, that it is the will of God that such a Church should exist on earth. This no Christian denies. God has imposed duties upon His people which render it necessary for them thus to associate in a visible organized body. They are to unite in His worship; in teaching and propagating His truth; in testifying for God in all parts of the world. He has prescribed the conditions of membership in this body, and taught who are to be excluded from its communion. He has appointed officers, specified their qualifications, their prerogatives, and the mode of their appointment. He has enacted laws for its government. Its rise, progress, and consummation are traced in history and prophecy, from the beginning to the end of the Bible. This is the kingdom of God of which our Lord discourses in so many of His parables, and which it is predicted is ultimately to include all the nations of the earth."

From the above it is evident what Dr. Hodge understands by the church in connection with his discussion of infant baptism. Like all Reformed theologians, Dr. Hodge connects baptism and the instituted, organized congregation. The two are not to be separated. He goes on to make the point that the children of believers are not to be excluded from membership in the church. Then Hodge faces the question, "Whose children are entitled to baptism?" And he states:

"This is a very delicate, difficult, and important question. No answer which can be given to it can be expected to give general satisfaction. The answers will be determined by the views taken of the nature of the

Church and the design of the sacraments. Probably the answer which would include most of the views entertained on the subject, is, that the children of the members of the visible Church, and those for whose religious training such members are willing to become responsible, should be baptized. But this leaves many questions undecided, and allows room for great diversity of practice." (p. 558)

Note, however, that while Dr. Hodge speaks of "room for great diversity of practice," he is nevertheless speaking of the children of the members of the visible church; and this diversity is not such that it allows room for baptism outside of and apart from membership in the church. Then, after discussing various views among Reformed theologians and among the Puritans as to who belong to the visible church, and after citing several statements from Reformed confessions, Hodge writes as follows:

"It is, therefore, plain that according to the standards of the Reformed Church, it is the children of the members of the visible Church who are to be baptized. Agreeably to Scripture usage such members are called 'foederati,' saints, believers, faithful, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling. The Apostles in addressing professing Christians in the use of such terms did not express any judgment of their state in the sight of God. They designated them according to their profession. . . . The Reformed, as well as the Lutheran theologians, therefore, speak of the members of the visible Church as believers, and of their children as born of believing parents. All that is intended, therefore, by the language above cited is, that the sacraments of the Church are to be confined to members of the Church and to their children."

On p. 578 you may find the same emphasis: "The sacraments as all admit are to be confined to members of the church. But the Church does not consist exclusively of communicants. It includes also all who having been baptized have not forfeited their membership by scandalous living or by any act of Church discipline. All members of the Church are professors of religion. They profess faith in Christ and are under a solemn vow to obey His laws. If they are insincere or heartless in this profession, the guilt is their own. The Church is, and can be responsible only for their external conduct; so long as that is not incompatible with the Christian character, and so long as the faith is held fast, the privileges of membership continue."

Lest there be any misunderstanding on this score, let me point out that the fact that we quote from Hodge's *Systematic Theology* does not mean that we agree with all the statements made by him. But we are quoting in order to point out that there is a consensus among Reformed theologians on the subject of the relation between the sacraments and the church.

And from the above quotations it is very evident: 1) That by the church, or the visible church, in connection with this subject Hodge very plainly means the local congregation as instituted by Christ. 2) That he very definitely teaches that the sacraments, both baptism and the Lord's Supper, are limited to the membership of that visible church as represented in the local congregation.

Prof. F. M. Ten Hoor teaches the same thing in his *Dogmatiek*, p.267 (we translate):

"Baptism is administered in Christ's stead, and this administration is bound to the office of the gospel, Mark 1:4; John 4:2; Matthew 28:19, but baptism is subordinate to the Word, I Corinthians 1:14-17; Acts 10:48. It must be administered in the midst of the congregation, since it signifies ingrafting into the congregation, I Corinthians 12:13, and must be accompanied by the ministry of the Word.

"Those who came to the congregation from outside were in the first period baptized immediately after confession, Matthew 3:6; Acts 2:41; 8:12, but later on after two years of catechism."

In his *Christian Dogmatics*, II, p. 749, J. J. Van Oosterzee writes:

"As to the *administration* of Baptism as a solemn initiation into the Church of the Lord; it ought properly to be administered in the midst of His Church whether gathered together as the congregation or the family. Naturally it is entrusted to the same persons to whom the Lord has committed the teaching of His people, whilst baptism in case of necessity, perhaps by entirely unauthorized hands, can be justified only from the standpoint of those who, in opposition to the Gospel, teach an absolute need of baptism for salvation."

In his *Systematic Theology* (Fourth edition), L. Berkhof, writing on the characteristics of the Word and the Sacraments as means of grace states the following, pp. 605, 606:

"They are the *official* means of the Church of Jesus Christ. The *preaching* of the Word (or, the *Word preached*) and the *administration* of the sacraments (or, the *sacraments administered*) are the means *officially instituted in the Church*, by which the Holy Spirit works and confirms faith in the hearts of men. Some Reformed theologians limit the idea of the means of grace still more by saying that they are administered only within the visible Church, and that they presupposed the existence of the principle of the new life in the soul. Shedd and Dabney both speak of them, without any qualification, as 'means of sanctification.' Says the former: 'When the world of unregenerate men are said to have the means of grace, the means of *conviction* under common grace, not of sanctification under special grace, are intended.'

Honig also distinguishes between the Word of God as a means of grace and the Word as it contains the call to conversion and serves to call Gentiles to the service of the living God. Dr. Kuyper, too, thinks of the means of grace merely as means for the strengthening of the new life when he says: 'The *media gratiae* are means instituted by God that He makes use of to unfold, both personally and socially, for and through our consciousness, the re-creation that He immediately established in our nature.' There is, of course, a truth in this representation. The principle of the new life is wrought in the soul *immediately*, that is, without the mediation of the Word that is preached. But in so far as the origination of the new life also includes the new birth and internal calling it may also be said that the Holy Spirit works the beginning of the new life or of faith, as the Heidelberg Catechism says, 'by the preaching of the holy gospel.' "

In discussing the relation between the Word and the Sacraments, Berkhof writes on p. 616:

"They differ: (a) in their necessity, the Word being indispensable, while the sacraments are not; (b) in their purpose, since the Word is intended to *engender* and to strengthen faith, while the sacraments serve only to strengthen it; and (c) in their extension, since the Word goes out into all the world, while the sacraments are administered only to those who are in the Church."

Although one does not find very much material on this subject in John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, yet the few indications that are found in the following quotations show that there is agreement between the various Reformed theologians whom we have already quoted and Calvin on this score. He also limits the sacrament of baptism to the organized congregation. We find the following statements in Book IV (Allen Translation):

"Baptism is a sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the society of the Church, in order

that, being incorporated into Christ, we may be numbered among the children of God." (Chapter 15, p. 583)

"It is also necessary to state, that it is not right for private persons to take upon themselves the administration of baptism; for this, as well as the administration of the Lord's Supper, is a part of the public ministry of the Church. Christ never commanded women, or men in general, to baptize; He gave this charge to those whom He had appointed to be apostles. And when He enjoined His disciples, in the celebration of the supper, to do as they had seen done by Him when He executed the office of a legitimate dispenser He intended, without doubt, that they should imitate His example." (Chapter 15, pp. 599, 600)

"It remains for us briefly to show what advantage results from this ceremony, both to believers who present their children to the Church to be baptized, and to the infants themselves who are washed in the holy water; to guard it from being despised as useless or unimportant." (Chapter 16, p. 610)

The last quotation is significant not because of the subject as such which Calvin is discussing here, namely the advantages of baptism; but it is important for our purposes because it speaks of believers presenting their children *to the Church* to be baptized. Incidentally Calvin (and all Reformed theologians follow him in this) denies the absolute necessity of the sacrament of baptism. The Reformed position is that baptism is not indispensable in the sense that it is not necessary to salvation. This is not to say that baptism must be neglected and despised: for it is an ordinance of God. However, in view of the fact that baptism is not indispensable unto salvation, there certainly is no hurry about baptism on the mission field prior to the time that a congregation is instituted or the time, when its institution is even likely — even apart from any other considerations.

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

National Destruction for Abandoning God

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

Isaiah 5:24-30

1. *The Ruin Complete.* "Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours stubble, and a flame burns down straw, their root shall be as rottenness, their blossom shall go up as the dust"; (24a), like a seeded dandelion head blown away! "Therefore," because of the foregoing sins, lightning strokes of judgment blast the

vine of Judah, withering its root with immediate decay and pulverizing its blossoms in a cloud of dust. Terrible punishments and awful judgments await those who stubbornly persist in the way that seems right unto a man. Gruesome judgments occur today, to the ruin of an entire nation. Take the genocide of

Cambodia, where Buddhist Communists horribly murdered and annihilated the Buddhist populace. As the root means the leaders, so the blossoms denote their subjects, particularly the children. (Luther). The above referred to slaughter occurred between Spring, 1975 and December, 1976. Soldiers were massacred, so also students, teachers, village officials, then, family by family fathers first, then their wives and children and babies, all bayoneted. In similar manner, the cities were destroyed. The land was made a charnel house, its borders ringed with exploded boobytraps and heaps of corpses, forming a wall of death, intended to prevent refugees escaping. The Communists killed 1.2 millions, destroyed the universities, commerce, art, music, libraries, literature, science, love, and hope. They were terrible instruments of divine judgment, destruction and ruin, themselves facing the judgment of eternal fire. Yet such fearful instruments in Gog and Magog at the time of the final Antichrist we know will make havoc of the end-time church.

2. *The Ruin Just.* "for they rejected the law of Jehovah Tsebhaoth, and the word of the Holy One of Israel they despised" (24b). Do we appreciate what that means, to reject the law of the Lord of hosts? It's like a gagging gasping maggot of a day exuding its vile bile against the sovereign God of eternity! *Worse* it is for such a wretchedly corrupt nothing to defile with his denial the all-glorious and exalted *holiness* of God revealed in His Word! Are not such reprehensible despisers of the only true God and His blessed gospel worthy of that sudden, severe, searing judgment?

The terrible judgments at this very hour coming on heathen nations we may expect to come closer to us. Why should our nation expect to escape? Has it not rejected knowledge? forgotten the law of God? (Hos. 4:6). Judgment begins at the house of God. What chance, then, have the impious and sinful? Other sins often meet with superabounding grace, and chastisements for other sins often lead men to repentance. But blatant, blind, bombastic blasphemy against God's Word is most often punished with destruction and everlasting desolation. The sin of rottenness is punished with hopeless, unending rottenness. (Rev. 22:11; Dn. 12:2). As Matthew Henry well said, When chaff is burned it "is consumed unhelpt and unpitied." (See Ezek. 5:11).

3. *The Ruin's Origin.* "Therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against His people, and He stretched out His hand over them, and they were struck; and the mountains trembled, and their carcasses were the sweepings (or, filth) in the midst of the streets" (25a). Punishment has come on the reprobate, and shall continue to strike them down in the future. God's hand upon them is not rehabilitating, nor has it reached satisfaction (of His justice), but is

ever stretched out to deal further strokes up to that satisfaction. The picture is that of an earthquake causing faulted mountains and fields and valleys to be strewn with corpses. The earthquake is set off by hordes of marching armies, the rumble of armed contingencies, the din of battle, the stripping of nature and the slaughter of the populace with bodies lying about like filthy street sweepings. As in Cambodia, last year, mass, senseless executions left corpses rapidly bloating and rotting in the sun . . . blood ran like water on the grass . . . rice paddies polluted with carcasses . . . along the way, the body of a child every 200 yards . . . the jungle smelled of rotting bodies . . . the odor, everywhere, was inescapable . . . on the way to the border, 5,000 bodies . . . paths so thick with skeletons and bones sharp to cut the feet . . . at least 800,000 Cambodians dead from famine, disease and massacre . . . left as nothing more than the refuse of the streets. (Cp. how the Midianites perished and became as fertilizer for the earth. Ps. 83:9f). "Filthy are the streets of an oriental city under normal conditions; the grievous hand of death now adds to that filthiness" (E.J. Young). "Whence came the distressful casting out of dead bodies, but because God has raised His arm against" them. (Calvin). "The power of God effects it; He hath stretched forth His hand against them . . . This is very dreadful . . . yet such is the merit of sin" (M. Henry).

4. *The Ruin's Continuance and Consequences.* In all this His anger (is) not turned away, but His hand is still stretched out" (25b). It seems nothing will bring men to admit or regard these awful events as the judgments of God, nor the recent severities of winter as the power and providence of God. Man, the great "Master of the Universe," cannot stand before His cold (Ps. 147:17), and in some places cannot warm himself due to the gas-fuel shortage! But divine judgments are in execution throughout the earth, and there is "more to come," for His hand is still stretched out.

5. *The Instruments Bringing Ruin.* "And He will lift up a standard to the nations (heathen) from far off, and will whistle for him (them) from the ends of the earth, and, look! speedily, swiftly he (they) shall come!" (26). An invading enemy shall take Israel off into total darkness (26-30). Now we see how the streets of the city and the out-fields got to be strewn with corpses of men and carcasses of animals. In the instance of Cambodia, the instruments of desolation were the closest enemy possible, the enemy within, of their own people, attacking and destroying them. With Israel, the instruments of ruin were the invading, ravaging enemy of a foreign power from distant lands. The invaders which came the farthest did the most deadly and devastating work of destruction.

A nation may deceive itself, thinking it is master of

its own and others "fate." So thought Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and Spain, imperial Japan and Communist Russia. So dreams our own country rushing blindly down the socialist trail. In fact, any arms agreement or peace negotiation of any kind easily lulls our nation to sleep, as if there is no danger to be dreaded. But the heathen nations are the punitive rod of God's anger (Isa. 11:5), His battle-axe and weapons of war (Jer. 51:20), by which He breaks down nations and destroys kingdoms. Josephus, the Jewish historian, reports the words of Titus after the Romans had conquered the city of Jerusalem. "We have certainly had God for our assistant in this war; and it was no other than God who ejected the Jews out of these fortifications; for what could the hands of men, or any machines, do towards overthrowing these towers?" (II, 439). Calvin put it this way: "Whether, therefore, we are afflicted by battle, or by famine, or by pestilence, let us know that all this comes from the hand of God, for all things obey Him and follow His direction."

Wicked men and nations, who daringly commit the sins mentioned in this chapter, may expect, as Isaiah described it, the like devastation of their countries. In the prophet's day, the people of his nation denied God's judgments with the provoking, "Let Him make speed and hasten His work" (19), only to find to their terror that He came with speed, swiftly.

Note the readiness of these distant nations. "Not one becomes weary, and not one among them stumbles and neither falls asleep; and a girdle of their loins is not loosed, nor a lace of their shoes broken" (27). When the foe from far off Japan came attacking our base at Pearl Harbor, as a result of the long exhausting journey, no one was exhausted; none faltered, none was sleepy in his intense desire for battle. Everything was in order, including such minor details as belts and shoe laces.

Their weaponry and mobility. "As to which their arrows are sharp (things) and all their bows bent; the hoofs of their horses are reckoned like the flint, and their wheels like the whirlwind" (v. 28). They had, for their day, the latest in the most advanced guided-missiles, chariots (tanks) and cavalry; and all in constant readiness. Our armed forces have "arrows" which can fly 2,300 miles unerringly to target. Our enemies are trying to bluff us into blunting the sharp-

ness of these arrows of ours so that they will fly no farther than 372 miles. Of course, then they would fall far short of the enemy. This is to insult us as stupid enough to come out with "bows" that will only allow the "arrows" to fall back on our own heads! But *their* arrows are all sharpened to wound deeply; all *their* bows are bent; all *their* arrows are ready to fly at a moment's notice. It is *their* philosophy to be soon in action. Their mechanized cavalry has for the last 25 years been modernized and outfitted for service. Their forces are as hard as flint. They have wheels (surely on their jets) which move through the air well beyond the speed of sound. There are far enemy nations, neither slumbering nor sleeping, with evil intent to destroy us. Yet there is also coming an Armageddon for all Antichrist and Gog and Magog nations.

Their terrorism. "His roaring (is) like the lion, and a roaring like the young lions, and shall roar and seize prey and place (it) in safety, with (and) none to rescue (it)" (29). Having described the enemy, what he is like, what he has, now he tells what he will do — terrify all about him. First, there is the low sinister growl of the enemy, then the rumble of the army on the move, finally the roar of the battle. The prey taken off with none to rescue it is Judah. God, of course, can deliver; but will He? The answer is, No. Judah is to be punished, and the theocracy is to be destroyed. The enemy is to have its way until the sovereign purposes of God through it are realized. "They who would not hear the voice of God speaking to them by His prophets, but stopped their ears . . . shall be made to hear the voice of their enemies roaring against them" (M. Henry).

Their irresistibility. "and they will roar over it in that day like the roaring of the sea, and look to the land, and, behold, darkness, distress; even the light in her skies shall become dark" (30). The figure changes from the roar of the lion to the roaring of the sea. These forces are irresistible. The ship of Judah is wrecked in midnight gloom. The Jews will look to the waves of sea to cover them from the wrathful eye of the divine Judge. They will look to the land for caves and rocks to hide themselves, but will not find them; nor will they find any hiding in the darkness. From world-darkness they go to eternal darkness. But the prudent foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself — in the cleft of the rock of Calvary.

Know the standard and follow it.
Read THE STANDARD BEARER.



GUEST ARTICLE

The Canons of Dordrecht: An Historical Perspective (2)

Rev. M. Kamps

Spread of the Reformed Faith

The Reformed faith had to earn its right of existence in the Lowlands. Its spread was continually opposed. Our Dutch fathers were to gain the faith only by purchasing it with their blood. Thousands were killed for cherishing its truth. The Calvinistic or Reformed faith *gained* its right to existence in the Netherlands only through suffering and death. It would be maintained only in the same way.

Christ, our Lord, died to gain the victory over depravity, sin, guilt, and the forces of Hell. There was no other way. The pattern for God's people was set. Christ's sufferings we must fill up. If the world hated the Master they will also hate His disciples. Christ was victorious in death. In the lives of His people Christ is always victorious too: faith inevitably makes its confession of the truth. But this victory of Christ by His irresistible grace is gained only through suffering. This truth our Dutch fathers learned from 1540–1585. God uses historical events and circumstances to form His people spiritually. One of His instruments was Philip II of Spain.

Several historical factors comprised God's means to bring the light of the gospel to His people in the Lowlands, who were engulfed in spiritual darkness and ignorance and exploitation by Roman Catholicism. Preparatory to the spread of the Reformed faith was, first of all, the dissemination of Luther's writings from 1520 onward. Luther showed clearly the corruption of the papal system, on the one hand; on the other hand, he made transparent the beauty of the gospel of grace. Secondly, the Anabaptist movement indirectly served to prepare for the spread of the truth. Anabaptism, if anything, served to awaken in the people a desire to grant religious freedom.

But there were two historical factors which directly insured the spread and reception of the Reformed faith by the people. The first was the wide and rapid

spread of Calvin's writings in the southern provinces of the Lowlands. These southern provinces were French speaking. Consequently the lucid, forceful writings of Calvin found ready access by the people eager to learn the truth of God's Word.

The second momentous event that enhanced the dissemination of the Reformed faith was the translation of the New Testament from the original into the Holland language. Luther's German Bible was also widely used in the Lowland, after it had been translated into the Holland.¹

This spread of the Reformed faith was in a measure unrestricted till 1559. Charles V opposed it but not wholeheartedly. Most of his severe edicts were not enforced widely. Consequently, from 1540 till 1559 the truth of God's Word as set forth by Calvin cast its illuminating rays and life-giving power into the spiritual darkness which engulfed our forefathers of the Netherlands.

The Political Situation in the Lowlands

In order to understand the motive and power of those who so mercilessly persecuted the Netherlanders and especially our Reformed fathers among them it is necessary to take a brief look at the political situation in the Lowlands from 1540 to 1585. In 1581 the northern seven provinces declared separation from the ten provinces of the south, which had made peace with Philip on the basis of a common faith — Roman Catholicism. In the year 1581 the northern seven provinces became an independent republic under the leadership of William of Orange. But at the midway point of the 16th century the Lowlands comprised seventeen provinces loosely joined together in a States General. Each province was self-ruling, enjoying local rights and privileges. However, these seventeen provinces that comprised the Lowlands (modern Netherlands and Belgium) were part of the domain of Charles the V in 1550. He had received the right to rule the Netherlands before 1519 in which year Charles became the Holy Roman

Emperor. Charles ruled all of western and central Europe with the exception of France, England, Portugal, and the Papal States. The glory and grandeur of a Roman Emperor had long before vanished by the time Charles obtained his position. Charles V, who was a physically weak man, occasioned by repeated illness, was called upon to rule a revolutionary Europe and a people aroused and excited by the reformation of the church. Charles was by birth and upbringing a Lowlander. He had watched helplessly the spread of the Reformation from Wittenburg to Geneva and to his homeland, the Lowlands. He tried to stop its spread but was too humanitarian. Though he murdered thirty thousand Lowlanders in his attempt, it was not enough.³ In his old age Charles cursed the day that he had not killed Luther, as Leo X begged him to do.

Physically weak and broken in spirit, Charles, at the age of 55, abdicated and gave to his son Philip on October 25, 1555 the position as King of the Lowlands and a year later the title Philip II of Spain.

Economically the Lowland in the middle of the 16th century was the most prosperous nation of all Europe. Antwerp excelled Venice in commerce and trade. The Netherlands was so wealthy that they provided 1,500,000 livres (\$37,500,000) as taxes to Charles, which constituted half of all his revenue. Religiously they were beginning to prosper in the truth. But it was all to change with the rise of Philip II, son of Charles V, bigoted, murderous, and, of course, a dedicated Roman Catholic.

Persecution by Philip II of Spain

Philip was a Spaniard in every detail. He was Roman Catholic in conviction. He did not understand the people of the Lowlands and had no regard for their physical well-being. When Philip began to rule in 1555 he was young, healthy, strong-willed and ungodly. For four years, 1555–1559, he remained in the Lowlands continuing his father's policies. Philip II had one burning desire which motivated him in all his actions in the Lowlands. It was to "root out all heresy." He secretly plotted with the King of France to suppress and destroy all heretics. Philip was a cruel man. When reports came to him of the merciless slaughter of seventy thousand Huguenots centered on St. Bartholomew's Day (1572) . . . he laughed uproariously.⁴ The Church of Christ wept and groaned . . . had God forgotten to be kind?

This enemy of the truth used three means to "root out heresy" in the Lowlands. First, he sent in his troops, placing them in the important cities. Secondly, he broadened and intensified the hierarchical rule of the Roman Catholic church. With the Pope's permission in 1559 Philip established three new archbishoprics and eighteen new bishoprics. Now the

people were directly under the powerful hand of an aroused and determined Roman Catholic clergy. Thirdly, the bloody Inquisition was used to ferret out and kill many of the Reformed believers. With military power the youthful king backed up the tenacious activity of the Inquisition. Philip left the Netherlands in 1559 to live in Spain. He ruled the Lowlands through his half-sister Margaret of Parma and three heads of state which he had appointed. These three formed a *consulta* to advise Margaret and to carry out the policies of Philip. Self-rule and ancient privileges of the people were disregarded. The nobles, the people in general, and the Church of Christ resented Philip II of Spain.

The years 1559 to 1581 are crucial in an understanding of how the Reformed church was brought to spiritual maturity. For, first of all, at the beginning of this period the Reformed churches began to take shape and were organized as Reformed in distinction from Roman Catholic. By the early sixties the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism became the confessions of Reformed believers in the Lowlands. These two confessions served to unite and identify the Reformed Churches. In 1569 the Reformed Churches held their first "synod" or conference at Emden, Germany; here because it was not safe to meet in the Netherlands. The Reformed church had emerged as a separate entity and began to manifest itself institutionally over against Roman Catholicism and Anabaptism.

Secondly, it was during this period that the Reformed people were severely persecuted by Philip. The Royal Academy of Belgium has published papers of Granvelle (a cardinal appointed as one of the three advisers to Margaret, Philip's Regent) which show that from the first Philip II urged the extirpation of heresy as the most important work to be undertaken by his government.⁵ Philip was undoubtedly emboldened and fortified in this endeavor, if he needed it, by the Decrees of the Council of Trent in 1563.

People were burned, buried alive, or hanged by order of the dreaded Inquisition. The Spanish troops were guilty of pillage and rapine. The people of Zeeland declared that they would rather perish in the waves of the ocean than longer endure the outrages of Philip's troops . . . thus she opened the dikes. News reached the Netherlands that the father of the Belgic Confession, Guido de Bres, had been executed in 1567. People fled the country. Commerce and economic prosperity had ground to a halt. After having recalled the first Spanish troops, Philip sent the Duke of Alva with thousands more and with extensive political power that made the Duke's word the word of the King. Alva was on his own.

Alva invented an instrument of persecution called The Bloody Tribunal. This Council punished treason

with death. Treason was defined as follows: to have presented any petition against the Inquisition and the new bishoprics, to have tolerated public preaching, to have asserted that the King had not the right to suspend the charters of the provinces, and to maintain that the Council of Tumults (Bloody Tribunal) had not the right to override all the laws and privileges of the people of the Netherlands.⁶ Thousands were killed. People were condemned to death in batches of ninety-five, eighty-four, forty-six, thirty-five at a time. Alva reported to Philip that on Ash-Wednesday morning fifteen hundred were killed in their beds. On another occasion eight hundred were condemned to death. In 1572 news of the butchering of the seventy thousand Huguenots by the French King, who had secretly plotted with Philip II to "root out all heresy," reached the Netherlands. The city of Antwerp was sacked. Leiden escaped total ruin only by flooding the countryside by opening the dikes and thereby allowing the ocean waters and the Sea Beggars to drive back Alva's troops.

But enough! The reader with a little imagination can gain a picture of the extent of the blood bath by which Philip attempted to root out the Reformed faith. Edward Gibbon estimates that the number of Protestants who were executed in a single province and a single reign, far exceeded that of the primitive martyrs in the space of three centuries of the Roman empire. Possibly more than one hundred thousand Lowlanders lost their lives for their religious beliefs during Philip's reign.

But what now is the significance of this horrible suffering? What does this tell us about our fathers, the Church at Dordrecht in 1618-19? The significance of this history is that this horrible suffering was the means God used to prepare the Church boldly to confess and maintain the truth at Dordrecht. Fifty-eight of the delegates of this Synod were Netherlands. Many were born about the time of the beginning of Philip's reign. Their youthful souls were deeply affected and influenced by the dedication and faith of those who suffered and died for the truth of God's Word. In their youth they learned what it meant to

choose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, to esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures and favor of Spain's King.

But we must remember that it is the Church as a whole that writes creeds and not just a handful of men. Therefore, not only the 58 delegates from the Netherlands but the whole Church at Dordrecht had gone through this experience in its youth. Youthful saints during the years 1560-1590 must have asked time and again "why?"; "what is so important about what we believe?"; "is it worth it?" Always their parents had answered: "for the truth's sake," "because we love the Reformed faith." Ultimately, the answer was, "we are willing to suffer loss of property and life if necessary that we may be able to confess the Reformed faith to the glory of our God. This living confession was sealed with the blood of many. Faith validates its confession by a godly walk!

Thus the Church at Dordrecht and its 58 representatives had counted the cost of discipleship; they knew and loved the truth of God's Word. They had been prepared to stand for the truth at all costs. They were not about to compromise it away. The generation before them had, by God's grace, not failed them! God had through the means of one suffering generation prepared a second generation to give us their creed, the Canons of Dordrecht, wherein God's sovereignty and glory is beautifully set forth.

Next time we will take a brief look at the events that occasioned this synod in 1618.

Footnotes:

¹ Kromminga, D.H.; *The Christian Reformed Tradition*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1943, p. 21

² Lindsay, Thomas; *A History of the Reformation*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1910, Vol. ii — p. 239

³ Durant, Will; *The Reformation*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1957, p. 632

⁴ Lindsay, op. cit. p. 298-200

⁵ Ibid, p. 243

⁶ Ibid, p. 256

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

A Reformed Look at Pentecostalism

David Engelsma

It will be worth our while to examine the religious movement known as Pentecostalism from the viewpoint of the Reformed faith. The Reformed faith is

the faith that the Holy Spirit has handed down to us as a glorious heritage through the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, especially through

John Calvin. It is the faith set forth in our Reformed creeds, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dordt.

Such an examination is worthwhile because the Pentecostal religion makes inroads in Reformed churches. Some openly and joyfully acknowledge that the Pentecostal religion replaces the historic Reformed faith. Others defend their novelty with the claim that Pentecostalism and the Reformed faith are harmonious. Others hold that Pentecostalism completes the Reformation in our day.

It is legitimate for us to conduct this examination. It is common for Pentecostals to scare off would-be critics by insinuating that any critic of Pent. is guilty of the unforgivable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. A Reformed man is not intimidated by this scare tactic. He knows of many instances in the history of the church when false teachers tried to gain entrance into the Church by crying, "The Spirit, the Spirit." An outstanding example is the fanatics that arose in Wittenberg at the time of the Reformation to harass the Lutheran Reformation. These were the "heavenly prophets" and "enthusiasts" who claimed special revelations from the Spirit and the power to perform miracles. They cowed Melancthon, but they did not cow Luther. When they screamed, "The Spirit, the Spirit," Luther replied, "I slap your spirit on the snout."

In addition, the Reformed man knows the instruction of the Spirit of Christ in Holy Scripture: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

The standard of the examination of the spirits, including the spirit of Pent., is Holy Scripture, the infallibly inspired, written Word of God. In the light of Scripture, the question must be this: Does this spirit, this religious movement, confess Jesus Christ (I John 4:2,3); does it abide "in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9)? For the Holy Spirit confesses Jesus Christ and brings the doctrine of Christ.

Our examination of Pent. should emphasize the Reformed conception of the Christian life. This is important because Pent. sneers at the life of "mere believers." The effect of Pent. is that believers wonder whether their life is what it should be, a "normal Christian life." Believers are even made to doubt whether they are saved Christians at all. In the final analysis, the appeal of Pent. to religious people is Pent.'s boast of a higher, fuller, deeper, richer Christian life. Pent. exults in a life that is all power, all excitement, all joy, all victory.

The Reformed Answer to Pent's Basic Biblical Appeals

By Pent., we understand the religious movement

that teaches that there is a second, distinct work of grace in the child of God which is referred to as the "baptism with the Holy Spirit." At some moment after regeneration, the believer receives the Holy Spirit, usually as a marvellous, emotional experience, in such a way that now, for the first time, he has a wonderful feeling of joy, possesses power for dynamic Christian life and service, and enjoys extraordinary gifts of the spirit, especially the gift of tongues-speaking. Even though the believer received Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and sanctification before this, not until the baptism with the Spirit lifts him to a much higher spiritual level is he enabled to live the full, real, joyful, powerful Christian life.

It is this doctrine that constitutes the very heart of Pent. Other features of Pent. may attract the attention of the onlooker, e.g., tongues, miracles, and the exuberance of the meetings; but the movement stands or falls with its novel doctrine of salvation — its second baptism, its second work of grace. The fundamental criticism that the Reformed faith makes of this religion is that it is heretical in its doctrine of salvation, its "soteriology."

The Pentecostals identify this Spirit-baptism with the coming of the Spirit on the 120 believers on the day of Pentecost. Hence, the name of the movement: Pentecostalism.

Since the Spirit is supposed to give extraordinary gifts to those who are so baptized, the movement is also called "the charismatic movement." In the Greek of the New Testament, the word meaning "gifts" is *charismata* (cf. I Cor. 12). The gifts that Pent. makes much of are tongues; interpretation of tongues; prophecy; miracle-working; and the power to cast out devils (exorcism). The main gift is speaking in tongues. Therefore, the movement is sometimes called the "tongues movement."

Neo-Pentecostalism is the name given to this movement as it develops within the established Protestant churches and within the Roman Catholic Church. There have been Pent. Churches since the early 1900's — the Assemblies of God is one of the main Pent. denominations. In the early 1960's, men in the established Protestant Churches began advocating Pent. beliefs and practices within their churches. The leader is generally recognized to be the Episcopalian, Dennis Bennett. This aspect of the movement is called *neo-Pent.*, i.e., *new-Pent.*

To the utter astonishment of a Reformed saint, Pent. is a large, growing, influential movement. It is regarded as a third force in Christendom, alongside of Rome and Protestantism. Millions the world over embrace the teaching and follow the practices of Pent.

There is hardly a denomination that does not have

an active Pent. group within it, including most (but not all – God be praised!) Reformed denominations.

Pent. claims that its doctrine of the baptism with the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace and its teaching of the presence in the Church of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit are Biblical. It finds in Acts 2, as well as in Acts 8, 10, and 19, that there was a distinct reception of the Holy Spirit by believers subsequent to their conversion, a reception of the Spirit that gave the believers great power and that bestowed upon them special gifts. It points us to I Corinthians 12 as proof that the gifts of the Spirit to the New Testament Church include healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, tongues, and the like.

What is the Reformed answer to these appeals to the Bible in support of the Pent. teachings of the baptism with the Spirit and the extraordinary gifts?

There is a baptism with the Holy Spirit. It is an essential part of salvation. John the Baptist so described the saving work of Jesus: “he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Matt. 3:11. Cf. also Mark 1:18; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). But it is not a second work of the Spirit subsequent to the work of regeneration and the gift of faith. Nor is it limited to some Christians only, those who have fulfilled certain conditions and thus made themselves worthy of this higher stage of salvation. Christ’s baptism of us with the Spirit is His one, saving work by His Spirit in every elect child of God. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that Scripture calls regeneration, or the new birth from above (John 3:1-8). It is Christ’s cleansing of us from sin and consecration of us to God by the pouring out of the Spirit into our hearts. Of this spiritual reality, John’s baptism with water was a sign. The sacrament of baptism in the Church is a sign of this baptism with the Spirit. This is clearly taught in Titus 3:5,6: “according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

There is only one baptism in the Church of Jesus Christ: the baptism with the Holy Spirit signified by the sprinkling with water in the Name of the Triune God. This is Paul’s teaching in Ephesians 4:5: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Pent. has two baptisms: a first, lower baptism – salvation from sin – of which the sign is water; and a second, higher baptism – the baptism with the Holy Spirit. Thus, Pent. divides Christ, salvation, and the Church.

Christ’s baptism of every one of His people with the Holy Spirit depends solely upon His work of meriting this gift for them by His death, not upon works that they must perform. Therefore, every elect child of God not only may receive it and can receive it, but *does* receive it. “He *shall* baptize you with the Holy Ghost,” John promised.

To be sure, baptism with the Spirit is the reception of great power by every one so baptized, just as Christ instructed His disciples in Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you . . .” But let us allow Scripture to teach us how this great power is exercised. As far as the Church is concerned, the power is exercised by witnessing to Christ (Acts 1:8; Acts 4:33). The mark of a Spirit-baptized Church, therefore, is the faithful proclamation of Christ.

As far as the individual child of God is concerned, the nature of the power of the baptism with the Spirit is indicated by John the Baptist when he says that we are baptized “with the Holy Ghost *and fire*.” We receive the Spirit *as a fire*; He dwells and works in us *as a fire*. Fire purifies by utterly burning away the dross that defiles the precious metal. The Holy Spirit, similarly, burns away our sin, so that we may be consecrated to God in the obedience of love. The power of the Spirit-baptism is the awesome power of sanctification. Such was the prophecy of the baptism with the Spirit in the Old Testament. In the day when the “branch of the LORD” is beautiful and glorious, the remnant of grace “shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning” (Isaiah 4:2-4).

The mark of a Spirit-baptized Christian, therefore, is sorrow over sin (repentance) and obedience to God’s law (holiness).

Have you been born again (and you certainly have, if you believe in Jesus Christ)? Are you sorry for your sinfulness and your sins? Is there a beginning in your life, small as it may be, of obedience to all of the commandments of God’s law? Then, you have been baptized with the Holy Spirit, and the sacrament is a constant sign and seal to you of that baptism. Do not let anyone deceive you, no, not for a moment, that you must look still for another, better baptism.

(to be continued)

As part of her ministry of testifying to Christ Jesus, the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland has on hand cassette tapes of a lecture by Professor R. Decker, “Pentecostalism in the Light of the Bible,” and a sermon by the present writer, “The Baptism with the Holy Spirit,” which we make available to those who desire them. If you would like one or both of these cassette tapes, write:

The Evangelism Committee
South Holland Protestant Reformed Church
16511 South Park Ave.
South Holland, Illinois 60473

GUEST ARTICLE

A House Divided?

Rev. James Slopsema

Is your home a house divided?

Consider.

On the one hand, we stress Christian education for our children. We recognize the fact that as believing parents we receive from the hand of the Lord covenant seed. We also recognize the fact that as parents it is our duty before God to instruct this seed. The Bible is clear. It lays it upon parents to provide for their children good, sound education; and that means a God-centered education. Our children must not only be instructed, but instructed in the things of God. They must not only be taught knowledge, but the true knowledge of God. All their learning, no matter in which subject or area it is, must be from the point of view of Scripture.

In obedience to this command of God we send our children to the Christian school. The education offered by the state in the public school simply falls short. In fact, it is just the opposite of what our children are supposed to receive. It is a man-centered education — instruction in the wisdom of men and the lie of Satan. Thus, we as parents and also grandparents have banded together, built, and maintained Christian schools where our covenant seed can receive the instruction that they must have.

And although this requires much sacrifice on our parts, yet we have done so willingly. For we have this promise, that God will bless our labors and bless our children through these labors. God uses the Christian school and Christian instruction for the spiritual well-being of covenant seed. We send our children to the Christian school in the expectation that in this way we shall see them grow up before us in the fear of God's name and with the love of God in their hearts.

We are emphatic on this whole matter of Christian education. That is good. It is well-pleasing to God.

That on the one hand.

But on the other hand, there is the matter of television.

It is a well known fact that 95% of the homes in our country have at least one working television set. That percentage is also fairly accurate for our homes.

It is also a well known fact that children spend a great deal of time in front of those television sets. Here are some statistics that will shock you. They appear in *The Christian Century*, April 21, 1972, in an article by Charles-Gene McDaniel entitled, "TV: A Wasteland for Tots." We quote:

"Pre-school children, ages 3 to 5... watch television on an average of 54 hours a week — nearly 64% of their waking time. By the time the child reaches 5 and enters kindergarten, in the previous 2 years he spent more time in the TV room than a liberal arts student spends in the classroom throughout his 4 years of college.

"American children and youth spend one-fourth to one-half of their waking time watching television, with only sleep surpassing television as the top time consumer. By the time a child is 14 and in the eighth grade, he has watched the violent assault or destruction of nearly 18,000 human beings on television. During an average year, the older child attends school 980 hours and watches television 1,340 hours, so that by the time he graduates from high school, he will have spent roughly 11,000 hours in the classroom and more than 22,000 hours in front of the television. . . .

"A new member of today's generation can expect to spend nearly 10 years in front of the television screen during his life-span."

Unbelievable, isn't it?

Or is it?

Keep track once. Keep track of the hours your children spend in front of the television: before they go to school; when they come home from school; after supper. And keep track, if you can, of how much they watch television at the homes of their friends. Do that for a week. Then add it all up. Do your children spend one-fourth to one-half of their waking time watching television? Do they spend more time in front of the TV than they do in school? You may be surprised and shocked when all the totals are in.

Is all this TV viewing consistent with the ideals of Christian education, as we maintain it?

Hardly!

Like the school, television is an educator. We seldom think of it in that way. We usually consider

the TV to be an entertainer. That is why we have it in our homes. And an entertainer it is. But in its entertainment it is also an educator. The TV is a tool to disseminate information and knowledge to its viewers. It is a tool to instill into those who are glued to it night after night certain values, attitudes, and viewpoints. It has the power to form one's world-and-life-view. And it does this very subtly so that one is not even aware of it. This is the power of mass communication. Radio and the printed page do the same thing. But television is more effective in this because it reaches us through both the eye and the ear. Sit glued to your TV set hour after hour and it will entertain you. But it will also educate you. Place your children in front of the TV. They will love it. And while they are enjoying themselves, they too will get quite an education.

But what kind of education?

Is it a Christian and God-centered education? We know better than that. There is absolutely nothing Christian at all in television programming today. Men of God are not in control of the TV industry. The Scriptures are not the standard which determines the content of TV programs. God is nowhere to be found on TV, except in a perverted and blasphemous way.

The world controls TV — the world at its worse — and ultimately Satan. That is all too obvious from the immorality, crime, murder, profanity, and violation of every one of God's commandments that characterizes the lion's share of TV viewing today. Remember the quote from *The Christian Century*: "By the time a child is in the eighth grade, he has watched the violent assault or destruction of nearly 18,000 human beings on television." Our televisions are the most godless, anti-christian educators that exist today!

And we can not set our children before this educator without their being affected. They will learn. The devil is only too happy to teach them. You place your children in front of the immorality of TV, and they will learn immorality. You let them watch their police and detective shows with its crime and murder, and they will learn crime and murder. You give them a steady diet of television's profanity, and profanity they will learn. How can it be any different when night after night, year after year, our children are engrossed in this type of godlessness? Our Christian school teachers only wish that they could command such interest and attention from our children as do our TV sets. What they could not teach our children in the things of God!

The objection is raised: "But we don't let our children watch those types of programs. We regulate our TV very closely. Our children watch only the good programs — family programs." These "good" programs differ from the crime and sex shows of television only in degree. What effect do you think a comedy program has on our children when a father is

portrayed as a bumbling idiot, a laughing stock, and the object of ridicule? We laugh; our children laugh. They have learned disrespect for the authority of the God-appointed head of the home. What happens when Grandpa Walton of "The Waltons" (so I am told) chases after another woman in violation of the seventh commandment? We have told our children that this is a "good" program. They will undoubtedly learn disrespect for the holy ordinance of marriage and fidelity in marriage. Fact of the matter is that these "good" programs are also filled with every violation of God's law, only not to the blatant degree as the other programs. This makes them more dangerous yet; for our guard is down when we and our children view them.

Perhaps a word ought also to be said about the "educational" programs — National Geographic specials, Sesame Street, Electric Company, etc. Are you aware of the fact that the godless theory of evolution comes through loud and clear in the popular National Geographic specials? Are you also aware of the fact that even worldly educators are alarmed at the values and attitudes that are taught in Sesame Street? Even the "educational" programs are godless and anti-christian.

Are Christian education and television viewing compatible? Hardly! Fact is, they are diametrically opposed to each other. The two are like water and oil — they simply do not mix. What we accomplish through the Christian school we completely undermine and destroy when we let our children sit in front of the TV. When we send our children to the Christian school by day, and then allow them to attend the anti-christian school of television by night, we are a house divided against ourselves as far as the education and instruction of our children are concerned. And a house divided against itself simply can not stand.

If our homes continue in this trend, then we can not expect to see our children grow up in the fear of God's name. Do not expect them to manifest a deep love for God and things of God. Do not be surprised when they walk in the way of rebellion and set their feet on the path of great wickedness. They are following the instruction we have given them through television. We can expect this type of thing.

Let us be consistent!

Let us rid our homes of every evil influence. If that means that the TV sets must go, so be it. Life is not unbearable without them. And let us bring to bear upon our children everything that is beneficial for them. Then we can expect to see them grow up in our homes and in the church as responsible citizens of the Kingdom of God, eventually taking their places in the battle line of the church fighting the good fight of faith.

This is important.

Our children are the future of the church.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to the Members of the Church at Philadelphia

April 1, 1977

Dear Timothy,

Perhaps it is well in our correspondence for the next few months to discuss together various subjects, of a more practical nature, which are of interest and concern to a young minister of the gospel. There is advantage to this because of the fact that the years you have spent in the Seminary are mostly concerned with the acquisition of theoretical knowledge. There is a certain amount of factual data which you are required to learn in order to graduate from the Seminary and be declared eligible for a call. Practically all the emphasis in Seminary falls upon the learning of knowledge which is, in the nature of the case, theoretical. It is true that you have opportunity to gain practical experience in some phases of your work: you have had opportunity to preach in the Churches in your years in Seminary; and you have had opportunity to teach some Catechism classes. But, as you know, we do not have in the Seminary an "intern program" which gives you opportunity to gain experience in the actual shepherding of a congregation. There are definite advantages to such a program, no doubt; it might be worth our while to consider putting such a program into effect some time in the future. But the fact is that you went to your congregation with little practical experience, and you had to learn in "the school of hard knocks" — not always such an easy school.

So I thought it would be worth our while to examine some of the more practical matters of work in the parsonage. I do not want to repeat in these letters what you have already discussed in school in such subjects as Poimenics and Catechetics; that would be rather wasteful of your time and of mine. But there are many aspects of these very practical subjects which are important to you, which you did not have time to discuss thoroughly in school, and which probably take on new meaning anyway, now that you are actually in the work of the ministry of the Word.

We can take Paul's letters to Timothy as our point of departure, for not only was he a "veteran" in the service of the Lord writing to a fledgling minister, but the apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, writes of just such practical matters as you and I want to discuss. While both epistles of Paul to Timothy are filled with such practical advice, I want to concentrate first

of all upon a few ideas which Paul sets forth in the fourth chapter of his first epistle.

And more particularly yet, I want to pay attention, in this letter at least, to the first part of vs. 13: "Till I come, give attendance to reading."

In my experience in the Seminary, I have found a lamentable lack of reading among our students — something which you probably remember that I talked about with you more than once in your years in school. I tried then to get across to you something of the importance of reading, but I am fearful that now in the pressure of work, you have perhaps once again neglected this important aspect of your work. And so it is well that we spend a little time talking about it.

There are two questions especially which we ought to face: one is the question of *what* to read; the other is the question of *why* read. Both are important, and we shall discuss both together since there are different reasons why you ought to be reading different kinds of books.

Before we answer these specific questions, however, there are a couple of general remarks that should be made. The first of these is that you should have some plan and organization in your reading. Generally speaking, it is not a good idea to read in a helter-skelter fashion. I know that no rigid plan can be devised, and it is not wise to attempt to hold yourself to such a rigid plan; but if your reading is characterized by a shotgun approach, you will not benefit by it as much as if your reading has some system to it. What I mean to say is that, if you want to do some reading in the field of Church History, e.g., you should concentrate on that field, and, in fact, concentrate on a particular area in that field. If you want to read in the area of Theology, you should concentrate either on a specific topic in that general field, or you should concentrate on a particular period before moving on. If you want to study Puritan theology, you should pay particular attention to the writings of the Puritans. It does not do any harm to draw up a tentative program for your reading.

In the second place, you have to make time to read. It is my experience that unless you do this, you

will do very little reading — especially if you do not particularly enjoy reading. If you say to yourself, “I will read in my spare time,” you will soon find that you do not have any spare time and that you do not read. You must set aside time in your schedule to devote to reading, even if it means getting up an hour earlier in the morning to find this time.

In the third place, you must read widely. I will not expound on this for the moment because we can discuss this presently. But there is always a lurking danger that you are too narrow in your reading, and that the result is that you become narrow in your outlook.

What ought you to read?

First and foremost, you ought to read the Scriptures. It may sound a little silly to say this to one who is spending his life in preaching the Scriptures. But it is nevertheless, important. It is easy to fall into the trap of reading nothing in the Scriptures but the particular text you are going to preach on the following Sunday along with that part of Scripture which you read with your family in your family devotions. This is not good. You must read the Scriptures regularly and consistently. After all, the most fundamental rule of all Biblical interpretation is: Scripture interprets Scripture. And this rule will come to mean all the more to you as you are thoroughly acquainted with the Word of God. It is, in the final analysis, the fountain from which you draw all your strength.

But this reading is unique, for it is always eminently a spiritual exercise. Your reading of Scripture is not only to steep yourself in the Word, but is also to make the Scriptures the lamp unto your feet and the light upon your path which God gave them to be. You must read in such a way that you always ask, as you read, What does this Word of God say to *me*? If you read the Scriptures, then you will also have the Word of God as the guide for all your reading which you must do.

But Paul has more in mind when he urges Timothy to give attendance to reading. Certainly it is true that Paul assumes that Timothy will read and study the Scriptures. And that means that our reading must be broader.

Secondly, it is well that you spend some of your time reading various religious periodicals. There are so many in today's world, that you cannot possibly do justice to them all. But part of your reading must include these. And these periodicals you must get from a wide and as diverse an area as you can. Do not limit yourself to Reformed writings. Read a sampling of papers which are representative of the whole ecclesiastical spectrum. This will have two advantages. In the first place, it will give you writings, of others from outside our own Reformed circles, which are

instructive and helpful to our understanding of the truth. Though it be from different viewpoints, and though it be with an emphasis with which you do not always agree, there are many who write well concerning the truth of God's Word. You need these different viewpoints. And secondly, it will keep you informed of what is going on in the ecclesiastical world. You have to know this to keep abreast of the times, and to keep your congregation informed of all that is happening that they may “redeem the times.” This includes periodicals which are not written from the perspective of the truth of the Reformed faith. Do not throw them away in disgust because they militate against what you believe. You must know the wolves which threaten God's flock.

In connection with this, it is almost a necessity that you read something which keeps you informed about what is going on in the world. I do not mean watching the late news on TV. I do not mean reading the headlines in the daily newspaper. This latter too perhaps. But I mean that, while admitting that the news is badly slanted and that we cannot always tell what actually is going on and what those who manipulate the news media want us to know, we must be able to see the broad sweep of history as it is taking place before our eyes, for the Lord speaks in these things of His return upon the clouds of heaven.

Thirdly, you will have to read widely in your chosen field of theology in all its branches and aspects. I shall not comment upon this in detail. It is here especially that a program of reading is essential. But what needs to be read is what is being published today and what has been published in the past. The latter is far more important than the former. There is not a whole lot of good which comes on the market today which is necessary to read. But there are, nevertheless, many books published which are worth your time. Yet, by all means, steep yourself in the past. And read, in an organized way, in all branches of theology. While you may have areas of particular interest (and quite naturally you will concentrate on these), nevertheless, you should read in areas which are not of chief concern to you. If you do this, you will grow yourself, and your work in the congregation will never go flat. Your preaching will constantly be enriched; your labors with the people of God will constantly be fresh; and you will never see yourself “getting into a rut” in your work.

Finally, your reading must include a wider range of interests than theology. You ought to be reading constantly in the “classics” which have been produced over the centuries. I refer to the great writings of the past in the field of philosophy, in literature, and in the writings which have come forth from the life of the people of God. This too is an important part of your reading. Furthermore, you must read, in so far

as that is possible, in other fields of study such as history, astronomy, science, economics, etc. I know that this aspect of your reading will have to be limited. But, nevertheless, it is important that you have at least a passing acquaintance with these subjects.

There are all kinds of reasons why this is true. I cannot enumerate them all. But these reasons particularly come to mind. You will have to devote a share of your work to your young people who are going to college, and you have got to know what they are talking about when they come to you with their problems and questions. The reading of good literature stimulates the imagination — something which is so important for the minister of the Word. Although the word “imagination” sometimes stirs up in our minds frightening spectres of the lie, nevertheless imagination in the good sense of the Word is essential for sermon making, for understanding the needs of the people of God, for writing when your turn comes

to prepare an article for the *Standard Bearer*, for the making of the many speeches which are required of you. Nothing is quite so helpful to develop the imagination as wide and varied reading.

Well, I have only touched upon some aspects of this matter. And I suppose when you see this rather lengthy list you begin to think that there is just too much reading to do along with all your other work. But you would be surprised what a tremendous amount of reading can be accomplished if you would only set aside one hour a day to do it. And if you have two or three books lying about, all of which you are reading at the same time, then you will find that certain types of reading adapt themselves to certain times when you have a few minutes to spare. And you will not have any difficulty reading two or three books a week.

Give attention to reading. It is vital for your work.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

ALL AROUND US

“The Battle for the Bible” Ashamed of being Dutch ? Life Enrichment ?

Rev. G. Van Baren

“The Battle for the Bible

In a much-discussed book, Dr. Harold Lindsell writes of the trends within evangelical circles toward a denial of the inerrancy of the Bible. His book, *The Battle for the Bible*, has itself become the focus of considerable controversy. Articles have appeared in the *Banner* by the editor, L. De Koster, in which he condemns Lindsell's book (“It is a highly incompetent work, at most a reservoir of unseemly gossip.”). Commenting on these editorials, John J. Mitchell, editor of the *Presbyterian Guardian*, writes:

In his final editorial on the subject, De Koster notes that many evangelical leaders are “deploring the division among evangelicals being caused by Lindsell's book.” And he adds, “Let us take care that such division does not invade us” (in the November 26 issue). But it already has. Dr. Walhout's views of Scripture are not those of the great Reformed theologians of the past. Neither are Dr. Allen Verhey's. Neither, apparently, are the views of the synodical committee that De Koster mentions whose report on women in church office was rejected by Synod.

The division is already there — between those who

believe the Scriptures to be the very word of God, infallible and inerrant in all that they teach, and those who say many fine things about Scripture but are willing to find errors in it. It is sad that this is so. But it is even sadder if the leaders of once sound churches are no longer willing to make a “battle for the Bible” in our day.

Some of this same “battle for the Bible” continues within the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. In *Lutherans Alert National*, Feb., 1977, a report is given on Dr. Tietjen who was ousted from the Concordia Seminary of that church:

Liberalism is full of word perversion. To the liberal, Christ's statement “as Moses spoke” doesn't mean that Moses spoke; when He said: “As Jonah,” doesn't mean there was a Jonah. Dr. Tietjen, leader of the Missouri revolt declares that “nothing new is being taught. The problems, he says, are only in the new ways of expressing old truths.”

A Concordia Seminary Student Blue Book, dated January, 1971 cited some of the liberal teachings in the Seminary of that time under Dr. Tietjen's presidency. The book cites many of the “new ways of expressing old truths.” One example: “The theory that John the Baptist did not wear camel's hair, eat honey,

and preach repentance in the Judean desert is a viable option." (That is, you can choose what you want to believe.) "Instead, the desert was merely a 'theological' desert, and clothing merely 'theological' clothing. John, in fact, preached in Jerusalem, but a second Elijah was expected and therefore the church put Elijah trappings on the Baptist." The fact that the church did not write the Bible is probably quite beside the point to a liberal.

When the meaning of words is at the mercy of individuals and small groups of the intelligencia we can anticipate a veritable Babel. Is it any wonder that our mail, more and more, reflects the increasing confusion and frustration over the literature that is pouring out from our liberal official voices and their printing presses.

As Athanasius declared: God's Word is not like the word of man. The Word of God endureth forever — not changed, not before or after other, but existing the same always.

The above sounds all too much like that reported in the *Outlook* (Feb., 1976) concerning Dr. Allen Verhey who was examined by the Classis G.R. East of the Christian Reformed Church:

This fall a candidate in a preliminary examination had repeatedly told us that he intended to teach people to read the Bible *critically*. Questioned about this matter he stated that he did not believe that the serpent spoke to Eve as reported in Genesis 3. Questioned further about the earthquake mentioned in Matthew 28:2, he explained that whether or not this happened was a wrong question and the earthquake in the account should be understood as an apocalyptic literary symbol of the end. Some of the results of such a view of the Bible also were apparent in views he expressed on some moral questions. His view of abortion differed from that officially expressed by the church. The command, "Servants obey your masters" was no longer to be repeated in 1850, but the Bible taught a principle of equality under Christ which brought an end to slavery. The same principle, in his opinion, applied to the place of women in the church. Although it was plain that he held many orthodox opinions, regarding the Bible he was convinced that we cannot identify the words of biblical authors with the words of God in other times. What became apparent in the examination was that such views were not held only by him.

Or, how about this from *Calvinist Contact*, January 14, 1977, by Dr. Remkes Kooistra:

To me the three most discussed passages in connection with the possible ordination of women (I Cor. 11:2-11; I Cor. 14:26-36 and I Tim. 2:8-15) do not exclude this possibility. If someone with some kind of "hermeneutics of obedience" would object: "But does not Scripture state plainly that Paul does not permit women to teach and that it is shameful for a woman to speak in church", then, of course, who wants to take one verse literally must take every verse literally and so he must drink wine for stomach

pains (I Tim. 5:23) or he may not pray in the company of unveiled women, since this disturbs even the angels (I Cor. 11:10) and, if he is married, he must demand that his wife addresses him as "My lord John or Peter" (following the example of the holy women of I Peter 3:5,6). . . .

. . . In conclusion, what is the biblical teaching regarding women in office? In my understanding Scripture (Gal 3:28) says clearly: "yes", but it is also scriptural wisdom that I must have patience with my brother who has not yet heard the "yes". May the peace of the God of peace be with us both!

Ashamed of Being Dutch?

An interesting little article appears in *Calvinist Contact*, Feb. 11, 1977, with the above title. It suggests that one ought not be too ashamed of his heritage. In part, the article states:

Fight for your native language till the death? No, people of Dutch heritage don't do that and it is not necessary either. But don't you think it is "klein-zielig" to deny other people the privilege to read or converse in Dutch once in a while?

I have met some Dutch people who were a constant embarrassment to me, not because they were Dutch or spoke Dutch, but they tried to pretend to never having heard of the Dutch. They were "Canadians" you see. I suppose they thought they could fool the people around them into thinking that their accent was a carry over of a childhood speech impediment.

But, here is some food for thought, if you meet someone with even the slightest trace of a foreign accent, whereas you have none, it most likely means that he or she is smarter than you are when it comes to language, since that person knows at least two languages against your one. . . .

. . . The following story still does the rounds in Winnipeg about a Dutch immigrant who had been in Canada for a whole year, going to the airport to pick up the Minister. "Goeie dag, hoe gaat het er mee", said the Minister. "Could you please talk a bit slow, Minister, because I have forgotten my Dutch" said our veteran of one year. "Hey, have you got a problem", said the Minister, "already you forgot the Dutch and you can't speak English yet" . . .

The above rather humorous account could also serve to us as a reminder of that which we are so inclined to do in this world. Often we are ashamed of our spiritual heritage. We might rather appear to be like this world, than have any know we belong to Christ and are not our own. Scripture warns us not to be ashamed of our calling.

Life Enrichment?

Pine Rest Christian Hospital has a division known as "Life Enrichment Center." In this section, people

are invited to attend various courses in order to "enrich" their lives. One wonders, in reading of the various available "courses," whether Pine Rest Hospital remembers its own Reformed heritage. It appears that there is an effort to imitate virtually every latest "fad" in the world of psychology. There is the "Alpha Group" where there are "action games, role playing, and sharing. . . . Some exercises are fun and playful; others are serious and involve risk taking and self-disclosure. . . ." Another "course" is "I'm OK — You're OK" in which "Transactional Analysis will help you understand why you do what you do, and how to feel good about it. Basic concepts of TA will be covered and discussed, including ego states,

games, strokes, positions, scripts, permissions. . . ." Or there is the "relaxation training" (an imitation of transcendental meditation?) which "involves a process of tensing and untensing your muscles systematically." There is also an "Assertion Skills Workshop" which "utilizes a variety of techniques and methods in exploring and understanding the concepts of assertiveness. It begins with discussion of what assertive behavior is and the benefits of assertiveness. . . ."

One does begin to wonder whether Pine Rest Hospital simply imitates every new thing — or seeks to be distinctively Reformed?

Book Review

INTRODUCTION TO PURITAN THEOLOGY, A READER; Edited by Edward Hindson, Baker Book House, 1976; 282 pp., \$8.95.

Especially for the majority of the readers of the *Standard Bearer*, most of whom have little acquaintance with the Puritans, this is an extremely worthwhile book. It is intended to be an introduction to Puritan writings and Puritan thought. J. I. Packer, who writes the foreword, explains the importance of re-studying Puritan thought in our days:

We evangelicals need help. Where the Puritans called for order, discipline, depth, and thoroughness, our temper is one of casual haphazardness and restless impatience. We crave for stunts, novelties, entertainments; we have lost our taste for solid study, humble self-examination, disciplined meditation, and unspectacular hard work in our callings and in our prayers. Again, where Puritanism had God and His glory as its unifying center, our thinking revolves round ourselves as if we were the hub of the universe. The hollowness of our vaunted biblicism becomes apparent as again and again we put asunder things God has joined. . . . Truly, we need help, and the Puritan tradition can give it.

The editor has chosen subjects from each of the six loci of Dogmatics and has included an article on each of these subjects from different Puritan authors. Thus we have John Preston on natural theology, John Jewel on Scripture, Stephen Charnock on God, Thomas Manton on sin, James Ussher on Christ, John Owen on the atonement, Samuel Hopkins on regeneration, George Downname on justification, John Bunyan on sanctification, Richard Baxter on the church, and Jonathan Edwards on eschatology.

There are added features: a rather lengthy introduction which explains Puritan piety and doctrine; biographical sketches and pictures of the Puritan authors, a valuable bibliography for those who wish to read further in Puritan writings, an index to all

Scriptural references, and a chart of "the golden chain of salvation" prepared by the Puritan William Perkins (according to which Perkins was a supralapsarian).

We whose background is primarily Dutch Reformed have very little acquaintance with the Puritans. Presbyterians generally know the Puritans far better. It is, however, our loss that we do not know and have never made the acquaintance of the Puritans. I highly recommend this book, and hope that those of our readers who purchase it and read it will be persuaded that the Puritans are worthy of further study.

Jesus, my God, my Friend, my King,
Whom heav'n and earth adore;
The wonders of thy Word I sing,
But never can explore.

Thy word in cov'nant undertook
To bring salvation in:
Thy Word upon mount Calv'ry shook
The gates of hell and sin.

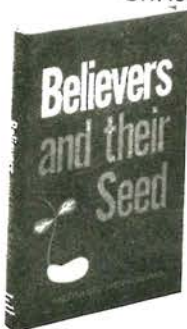
Thy pow'rful Word can intercede
And grace divine impart;
Can change the soul, supply its need,
And sanctify the heart.

Thy sov'reign Word knows no control:
Its conquest none can tell:
Its triumphs reach from pole to pole,
To heav'n to earth, and hell.

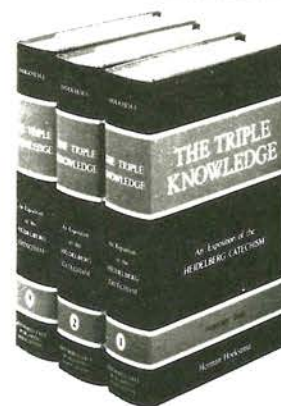
Summon'd by Thee, all worlds shall come,
From seas and tombs shall start;
Thy Word shall welcome Christians home,
And bid Thy foes depart.

R.F.P.A. PUBLICATIONS

The **Triple Knowledge**, the publication of which was completed in 1972, is already in its second printing. A three volume set, totaling more than 2000 pages, it is the only extensive commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism available in the English language. This work of Herman Hoeksema is a complete development of the doctrines of the Christian faith.



Each volume is an \$8.95 value. Order the complete set for \$24.95, and receive a copy of **Believers and their Seed**, by the same author, free of charge. This book of 159 pages is a thorough, popularly written exposition of the truth of God's covenant of grace.



Order from the R.F.P.A. Publications Committee, P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501. (Include payment, please.) Offer good till January 1, 1977.

The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed Christian School at Doon, Iowa will be in need of three teachers for the 1977-78 school year. Interested persons can apply in writing to Mr. Jim Hoogendoorn, Sec'y., Box 272, Doon, Iowa 51235.

Report of Classis West

Classis West met in Hull, Iowa on March 2 and 3 in the midst of a snowstorm reminiscent of the famed Hull blizzard of March, 1965. More than a foot of snow fell on Wednesday with the result that the delegates were unable to get to their lodging in the country that evening. Since all travel by car was impossible even within the town of Hull, delegates were transported to homes in town by snowmobile. It was an amusing sight: delegates perched warily on the back of the suspicious machine, one arm holding the driver for dear life, the other arm grasping a suitcase, and a hat left to fend for itself.

The hostility of the elements was more than matched by the warm hospitality of the Hull congregation, some of whom put up five or six delegates on Wednesday evening. Indeed, in the good providence of our God, the One Who "saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth" (Job 37:6), the storm served to increase the fellowship of the delegates and the brothers and sisters of northwest Iowa.

Eleven ministers and fifteen elders represented the churches of the West. Missing after some sixteen years in the Classis was Rev. B. Woudenberg, who had accepted a call to Classis East. Classis bade him an affectionate farewell. Classis welcomed back, after a stint as home missionary, Rev. D. Kuiper, now pastor of the Lynden, Washington congregation. Four elders were present at Classis for the first time: A. Brummel

(Edgerton); J. Sugg (Houston); B. Van Der Molen (Pella); and R. Wimberly (Houston).

Rev. M. Kamps, president of the previous Classis, led Classis in opening devotions. He expounded I Thess. 5:1-4. Rev. J. Kortering served as president of this Classis.

Classis witnessed the birth of a congregation and the death of a congregation. The congregation newly born is Houston, Texas. Classis received a letter from the Mission Committee informing Classis of their decision to organize Houston and of their advice that Houston affiliate with Classis West. The consistory of Houston also had a letter at Classis informing Classis that they were organized on February 15, 1977 and requesting Classis to receive the congregation in Classis West and to seat the elders sent to Classis. Classis granted the request and received Houston's credentials.

The congregation that disbanded was Forbes, North Dakota. The agenda of Classis included Forbes' request that Classis approve their decision to dissolve the congregation in Forbes. Since their acceptance into the Protestant Reformed denomination in 1960, their membership has declined. Their energetic efforts at church extension work in the past few years under the leadership of their pastor, Rev. M. Hoeksema, had no positive fruit in church growth. Classis approved

their disbanding. The sadness over this action was tempered by the knowledge that the saints in Forbes plan to move to other localities, so that they can join other Protestant Reformed churches. The actual disbanding of the church is scheduled for this summer; until then, the church will continue to meet for worship. Classis gave Forbes classical appointments until June.

Various reports were read and acted on: Classical Committee; Reading Sermon Committee; Taped Sermon Committee; Stated Clerk; Church Visitors; and Board of Trustees. The Taped Sermon Committee has a new corresponding address: The Evangelism Committee, South Holland Prot. Ref'd. Church, 16511 South Park Ave., South Holland, Il. 60473. All requests for tapes, cassette or reel-to-reel, from the Taped Sermon Library of Classis West should be sent to this address.

A classical appointment schedule for Forbes and Houston was adopted. *Forbes*: March 13, 20, 27 – Slopsema; April 17, 24, May 1 – Kamps; May 15, 22 – Miersma. *Houston*: March 20, 27, April 3 – Lanting; April 17, 24, May 1 – Kortering; May 15, 22, 29 – Lubbers (Houston is instructed to look to the seminary for supply during the summer months.).

Classis treated several overtures. It sent to Synod with approval of Classis an overture from Lynden that Synod improve our liturgy concerning public confession of faith. Lynden finds our present questions and answers “unnecessarily brief and barren.” Classis also sent to Synod with its approval an overture from Hull to change the By-laws of Synod, so that the Board of Trustees are empowered to appoint temporary replacements to synodical committees under certain conditions. Classis rejected an overture to change the time of Classis to the first Wednesday of April and October, spring blizzards notwithstanding.

A protest by a brother against a former decision of Classis was carefully considered.

Classis denied the request of a consistory for advice to proceed with the erasure of a baptized member, on the ground that the consistory did not furnish the Classis with sufficient grounds.

Six churches requested subsidy in the amount of \$33,420. Classis approved the requests and sent them on to Synod. In addition, Houston made known its

need for subsidy and was instructed to make a request to the Classical Committee.

The results of the various elections were:

- Classical Committee: Rev. M. Hoeksema
- Primus Delegate ad Examina: Rev. G. Lubbers
- Secundi Delegates ad Examina: Rev. M. Kamps and Rev. R. Miersma
- Church Visitors: Rev. D. Engelsma and Rev. J. Kortering
- Primi minister delegates to Synod: Rev. D. Engelsma, Rev. M. Kamps, Rev. J. Kortering, and Rev. R. Miersma
- Secundi minister delegates to Synod: Rev. W. Bekkering, Rev. M. Hoeksema, Rev. D. Kuiper, and Rev. J. Slopsema
- Primi elder delegates to Synod: Elder J. Haak (South Holland), Elder H. Huisken (Edgerton), Elder L. Regnerus (South Holland), and Elder E. Van Egdom (Doon)
- Secundi elder delegates to Synod: Elder R. Brunsting (Hull), Elder B. Menninga (Pella), Elder J. Sugg (Houston), and Elder F. Tolsma (Edmonton)

Classis adjourned about noon on Thursday, having accepted the invitation of the Pella, Iowa congregation to hold the next meeting of Classis in Pella on September 7, the Lord willing.

Rev. David Engelsma,
Stated Clerk, Classis West
—D.E.

On the Tuesday afternoon and evening before Classis, a large group of men, delegates and visitors, met in an Officebearers' Conference. The topic was “Baptism on the Mission Field.” The men used the report of Synod's study committee as an introduction to the subject and springboard for discussion. Rev. J. Slopsema chaired the meeting. There was an open, lively, and brotherly discussion of this interesting subject.

These conferences, a regular feature when Classis West comes together, prove to be good instruction and good communion.

The committee asks your suggestions regarding a topic for a conference in Pella. Send any suggestion to Rev. W. Bekkering.