March 1966

The Scholarship Fund
The Essential Ingredient

Thoughts on the Doctrine of Election

Jewish Education in the Time of Christ
Published monthly, except June and August by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People’s Societies.

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Subscription price: $3.00 Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

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INVINCIBLY ESTABLISHED

"Some twenty years ago an acorn dropped
Into a rocky ledge where limestone showed
A few white teeth and where the forest
stopped
Before the red slash of a quarry road.
It had no business to be hatching there,
A skinny leg of green life on the bare,
Inhospitable ledge. A week, no doubt,
Would see it shrivel up and starve itself,
A pinch of failure in a cup of stone.
But there it stands today upon its shelf,
Its talons in the rock! I freely own
The whole thing baffles me, and I can show
Statistics proving that it couldn't grow."
The poem quoted above, "The Scrub Oak Tree" written by Herbert Merrill, is one that we believe is worthy of some attention beyond that of the simple message of the poem in the literal sense. This poem, though outwardly speaking of a natural phenomenon, is characteristic of poetry which is utilized to convey deeper, more significant instruction and meaning than appears directly in the literal wording of the poem-text itself. It is with respect to such a thought conveyed in the more subtle sense in this poem that we read it and utilize that thought for our discussion this time.

We suggest, first of all, that we can enjoy the author's ability to present a setting in picturesque manner. Probably rather commonplace, also, for who has not seen such evident futility, or something seemingly more futile, when we witness the countless situations into which the seeds of the trees round about us fall! We exactly want us to see at this point that WE, as children of God, see these things, and that WE characterize them as futile.

Secondly, we should notice that the power of life, natural existence so called, as God has infused that power into this universe, is marvelous indeed. At this, we are at once reminded of the marvel of growth itself, even as it is manifested when viable seeds are cast into fertile lands! All these marvels are too much with us, it seems, for us to stand in awe and wonder at those mighty laws of God, infused and maintained continuously from creation forward, as they are evidenced in the world about us which we call nature.

We notice, also, the element in the story which points out life, in the seed. We see the ecological situation which leads us with the author to conclude that there is no possibility of life to be expected from this seed in this place, but that death, rather, is the only end which can be expected for that tiny life resident therein, or to characterize it in his paraphrase: "A pinch of failure in a cup of stone."

We notice, too, the standing, living, growing oak tree, with its talons in the rock! And because of the implications of that statement, which we purpose to show presently, there is mighty, awesome power called to mind in that sudden picture of the poem.

There are a few statements that involve the author, his commentary if you please, and that do not allow him to remain in the ranks of the observing-poets. With the picture, he will instruct, or draw forth his lesson, and you will know a bit of the philosophy of the man. Notice: "It had no business to be . . . ."; "A week, no doubt, would see it shrivel . . . ."; and " . . . and I can show statistics proving that . . . .". He also very forcefully interjects: "I freely own the whole thing baffles me." All these statements are beyond the scope of the natural scene which the author holds before his reader.

Well, what about it for us in this discussion? First, I do not happen to know very much about Poet Merrill as a man. For instance, I do not know if he professes himself to be a child of God or not. I do not know from his pen elsewhere or that of any of his close acquaintances as to what was Merrill's mood when he wrote this poem, nor for that matter, what his purpose was in writing it. But the fact is that he has discovered for the child of God and committed to print in this form a beautiful truth, wrested from the physical, national creation, which is a source of comfort continually to the saint in distress and affliction. And that, by the way, is the perpetual
state of ALL the saints historically, and not just some periodic happenstance of some of them.

That truth: That the saint is regenerated and called forth unto life in this world wherein it appears that everything is firmly and effectually set against him to his certain death as a child of God: his own depraved and corrupted mind, body and heart; the depraved and wicked counsels and enticements of the world round about him; and the devil himself and all his cohorts... it appears that all are effectually geared to his extinction as a saint on the earth. There appears to be nothing according to which we might, even with the slimmest of hopes, anticipate that a child of God, a child of Light, a follower of the Words of Jesus, should ever LIVE and GROW as such an one in this world. That is the point!

You as the young people of God also realize these things I am sure. The outward aspect of life is so fundamental and so much an end in itself oftentimes that I fear we may take the view of those that Merrill paraphrases, for I contend they are not his views, when he concludes: "A pinch of failure in a cup of stone."

We speak of you as those in whom God has implanted the new life. And we rejoice! But you say that you are small in number. You are inexperienced in the trials that God places upon His saints in this life. The way seems difficult, and if you look to the future it only appears that the path will become more harsh, more painful for the flesh, and that your place on earth becomes increasingly smaller. This world appears intolerable as it becomes more and more "inhospitable" and as the oppression by the mounting powers of Anti-Christ do and will witness that it is folly to walk after the ways of your God. Yes, all this comes and more. All the "statistics" will allege that you cannot survive as the new-life, the wondrous planting of our Covenant God.

But let us assure you that these "statistics" are nought but godless lies against the mighty God of LIFE. You will look to God's Word, and there you, with an eye that is made clear and perceptive according to the power of faith, will see the long, continuous line of saints, who because of the reality of a sovereign grace given by Jehovah, stood in the midst of a sin-darkened and sin-cursed world with their talons in the rock! They are the ones who have been established that they shall stand! Thus planted, thus established by God, they stand through every adversity. And none can shake that planting of the Lord!

Covenant youth, as you are thus established, recognizing your dependence on Him and rejoicing in the work of your God, you shall never be moved!

H.W.K.

FEATURE

THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Several years ago, as all our young people know, a Scholarship Fund was set up which is supported and operated by the young people of our Churches themselves. The purpose of this fund is to give some measure of financial assistance to some of those young people who are pursuing their studies in college with a view to becoming a teacher in one of our Protestant Reformed Christian Schools or a minister in our Protestant Reformed Churches. It was felt that while our schools and Churches need teachers and ministers badly, the financial cost of attending college was, in many instances, prohibitive.

It is my opinion that this Scholarship Program is an extremely worthwhile venture on the part of our young people. They are themselves contributing of their money and time to the cause of Christ as our Churches represent it; it is a measure of their zeal for our cause.

There has been a great deal of interest in this Fund; this interest has been shown by the rapid growth of the fund so that the goal of $5000.00 is all but reached. Our people have contributed willingly and our young people have regularly supported the fund through their federation assessments.
As most (if not all) of our young people know, the Scholarship Fund Committee, through the Federation Board, is offering the first scholarship of $200.00 this year. This was proposed to the last Delegate Board Meeting at the Convention, and was approved. At that time application blanks were distributed to all interested young people, and the program is now underway.

This is a reason for deep gratitude, for our goal has, under God's blessing, been reached; and, if the Lord wills, we can envision aid in the future to some of our young people who are pursuing the goals of advanced education in preparation for a teaching or ministerial career.

I have been asked by the Beacon Lights Staff to write a brief article concerning the Scholarship Fund since the time for filing applications is rapidly drawing near. The deadline, before which all applications must filed, is May 1. As yet, no applications have been received; but, presumably it is still a bit early. Let this article therefore serve as a reminder to you who are attending college or considering college that this scholarship is available. It is available to any college student who meets the requirements of the application form regardless of what year of college you may now be in.

Of course, only one scholarship is offered for this year at least. But to whom the scholarship will be given is determined, not only on the basis of scholastic ability, but also on the basis of need. In fact, the latter is of chief importance.

Are any of you considering a college education this coming year in preparation for teaching or the ministry? Are any of you holding back from college because of difficulties in financing this education? This Fund was formed and is supported by you. Now is the time to make use of it.

H. HANKO

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FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. VAN BAREN

The Essential Ingredient

We have a custom in our churches, and I believe it to be a good one, to hold prayer-day service the second Wednesday of March. The intent was that one could not properly begin a season of planting without entering into the house of the Lord to beseech His blessing upon the labor. Though most of our people no longer farm, the custom remains. What is true in farming, is true for any labor: we can begin only in the Name of our Lord.

We are again to commence a new season of labor. And certainly as we go forth to the work, we can not do this as many in our day – with the firm resolve that we shall attain to earthy riches and ease. But we do go forth with the confidence of the Psalmist in 37:3-4: “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give the desires of thine heart.” This, I believe, is the correct principle, the essential ingredient, for the child of God as he begins another year's labor.

BEACON LIGHTS

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Notice: the Psalmist mentions first “trust.” He does not here speak of material preparation for our labor. There is a necessity of such preparation. A farmer especially knows that he must have everything in readiness for that day when he can go out and plant his fields. A slothful person in this respect also reaps his own reward. But one can not go forth with his confidence placed upon such preparations. The Christian cannot believe that the success or failure of his work will depend merely on the degree of his preparedness.

Nor may we use a prayer-day as a means to persuade God to give us much material success during another year. If we were only to pray for material successes, what would we ever say in times of crop failures?

But the necessary ingredient for one who is about to begin another year of work is trust in the Lord. This trust or reliance means that he clings to the hand of God as one goes forth. As the little child holds to father’s hand in the face of apparent dangers, so the child of God seeks his Father in heaven to provide for him in a proper way.

This trust in the Lord implies three things. First, we confess that we know not what we shall confront this coming year. The farmer can not direct the rain, sunshine, hail, or wind. So each of us knows not what lies before us in another year. As a result, in the second place, we stand as those completely helpless. We can not govern or control that which lies before us. There are so many things which might happen. And we are finite creatures who have not the government of the heaven and earth in our hand. Therefore, for the child of God there is the consciousness that reliance must be placed on that without ourselves. Thirdly, trust in God implies that we confess His almighty, sovereign power. He has not only created all things, but He upholds and governs them by His providence. And for Jesus’ sake, He works all things together for our good. Then we can cling to His hand with the greatest confidence. He will work out all that which is for our welfare. Then I do not even need tell Him what I think would be the best. He knows and will provide.

Then also there is delight or satisfaction in God. Knowing that He is God, that He will hold my hand, that He will lead in right paths — I am filled with unspeakably great joy and pleasure. Then there is nothing more that I need. I can then never become discontent with what He provides — for I know that it is for my good. With such trust, though I lack the world’s goods, I am rich.

Spiritual trust in the Lord becomes evident in the doing of the good. Confession of trust and a spiritual walk go together. Doing the good is to seek the highest, or rather, the only good: the glory of our God. In all we do, say, and think, we would honor and praise His Name. When we begin our labors again this season, we perform these because we love Him. Secondly, doing the good involves obedience to the holy law of our God. We would serve Him as He requires us. There is in us the desire to walk in righteousness in all of our labors.

These spiritual children are assured of dwelling in the land and being fed. Typically, that land was Canaan. God had promised it to Abraham and his seed. Under King David, Israel had received that land to the extent that God promised. Israel experienced that under the favor of God, they ate of this land of milk and honey. But also to us is this promise given. That we receive the land and are fed is, in a certain sense, God’s promise to His people that He will provide for them as they live on this earth. He gives us our place; He provides our daily bread. Never have His saints lacked. And knowing that God so provides, we can face this new season with confidence.

The promise, for Abraham and for us, refers ultimately to the heavenly land with all its glories which is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. That God provides now that which is good, is a foretaste of that eternal blessedness of the heavenly.

Those trusting and delighting in the Lord are assured that He will give them the desires of their heart. Note: this is of the heart, in distinction from the mind or flesh. The heart represents the spiritual, ethical center of man. In the Christian this is the regenerated, purified heart. It is that heart in which is instilled the life of Christ through the operation of the Holy Spirit.

That regenerated heart desires only that which is spiritual. Our flesh, of course, has

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all kinds of desires. This seeks earthly comfort and ease. It seeks its own advancement and promotion. Even the child of God is often influenced by what his flesh desires. But the regenerated heart desires only that which God has promised. It seeks to know the will of God as revealed in Scripture. This heart desires the glory of God through the salvation and preservation of the Church in Christ. Our hearts’ desire this season is that all things may indeed serve unto our final salvation and glorification.

God promises that the desires of that heart shall be given to us. What that heart wants, it shall surely receive. God has promised that! In that confidence we can begin our labors.

We must not then expect everything that we think we need. God is not as the politician who freely promises something to everyone. Nor has God promised that He will give to the farmer the rain and sunshine he might think he should have. Very possibly God will withhold what the farmer considers proper proportions of these. And to other laborers, God has not promised that He will provide always health or assured wealth. It could well be that the “daily bread” of the Lord’s Prayer will be only a small dry crust.

But His promise remains. Again this season He shall assuredly glorify His own Name — as our heart desires. He will again work all things for our good for Jesus’ sake — as our heart desires. He will again provide for us just what we need — as our heart also desires.

In the assurance of that truth, the child of God begins his labors without doubt or fear. Our Father will provide that which is good. He will lead in the way. And our prayers, in the beginning of this new season, ascend to Him: “Lord, grant us that which is good for us this year to the glory of Thy Name.”

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**TRUTH VS. ERROR**

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

**12. THOUGHTS ON THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION**

**11. ITS EVIDENCES**

We have entitled this series “Thoughts on the Doctrine of Election,” rather than simply “The Doctrine of Election,” since we have not been treating the subject from a systematic-theological or dogmatical point of view, but more from a biblical and expository point of view. It is more proper to speak of the doctrine of Scripture, or the doctrine of the Gospel, than to speak of the doctrine of election, or, e.g., of the doctrine of creation. For the doctrine of Scripture is one. There is only one doctrine, and it is the doctrine of Scripture. There is only one truth. Truth is a unit. That is why we speak of the truth, rather than “the truths” of the Gospel. It is “Truth versus Error,” the truth versus the lie, not truths and untruths. It is even less proper to speak of “the doctrines of Grace,” or “the doc-
trinics of Calvinism." There is but one doctrine of grace. Christian doctrine is
nothing but grace from beginning to end. Then, too, Calvinism is the doctrine
embraced by Scripture. The name Calvinism is a convenient term to immediately illustrate
what we mean by Reformed Doctrine. But Scripture does not speak of all kinds of
doctrines. It does not use such language as the doctrine of predestination, regeneration,
calling, faith, justification, sanctification, etc. That is, it does not use the plural
"doctrines" when referring to the various facets in the diamond of the faith once-far-
all delivered to the saints. Loosely, we may speak of the doctrines of the faith. Yet
biblical usage of the plural "doctrines" in the Word of God has no reference to the
truth, but to error. For example, the Bible speaks of "the doctrines of men" (Col. 2:20).
"doctrines, the comandments of men" (Matt. 15:9), "doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1),
"divers and strange doctrines" (Heb. 13:9). When Scripture sets forth the truth over
against the contrary, it refers to its position as "the doctrine." (1 Tim. 4:16), "good doc-
trince" (4:6), "sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1) and "the doctrine which is according to god-
liness." (1 Tim. 6:3).

Especially from the latter word of Paul it is apparent that "the doctrine" has not only
its creedal, but also its practical side. It has an intellectual appeal, but it also has
spiritual influence. So it is with that facet of the doctrine we are treating. Election
has a doctrinal emphasis; it also has a practical emphasis. We now enter upon
the latter. We have seen in what way election has been instructive. It now re-
mains to be seen how it is related to prac-
tice. Since the divine foreknowledge of
love is the originating cause of all things,
and the final cause of all things, and elec-
tion stems from that fountain, then the
relation of election to a practical life of
godliness is one of cause and effect. The
effect of divine election is the production
of every saving good.

One outstanding product of the truth of
God's absolute sovereignty, of His election
of a glorified, perfect church, is that of
humility. The person who has a true con-
ception of God's sovereignty, and conse-
quently, of God's election, has had all his
pride abased. He takes his place in the dust
at his Maker's feet! At first, a man may
believe, like Cain, that God will surely be
satisfied with his lofty efforts to exert his
cultural skills and develop mankind and the
earth into an advanced civilization! Cer-
tainly then, if there is a heaven, he must
be on his way to it! It must come as some-
what of a shock to learn that God is the
God of election. How that changes the
picture! God has from eternity chosen to
Himself a people in His Son Jesus Christ
and under His headship. He has also deter-
mined upon the means that He shall use
to accomplish this great end. He now be-
gins to show some concern as to whether
he is one of those ordained to glory. He
is impressed deeply with the eternal issues
involved. Thinking becomes painful and
unsettling. He is no longer "at ease in
Zion."

If he persists in the direction of his old
self-inflated carnal assurance, he will not
want anything to interfere with his counter-
feit peace. He will begin to rebel against
the idea of electing grace, distinguishing
grace. But that very grace will humble him
and bring him to inquire more openly and
honestly into the truth. To him it may seem,
to begin with, like plunging into an icy
stream of frustration to learn that God's
eternal purpose of grace is limited to an
elect people. He would find it much more
"comforting" to believe that God loves all
men alike. To face the question whether I
am one of the chosen in Christ is most dif-
ficult because it is not easy to give a satis-
factory answer. Who is sufficient for these
things? It is not an issue the hypocrite will
face. But the regenerated elect will not
draw back from it. He will wrestle in
prayer until he obtains the desired help
from God, "and all is made plain."

Then assurance will be wrought. Now that
he has come this far, finding himself trembl-
ing with doubts and fears, he need not
think that this is evidence that he doubts
the reality of his Christian profession is
one thing. But now he believes the Word
of God. He does not doubt that! He be-
lieves the Lord's chosen people are a "little
flock" (Luke 12:32). What he doubts is
that he belongs to that flock! He believes,
but he cries, "Help thou mine unbelief." Of
necessity, for now he believes that "the
heart is deceitful above all things, and
desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9). He realizes
something of the deceitfulness of sin, and
regardless of what others think, he prays God to undeceive him! He longs for full assurance of salvation. He desires to know his election of God. He is inclined to believe that certain knowledge of this is possible (I Thess. 1:4). He finds no comfort in the Romish dogmatism that no one can know his election, unless favored with an unusual, personal revelation from God. He wants to stand, not in an apostolical succession (an empty fantasy) but in the assurance the apostles had, that their names were "written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). They were men who knew their election! And that because they took God at His Word. "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven," Jesus exhorted. One does not rejoice in the unknowable, the unknown or the uncertain. The Romanist with his constant doubt as to his soul's welfare, and his utter lack of assurance of salvation, still claims to have faith. Is it possible to have faith, saving faith, and that of long standing, and still not know one has salvation? Or is it not rather that the man who has faith soon learns that true faith is a sure mark of election, since "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48)?

The implication is, that knowing, brethren, your election of God, is something attained by faith. It comes not by ascending up to heaven to get a glimpse of the register of names in the Lamb's Book of Life, not by peering into the book of God's eternal decree. Much less does such knowledge come by some preternatural event or extraordinary providence. C. H. Spurgeon struck at this self-delusion when he said, "... some imagine themselves to be elect because of the visions they have ... but these are as much value as cobwebs for a garment ... at the day of judgment ..." (Sermons on Sovereignty, p. 73). No, but rather it is this way: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (II Thess. 2:13). The witness of my own spirit is that I believe the truth, therefore (that witness continues) God has chosen me to salvation! I believe the truth of the Gospel because the witness of God's Spirit with my spirit that I am a son of God moves me to that conviction. It is God who works faith in me. Faith is the operation of God (Col. 2:12).

We happily know our election by the evidences of election. One of its evidences is that of true prayer. The elect are a praying people. "Shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him?" (Luke 18:7). Their prayer is that of a deep, heart-felt cry out of the depths of sin misery and death—a prayer like the publican's prayer: "God be a mercy-seat to me, the sinner!" Their prayer is, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" and he prays this with groanings which cannot be uttered. He prays as an elect child of God blessed in God's sovereign election. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that Thou bearest unto Thy people: O visit me with Thy salvation, that I may see the good of Thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of Thy nation, that I may glory with Thine inheritance" (Ps. 106:4, 5). The elect pray as no others do. They seek the things (above) no others seek. They know God's grace is only to the elect. They pray for His saving grace for themselves. But they also covet the same for all God's elect. They pray for the good of His chosen ones. In prayer they rejoice with those that do rejoice in the Lord. They rejoice in the gladness of that holy nation (I Peter 2:9) which is God's "elect race" (ASV). In the communion of prayer they glory with the Lord's heritage. They aim to endure all things for the elect's sakes!

Another evidence of election is a looking for and longing for the final coming of Christ, whether He comes by death or by His return in final glory and visible majesty. Naturally the Christian flinches at the thought of physical death. It is not only an abnormality, but the first, the persistent, ubiquitous and last enemy we have to face. Then his own indwelling sin makes the thought of death more difficult. For how shall such a sinner stand before the Holy God, the Judge of all the earth? But the new man in him has strength to raise his soul above such hindrances. The renewed man cannot be satisfied with his sin-leaden existence, his imperfect prayers and distracted communion with God. He longs for full and perfect fellowship with the Lord. He feels as Paul did about it, "having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). This is an attitude common, perhaps not to every pew-
holder, but to every child of God, and to the entire election of grace. They long for that "crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (II Tim. 4:8).

(To be continued, D.V.)

The Federation Board of Protestant Reformed Young People’s Societies and the Beacon Lights Staff wish to express a sincere word of appreciation to Carol Somers (Asst. Clerk), Lois Schipper (Asst. to Man. Ed.), Mary Pastoor and Ed Langerak (Public Relations Staff) for their diligent and needed labors on the Beacon Lights Staff. Although we may not realize how much work and effort you put forth to make Beacon Lights a Godly publication, yet we thank you and pray that as God has given you to work with us so will He send other diligent young people to fill your vacancies. THANK YOU!

FROM Dort TO TODAY

A History of the Reformed Faith
The Protestant Reformed Churches

by PROF. HERMAN HANKO

If there is one chief doctrine, the defense of which characterized this entire period of history, it is the doctrine of God’s sovereign work of grace in the salvation of His elect people in Christ. This is the truth which was recaptured by the Reformation of the 16th Century; this is the truth for which all our fathers fought so valiantly through the succeeding centuries; this is the truth which requires defense today.

I said that this truth was "recaptured" by the Reformation. This is, no doubt, the correct word. For far back in the latter part of the Fourth and the early part of the Fifth Century, St. Augustine had already taught clearly and concisely this great truth of God’s Word. He developed and maintained this truth overagainst the error of Pelagianism — the error which became the father of all Arminianism. He not only maintained this truth, but rooted it in the doctrine of sovereign predestination.

He was a lonesome light, however, in the history of the early Church, for the Church of Rome to which he belonged did not long maintain the truths which he taught. Men arose in the Church who wanted to compromise: between the position of St. Augustine and Pelagius. They taught, by way of compromise, that while indeed original sin was a fact and grace was necessary to salvation and regeneration necessary to be saved, nevertheless, they maintained along with this that original sin is really only a sickness, that man has the seeds of virtue of himself and a will to choose the good. The seeds of virtue and holiness can sprout, it was said, only by
grace, but a man is susceptible to grace before grace begins to operate. They taught that while indeed sometimes God draws a man to Him against his will, most often the will of man precedes and cooperates in the work of salvation. They taught that God calls all men and that unwillingness is the real reason for unbelief.

These views were all discussed by the Church at the Synod of Orange in 529. And they were supposedly condemned. But there were all kinds of inconsistencies in the condemnation. At one place they condemned the views of these men as being denials of the work of irresistible grace; but in another place they went out of their way to make light of the irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit in the work of grace. While they indeed admitted the doctrine of original sin, they opposed sovereign predetermination and refused even to speak of election.

This was all that the Church of Rome needed to construct the elaborate structure of work righteousness which became doctrine in the Romish Church. By means of the mass, the idea of penance, the whole system of indulgences, the value of pilgrimages, worship of saints; martyrs and relics, the prayers to saints, etc., the Church spoiled thoroughly the beautiful doctrine of sovereign grace as taught by Augustine and substituted the detestable error of salvation by works. Works merit and must be added to faith as the ground of justification.

It was from this corruption of God’s Word that the Church was delivered through the efforts of the Reformers.

It is not our purpose to enter into this in detail, for this would carry us very far afield. But it ought to be noticed that the whole rigid and systematic structure of work-righteousness went crashing into a thousand pieces under the hammer blows of Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone. Through this mighty Reformation truth, the doctrine of sovereign grace was once again established.

It remained, however, for Calvin to construct the beautiful and Scriptural system of this truth in all its parts. Calvin built on Luther and was eminently fitted by God to perform the work which Luther had begun but could not have finished. It is not amiss to use at this point an interesting quote from Schaff’s “History Of The Christian Church”: “Revolution is followed by reconstruction. For this task Calvin was providentially foreordained and equipped by genius, education, and circumstances. . . Calvin, the Frenchman, would have been as much out of place in Zürich or Wittenberg, as the Swiss Zwingli and the German Luther would have been out of place and without a popular constituency in French-speaking Geneva. Each stands first and unrivalled in his particular mission and field of labor. . . Calvin was twenty-five years younger than Luther and Zwingli, and had the great advantage of building on their foundation. He had less genius, but more talent. He was inferior to them as a man of action, but superior as a thinker and organizer. They cut the stones in the quarries, he polished them in the workshop. They produced the new ideas, he constructed them into a system. His work was the work of Apollos rather than of Paul; to water rather than to plant, God giving the increase. Calvin’s character is less attractive, and his life less dramatic than Luther’s and Zwingli’s. But he left the Church in a much better condition. He lacked the genial element of humor and pleasantry: he was a Christian stoic: stern, severe, unmoving, yet with fires of passion and affection glowing beneath the marble surface. His name will never arouse popular enthusiasm. . . But he surpassed them in consistency of self-discipline, and by his exegetical, doctrinal, and polemical writings, he has exerted and still exerts more influence than any other Reformer upon the Protestant Churches of Latin and Anglo-Saxon races. . . . History furnishes no more striking example of a man of so little personal popularity, and yet such great influence upon the people; of such natural timidity and bashfulness combined with such strength of intellect and character, and such control over his and future generations. He was by nature and taste a retiring scholar, but Providence made him an organizer and ruler of Churches. . .

“Widely as these Reformers differed in talent, temperament, and sundry points of doctrine and discipline, they were great and good men, equally honest and earnest, unselfish and unworlthy, brave and fearless, ready at any moment to go to the stake for their conviction. They labored for the
same end: the renovation of the Catholic Church by leading it back to the pure and perennial fountain of the perfect teaching and example of Christ."

Calvin produced the system, so completely Scriptural, which has become known as the Reformed faith. And at the basis of his system was the truth that salvation, rooted in predestination, realized in the cross of Christ, is applied to God's elect by sovereign and irresistible grace. And all this, as Calvin saw so clearly, was true in order that God Himself may be alone glorified.

We have noticed in the course of these many articles, that this is the truth which persisted in the hearts and confessions of God's people throughout the history "from Dort to today." This truth was the issue at Dort itself when the Arminian error could be said to "bring again out of hell the Pelagian error." (Canons II, B. 4.) And this truth was unswervingly defended and preserved in our Canons of Dortrecht. This same issue was principally the issue in 1834 when the "Seceeders" left the State Church to maintain the cause of God apart from the heavy shadow of the government. This was the truth which was brought to these shores by our fathers who preceded us to America.

Now it ought to be evident to anyone who has paid any attention to what is happening in the churches of America that these truths are the chief issues in the defense of the faith today. Arminianism is running rampant in the churches; the churches are ruined by it; the preaching is vitiated by its insidious influence; the members of the church are infatuated with it.

All of this is bad enough; what is worse is that also the Reformed Churches have fallen to the tempting siren calls of Arminianism. This is worse because these Churches in particular claim to stand in the heritage of the Calvinistic Reformation.

But what concerns us still more particularly is that the Churches to which we belong have their origin in the struggle with Arminianism.* It does not take a masterful theologian to see that the theory of common grace has committed the Christian Reformed Church from which we came to the tenets of Arminianism. We have discussed these "three points" before; but it ought to be noticed now that they stand in the Arminian tradition; not the tradition of Reformed thought. They teach that there is a grace of God for all men; that the gospel is offered by God to all men as an opportunity for all men to be saved; that the Holy Spirit operates in the hearts of all men in such a way that sin is restrained and that the fruit is a certain amount of "civic good" which even wicked men can do and which meets with God's approval.

It is really no wonder that these seeds of common grace sown better than four decades ago are presently producing in the Christian Reformed Church a harvest of thought which stands in flat contradiction with all the Reformation has ever stood for. Men today, following admittedly upon common grace, teach that God loves all men without distinction. that this love of God for all men is rooted in an atonement of Calvary which was accomplished for all men, that salvation is consequently available for all men and only his own persistent unbelief keeps him from receiving what is available to him. And all this makes faith the work of man whereby he succeeds in escaping from such a great damnation which awaits him if he does not accept the salvation prepared for him by Christ.

No one ought to be astonished by the appearance of these views when the Church has principally committed itself to them with her common grace.

But this is not Reformation thought; this is not the genius of Dort; this is not what our fathers confessed and suffered for. The lines of the confession of the saints, running from Luther and Calvin over Dort and the Secession to 1924 and today, are the lines of sovereign grace rooted in eternal election, accomplished in a particular atonement and given to God's people by an irresistible operation of the Spirit.

It is in this noble, glorious and, above

* A recent editorial in The Banner carried comment on the fact that the recently published "Handbook of Denominations" stated that the separation between the Protestant Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church occurred as "the result of disagreement over the doctrine of common grace (Arminianism)." The editor writes: "To identify the doctrine of common grace with Arminianism is a most unfortunate misrepresentation." The fact is, however, the editor of The Banner notwithstanding, that the Handbook is so right, however now this may have come to be inserted.
all, Scriptural tradition that we stand as Protestant Reformed Churches. No one can gainsay this. It is simply obvious.

We do not therefore stand alone in our confession: we join the confession which we make to the voices of thousands of saints preceding us who have lived and died in this blessed truth.

We have, no doubt, many errors to combat in the defense of the faith. For heresy is rampant in the Church. But it remains for us to recognize this greatest of all dangers — the evil of Arminianism, and to fight for the faith once delivered to the saints against this evil especially. Standing in the awareness that we, by this confession, join with an innumerable company of saints who have preceded us, let us defend vigilantly and courageously this heritage entrusted to our keeping.

**JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE TIME OF CHRIST**

The Synagogue-Rabbi System

by REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

(Continued from February Issue)

The Pre-Talmudic School. We cannot speak with as much certainty of the elementary school during the time of Christ's childhood as we can of later periods. For just about the only authority afforded us is the Jewish Mishnah, the first part of the Talmud, which is not older than 200 A.D. It is probably safe, however, if we use caution, to assume that some of the methods there described as being of long standing may have been extant in the first century. It is more than probable that our Lord attended the synagogue school in Nazareth, was taught not by a learned rabbi, as there was none in that city, but by the minister of the synagogue. These teachers were in every town of Galilee and Jerusalem (cf. Luke 5:17). There was always one of these elementary schools wherever there was a synagogue. The teachers belonged to a teachers' guild formed by the scribes. The term of address applied to a teacher was that of Rabbi, "my teacher," (lit., "my great one"), which during this time of Christ had not yet come to be used as a title, as in Rabbi Eliezer.

Teachers. Originally, the teachers in Israel were the priests and the prophets, until later the scribes also taught. Teachers were called the Wise Ones (ha-Chamin, and Sopherim), scribes. Later, in the third century, teachers were called Amoraim, Speakers, and still later in history were called Sabrumin, Examiners or investigators. The earlier terms are much to be preferred, being biblical titles of honor. In keeping with the biblical spirit, the Hebrew words for education were: Hochmah, wisdom; da'ath Adonai, Knowledge of the Lord, and Nusar, instruction, learning. From the selection of teachers, bachelors and women were eliminated. It is rather commonly known that no salary was provided the teacher for his labors. He served, out of respect for his profession, gratuitously. However, in keeping with the casuistry and subterfuge of the age, he was somewhat speciously granted a fee for "watching the children," or for loss of his time from his secular work, by which, largely, he had to support himself.

Learning of a Trade. Study of the law of God in the synagogue-school was combined with the learning of a trade. It was the duty of the father to see that his son learned a trade that he might be able to support himself, and also it was believed that a one-sided intellectual occupation with the law was not conducive to success. We think of Elisha who was a farmer, Amos a herdsman, Paul a tent-maker and Jesus a carpenter.

Physical Education did not have a great part in the training of the Jew as it did with the Greeks. According to I Maccabees 1:14, 15; II Macc. 4:10-15, some of the worldly Jews joined with the YMHA of the day. But generally the Jew had little inclination for gymnastics. He was averse to public wrestling as beneath his dignity and self-respect. Nevertheless, it was customary for the father to provide his son with swimming lessons.

Supervision. Parents considered it their duty to supervise the school instruction to
the point of visiting the teacher during the lesson to see whether his work was faithfully performed. We have much the same practice in our catechism classes, which are visited by the elders, and in a few of our Christian schools, although in some the practice has been dropped.

**Discipline.** It was recommended to teachers in matters of discipline that corporal punishment could be but slightly imposed. The elder pupils were not to be subjected to corporal punishment, for one thing, lest it wound their sense of honor, and for another, lest it arouse resistance. Only pupils showing promise, yet who were indifferent, were to be punished. If they were dull pupils, incapable of learning, they were not to be punished.

**Studies and Texts.** Especially the Law, the Torah was the main body of knowledge revered by the Jews. They proudly trace its origin from God on Mt. Sinai to Moses, to Joshua, to the elders of Israel, to the prophets and through them to the Great Assembly, or the Sanhedrin, an academy of scholars and thinkers. The Sanhedrin chose rabbis (teachers) to educate the people and their children. Ezra the scribe is said to have organized the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. The Scriptures, but especially the Torah (the Pentateuch) became the text-book in the schools. The law was regarded as the *summa bonum*, the sum of intellectual pursuits, the aim of life. It was put this way in the Babylonian Talmud, "There is no love such as the love of the Torah. The words of the Torah are as difficult to acquire as silken garments, and are lost as easily as linen ones."

The Hebrew child of pre-school age, besides being orally instructed in the whole history of Israel, was taught to memorize the Shema (Dt. 6:4), some of the Proverbs, verses from the Psalms, besides a birthday text, which was a verse of Scripture beginning or ending with, or containing the letters in his Hebrew name. He was taught to use this verse in his daily prayers. He was also familiar with some of the Israelitish rites and ceremonies, such as the commemoration of the dedication of the temple, the happy and boisterous time of Purim, Esther's feast of deliverance, the Passover, Yom Kippur and the Feast of Tabernacles, to mention a few. Girls were excluded from the schools, being, as already noted, educated at home.

At six the Jewish child entered the elementary school and began formal training in the Scriptures, memorizing one verse daily. At ten he began to study the Mishnah. At thirteen he studied the commandments, and at that age became Bar Mitzvah, son of the commandment, thus becoming responsible for fulfilling the law! At fifteen, according to the following period of Jewish history, he took up the study of the Talmud. He was ready for marriage at eighteen. At twenty, he entered on his career, trade or business. For students destined to go on to higher learning there were the colleges of the scribes. The highest attainments in education may be ascribed to Moses, who was brought up in all the learning of Egypt (Ac. 7:22), as well as that of all Israel; to the writer of the Book of Job, who was well versed in natural history and in the astronomy of the day; to Daniel and his companions (1:4,17); to Solomon, whose *intellectual* attainment was even more renowned than his *political* greatness (1 K. 4:29,34; 2 Chr. 9:1-8); to Paul, a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

Great emphasis was placed on reading, for much esteem was placed on the ability to expound the law. The course of study began with the study of the Book of Leviticus. Every Jew was required to know the contents of that Book. One authority suggests that the reason for beginning with this Book was to teach the child his sinfulness and need of justification. This certainly is in harmony with the idea of our Heidelberger in its first part where we learn our misery, and its second part where we learn of our justification. Indeed, the Book of Leviticus could very profitably be studied from the point of view of the three well known divisions, Misery, Deliverance and Thanksgiving. Contrary to this view, Edersheim thinks such a reason for study of Leviticus quite far-fetched. We would answer, as we see it, that that is exactly the proper point of view to adopt in the study of any part of Scripture. But worse than far-fetched is the rabbinical opinion that since children are pure and the offerings pure, that the pure should study the pure! Edersheim presents a more strictly Jewish reason for this approach, namely that Leviticus treats of the ceremonies and rituals with which every Jew
found it necessary to have an acquaintance. The first reason given is not only educative in the highest sense, but is soundly theological, God-centered and truly evangelical. The second reason is bald Pelagianism. The last is cross Judaism. After this initial study, the remainder of the Pentateuch was taught, then the prophets, and finally the Hagiographa. It is quite likely that our Lord learned His first lessons from the Book of Leviticus, that in the synagogue services He had heard Moses and the prophets read. His home in Nazareth may also have owned a complete copy of the Old Testament. For He was from earliest childhood intimately familiar with every detail of Holy Scripture. We know that He read the original Hebrew (Cf. Mt. 5:18; Lk. 16:17), and very likely in the square characters found in the minister's and seminary student's Hebrew Bible. For ancient Hebrew was the only language permitted in the schools. At the completion of elementary school education, the Jewish boy knew by heart most of the Pentateuch, and many selections from other parts of Scripture.

Methods and Reviews. The practice of review was thoroughly utilized, the opinion being, "To review 101 times is better than to review 100 times." Therefore it was recommended in teaching the law, "Go over and over it again and again, for everything is in it." Here you see something of the Jewish one-sided favoritism for the law. Jesus had a different evaluation. He placed all Scripture on the same level of equal authority: the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Mt. 5:17; Lk. 24:44). Unweariedly the teacher was to explain and explain until the pupil thoroughly understood. Yet, knowing that by incessant and laborious driving of a certain study into the mind it is possible to drive it out again, the shortest manner of instruction was to be preferred. What the pupil could learn in one word should not be imparted in three.

The Hebrew Language. Foreign languages at first had no part in the curriculum of Jewish schools. But as foreign influences gradually corrupted the purity of the Hebrew language, Jewish boys in the cities learned not only to speak Aramaic, but also Greek. Exclusive as they tried to be, God used the great linguistic ability of the Jews to prepare the way for the writing and spread of the new covenant Scriptures.

Teachers in that period were as precise as they could be in the very pronunciation of the Hebrew language. For nowhere was there absolute purity of language, not even in Judea and Jerusalem. Especially schools in despised Galilee were rather corrupt in the language. But the aim was to teach the children to read Hebrew as accurately as possible and always reverently. The letters of the Hebrew alphabet were mastered. Then the teacher taught the child to identify separate words from a text which he had already memorized. Since, at the time, the letters of the alphabet consisted only of consonants, with no vowel pointings, the child was not able to read syllables, as later Jews did.

However, the classroom was a babel of noise, as the pupil was constantly drilled in correct, audible Hebrew pronunciation. This was absolutely required with a view to proper study of the Torah. Reading, study, review and memorization were done orally, i.e., with audible recitation. It was strongly believed that a pupil who learned his lessons by the silent method, without repeating them aloud, would forget all he had learned in three years. The ideal pupil of the time was Rabbi Eliezer, who was likened to a water-tight cistern which never lost a drop.

Trend to Pharisaism. The rabbinical teachers, especially of the Pharisees, as over against the literalist priests and worldly Sadducees, sought to establish the Mosaic law above monarchy and priesthood. The formula they adopted was Halachah le Moshe mi Sinai, "The way (given) to Moses from Sinai." This was the idea that the revelation on Sinai provided everything needful. "Everything that a pupil will ever demonstrate to his master was shown to Moses on Sinai." It would appear from this that in Christ's time a strict adherence to the very letter and spirit of the law, giving no place to mere tradition, was maintained. But the expression, Halachah le Moshe mi Sinai, "The way (given) to Moses from Sinai," in the twelfth century came to mean, "Valid as if given to Moses on Sinai." Since there was originally only a consonantal text, with no vowel pointings, when it came to interpreting the text, many sought to read their own thoughts into Holy Writ. Thus the oral tradition known as the Halakah came about. For centuries the Halakah was forbidden to be written. Prospective scribes had to com-
mit it to memory. The Hagadah ("narrative"), another branch of oral instruction, embraced Jewish literature: proverbs, fables, traditions, history and science. These two elements of oral tradition developed into the Talmud. Thus Jewish education in the time of Christ finally parted in two directions: first, to that which was merely out of Israel without really being Israel (Rom. 9:6), declining to the precepts and traditions of men (Mk. 7:71), to an early version of "Ivy League" liberalism, and then that which was the Israel of God continuing the system of true, God-centered knowledge in the line of the new covenant. 15

In conclusion, it may safely be said that Jewish education in the time of Christ was originally founded exclusively on the Old Testament Scriptures as not only containing but being the verbally and plenarily inspired Word of God. Education was especially based on the fundamental truth of the doctrine of creation, was at least predicated to the doctrine of the trinity, and was taught and administered within the context of a covenant life. The entire educational system was therefore preserved separate from the wicked world which lies in the lap of the evil one, and from the modern philosophies of a crooked and perverse generation. And since these schools were still connected to Moses' seat, they were worthy of emulation in what they commanded and in what they taught (Mt. 23:2-3). For according to Moses the aim of education was the glory of God, the standard was the Word of God and the underlying motive was faith. 4

8Universal Jewish Encyclopedia; Funk and Wagnalls, 1899, 2, 631. Note: On every volume and title pg. there is a detailed illustration of a candlestick (not a lampstand), seven-branched, with the main trunk bearing the candle of religion. The three branches on the left bear the candles of History, Literature and Jewish Life, respectively. The three branches on the right, from right to left, carry the candles of Jew-And-Non-Jew, General Subjects and Contributions, respectively. This is a modern perversion of and departure from the Moabite and Solomonic lampstand. This candlestick represents the manifold spheres of humanism and "common grace." The golden lampstand signified the Messiah dwelling in the congregation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

9The Jewish Heritage Series, I, 94-98.

10Edersheim, "The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah," I, 228.

11Ibid., I, 232; and his "Sketches of Jewish Social Life . . . ." (130).


BOOK REVIEW

Shadows of Ecstasy

by CHARLES WILLIAMS. Published by William B. Eerdmans Company.

In this novel, as in The Place of the Lion, Williams weaves an eerie tale. This novel takes place in England, but starts with an uprising on the African continent instigated by the would-be conqueror of death, Nigel Considine. Roger Ingram, a London University Professor of Applied literature, plays a large part in the story as he relentlessly searches for the source of ecstasy—the source and meaning of death. The eeriness of the search is well punctuated by ritual fires and savage dancing on the Hampstead Heath, the rescue of a Zulu king from supernatural control, and a strange Mass a Lambeth. Mystical experiences, unexpected and unexplained suicides, robbings, murders, and exorcisms are as common as London fog.

Williams indeed creates a universe in which the strong weaken, saints doubt, but death finally conquers all.

Behind all this "Riot and Ruin" (a chapter heading) Williams depicts the bitter struggle between good and evil. But one searches long and hard for a definition of either term. Even the characterization gives no aid because often no distinction is made between the good and the evil person. Those that same time appear good are not good in the true sense of the word. They do not do good works that proceed from true faith; they do not follow the law of God; but, rather, their good is usually founded upon their own imaginations and/or the institutions of men (Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. XXXII, Qu. and A. 91).

Since Charles Williams is not sound of doctrine, this book cannot be recommended for young people. Mature adults with strong faith and spiritually discerning minds may enjoy this and other works by Charles Williams.

D.H.
GENESIS

B. Joseph's explanation of the event of his being brought into Egypt (vss. 5-8).

1. This passage is of great importance (with the companion passage of chapter 50:20) for our understanding of the relationship between God's providence and sinful deeds.
   a. The doctrine of providence asserts that God not only upholds but also governs all creatures.
   b. This passage clearly shows that God's sovereign control extends also to the sinful deeds of men.
   c. We have looked into the matter of God's providence, a little, in the November and December, 1965 issues of Beacon Lights.

2. Some remarks on this passage by John Calvin in his "essay" on "The Secret Providence of God" in the book, Calvin's Calvinism. (Every Reformed student of Scripture would do well to obtain, read and reread this beautiful work, which also contains the "essay," "The Eternal Predestination of God." Eerdmans Pub. Company carries the book which sells for the trifling sum of $3.50).
   a. "That the way of God's goodness is prepared by the evil deeds of men one single portion of the writings of Moses will fully demonstrate. The conspiracy of the brethren of Joseph against him was more than wicked, perfidious and cruel... But Joseph himself transfers the cause of this selling him, though with a different motive, to God Himself... It is evident, there-
before, that though they did wickedly, God nevertheless did His work by their means . . .” (pp. 239, 240).

b. This and similar passages of Scripture on God’s governing the sinful deeds of men lead Calvin to describe God’s providence as follows: “the internal affections of men are not less ruled by the hand of God than their external actions are preceded by His eternal decree; and, moreover, that God performs not by the hands of men the things which He has decreed, without first working in their hearts the very will which precedes the acts they are to perform” (p. 243).

c. Over against those who claim God merely permits men and devils to sin but does not ordain the sinful deed nor positively govern its happening, Calvin remarks: “how vain and fluctuating is that flimsy defence of the Divine justice which desires to make it appear that the evil things that are done, are so done, not by the will of God, but by His permission only” (p. 244).

3. Questions on this passage.

a. When Joseph tells his brothers not to grieve because it was God Who sent him into Egypt does he mean that their act was no sin and that they should not sorrow in repentance?

b. The objection always lodged against the doctrine that God ordains and governs men’s sinful deeds is that this doctrine makes God the author of sin (which “the Reformed Churches . . . detest with their whole soul,” “Conclusion” of the Canons of Dordrecht). Does not Joseph carefully distinguish, in the one event of his being sent to Egypt, the pure and holy act of God from the evil act of the brothers when he says, “ye sold” (vs. 4) but “God did send” (vss. 5, 7)?

c. Are we, following Scripture, to conceive of God’s governing this deed in such a way that the brothers, first and quite independently of God, make and carry out their wicked plot and God, only afterwards, works at making the deed turn out well or are we to conceive of God’s control in such a way that God first determines to bring Joseph into Egypt by means of the brothers sin and controls the brothers’ very thoughts and wills so as to accomplish His determination?

d. Are we able to comprehend that God is sovereign over men’s sinful deeds and, yet, that men are guilty, God being perfectly holy and sinless, indeed, hating with all His Being the deed He ordained and controlled? (Against those who reject this doctrine because they cannot comprehend it, Calvin says, “This depravity . . . is utterly intolerable, that we, who by nature are hardly gifted with worthiness to creep as worms on the earth, should approve of nothing but that which, as if lying on the ground, we can look down upon with our natural eyes,” Calvin’s Calvinism, p. 233).

II. The Church prepares to come into Egypt (vss. 9-28).

A. The invitation of Joseph and Pharaoh.

1. Why is Joseph confident that it is permissible for the people of God to leave the promised land and abide in Egypt?

2. What accounts for Pharaoh’s overwhelmingly generous hospitality?

a. In addition to the Pharaoh’s motives, ought we to see in his hospitality the working of God’s providence (cf. Proverbs 21:1)?
b. Does not this attitude and conduct of Pharaoh (and, in him, the Egypt he represents) make the actions of the later Pharaohs towards Israel all the more evil?
c. Perhaps, Proverbs 12:10 applies here?
3. What is the meaning of Joseph’s warning in vs. 24, “See that ye fall not out by the way!” (Literally, Joseph’s words are, “Be not disturbed” and the word “disturbed” can refer to disturbance of anger, grief, or fear.)

B. The reaction of Jacob.
1. What was his initial reaction to the news? (“Fainted” in vs. 26 is, literally, “was cold.”)
2. Was the announcement the brothers made to Jacob, do you suppose, entirely a happy task for them?
3. Is there any significance in the change of name of the old patriarch in vs. 28? D.E.

The Death of Jacob and Joseph
Genesis 46:4-50
A. Jacob’s Descent into Egypt (Gen. 46:1-30)
1. His fear
   a. The occasion
      (1) Pharaoh requested Joseph to send for his father and furnished wagons for their transportation. This Joseph did.
      (2) Jacob was overcome by the news that Joseph was yet alive and was ruler in Egypt. He resolved to go down to Egypt (45:28).
      (3) They departed with their families, servants, and all their possessions.
   b. The problem
      (1) Jacob realized as they traveled southward, he was not taking a journey, he was moving.
      (2) Approaching Beersheba (very southern edge of Canaan) he became afraid.
         (a) Canaan was the promised land.
         (b) Everytime the Patriarchs left Canaan it brought trouble. Abraham in Gen. 12 and 20, Isaac in Gen. 26, and Jacob himself in Haran, Gen. 28-30.
   c. God had not approved as yet this act of departure. His problem was this, was he running away from God by going to Egypt.

   c. His sacrifice
      (1) This was in a certain sense the Old Testament form of prayer.
      (2) Jacob addressed himself to the covenant God (God of Isaac).
      (3) A good lesson in taking our problems to the same God.
2. The Divine Assurance
   a. Jehovah engaged in direct communication with Jacob. Is there anything like this today?
   b. God’s message to Jacob contained, 3 things to assure him not to fear
      (1) God had a purpose for this descent into Egypt, he would make of Israel a nation. This He would accomplish in Egypt. This harmonizes with Gen. 15:13ff.
      (2) God assured Jacob He would be with him while he was in Egypt. God is with His people even while they are in the house of bondage. Today no less.
      (3) God assured him the stay in Egypt would be temporary. God would bring them back again to Canaan.
         (a) This does not mean that Jacob would personally return to the earthly Canaan. Jacob was going to die in Egypt, but Israel, not the man but the nation, would return.
         (b) For proof of all this, God told Jacob that Joseph would “put his hands upon thine eyes.” Joseph, whom he thought dead, would be present at his death, and he would out live Jacob. The generations would continue.

   (To be continued, D.V.)

BEACON LIGHTS

(Seventeen)
ANNOUNCING

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