

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Let us cling to the doctrine of salvation as it is exclusively in Christ Jesus, rooted and anchored in God's sovereign and unchangeable will and counsel, and let us never attempt to contribute to it one solitary work or merit on our part! May we ever remember that this salvation is in Christ Jesus and it must always remain there. Our works are always to be Christ's works (as we read it in Rev. 2:26), the fruits of His grace and Spirit. See "Preservation and Perseverance"

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THE STANDARD BEARER

ISSN 0362-4692

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.

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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.

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Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$10.50 per year. 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

Zion's Founding

Rev. H. Veldman

"His foundation is in the holy mountains." Psalm 87:1

How wonderful is the Zion of God!

We sing of this Zion of the Lord in number 237 of our *Psalter*. Psalm 87 is a eulogy, a word of praise concerning this Zion of God. This Zion is the church of God, also called the "City of God" as in verse 3. Glorious things are said of this Zion of God, things that concern God and are therefore glorious.

God is glorious and these glorious things are all related to Him: His grace and mercy, His goodness and perfection, His forgiveness and to know Him in love and covenant fellowship. All these glorious things are true of this City of God.

Psalm 87 is also prophetic. It speaks of the church of God as throughout the ages. The Lord

knows all His innumerable own by name, as we read in verse 6. They were all born in Zion; that is, they all owe their life to the regenerating power of the blood and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, which operates in the church of God. They will come from Rahab (Egypt) and Babylon, from Philistia and Tyre, also from Ethiopia; all nations shall swell this City of God, and they were all born through the almighty and irresistible grace of God, until that day when the new heavens and the new earth shall burst forth in song and sing forever the song of Moses and of the Lamb.

This Zion has been founded in the mountains of holiness. Literally we read: "His foundation is in the mountains of holiness." This "His" refers to the Lord, Jehovah. Concerning this there need be no doubt. If the reference were to Zion, then we would read in the original: her foundations. That this is Jehovah's foundation, that He has laid it is, of course, also established in other Scriptures, as in Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." It is to the foundation of God that we now call attention in this meditation.

* * * * *

The text surely refers to Zion's foundation.

Various connotations are given of Zion in Holy Writ. Scripture speaks of Zion as the Body of Christ, as in the epistles of Paul to the Ephesians and the Colossians, and also in his epistle to the Romans. Then, the Word of God speaks of Zion as a building and temple of the Lord, as in Ephesians 2:20-22: "Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church." And in this psalm we read of Zion that it is the City of God, as in verse 3: "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah."

Zion is the church of the living God. As the body of Christ the church is an organism which is a fulness, and in that fulness a unity, to which not one can be added and from which none can be subtracted, consisting of exactly so many members, each member occupying its own place and serving its own purpose, all together serving the wonderful and glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a building, the church is constituted of so many bricks or stones, all differing from one another and yet blending together into one marvelous structure,

showing forth the glory of its heavenly Architect and Designer. As a city, the church is a glorious commonwealth, a spiritual community living its own life, speaking its own language, gathered out of all nations, peoples, lands, and tongues, revealing forever the glory of Him, the living God, Who alone and sovereignly called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Zion's foundation — this presupposes two things.

First, this foundation presupposes firmness, stability, permanency. We may distinguish whatever rests upon a foundation from a tent or tabernacle. A tent does not rest upon a foundation. A tent is unfolded in the evening and folded up in the morning. A tent emphasizes the temporary; it is used by a traveler or pilgrim who has no abiding place and is enroute to his destination. A city or a house rests upon a foundation. This emphasizes the idea of permanency. Scripture speaks of the city that has foundations. A city is the goal, the end of one's sojourn or travels. In a city one intends to abide. There one sets up his permanent home. A foundation means that it cannot be moved. It renders a home or city stable or permanent.

Secondly, a foundation also determines the nature and form of a structure or building. One does not build a square house upon a round foundation. Hence, the foundation also determines the form and shape of the building. This, we understand, applies also to any church in the midst of the world. An Arminian foundation implies an Arminian church. If a church rests upon the Arminian conception of the universal love of God, universal atonement (that Christ died for every man, head for head), the free will of the sinner and the denial of absolute depravity, and the general well-meaning offer of salvation, then that church will be Arminian in all its preaching and teaching. Zion, too, rests upon a foundation. This foundation of Zion, we know, is Christ Jesus. And this means that Christ does not merely render the church of God secure, does not merely establish its firmness and permanency, but He also determines the nature and being of this church of God, its spiritual identity, its life of holy fellowship and communion with the alone blessed God. Christ does not only determine who the church shall be but also what it shall be. He suffered and gave His life that we should be reconciled to God and be a holy people unto the Lord. What He merited for us He also bestows upon us by His almighty and irresistible grace. Christ determines this structure of Zion, the church of God, redeemed by His blood and sanctified by His Spirit.

* * * * *

The realization of this foundation is suggested by

this word of God. In the first place, we read: "His foundation is in the holy mountains." This is His foundation. And the word "His" refers emphatically to the Lord, Jehovah. Besides, in the second place we read that His foundation is in the holy mountains. These holy mountains are the mountains of Jerusalem: Mt. Zion and Mt. Moriah, the palace of the king resting upon the former and the temple having been built upon the latter. These mountains are called holy because they were consecrated by God unto Himself, unto the service of the Lord, set aside by God for Himself in a peculiar way. Upon these mountains were built, according to divine instruction, the palace of the king and the temple of the Lord. And, if you inquire further, you will notice that God's dwelling place with His people, upon Mt. Moriah, centered in the Holy of Holies, and that in this Holy of Holies was the ark of the covenant, with its mercy seat (the covering of atonement), and that the high priest entered this inner sanctuary once a year to sprinkle upon the mercy seat the blood of the sacrifice. Also within this ark of the covenant was the moral law, the law of the ten commandments. Strikingly beautiful was the symbolism. The law of God within the ark of the covenant speaks of the law of God as it is written in our hearts, and this because of the blood of the covenant sacrificed in behalf of the people of God. This symbolism, we understand, pointed to Him Who was to come, our Lord Jesus Christ, called in Scripture the Chief Cornerstone and also the foundation of the church of the living God. It is in and through Him that the founding of Zion was realized.

Indeed, throughout the ages God lays this cornerstone or foundation. This, we understand, is Jehovah's foundation: His foundation. And He lays it throughout the ages, even as we read in Isaiah 28:16: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation." Notice: Behold, I lay, I am laying in Zion this foundation or stone. Hence, the Lord is constantly laying this stone. All through the ages He is preparing all things for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. That this stone or foundation is laid in Zion, according to Isaiah 28:16, means that it is laid in the sphere of Zion, the church of God, inasmuch as Christ, the Chief Cornerstone, is the Head of this church of God. Throughout the ages the Lord is causing all things to culminate in that moment, known as the "fulness of time," the one and only exact moment in history for the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, in our flesh and blood. Throughout the ages of the Old Dispensation God speaks of this foundation; He speaks of Him in Genesis 3:15, where we read of the seed of the woman which would crush

the head of the serpent; He speaks of it by the prophets of the Old Day, in all the symbols and shadows and sacrifices of the Mosaic law in the old dispensation. He laid this foundation in the mountains of holiness in the city of Jerusalem, spoke of the Christ through Him who sat upon the throne of David, symbolic of the mighty Son of David Who was to come, and He also spoke of Him in the temple upon Mt. Moriah.

This foundation is laid centrally in Christ Jesus. Finally, the Cornerstone makes His appearance in our flesh and blood. God laid this Stone, this Foundation, when He caused Him to be born as the Son of God, Incarnate, born of a virgin, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Bethlehem is the key to Calvary. Calvary is the climax of Bethlehem, but without the former the latter would be impossible. Even as we read it in Answer 36 of our Heidelberg Catechism, where, in answer to the question concerning the profit we receive by Christ's holy conception and nativity, we read: "That He is our Mediator; and with His innocence and perfect holiness, covers in the sight of God my sins wherein I was conceived and brought forth." Christ, the eternal Son of God, underneath the burden of all our sins and guilt, enables Him to bear the eternal and infinite wrath of God, redeeming us from sin and death and meriting for us everlasting life and glory, to lay the foundation of the church, the Zion of God, in unchangeable righteousness and justice. Then, God laid this foundation upon the cross of Calvary, in the suffering and death of His own beloved Son, enabling Him, through the power of the everlasting Spirit, to stand in the bottom of bottomless hell, enduring, consciously and obediently, the eternal wrath of God, redeeming Zion and laying the church's foundation in the everlasting and unchangeable righteousness of God.

Zion has been established; the church is founded in the righteousness of God; this church can therefore never be moved, inasmuch as the righteousness of God is more steadfast than the mountains. This Christ rises from the dead, is exalted into glory, receives all power in heaven and on earth; in Him the church of God is rooted, and out of Him that church is gathered and preserved into God's wonderful and heavenly fellowship. Indeed, we shall sing forever the song of Moses and of the Lamb. To God, in Jesus Christ, our Lord, be all the praise and the glory, now and forevermore.

Zion is founded in His holy mountains.
In Christ Jesus, God's Son, our Lord.
May we stand upon and rest solely in Him.
And the everlasting victory is sure.

Read The Standard Bearer

Editor's Notes

This is the last issue of the current volume-year, our sixtieth. In this issue, thanks to Mr. Donald Doezeema, you will find a complete index of this volume.

* * * * *

In commemoration of our sixtieth anniversary you will find in this issue Part Two of a special section entitled "Our Rich Heritage." This second installment includes random quotations from various articles which appeared in the *Standard Bearer* during the last 30-plus years. Perhaps you can identify some of the writers from their styles. The main thing we would have you notice is the fact that the *Standard Bearer* has continued to sound a consistently Reformed note throughout the years of its existence.

* * * * *

Our readers in the Michigan area are invited to join us for a commemorative evening in celebration of our Sixtieth Anniversary at our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church on September 27 at 8:00

P.M. Your editor plans to speak at that occasion on the subject, "*One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty.*"

* * * * *

Church History students may be interested in the following information which I received recently. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church plans to celebrate its 50th Anniversary in June, 1986. In anticipation of that event the Church has authorized the preparation of a semicentennial volume describing the history of the denomination. According to the Rev. Charles Dennison, OPC Historian, "this attractive 300-page hard-bound book will chart the story of the OPC, and will include histories of congregations, presbyteries, denominational committees, the work of women's presbyterials and a biographical register listing all ministers who have served the church." The book, which will cost \$21.00, is offered now at a prepublication price of \$16.00 (including shipping and handling). Orders may be sent to Charles Dennison, 804 7th Avenue, Coraopolis, PA 15108, accompanied with a check payable to OPC Anniversary Volume.

EDITORIAL

Anonymous Slander of the P.R.C.

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

The *Question & Answer* department of *The Banner* is anonymous. This holds, first of all, for those who send in questions. Instead of the name of the questioner being printed, he is simply identified by the place where he lives, such as "Indiana." And while such anonymity for questioners in such a department has its advantage and is not as such wrong, it also requires prudence and journalistic ethics on the part of the department editor in placing these anonymous questions, in case they contain unproved and unethical and unverifiable claims about others. Meanwhile, questioners are encouraged by the little statement occurring in this department each time it appears: "Confidentiality is assured."

What is worse, however, is the fact that the answers to questions are also anonymous. The Rev.

W.D. Buursma is the department editor, and I suppose he will ultimately have to be held responsible for the contents of the department. But I recall that when a change was made some time ago in this department of *The Banner*, it was stated that various Christian Reformed men would be furnishing the answers. Hence, the reader is unable to detect who is the author of any given answer; it may be one of several persons. Perhaps this also has its journalistic advantages; I do not know. Personally, I think that when a person takes a stand on a matter in print — especially when what he writes may be open to difference of opinion — he ought to be enough of a Christian gentleman to sign his name.

All the more amazing to me it was, therefore, when the following appeared in *The Banner* of July

30, 1984:

Q. My Protestant Reformed friends make it clear that they believe they have the purest and truest interpretation of the Scriptures. Although they don't condemn me as a member of the Christian Reformed Church, they also don't acknowledge me as a true believer. What are the differences in our beliefs? Why do they make me feel like I've missed the boat?

Indiana

A. The differences lie more in emphasis than in actual beliefs. Both denominations accept the ecumenical and Reformed creeds. People who founded the Protestant Reformed churches rebelled against, among other things, what they believed to be an undue emphasis on common grace within the Christian Reformed Church. They believed that the implications of that doctrine in the life of Christian Reformed church members justified separate existence.

Alas, some members of the Protestant Reformed Church do, indeed, make other Christians feel "inferior." Don't allow this unfortunate attitude to deprive you of the joy and contentment of fellowship in your own denomination.

I'm glad that many Protestant Reformed people today, though thankful for their denomination, have the grace to realize that not all Christian people will think precisely alike on minor points of the faith. We must acknowledge that in our own denomination we, too, have had people who have been elitist and who have conveyed to people in other churches an air of superiority.

As churches mature and as individual Christians grow in grace, they are less and less likely to emphasize "superiority" and more and more apt to confess that not only individuals but also churches are saved by grace alone.

Now, first of all, as far as the question is concerned, it should be noted that the questioner makes statements about his "Protestant Reformed friends." Are these facts, and do they state things which his "Protestant Reformed friends" actually stated? Or are they *conclusions* which the questioner reached, and which he may very well have reached incorrectly? Did they tell him that he isn't a true believer? Did they tell him that he missed the boat? Did *The Banner* consider the possibility that the questioner might be misrepresenting his "Protestant Reformed friends?" Or did it just assume as gospel truth that these "Protestant Reformed friends" were elitist and that they made the questioner feel inferior by conveying to him "an air of superiority?" I have no idea who these Protestant Reformed friends are, though I would guess (in the light of the fact that the questioner is from Indiana) that they are from our South Holland congregation. But it sounds highly unlikely to me that they would tell him that he isn't a true believer merely because he is Christian Reformed.

Secondly, the answer seriously misrepresents the facts and is slanderous of our Protestant Reformed Churches. I call attention to the following items:

1) It is formally true that both denominations accept the ecumenical and Reformed creeds. But this is not the issue. There are many who accept these creeds. The question is: do they *abide* by these creeds in their preaching and teaching, and do they uphold these creeds in their discipline?

2) It is totally untrue that "People who founded the Protestant Reformed churches rebelled against, among other things, what they believed to be an undue emphasis on common grace . . ." This statement is slanderous. For no one may separate from a church merely because of a difference of *emphasis*. The truth is that there was fundamental disagreement on the *doctrine* of common grace. The truth is that the CRC elevated common grace to the status of binding doctrine in that denomination by the adoption of the Three Points in 1924. The truth is that ministers and consistories were deposed and cast out because they would not subscribe to the Three Points; and they were cast out with an appeal to the Formula of Subscription. The truth is, therefore, that it was the CRC which considered the Three Points of Common Grace essential. The truth is that in the early 1960's, when the De Wolf group returned to the CRC, the Three Points were still considered essential and that more than one minister was required to declare agreement with them in his *colloquium doctum* at classis. The truth is that by this time the differences are so great — differences which stem from 1924 — that there is no comparison between the two denominations. Think of the general atonement case, the reprobation case, the movie issue, the union issue, the dance issue — all related to the common grace controversy. These are the things Rev. Anonymous should have told his questioner.

Thirdly, Rev. Anonymous seems to know much about Protestant Reformed people. He knows that "some members of the Protestant Reformed Church do, indeed, make other Christians feel 'inferior.'" He seems to know that "many Protestant Reformed people . . . have the grace to realize that not all Christian people will think precisely alike on minor points of the faith." Just how many Protestant Reformed people does he know and has he surveyed? I dare say I know *most* of our Protestant Reformed families. I don't know of those who make others feel inferior. I don't know of those who are "elitist," that is, who pride themselves because they are the "select or choice part . . . socially superior." I know many Protestant Reformed people who believe that our churches, judged by the *marks* of the true church, are the

purest manifestation of the church on earth and who believe that it is therefore their duty to belong to the PRC; but they are also humbly thankful for this grace, and acknowledge that what they are and have is by the grace of God, while they have nothing to boast in themselves. Indeed, churches are saved by grace alone!

But how sad it is that Rev. Anonymous does not instruct his questioner concerning the marks of the true church (Art. 29, Confession of Faith), and how

sad that he does not instruct him concerning the CRC's deviation from those marks. And how sad that he does not instruct his questioner about his duty to join himself to the true church! (Art. 28, Confession of Faith) If he had done so, and then made it crystal clear that the CRC maintains those marks while the PRC has departed from them, he might have helped his CRC questioner. But this he does not do; and he does not do it because he *cannot* do it.

Our Rich Heritage (Part II)

(How The *Standard Bearer* Has Instructed
And Guided Us For Sixty Years)

[In commemoration of our sixtieth anniversary we have gathered out of our sixty volumes brief quotations on various subjects and by various writers, left unnamed. These quotations demonstrate that our magazine has consistently spoken with one voice and emitted one sound. In this second installment you will find quotations from Volume 27 forward.]

They (the Liberated) say that the promise is conditional. We maintain that it is unconditional. They claim that the promise of God is for all that are born in the historical line of the covenant. We insist that it is for the elect alone and that it is an oath of God that He will infallibly lead all the elect unto salvation and eternal glory through faith.

It will be evident that according to the conception of the Liberated faith is excluded from the promise. I am well aware that on the other hand also the Liberated teach that faith is a gift of God, and that man of himself cannot believe, and that therefore really they also teach that faith is included in the promise. But on the other hand, they plainly insist that faith is a condition which we must fulfill in order to obtain the promise. And therefore the promise, according to them does not include faith. This is really the old double-track theology which we have always rejected. Repeatedly I have asked them to explain this contradiction, but thus far they have never succeeded.

Let us clearly see this difference.

Is faith a condition which we must fulfill in order

to obtain the promise? Or is faith included in the promise, so that God also promises faith?

Both cannot be true. It is either . . . or.

Now it certainly is Reformed, confessionally Reformed, to say that faith is not a condition unto the promise, but that God promises faith.

And this is certainly traditionally Protestant Reformed, ever since 1924. Everyone may know that we as Protestant Reformed Churches have always sounded the same note in this respect. The promise includes all of salvation, and faith is not a condition unto that promise. (Vol. 27, p. 226)

* * * * *

Upon the necessity of such Protestant Reformed teacher-training we have touched previously. However, it will do no harm, by way of introduction, to call attention to the matter once more. And we may do so very succinctly in the following propositions:

1. We believe, as Protestant Reformed people, that our schools must not merely be separate from the existing Christian schools and from the public schools in externals, in name, organization, facilities, etc., but that they must be schools in which the instruction from beginning to end is founded upon and permeated by our Protestant Reformed principles, which to us is the same as saying Reformed principles — which, in turn, is the same as saying the truth of Holy Scripture.

2. It follows from this fundamental proposition that a Protestant Reformed school is a school that is

staffed by Protestant Reformed teachers, men and women who are equipped to bring Protestant Reformed instruction.

3. It is also self-evident that a Protestant Reformed teacher is not a person who, though he be Protestant Reformed in confession and church affiliation, has had some teacher training in any of a number of different teacher-training institutions — Christian Reformed, Reformed, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, or even so-called non-religious schools, which are in reality modern or pagan — but that a Protestant Reformed teacher is a Protestant Reformed man or woman who has been trained in Protestant Reformed principles of education, positively and completely, so that he enters upon his teaching career with the equipment necessary to bring Protestant Reformed instruction. (Underlying this proposition are, of course, two facts which we can all see readily: a) The fact that a teacher must be trained. And, b) The fact that his training is not merely formal, but that all his training has doctrinal and ethical content and is necessarily colored by the spiritual principles of the particular school by which he is trained. Thus, for example, the modernists' training in the principles of discipline is fundamentally different from training in discipline based upon Holy Writ: the one bases his instruction upon the lie that man is inherently good, while Holy Writ gives us the principle that a man is incapable of doing any good and inclined to all evil, unless he is regenerated by the Spirit of God.) (Vol. 28, p. 396)

* * * * *

Yet, the contentment of which we speak in this chapter is a gift of grace, and the natural man does not know it. Nor is he capable of learning its secret. You may explain it to him. You may exhort him to be content with whatsoever he may be and whatsoever way he may have to walk. He will not and cannot understand it. In as far as he understands not the blessedness, but the doctrine, of true contentment, he will even despise it. For he is natural, not spiritual. And the natural man is carnal. He has a carnal mind, which is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Nor is it subject in any way or in any measure to the eighth commandment. The man of the world does not and cannot have his joy in the Lord. The precepts of the Most High are not his delight. To know Him and taste His grace and enter into the secret of His fellowship, to serve Him and love Him with all his heart and mind and soul and strength, to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness and consider all other things as subservient to this highest purpose, also the material things of this world — these things are hid from him. He cannot see them afar off. He has his delight in the things of

the present time

But contentment is a gift of grace, bestowed by the God of all grace upon His regenerated child, through Christ Jesus our Lord, and by the power of His Word in the holy gospel. Only the Christian, redeemed from the present world, delivered from the power of sin through our Lord Jesus Christ, by mere and sovereign grace, can be content in principle. He can say: I am content in whatsoever state I am. (Vol. 31, pp. 7, 8)

* * * * *

For impersonation is defined as assuming or acting the person or character of another. That is the prominent element in a play. In order to be successful, an actor must be able to enter into the thoughts and feelings of the person he is portraying. For in the minds of the audience the actor must be so completely associated with the real person that the audience forgets the actor and lives into the life of the real person, as if they were going through the same experience with him. The actor and his audience must be able to put their heart and soul into that experience in order really to enjoy it.

It is, therefore, exactly at this point that dramatization assumes an ethical character, that is, at this point it must be judged to be either right or wrong.

And it hardly needs proof to show that at this point dramatization becomes sin, both for the actor and the audience. (Vol. 35, p. 161)

* * * * *

God IS interested in covenant seed.

God is concerned with the salvation and glory of the youth of His Church. For that reason He speaks to them words of comfort, of wisdom, of admonition and exhortation. Jesus would not allow the disciples to send away even the little children, the babes that were brought to Him for Him to bless. For of such is the kingdom of heaven. How much more plain it ought to be that when these children come to young manhood and young womanhood, are mentally reaching full development as well as physically, that God is interested in them and is watching over them as a loving Father, ever seeking their salvation and everlasting good.

And although Scripture approaches our covenant youth in the masculine form of *my son* and *young man*, the young women and little girls are meant as well. It is not so that girls and women — young or old — are more inclined to be faithful and spiritual. Nothing is farther from the truth. Young women do not commit the same sins as young men. Women do not rebel against God in the same way that a man shows rebellion. One is more outward and brutal perhaps; and the other is more "polished" and "refined" in the act of sin. But it makes not one

particle of difference: both are conceived and born in sin. Both come into this world with a totally depraved nature. Neither one has anything over on the other from an ethical, moral point of view. Young women often are the temptation for the young man. Young women often "ask for it" even though the young men get the blame for it. Young women in the church make themselves attractive in the same way that the ungodly young women and older women of the world do for carnal reasons: and they wonder (?) why young men of the church and world alike take liberties, or, if you will, expect them to live up to the attractiveness they have displayed. Young men read the "advertisement" of what is for sale or free for the asking, what the covenant young women have to "offer"; and young men of the world who see nothing distinct in the covenant young women find them quite to their fleshly fancy. Many a young woman in the church has been enticed out of the church because she first attracted the world unto herself. Physical attraction draws young men of the world as well as of the church. Natural beauty is not a thing to despise. But let covenant young women be sure that spiritual beauty shines through that natural beauty and attractiveness God has given them, lest the world find delight in them. And let the natural beauty be used in the service of God and not of the flesh. (Vol. 39, p. 14)

* * * * *

One cannot refrain from asking, "How is it possible to preach the Scriptures and not preach predestination, since this is a fundamental truth that pervades all of the Scriptures? Anyone who preaches on the love of God as revealed to us in God's Word must surely declare:

That God loves Himself as the fulness of infinite perfection.

That God loves Christ as the perfect revelation of His glory.

That God loves His people whom He has chosen unto Himself in Christ as His peculiar people from among all peoples of the world.

That God gave His only begotten Son to die for those given to Him by the Father, Who had to bear an infinite suffering of eternal wrath to atone for the sins of His people who sin against the infinite majesty of the Most High.

That God spreads His love abroad, not promiscuously or universally, but in the hearts of His people by His Spirit.

That we love God only because He first loved us and implants that love in us. We choose Him only because He has chosen us. We come to Him only because He draws us to Himself. (Vol. 41, p. 377)

There are many such generalities proclaimed in our age, which is largely Arminian and Pelagian. Are we sensitive about them? Do we have a good pair of Reformed antennae, Reformed feelers? Or are we satisfied with them, and do we easily say, "That man believes in the atonement and preaches it?" Let me give some examples. "Christ died for sinners." Or: "Christ died for sin." Or: "Christ died for the ungodly." Or: "Christ died for the sins of mankind." Or again: "Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." Or even: "Christ died for our sins." Someone might say: "What is wrong with these statements? Are they not true? Isn't it possible to show that these are Scriptural statements? And does not such terminology occur in our confessions also?" My answer is, in the first place, that every one of the above statements, taken by itself, could be either Reformed or Arminian. They are, taken by themselves, general and vague, not specific. In the second place, they are all characterized by a very peculiar failure to be specific, a failure that lies not in what they say, but in what they *fail to say*. They fail to say: which sinners? whose sin? which ungodly? They fail to define "mankind" and "our" and "the whole world." And therefore it makes a world of difference whether an Arminian or a Reformed man makes statements of this kind. We must listen carefully and discern. And the preacher must take care that he speaks specific language, language that is not capable of an Arminian interpretation, and language that does not leave the real meaning up to the choice of the hearer. In the third place, such language, while it may have a Scriptural sound, is not truly Scriptural. It is grossly improper to single out a text or part of a text and then to say of that aphoristic statement that it is the "gospel." Every statement of Scripture must be understood in the context of the whole of Scripture ultimately, and certainly first of all in its own specific and immediate context. Only thus may it be proclaimed. This is also one of the reasons why all sound preaching is necessarily expository and exegetical. The preacher must not bring a so-called evangelistic message. He must not even merely preach a certain *text*. He must proclaim the *Word of God according to the Scriptures*. (Vol. 43, p. 6)

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We now have computers that work faster and more accurately than the human brain.

We send our voices across the whole expanse of the earth, and even to the moon. We not only send astronauts to the moon, but we watch them as they walk on the moon's surface.

We have television that can be seen by millions at the same time. We have satellites in the sky

watching the enemy and outsmarting them in their maneuvers. Soon no one will escape the searching eye of man's uncanny devices. The future world power will know every move we make and every word we speak.

Man has the world at his fingertips. It is as if he were present everywhere at any given moment.

Does not all this make man sovereign of the universe?

Is he not self-sufficient? Why should he not boast: "O man, how great thou art?"

And does he not have good reason, far better than Nebuchadnezzar had, to make himself an image extolling his greatness, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide? (see Daniel 3:1; Rev. 13:14, 15; and note the number 6)

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But He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds them in derision. Psalm 2.

He has His own name for all this: The Abomination of Desolation, Matthew 24:1.

Or if you will: The Man of Sin. The Son of Perdition, II Thess. 2:3, 4.

Or: The Beast, Revelation 13.

And his number is 666. (Vol. 46, p. 63)

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A covenant child is most susceptible to this instruction.

There are two reasons for this. First, the ability to learn and receive knowledge is greatest during the days of youth. No one can go back to those days when the mind was keen and the brain like a sponge that could absorb almost anything. So quickly those times are gone forever. How careful we parents have to be in that we don't judge our children's ability to learn and study by our own ability. Of course, they can do more than we can: for this reason the Scripture emphasizes, "Train up a *child* in the way he should go." Secondly, a child has the gift of implicit faith. He will believe anything you say because he trusts you. He doesn't have a great deal of why's and wherefore's. That comes later, as he grows up. As a very small child he simply accepts anything you say. That's the time we must fill up that mind with the knowledge of God's Word.

This requires dedication on the part of the parents from the day the child is born. All too often we imagine we can wait and do a better job of bringing them up later on. We like to reason we are so busy now, but probably sometime in the future it will be more convenient. Sometimes we think that little children don't understand anything anyway,

so when they get older we will concentrate on their spiritual instruction. What heartache has come from such reasoning; for either we bring up our children from infancy on, or we will see them depart from the right way. There is no re-doing when it comes to instruction.

It should be apparent that this also requires of parents that they do their utmost. The admonition comes to fathers not at the exclusion of mothers, but as the responsible head of the home. As parents we make this promise at the baptism of our children. So often we think in terms of schooling when we stand before such an injunction of Scripture. This is important, and parents must do their utmost to have the home and the school brought into harmony with the instruction received in the church. God's Word is one and must be brought in that way to our children. Yet, the home must receive the emphasis. No one can take the place of the parent in the calling to instruct. *Assistance* may be sought, but not replacement. (Vol. 49, p. 381)

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Jesus speaks in John 9:4 concerning Himself, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." And we are reminded in Romans 13:12, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

One cannot, of course, be "scared" into doing the good and holy by fear of impending death. Though the angel of death stood this very moment before a wicked person, that one would not therefore repent. Repentance and godly walk are the fruit of the work of the Spirit. There must be regeneration and conversion. Then one will principally seek that which is spiritual.

But the point we ought to see is that often the child of God is deeply affected by the world and his own sinful flesh. Often he puts off till next year what ought to be done today. Often he enjoys the very things which he knows will have no place in heaven. He seeks to defend and excuse his actions. He considers that he has much time till Jesus' return; or much time before Jesus calls him from this earth. So he procrastinates. He has forgotten that the night is far spent — the day is at hand.

We know not how many tomorrows we have. But we know that God has given us this day to use to His glory. May we be aware of the brevity of our days, that we may set our hearts on wisdom's way. Perhaps we could well ask ourselves before we did, or failed to do, anything, "Would I do this if I knew that today were my last?" (Vol. 52, p. 838)

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The Lord is coming!

And this time He comes, not as the lowly Babe in the manger of Bethlehem, but as the Lord of glory. He is coming as the righteous Judge, Who will set the crooked straight, and Who will reward every man according as his work shall be.

In respect to His coming two things must be borne in mind. In the first place, not at any time will He come, as so many in our day would have us believe; but at a set time which He only knows. Evidently this coming is at the end of the world, when all God's counsel shall have been realized, when all of the church which is to be gathered out of every nation shall have been saved, when all of the precursory signs of His coming shall have been fulfilled. And in the second place, it must also be remembered that He is coming throughout the ages. From the moment Christ ascended to the right hand of the Father He also begins to return. It is therefore for this reason that the apostles could write nearly two thousand years ago that His coming is near, that it is at hand. This is also the viewpoint of James when he says in the latter part of the text, "for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." And this implies that He stands as it were at the door which is ajar, and is about to be opened, allowing Him to appear. (Vol. 52, p. 891)

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Hyper-Calvinism is not the predominant evil of our time. The man who has an eye for the overthrow of the doctrine of God's sovereign, particular grace in the Reformed sphere today is inclined to regard the hue-and-cry raised against hyper-Calvinism as a display of ignorance at best, or a subterfuge at worst. As the Reformed house goes up in flames, the watchers alert us to the peril of flooding, call for lifeboats, and give swimming lessons. The same folly occurs in society. As society goes under in lawlessness and immorality, the supposed guardians of society decry the evils of a strait-laced, "Puritan" morality. In view of the advance of Arminianism in the past fifty years, especially in the area of "evangelism" and the call of the gospel, one is tempted to propose fifty years of hyper-Calvinism as a radical measure to check the wildfire spread of the free-will cancer.

This temptation, of course, must be decisively rejected. Error cannot be fought with error, but only with the truth. The Reformed faith has always been characterized by a refusal to become reactionary. It has never allowed heresy to drive it into the opposite error. It will not engage in theology, or preach, out of fear. Steadfastly, it insists on being Biblical.

The outstanding example of this is the Synod of Dordt. The Reformed churches were confronted

with the false doctrine of man's salvation of himself by his free will. Basic to this error was the teaching that the preaching of the gospel is God's gracious effort to save every man. The Reformed fathers viewed this error as a perversion of the gospel, the destruction of the Reformed churches, and the robbery of the glory of God in His greatest work, the work of salvation.

The vehemence of their opposition to the Arminian heresy might have led the fathers to react by slighting the importance of the preaching of the gospel and by denying the serious call of God to everyone to whom the gospel comes. But such was not at all the case. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit at that "most holy Synod," leading the Church into all the truth, are evident, in no small way, in its firm emphasis on the unique importance of the preaching of the gospel as *the* means of grace and in its unwavering insistence on the serious call by God and His Church to every person to whom God sends the gospel. (Vol. 53, p. 32)

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It is God in Christ, therefore, according to Scripture and the Reformed Confessions, Who accomplishes the work of missions. Even though God gathers His Church by the Spirit and Word of Jesus Christ, and even though that Word through which God gathers His Church must be preached, and even though that preaching must be done by men, it is God Himself Who gathers His Church.

That missions is the work of God is obvious also from the fact that it is God Who saves His Church, not man. God sovereignly loved Jacob and hated Esau. Before those children were even born God said to their mother: "The elder shall serve the younger." This was so that the "purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." God elected Israel to be His peculiar people, and raised up Pharaoh according to His decree of reprobation to show His power and declare His name throughout the earth. The fact is, God ". . . has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth" (Romans 9:11-33) . . . (Vol. 56, p. 323)

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The Arminian claims to have a richer gospel than do those who preach a Christ only for a few. Does he not speak of a Christ for all? Really, however, he impoverishes the gospel. Really, he has a Christ for nobody. A Christ that died for all really died for none, because a universal Christ never paid for sin. Had He really paid for the sins of all, none could possibly perish. Hence, a universal Christ did not pay for the sins of any.

How impossible is this view also, thanks be to God, according to the text. Are we not saved by

grace through faith? Always we must remember that we are saved by grace. We must never separate grace and faith, as if grace proceeds from God and faith proceeds from us. Faith belongs to grace, is part of it; faith is grace in operation in the heart of the elect sinner. Besides, we read in the text: not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. And then we read in verse 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast. Hence, it is all a gift of God, from the beginning to the very end. Nothing proceeds from us. The whole work of salvation is a gift of God. (Vol. 59, p. 52)

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The Scriptures are an *organic* unity. As an organism, they are composed of diverse parts. There are differences of testaments, and of books; differences of kinds of writings (poetry, history, prophecy, e.g.), and contents; differences in the styles of the different men God used, and the way these men expressed themselves; differences in language (Hebrew and Greek), and literary form; differences which are rooted in the organic development of the promises (the revelation of God

in Christ is different in Genesis from what it is in Isaiah), and the fulfillment of the promise in our Lord Jesus Christ. An organism needs differences to be truly an organism. But there is, in Scripture, one principle of unity — as every organism must be a unity of diverse parts held together by one fundamental principle; and that principle of unity is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Everywhere in Scripture Christ is talked about — nothing else. Those who want to emphasize some kind of disjunction between Scripture itself and the divine message of Scripture (a ploy used to attack Scripture's inerrancy) find a great deal in Scripture which is not a part of the divine message of salvation. But they do not understand Scripture. Whether Scripture is talking about the creation of the world in Genesis 1, the flood in Genesis 7, the chronologies in I Chronicles, the plight of Jonah in the whale's belly in Jonah 1 & 2, the problems in the Galatian Churches, or the footsore and weary apostle Paul in his trek across Asia Minor, the Scriptures are talking about *Christ*. (Vol. 59, p. 180)

GUEST ARTICLE

The King James Version of the Bible (IV)

Rev. Steven Houck

Note: Articles IV and V of Rev. Houck's series on the King James Version were inadvertently placed in the wrong order. Number IV, which follows, should have preceded the article which appeared in the last issue. We apologize for this error.

A BIBLE OF THE REFORMATION

If we carefully consider these sources of our Bible, then it becomes clear that there is something very special about it. Of all the English versions available today, the King James Version is the only one which can be called a "Reformation Bible." This Bible in a very real way came out of the Reformation of the 16th century.

This is true first of all from the point of view of the Greek text. The Greek text which underlies this Bible is the text which was recognized and used by the Reformers. In fact, it was even edited by them. Robert Stephanus (Estienne), whose fourth edition

of the Greek New Testament was very influential in the translation of the King James Version, was a strong adherent of the Reformed faith. Forsaking Rome and embracing the faith of the Reformation, he gave up his position as royal printer in order that he might publish Reformed literature. He fled from Paris to Geneva, that great Reformation city, where he printed his 4th edition of the Greek New Testament. He also published several of the writings of John Calvin.

The Reformer, Theodore Beza, was even more influential than Stephanus. Scrivener, in his Parallel Greek-English edition of the New Testament, demonstrates that the King James Version translators primarily used Theodore Beza's fifth edition (1598) of the Greek New Testament. He indicates that out of the thousands and thousands of words in the New Testament, they deviated from Beza only about one hundred and ninety times.

Moreover, they not only used his Greek text but relied heavily upon his Latin translation of it. Therefore Theodore Beza, the successor of Calvin at Geneva, a great Reformer himself, was a leading influence upon our King James Version.

It must be noted on the other hand that with but two exceptions there is not another version available today which is based upon the text of Stephanus and Beza, commonly called the "Received Text." All others, except the New King James Version and the King James II, are based on the critical text of Westcott and Hort, which omits and changes thousands of words. For instance, in all other versions you will find the following passages either omitted or questioned: 1) The descent of the angel into the pool of Bethesda (John 5); 2) the conclusion of the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6); 3) the woman taken in adultery (John 7); 4) the last 12 verses of Mark 16; and many others. But the text of the King James Version is the text used by Martin Luther, John Calvin, Theodore Beza, and our fathers of the Synod of Dort.

It is not true either that these Reformers did not know of the existence of this rival text. We are told that they used the "Received Text" because it was all they had. That is not true. While they did not have the thousands of manuscripts that we have today, they did know of this corrupt text as it was represented in some of the manuscripts that were available to them. They, however, rejected that text for the "Received Text" — the text which is supported by 80 to 90 percent of all the manuscripts we have today. That is the text of the King James Version. For that reason alone, we must reject all modern versions.

The King James Version is a Bible of the Reformation also from the point of view of the English versions of which it is a revision. William Tyndale, whose translation is reflected in nine tenths of the King James Version, was a child of the Reformation. He had embraced the faith of the Reformation and had even been with Luther and Melancthon at Wittenberg. In fact, Tyndale also made use of Luther's German New Testament (1522) in his translation work. Thus Martin Luther influenced him greatly. It is no wonder that he could reply to a Roman Catholic priest, "I defy the pope and all his laws . . . if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scriptures than you do!" Tyndale's own enlightenment had come from the Word of God and, therefore, he desired others to see that same light of the Gospel.

John Rogers, who is responsible for the "Matthew's Bible," is another who embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. We read concerning him,

"that he cast off the heavy yoke of popery, perceiving it to be impure and filthy idolatry and joined himself with them two (Tyndale and Coverdale) in that painful and most profitable labour of translating the Bible into the English tongue." Rogers moved to Wittenberg and there he associated with the Lutheran divines, particularly Melancthon. He even translated four of Melancthon's books into English. In harmony with his convictions, he added to the Bible prefaces and notes out of Martin Luther's works. These notes were "strongly anti-papal."

Myles Coverdale, who influenced the King James Version through his own Bible (1535), the "Matthew's Bible" to which he contributed one third, and the "Great Bible" which is a revision of his own work and that of Tyndale, was a strong supporter of the faith of the Reformation. He moved from England to Germany where he was for a while the minister of a Lutheran congregation. He corresponded with John Calvin and later moved to Geneva where he was elder in the English Church there.

Both Thomas Cranmer and Cromwell, who supported Coverdale in his work, turned to the true faith. Cranmer especially supported the efforts of the Reformers. He was strengthened by the council of such Reformers as Peter Martyr, Bernardo Ochino, Martin Bucer, and Melancthon.

The "Geneva Bible," which influenced the King James Version more than any of the others, was produced in the Reformation city of Calvin and Beza. Its translators were all exiles who had fled England and Scotland because of persecution for their Reformation doctrines. Associated with this version are such men as John Knox (the Scottish Reformer), Myles Coverdale, Thomas Cole, Christopher Goodman, John Pullain, William Whittingham, Thomas Samson, Anthony Gilby, Lawrence Tomson, and others. Thomas Samson, after his own conversion in London, was used of the Lord to lead John Bradford (the English Reformer) to the Reformed faith. Anthony Gilby is the translator of the commentaries of Calvin and Beza. He made these great men accessible to thousands of English readers. Christopher Goodman was the life-long friend of John Knox. He was also co-pastor with him of the English congregation at Geneva. William Whittingham succeeded Knox as the pastor of the English congregation in 1559. He was also a contributor to the metrical version of the Psalms which accompanied many editions of the Bible.

Even the translators of the King James Version itself had rejected popery. They were influenced greatly by the Reformation both on the continent and in England. In fact, these men considered

Theodore Beza to be the chief authority in religious matters. They relied upon his judgment in matters of exposition as well as the Greek text. Many of the translators were themselves very Calvinistic. Miles Smith, who was a member of the third translation company, one of the revisors of the whole, the final editor with Bishop Bilson, and the author of the preface to the reader, was a "severe Calvinist." Surely his influence upon the King James Version was great. Besides Smith, Lawrence Chaderton, John Reynolds, Thomas Holland, Daniel Fairclough, George Abbot, John Harmer, and Samuel Ward were all Calvinists. If we knew more about the other translators we would, no doubt, find even more Calvinists.

It is clear, therefore, that the King James Version both as a revision of previous translations and as a new translation, is the product of the Reformation. One is amazed by the fact that the translators of this Bible and its predecessors were almost all involved in the Reformation of the church. The King James Version, therefore, is the product of the mighty power of God's grace. For surely it was God's grace alone that stood behind the Reformation. God, in reforming His church, put within the hearts of these men a longing to have the Holy Scriptures in the native tongue. Thus the translators of the King James Version exclaim, "Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernal; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water." Indeed, the King James Version is the product of a God-given desire to see God's Word, in all of its reforming power, in the hands of the people, that they might know and experience the glorious light of the gospel. Of all the English versions available today, the King James Version alone has claim to the name "Reformation Bible."

A BIBLE FOR WHICH MEN DIED

It is not strange, therefore, that this Bible comes down to us today stained with the blood of the martyrs. For the men behind the English Bible were of such strong conviction, by the grace of God, that they would suffer imprisonment and death rather than renounce their faith in the Bible as God's infallible Word and as their sole authority for life and doctrine. Indeed, the persecution was very great. It is not strange that the Roman church should seek to do all in its power to stop the translation of the Scriptures. She recognized that one of the leading causes of the Reformation was the translation of the Bible into the language of the people. Therefore she persecuted the editors, translators, and promoters of the King James Version and its predecessors.

We see this antagonism already in connection with the original languages. An ignorant and illiterate monk is reported to have said, "There was now a new language discovered called Greek, of which people should beware, since it was that which produced all the heresies; that in this language was come forth a book called the New Testament, which was now in everybody's hands, and was full of thorns and briars; that there was also another language now started up which they call Hebrew, and that they who learned it were turned Hebrews." This monk was by no means alone in his convictions. At this time, the monks and priests were so ignorant that they could read no Greek, Hebrew, or even Latin. Yet they considered the Latin Vulgate to be the only true Bible.

The Roman Catholics did not look kindly upon the editions of the Greek New Testament which began to come off the presses. In 1514 Erasmus, the first editor of the Greek New Testament, was told not to publish his Greek text. Some in the Roman church considered it an open condemnation of the Latin Vulgate. Robert Stephanus, who gave us four editions of the Greek New Testament, had to flee Paris and settle in Geneva because of persecution.

THE STRENGTH OF YOUTH

Catechism

Rev. Ron Cammenga

By the time this article appears in print the new catechism season will have begun. Books will have been handed out and initial assignments will have

been given. As the new season gets under way, it's worthwhile to consider this important aspect of the ministry of the church. It's worthwhile that as

ministers, elders, parents, children, and young people we remind ourselves of the necessity of sound, thorough catechetical instruction.

We need to remind ourselves of the importance of catechism especially today when there is a demphasis on catechism instruction. Many churches today have eliminated catechism altogether, or have made some unsatisfactory substitution for catechism. In many churches the catechism season has been so whittled down that the children spend more weeks out of than in catechism. The age at which the children begin catechism becomes older and older, and the age at which they are finished becomes younger and younger. The catechism instruction itself in many churches is no longer assumed by the minister, or at least by the elders, but is passed off to other members of the congregation, often times even women.

This is a lamentable situation. It's a situation that can only have adverse effects on the church, especially the church of tomorrow. It is only another aspect of the rejection of instruction in the truth, knowledge, and doctrine which so characterizes these last days in which we live. It is a situation that is calculated to produce a generation that knows not the Lord, nor His mighty works (Judges 1:10).

From the very beginning of the New Testament church, catechetical instruction was given a large and important place in the official ministry of the church. Catechism is as old as the Christian church herself. It's already plain from the Book of Acts and the New Testament that instruction preceded admission into the membership of the church, baptism, and admission to the Lord's Supper. You have only to think of the instruction of the multitude on the Day of Pentecost prior to their baptism (Acts 2); the instruction of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip prior to his baptism (Acts 8:26 f.f.); the instruction of Cornelius and his household prior to their baptism by Peter (Acts 10); and of Paul's instruction of Lydia and her household and the Philippian jailor and his household before their baptism (Acts 16).

From the beginning, therefore, the church emphasized the need of instruction of those who sought membership in the church. Those who were candidates for baptism were given thorough intellectual and spiritual preparation for membership in the church. In earliest times, this instruction concentrated on converts from heathenism. But also the children of believers were made the object of the catechetical instruction of the church. This instruction was at first left to the parents, and in some cases to the schools. But, gradually, organized classes of instruction under the supervision of the church were instituted.

Although catechetical instruction, as so many

other aspects of the life of the church, languished in the Roman Catholic Church of the Middle Ages, the Reformation restored catechetical instruction. The Reformers emphasized the need for catechism, and both Luther and Calvin, as well as other of the Reformers, prepared catechisms for the instruction of the children of believers. One of the outstanding reasons for the preparation of our own Heidelberg Catechism was that there might be a course of catechetical instruction for the youth of the Reformed churches. The original introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism states: "... we have secured the preparation of a summary course of instruction or catechism of our Christian Religion, according to the Word of God, in the German and Latin languages, in order . . . that the youth in churches and schools may be piously instructed in such Christian doctrine"

For many years catechetical instruction flourished among the Reformed churches. Undoubtedly this is in no small measure due to the unique importance attached by the Reformed churches to the Scriptural doctrine of the covenant of grace. Understanding the position in the covenant of the children of believers, and emphasizing the calling of believing parents and the church alike to instruct the children of the covenant, the importance of catechetical instruction necessarily followed. It's really no surprise today that with the neglect and corruption of the doctrine of God's covenant there is a corresponding neglect of good catechetical instruction.

At the beginning of a new catechism season we do well to remind ourselves that catechetical instruction belongs to our rich heritage as Reformed churches. We do well to thank God for what He gives us in this important aspect of the gospel ministry. And we do well to recommit ourselves to the preservation of sound catechetical instruction in our midst.

The children and young people especially must be impressed with the importance of catechism. As you begin your work in catechism for a new year, resolve to do your work diligently. Take an interest in your instruction in catechism. Give to catechism the importance that it deserves. Don't let it happen that your involvement in school activities, athletics, work, or anything else stands in the way of your doing well in catechism. Don't wait until the last minute or the evening before class to learn your questions and do your written work. This is a shame and something with which you can be sure the Lord is not pleased. In class, be attentive and take an interest in the instruction that's given. Participate in the discussions and ask the questions that come to mind. Your time in catechism will be what you make it. If you're disinterested and

would rather be doing other things, then catechism is going to be a bore. But if you take an interest in catechism, learn your questions, do your work, participate in the discussions, you will probably be surprised how much you actually do enjoy catechism.

Parents must be involved in the catechetical instruction of their children. They must not only see to it that they are receiving the instruction, that the instruction is Biblical, but they must see to it that their children are doing their work faithfully. Especially with the younger children, Mother or Dad should teach the children their memory questions. But they mustn't leave it at this. They ought to teach them the Bible story that each week's lesson is centered in. Start early in the week, going over the lesson four or five times each night, and by the end of the week the children will know the lesson. See to it that the older children do their written work. Help them with the written work if they need help.

Parents ought to keep up this involvement in their children's catechism instruction even when they are out of the younger classes and in the classes on the Heidelberg Catechism and Essentials of Reformed Doctrine. Too often I find it the case that parents simply assume that their young people are learning their questions and doing their preparation. Don't simply assume this. Young people are notorious for learning their questions at the last minute. Continue to see to it that your children are prepared for catechism even after they graduate from the younger classes. Don't assume that they know their questions; ask them the questions.

We ministers too ought to remind ourselves of the importance of catechism. Let's not give our preparation for catechism the once-over-lightly. But let's give catechism the time that it deserves. Let our preparation be careful and thorough. Let's

make every effort to make our classroom instruction fresh and lively, and not simply rely on the same material that we used the last time through the book. Let's be concerned to ground the children of the church in the Reformed faith, and be at pains to demonstrate to them that the Reformed faith is the faith of the Scriptures. And let's demand good work of the students, making catechism not only intellectual but spiritual preparation for active membership in the church.

The responsibility and supervision of the consistory in regard to catechetical instruction cannot be stressed enough. An excellent series of articles on this specific subject, written by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema, can be found in Volume 44 of the *Standard Bearer*. It would be worth the while of our elders to read these articles. Let officebearers have the high regard for catechetical instruction that the Reformed have always held, that catechism is the official ministry of the Word. As much as they are responsible for and are called to supervise the preaching of the Word on the Sabbath, so are they called to oversee the catechism classes. In large measure the quality of catechetical instruction depends on how faithful the elders are to oversee the instruction. Periodic visits ought to be made to the various classes. The instruction, both from the point of view of its content and its effectiveness, ought to be discussed by the consistory. And parents and young people who are negligent with regard to catechism ought to be visited.

May God's blessing rest upon the new season of instruction in catechism. May we all show a zeal for this important work. Especially may the instruction given be blessed to the hearts of the children and young people. By means of the instruction received may they be established in the faith and led to assume their place at the Lord's Table and make public confession of their faith.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

Preservation and Perseverance (4)

Rev. H. Veldman

We concluded our preceding article with the remark that, to persevere, we must hold fast that which we have, and this means that we must hold fast to life and doctrine. How important this is,

especially in our present day and age when so many cults and other departures from the truth make it increasingly difficult to maintain our calling in the midst of the world. May our churches

and especially our homes continue to be true and faithful in this only way to persevere even unto the end, that no man may take our crown. How urgent it is that we remain faithful to this, in all our preaching and also in all our catechetical instruction!

Let us cling to the doctrine of salvation as it is exclusively in Christ Jesus, rooted and anchored in God's sovereign and unchangeable will and counsel, and let us never attempt to contribute to it one solitary work or merit on our part! May we ever remember that this salvation is in Christ Jesus and it must always remain there. Our works are always to be Christ's works (as we read it in Rev. 2:26), the fruits of His grace and Spirit. May we ever cling to the doctrine that God is God, that He is God alone, and that, from the beginning even until the end, no flesh may ever boast, may ever point to a single work which we have done toward the salvation of God in Christ Jesus. Into all eternity Christ must stand in the center. Let us ever cling to this truth. This we must do individually, as the people of God in Christ Jesus, in all our activities, especially in our homes. And we must cling to it as churches, never permitting any deviation from it.

But we must also hold fast to the Word of God in all our walk of life which seals that doctrine. We must not depart out of the line of the grace of God and of His covenant. We must not permit our garments to become soiled or spotted. We must do nothing which would cast a reproach upon the Name of God in Christ Jesus. We must practice and live what we preach and teach. We must persevere even unto the end, ever having our eye of hope upon the crown of victory, the city of our God that has foundations.

* * * * *

The question, how the truths of Preservation and Perseverance are related, is, of course, of the utmost importance. We know that both are taught in the Word of God. To this we have already called attention. However, how are they related? Are we preserved because we persevere; or, is it true that we persevere because we are preserved? It is, of course, either-or.

There is, on the one hand, the conception of the Arminians or Remonstrants. We always seem to run into this Arminian conception. This, however, is not strange. Fact is, fundamentally there are only two possible conceptions. We are either preserved because we persevere, or we persevere because we are preserved. Salvation is either of God or of man; it is either dependent upon God and determined by God or it is dependent upon man and determined by man. Arminianism, Pelagianism, Roman Catholicism, Paganism all have this in common: the work

of man is elevated to that position of prominence whereby he controls and determines his own salvation. This is also true of all the cults that abound today. As a certain writer wrote concerning these cults, it is helpful for a Christian to have a series of questions by which he might examine and test the teachings of those groups with which he comes into contact. Among these questions is also this question: is their approach to God and salvation on the basis of works or grace? "Saved by works" is the slogan of every religion which is not anchored in the unchangeable sovereignty of the alone living God. After all, the truth of the Word of God can be summed up in three words: God is God. And this does not imply that one can write the truth upon a thumbnail. The implication of the truth that God is God is, after all, all-embracing and all-comprehensive. Salvation is either conditional or unconditional and sovereign. A third possibility is inconceivable. It is either-or. Salvation is of God and determined alone by God, or it is of man and determined by man.

The position of the Arminian is clearly set forth in the Fifth Point of the Remonstrance. Let us again quote this point.

That those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith, and have thereby become partakers of His life-giving Spirit, have thereby full power to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and to win the victory; it being well understood that it is ever through the assisting grace of the Holy Ghost; and that Jesus Christ assists them through His Spirit in all temptations, extends to them His hand, and if only they are ready for the conflict, and desire His help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling, so that they, by no craft or power of Satan, can be misled nor plucked out of Christ's hands, according to the Word of Christ, John 10:28: "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." But whether they are capable, through negligence, of forsaking again the first beginnings of their life in Christ, of again returning to this present evil world, of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them, of losing a good conscience, of becoming devoid of grace, that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scriptures before we ourselves can teach it with the full persuasion of our minds.

It is true that the Arminians say in this article that they are not ready as yet to declare whether the people of God are capable of forsaking again the first beginning of their life in Christ and of again returning to this present evil world. In other words, they say they are not ready as yet to declare in favor of a falling away of saints. This, however, is only camouflage! As we have called attention to this fifth article of the Remonstrance in preceding articles, notice that this article speaks of the *assisting* grace of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ *assists* them

through His Spirit in all temptations, extends to them His hand, and if only they are ready for the conflict, desire His help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling. And then this article also declares that the question whether anybody can fall out of grace must yet be determined out of the Holy Scriptures. This, however, they had already concluded.

Arminianism causes everything to turn upon, revolve about the axis of the free will of man. God foresaw from before the foundations of the world who would believe, and He elected them unto salvation. Hence, man's free will is first and determined this election. However, the Lord not only foresaw faith, but He also foresaw a struggle, a bitter struggle even unto the end; and so He predestined unto everlasting glory those who would persevere and survive. Salvation is dependent, not only upon the initial act of faith, but also upon one's continuance in the faith. He must not only believe but he must also continue to believe. The divinely foreseen believer is preserved unto glory because he perseveres. One may well ask: how can a Christian possibly prefer this interpretation to the view that we are saved must assuredly by God's irresistible and sovereign grace? And to this there is only one answer: the sinner will always resent giving God all the praise and honour and glory. That sinner always wishes to maintain himself.

Upon what does the Arminian base his conception? Of course, he too quotes from Scripture. He does this to lead the people of God astray. First, does not the Word of God emphasize repeatedly that the crown of life everlasting and glory is dependent upon my perseverance? Is it not exactly he who endures unto the end that shall be saved, according to Matthew 24:13? Do we not read in Romans 2:6-7 that the Lord will render to every man according to his deeds, and reward them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and immortality? Are we not commanded in John 15:1-4 to abide in Christ, and told that every branch that beareth not fruit will be taken away and purged? Does not this passage teach a falling away of saints, inasmuch as we read of branches in Christ that do not bear fruit and are taken away and burned? Of course, these branches who were in Christ and are taken away and burned, destroyed, never were in Christ personally but only in their generations. Do we not read in Hebrews 2:1 that we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip? And are we not exhorted, in Hebrews 4:11, to labour to enter into that rest, lest we fall after the same example of unbelief? Besides, does not the Saviour, in Revelation 2:5, admonish the church of God at Ephesus to remember

from whence it had fallen, and to repent and to do the first works, lest He come to them quickly and remove the candlestick out of its place? And do we not read in Revelation 2:10 that we will receive the crown of life if only we are faithful unto death? These Scriptures speak for themselves, do they not? Is not everlasting life dependent upon our perseverance even until the end?

Secondly, does not the Arminian conception of preservation because of perseverance follow from these Scriptural admonitions? Why should someone be admonished to fight when the victory is assured, to struggle unto the end when the crown is guaranteed? Incidentally, did this Arminian ever hear of anyone receiving the crown of victory without fighting for it, of receiving the victor's crown without running the race? When the Lord admonishes us, we are responsible, are we not? And when He admonishes us to fight even unto the end that no man take our crown, this makes us responsible for the crown, does it not? And the crown is therefore dependent upon us. Besides, to guarantee a runner the prize before he begins the race leads to carelessness and licentiousness; why run and fight and persevere and struggle if the end is assured anyway? However, where does Scripture assure us of the everlasting crown of life and glory regardless whether we run or not? Besides, we have already asked the question: can the Arminian conceive of anyone obtaining the crown of victory without a struggle and of obtaining the prize without running a race even unto the end?

Thirdly, does not the Word of God teach a falling of saints? In 1 Timothy 1:19, 20 and in 2 Timothy 2:17-18 we read of Hymeneus and Alexander and Philetus; in 2 Timothy 4:10 we read of Demas; and in 2 Peter 2:1 we read of false teachers and prophets who denied the Lord that brought them. The last passage, 2 Peter 2:1, reads: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in destruction." And in John 15:1-4 we read of branches, once in Christ, that are cut off and purged because of their failure to bear fruit; and in Hebrews 6:4-8 we read of them that they tasted the good word of God . . . , and that later it became impossible to renew them again unto repentance.

We need not quote any more. As we shall see in our following article, these arguments of the Arminians are not difficult to refute. However, is it not somewhat strange for these remonstrants to quote such passages from Holy Writ, and then say in their Fifth Point of the Remonstrance that it must still be determined from Scripture whether one who once had life in Christ can fall away into sin and destruction? One thing is sure: how uncertain they may be concerning the perseverance of the saints, they

surely reject the position of the Word of God that nothing can ever separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord. They may not know what they want, according to what they say in that Fifth Point, but they surely know what they do not want. They reject the certain perseverance of the saints as

rooted in the unchangeable and sovereign counsel of the Lord, and as based upon the particular atonement of the cross of Calvary. They want nothing to do with the sovereignly particular character of the love and grace of God.

Book Review

SHARIFA, by Cornelia Dalenberg; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983; 233 pp., \$11.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

This interesting book is part of "The Historical Series of the Reformed Churches in America." The name, "Sharifa," is the Arabic name of the author, a name which she received while serving as a missionary-nurse in the Middle East. In the book she tells of her experiences while laboring in Bahrain, Qatar, and Iraq over a period of more than forty years. She went to Bahrain as a young girl and labored in that field until her retirement. At present she is living in South Holland, Illinois, her original home town.

She began her work before the first World War and writes of her experiences in these lands of the Middle East as these countries themselves were developing from backward and feudal countries to modern nations which hold the world in their economic grasp because of the vast oil reserves found beneath their soil. It was an unusually interesting time to be busy in this area.

The author tells in vivid detail about her experiences in the heat and discomfort of Arab countries, and explains the difficulties of the work in lands of Moslem religion where Christians were considered infidels, were often spit upon, and were daily consigned to the hottest fires of hell. She tells too of the work of nursing in a land which had diseases of which we are unaware, of a people with no access to modern medical technology, of superstitions born out of the Koran, which sometimes resemble pagan healing rites, of working in almost unbearable heat with few modern means of treating illnesses. She tells about visiting the poor, harems

of the wealthy, palaces of sheiks, and leper colonies, one of which was established within the medical compound of the missionaries. The book reads well and can be enjoyed by adults and young people. It will produce in the reader an appreciation for the difficulties of missionary work in a foreign land, and of the great difficulty of mission work among Muslims.

It was a bit disappointing not to find in the book more discussion of the missionary labors themselves. The book deals almost exclusively with the medical aspect of the work, and is mostly silent concerning such questions as : How was missionary work among Muslims carried out? What were the particular problems which the missionaries faced? What methods did they use to bring the gospel to these followers of Mohammed? What success did they have in the work? How did mission work among the Muslims differ from mission work in other foreign lands?

There is not much theology in the book, but such as there is, is a far cry from what is truly Reformed.

The books I have read in this series are interesting and worthwhile books. The whole series is at the beginning described with these words:

This series has been inaugurated by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, acting through its Committee on History, for the purpose of encouraging historical research and providing a medium wherein this knowledge may be shared with the academic community and with the members of the denomination in order that a knowledge of the past may contribute to right action in the present.

We recommend this book and the other books in this series to our readers.

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News From Our Churches

August 30, 1984

Faith Protestant Reformed Church has formed a trio of Rev. C. Haak, Rev. J. Slopsema, and Rev. W. Bekkering.

Faith Church's Evangelism Committee has made

a comprehensive list of current and past sermons preached at Faith Church. This list is available to anyone who is interested. The Evangelism Committee also encouraged members of the congregation to

take stamped pamphlets with them on their vacation travels. The pamphlets placed in strategic places provide an excellent means of drawing attention to the truth of God's Word and the Biblical positions our churches take on important issues.

By the time you read this news, Rev. Lubbers, D.V., will have celebrated fifty years of faithful labor in the ministry of the gospel, September 7. An Open House was planned for them on Saturday, September 15, from 2 to 5 P.M. in the basement of First Church. We thank God that He has provided Rev. and Mrs. Lubbers to work in our Protestant Reformed Churches.

In harmony with the advice of Synod and according to Article 39 of the Church Order, the following persons from Blue Bell were received as members of Covenant Protestant Reformed Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey after being allowed to make public profession of their faith: Mr. Charles C. Brown, Jr., Mrs. Virginia K. Hudnut, Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Thompson, and Mr. and Mrs. Tony Van Brakel. Mr. and Mrs. Philip Veitch were unable to come and will be received as members by transfer from Blue Bell Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

In order for Rev. Joostens to assist Rev. Bruinsma and Prof. Decker in the preparation of materials to be used by Rev. Bruinsma in Jamaica, the Consistory of First Church has decided to have Rev. Bruinsma preach in the evening worship service.

The designing of a church's sanctuary is important for many reasons. A firm is being consulted to ensure adequate acoustical control in First Church's new church building. The firm will advise First Church as to the best materials for a live auditorium, which is important for our churches where the emphasis is on the preaching of the Word and congregational singing. The plans will probably be complete by the beginning of September.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The council of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, wishes to extend its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Gerrit Boverhof in the passing of his father-in-law, MR. STEWART PEPPER.

May our Heavenly Father comfort the bereaved with the assurance that He doeth all things well.

Rev. M. De Vries, Pres.
G. Feenstra, Clerk

The consistory of Hudsonville Church has decided that those who are not members of the congregation can reserve the building no earlier than five months before a wedding. This gives Hudsonville's own members opportunity to reserve the building prior to the five-month period without competition with those outside of Hudsonville's congregation.

Remember the *Standard Bearer* Annual Society Meeting, September 20, 8 P.M. in Southwest Church. Prof. Decker will be the speaker. Also plan to attend a program commemorating sixty years of *Standard Bearer*, September 27, 8 P.M. in Hudsonville Church. Prof. H. Hoeksema will speak on the topic, "One Hundred Fifty Years and Sixty."

In regards to education, the Teachers' Institute will hold its 30th Convention in October. They are planning Wednesday, October 24 as the special night when you can meet former classmates, and reminisce over former school days. Send pictures, annuals, articles, or interesting memorabilia to Miss H.J. Kuiper, 7363 Westwood Drive, Jenison, MI 49428.

Randolph Protestant Reformed School Society newsletter No. 10 reads in part, "... It is the calling of a Christian school teacher not just to teach bare facts ... but to teach everything from the viewpoint of the Scriptures ... Now if the purpose of the instruction in the Christian school is to orientate the students to a life in Jesus Christ, the teacher's view of Christ must necessarily come through loud and clear in all the instruction. Whether the teacher is solidly Reformed or tainted with Arminianism will definitely come across as he seeks in all his work to orient the students to a life in Christ.

"Are we satisfied with a Christ that is tainted with the Arminianism of common grace? Our very existence as Protestant Reformed Churches declares very clearly and forcefully that we are not! To be consistent we must be no less satisfied with the same error in the school to which we send our children."

DH

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mens Society of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, expresses sincere Christian sympathy to fellow-member, Mr. Gerrit Boverhof in the death of his father-in-law, MR. S. PEPPER.

"Cast thy burdon upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psalm 55:22)

William De Kraker, Sec'y.