

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Sage Counsel For The Future

Editorials:

Flight From The Telephone

The Issue In Doctrinal Controversy

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Operation '76 and the Universal Church

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*Meditation***Sage Counsel For The Future**

Rev. M. Schipper

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Proverbs 3:5, 6

Thy paths!

Those over which you must yet walk, which still lie before you, and where you have never walked before. They refer, no doubt, to the way you must go in the time to come, which is unknown to you, but which is known to and foreordained by Jehovah your God.

Into that unknown future and over these uncharted paths the wise man of God instructs you to place all your confidence in the Lord Who will safely direct all your steps.

And this is sage counsel, indeed!

How foolish it would be to proceed without Him!

How reckless is he who would lean on his own understanding!

O, indeed, you have an understanding. The Lord, your God, when He formed you created you an intelligent creature. In distinction from the brute and inanimate creation, He gave to you a mind which discerns and intelligently sees into things. It weighs and measures, analyzes and studies, estimates and judges the things which it sees. This understanding, along with your will, distinguishes you and makes you an accountable and responsible being. But such an understanding, unless it is regenerated and comes under the power of new life, is darkness! The carnal mind is enmity against God, and is perverse in all its actions. But the Scripture here does not have in mind the understanding of the natural, depraved man. Solomon is speaking of the regenerated mind and the understanding of the child of God, who in principle once more is able to judge correctly. However, even that renewed understanding is not to be relied on, to be completely trustworthy. For, you see, it is enclosed in corrupt flesh that never willeth any good thing. Is it not exactly the complaint of the regenerated child of God "that to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not?" And is it not striking how Solomon, reputed for his great wisdom, should emphatically exhort you not to lean on your own understanding?

Rather place all your trust in the Lord!

Trust in the Lord with all your heart!

Trust, as you know, is one of the two elements of saving faith. The other element is a certain spiritual knowledge, without which your trust cannot have proper direction. You do not trust one whom you do not know. These two elements are inseparably connected, and in such a way that the one finds its basis in the other; that is, trust, or confidence, finds its grounds in that certain spiritual knowledge. In other words, if you do not know Jehovah, your God, with that spiritual knowledge of the heart, you will not trust in Him with all your heart. And this knowledge is obtainable only through grace and through the holy revelation of Himself to you through His Word and Spirit. And make no mistake about it, this knowledge is not the mere intellectual knowledge which also the devils have and they tremble. It is the intimate, spiritual knowledge whereby we know Him as the God of our salvation. Who loved us from everlasting! Who justified us in the blood and sacrifice of His Son on the cross! Who sanctifies us by the Spirit and grace of Christ! Who makes us the heirs of eternal life! And Who makes all things to be subservient to our final and complete salvation in the day of Christ! Knowing Him with that knowledge, you also place all your confidence in Him. Literally the text says: Confide towards Jehovah with all thine heart.

With all thine heart!

That means with the whole center of your spiritual

being. The heart is it out of which are all the issues of life. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. There is the center of all his thinking, willing, and desiring; and here, of course, as the center in which dwells the spiritual knowledge of God. With all your heart let all the confidence you have go out to Him.

Trust Jehovah!

O, indeed, that says more, much more, than simply: Trust in the Lord! Jehovah is Lord, to be sure! He is Sovereign, Ruler, Possessor, Who commands reverence, obedience, service. But in the name Jehovah He is revealed as the covenant Lord, the Lord Who has established with His people in Christ an everlasting covenant. In that covenant He is and remains the unchangeable I AM. His word and His promises fail not. The good work He has begun in you He will surely finish unto the end.

Trust in Him only!

Not partly on Him and partly on your own understanding! Not both on Him and on an arm of flesh! Not on yourself, and when that fails, then on Jehovah!

On Jehovah alone!

In all thy ways acknowledge Him!

Literally the text says: In all thy ways discover Him! And this shows you how and in what manner you can realize your calling to trust in Him.

It means, first of all, that Jehovah is not some vague, super Being Who is somewhere out there in outer space; Whom you cannot see, but just have to believe that He is somewhere and that somehow you are to believe in Him. O, no, it's nothing like that at all! It means that wherever you go, there He is also; and wherever you go, there you will discover Him. In other words, He never leaves you alone; He always accompanies you as you tread your way.

It means, in the second place, that whereas He is to be found on your way, you are to look for Him; and when you discover Him, acknowledge Him as your covenant Jehovah.

In all thy ways — discover Him!

The term "ways" is used here in the figurative sense, as it is so often used in Scripture. Literally, a way is a beaten path over which one walks to reach a certain destination. In the figurative sense it refers to one's life as he lives it here in the present world. And as it is true of any way, that it has a certain beginning and leads to a certain destination, so life as we live it here in the present world has its beginning in birth, wends itself through the various stages in life — childhood, manhood, and old age — to our eternal destiny. That the text speaks of our way in the plural, evidently looks at that life from the point of view of its various departments and varied experiences. Our life is not always on an even plain. There are mountains of troubles that have to be climbed, and there are valleys of despair and gloom that have to be gone through. There are mo-

ments when we are carried along, as it were, with the wind, and we travel with ease; but there are also times when our way is beset with many difficulties so that the way seems impassible. And there are dangers to be encountered, powers of darkness, that would endeavor to destroy you. Moreover, the devil, the world, and your own flesh beset you often with manifold temptations, offering you prosperity, honor, and fame if you will but deny one of your Christian principles. And they threaten you with persecution and death if you walk steadfastly in the fear of Jehovah, your God.

Not to discover, not to acknowledge the Lord in all your ways, is to disregard Him and to place your trust in another object. This is, indeed, God-provoking; but also it is not safe. He knows how to allow you for a time to go your own way, while He withdraws from you in such a wonderful way that you feel the rod of His chastisement, and see not the light of His presence. In such a way you experience only sorrow and disappointment. But to acknowledge Him in all your ways, and to place in Him alone all your confidence — this honors Him, and at the same time brings you joy and peace.

How important this counsel is for you and me as we enter into the new year! We call it a new year; and such it is as far as the calendar is concerned. Never before has the church of Christ known the period of time into which we in the providence of God have been brought. And only God knows what lies ahead, for it is all ordered in His all-wise counsel. We do know from His prophetic Word that as the history of the world and therefore of the church hastens to its end, the days will become increasingly evil. And we do know that as far as the people of God are concerned, there shall be trying days such as the church has never known. But what lies ahead in the year 1970 no man can predict. We do know, however, that though we enter a new span of time, we are nevertheless in the same old world, the world which lieth in darkness and where wickedness shall abound.

For this we need the wise counsel this Word of God gives us. It would be sheer folly to lean on our own understanding. And even more foolish to look to an arm of flesh for help.

We shall have to confide with all our heart in Jeho-

vah alone; and discovering Him in all our ways, and looking to Him to guide us, we shall go safely through whichever ways He may lead us.

And He shall direct thy paths!

Comforting promise!

Literally the text says: And He will make our paths straight!

We are reminded here of what the psalmist tells us in Psalm 37:5 — “Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He shall bring it to pass.” That is, rolling our way on Him by faith, He will realize it for us. And this is precisely what He wanted to do in the first place. Our path was ordained of Him in His eternal counsel. He makes our way difficult so that we cannot travel it alone. By committing it to Him, He brings us safely to our destination, in order that His may be all the glory.

Our paths become crooked and uneven and most difficult to travel, but He levels them and straightens them out. O, to be sure, He will also direct thy paths, as the translation has it. Entrusting ourselves and our way to Him completely, He will lead us in such a way that all our paths terminate in the end which He has purposed for us. But the text promises still more. It implies that our paths often become crooked and perverse because of the sin which still so easily besets us. It implies, too, that due to the fact that we are often weak in faith and unable to climb the heights, and descend the valleys, He will make straight paths for our feet, and cause us to continue in the way of the upright.

This is the promise of Jehovah, our God!

We may fail, and fail often, in the way of life; but He never!

Entrust yourselves wholly to Him, therefore, ye children of God! Look for Him all along your way. And when you become entangled in your paths which you make crooked through your sin, lean not on your own understanding, but cast yourselves completely on Him Who loved you and is determined that your way shall lead to His everlasting glory in which He desires that you also shall dwell.

Then the way which leads through 1970 will be a blessed experience!

The Arminian holds that Christ, when He died, did not die with an intent to save any particular person: and they teach that Christ's death does not in itself secure, beyond doubt, the salvation of any one man living! . . . they are obliged to hold that if man's will would not give way and voluntarily surrender to grace, then Christ's atonement would be unavailing. . . . We say Christ so died that He infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only *may* be saved, but *are* saved, *must* be saved, and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything *but* saved!

C. H. Spurgeon

Editorials

Flight From The Telephone

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

In one of the Dutch papers, *in de rechte straat*, (Nov., 1969) there is reported a tragic instance of the sad state of affairs in the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, an instance at the same time of the reckless manner in which certain leading figures express themselves publicly to the detriment of the churches. This incident involved Dr. J. Lever, biologist at the Free University of Amsterdam, and one of the leading protagonists of the theory of evolution in the Dutch churches. The above-mentioned magazine quotes from an interview between Prof. Lever and a certain A. ter Braak which was carried in *Jong Gereformeerd*, a paper for young people of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* (somewhat equivalent to our *Beacon Lights* or *The Young Calvinist*). I will quote this interview in translation:

"J. Lever: I like to go to church.

"A. ter Braak: Why?

"J.L.: In the first place, because I can't be disturbed by the telephone; secondly, because I find it pleasurable to sit there with my children; and thirdly, because I like to hear a worthwhile sermon.

"AtB.: Mention an example.

"J.L.: If find it pleasing when a sermon deals with current events of our daily life.

"AtB.: Such as, for example, Vietnam and Czechoslovakia?

"J.L.: Yes."

Not only did this interview have a place in *Jong Gereformeerd*, but the above excerpt of it was quoted in the rather sensational Dutch daily, *Trouw*.

The Rev. J. Hegger (Editor-in-Chief of *in de rechte straat*) has some pertinent comments on this excerpt. First of all, he writes about the matter itself as follows:

"You see, when I read something like this, I find it to be terrifying. In the first place, for Prof. Lever himself. Is this the fruit of faith? How entirely differently the Heidelberg Catechism speaks about the reasons why we 'especially on the sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God,' namely: 'to hear his Word, to use the sacraments, publicly to call upon the Lord.'

"Is it not a mockery of the Word of God when you give as a reason: I go to church, where God's Word is proclaimed, first of all, because then I can't be disturbed by the telephone? Must the proclamation of the Word of God serve to counter-act the ringing of the telephone? Why doesn't Lever take the phone off the hook for an hour if he wants to get some rest? Above

all, has our observance of the sabbath-rest sunk so low that we are continually phoning one another on Sunday?

"But perhaps it is understandable. For if Lever finds a sermon to be worth the bother on Sunday especially if it deals with actual events such as those of Vietnam and Czechoslovakia, then he does not really seek God's Word any more."

A little later in the same article Rev. Hegger makes the following point:

"What a beautiful opportunity Lever had to answer this question with a testimony concerning the preciousness of the Word of God, which, though sometimes proclaimed with weakness, is so great because in it God Himself directs Himself to us, admonishing and comforting, as the God of wrath and of mercy. In that Word is life and light and power and peace. Why did he not talk about the assembling together of the Church of God, which in spite of the sins and the smallness of spirit which, alas, cleave to us, is nevertheless the manifestation of the people of God, with whom God has concluded His covenant in the blood of His Son?"

And then Rev. Hegger points out that this kind of propaganda serves to chase the youth out of the church. Writes he:

"In the second place, I find this expression of Lever so terrible because it is published in *Jong Gereformeerd*, the organ of the Federation of Reformed young people's societies. For in this manner you chase our youth out of the church. They will say to reason No. 1 of Lever: 'I am not bothered by the telephone, hence ...'; to reason No. 2: 'I don't have children yet, hence ...'; to reason No. 3: 'I'm not interested in politics' or: 'I can get more thorough information about Vietnam and Czechoslovakia elsewhere than in church on Sunday. Hence ... I just don't go to church on Sunday.' It is not pleasant to have to write thus, but neither is it pleasant to have to hear such language from someone who claims to be a professing Christian. Things of that sort are painful; and I am convinced that that pain does not simply arise from personal feelings, but because I love God's Word and find it sad when anyone writes thus about the eternal, glorious Word of God by which a believer is begotten again (I Peter 1:23) through the operation of God's Holy Spirit."

With these sentiments of Editor Hegger we are in hearty accord. He is certainly correct as to the substance of the matter when he puts Lever's "reasons"

for church attendance in the light of what our Heidelberg Catechism teaches us in connection with the Fourth Commandment; and by so doing, Hegger exposes the wicked, superficial, flippant attitude betrayed by Lever. And he is also correct as to the ethics of Lever when he points out that by such talk Lever "chases our youth out of the church," — something which is all the more serious because of the fact that the *Gereformeerde Kerken* are particularly troubled by the fact that especially the younger generation is forsaking the means of grace, so that in many instances the second service on Sunday is attended by only a few of the older folk.

But there is more involved here.

Here you have a clear illustration that doctrine and morals go hand in hand. Still more, here is a clear illustration that false teachers not only propagate false doctrine, but also lead the church in immoral, lascivious ways.

True, Dr. Lever is not a theologian or a minister. He is a biologist. But he has been a leading spokesman — be it from a scientist's point of view — of those who have been striving, and to no little degree succeeding, to foist evolutionism on the Reformed people in the Netherlands, and that in the name of faith in the Word of God. In November and December of 1968 he delivered a series of radio lectures (now published in the book entitled *Waar Blijven We?*) which were broadcast by the Netherlands Christian Radio Association. The stated purpose of these lectures was to bring to the attention of the general public in an understandable way the relation between Christian faith and modern natural science, to remove misunderstandings, and to present the viewpoint that both [Christian faith and natural science] can actually be of essential significance for the progress of mankind. All this, however, is a deceitful euphemism for the *actual* purpose of those lectures, namely, to popularize the theory of evolution and to deceive God's people into thinking that evolutionism is quite in harmony with Scripture. And thus he has been a teacher of false doctrine.

But there is another aspect to this phenomenon of false teachers which is frequently ignored, if not contradicted. That is the matter of their own ethics and of the immoral ways in which they seek to lead the people of God. You understand, of course, when I use the term "immoral" in this connection, I am not thinking exclusively of sexual immorality, but of immorality in general, that is, of that which is contrary to God's commandments. And the Biblical picture of false teachers is such that it consistently portrays false teachers not only as having evil motives, but also as seeking to lead God's people astray in their life as well as in their doctrine. This is, for example, the picture of false teachers which is painted in II Peter 2, which speaks not only of the "damnable heresies" but also of the "pernicious (lascivious) ways" of false teachers.

There is, of course, good reason why these two go hand in hand. It is impossible to grow good moral fruits upon a tree of corrupt doctrine. Soundness of doctrine and uprightness of life go hand in hand; and corrupt doctrine and an immoral walk go hand in hand. Soundness of doctrine is the basis and the root of uprightness of walk; and by the same token, false doctrine is the root of, and must needs bear fruit in, a walk contrary to the precepts of our God. It is, of course, possible in some instances, and then only for a time, artificially to hang some fruits of external and apparent good works on such a tree of corrupt doctrine; but even these are only shining vices. And ultimately it must needs become abundantly plain that from the root of corrupt doctrine can only spring corrupt works.

The example cited earlier in this article is, I say, a clear illustration of this point. Notice:

1. Dr. Lever himself adopts and teaches the false doctrine of evolutionism. (false teaching)

2. He then goes about in a very smooth manner, using language which gives the impression of discussing an entirely legitimate question (that of the relation between the Christian faith and natural science), to deceive the people into accepting an alleged harmony between evolutionism and Scripture. (unethical practice)

3. He then, by way of an interview in a young people's paper, leads in pernicious ways, publicly belittling and caricaturing church attendance and the preaching of the Word, and furnishing especially the young people of the church a thoroughly rotten example.

Dr. Lever is by no means the only one who is guilty of this. As far as the Netherlands is concerned, anyone who follows reports in the Dutch papers or anyone who has been there for a visit will be able to tell you of the rapid degeneration not only in doctrine but also in Christian life that has befallen the Dutch churches. And one can notice repeatedly that the same group of men who are promoting the "new theology" in the Netherlands are the men who are also placing their stamp of approval upon all kinds of radical moral departures. From these same false teachers come such things as the desecration of the Sabbath, recommendation of street rebellion, recommendation of and praise for homosexual writings, etc.

Moreover, in the present course of events in the Netherlands there are at least two sound reasons for this close connection between corruption of doctrine and corruption of morals. The first is that the doctrine of Holy Scripture is at stake; and when you forsake the objective standard of the absolute authority of the Scriptures, you have completely lost your moorings, both doctrinally and morally. The second reason, closely connected with the first, is that the specific false doctrine which is being embraced in many

quarters in the Netherlands is the philosophy of evolutionism. And the latter is in its very nature destructive of all morality. The philosophy of evolution and the doctrines of grace (and I have in mind especially now the grace of sanctification) mix like fire and water.

What is the solution?

Basically, it is a very simple one: the resolute

rooting out of all false doctrine and the casting out of false teachers.

If that is not possible by reformation from within, then there is only this alternative: reformation by separation. Any other course is fatal!

And this is true in America as well as in the Netherlands!

The Issue In Doctrinal Controversy

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In the same article from *in de rechte straat* mentioned in the editorial "Flight From The Telephone" a very important aspect of doctrinal controversy is touched on by Editor Hegger. And both because it is of importance in all controversy and because it is of special importance in the current controversy against the "new theology" in the Netherlands, I want to comment on it.

The article from which I quoted is a reply to correspondence. This correspondence expresses disagreement with what Rev. Hegger had written earlier about Dr. Lever's position. This particular correspondent was offended by Rev. Hegger's criticism of Lever's position, and suggest that Rev. Hegger really expressed doubt as to whether Lever is a professing Christian. Commenting on this point, Rev. Hegger replies: "Another observation. I did not deny that Prof. Lever could be a professing Christian. Emphatically I wrote: 'Let it be well understood. I will not assert that they are *unbelievers*. I will not presume to judge their hearts' (p. 13). Because of this I also received a few reactions from subscribers who asked me: How can you leave open the possibility that these men (Kuitert, Lever, Baarda c.s.) are believers? I can understand such a question, but once more: I refuse to sit in the judgment seat of God. But I indeed can and must observe the fruits: for Jesus Himself has taught us that: By the fruits you know the tree. And then I must sometimes say: These are fruits which decidedly do not come forth from *faith*, even though I do not yet say thereby that such men are also in the deepest sense *unbelievers*."

At the end of his reply to this correspondent, Editor Hegger writes in the same vein: "No, this expression of Lever is not the fruit of faith, and I believe that in this case I must apply the words of Romans 14:23: 'All that is not of faith is sin.' Though I repeat once more that I do not want to judge concerning the *hearts* of others, but only concerning their *expressions*."

With the above sentiments of Rev. Hegger one can agree, as far as they go. And although one can take

into account the fact that the writer is only answering a correspondent and not dealing with this question extensively, yet, it seems to me, there is more that can and must be said.

In the first place, it should be observed that this and similar questions frequently arise at times when there is false teaching abroad in a church or a communion of churches. Sometimes this question arises quite honestly; when men teach that which is very plainly in contradiction of Scripture and the confessions, when they deliberately and sometimes even cockily introduce teachings which are radically new and different in the churches, when this is pointed out to them and when the whole tide of the history of dogma is against them, and when they nevertheless wilfully persist in their erroneous doctrines and persist in propagating them, then, as Rev. Hegger states, it is quite understandable that earnest-minded children of God begin to ask whether such men who deny the fundamentals of the truth can possibly be believers. And there is an answer to this question. Certainly, part of that answer is that we do not judge the hearts, but the deeds and the expressions; and part of that answer is that we refuse to usurp God's judgment seat. And from that same point of view, there are many questions which shall not have their final and full answer until the day of judgment. Part of the answer is, too, that by the fruits the tree may be known. But part of the answer is, too, that we do not have to judge this question, but simply allow the judgment of the Word of God to fall. And there can be no doubt but that Scripture everywhere condemns not only false doctrine but also false teachers. Let him who has any doubts on this score read a passage like II Peter 2, for example. In other words, the judgment of the Word of God is that he who wilfully persists in false teaching and who does not repent of it brings upon himself damnation. And it is highly necessary in this age, when there is so little sensitivity about the seriousness of sin and especially about the sin of false teaching, and when practically everybody, no matter how blatant a heretic he may be,

can be not only tolerated, but even hailed, as a fine Christian gentleman, — it is highly necessary, I say, that this be emphasized. The matter of false teaching, from a spiritual, ethical point of view, is just exactly as serious as that. And the reason is that the truth of God, as it is objectively and perspicuously set forth in the Scriptures, is at stake. And God is not mocked! He is a righteous and holy Judge!

But there is another aspect to this matter. Not infrequently this same question, whether a certain teacher of false doctrine is a believer or an unbeliever, is introduced as a charge, an argument, against those who sharply oppose and condemn his false teachings. Or, if this particular question is not introduced, then you will hear irenic warnings against being too sharp, too outspoken, too condemnatory, too polemical; or you will hear pleas that we ought to accept one another in good faith, that we ought to discuss things calmly, that we ought to keep the discussion on a high and rather academic plane, that we ought not be in a rush to make charges of heresy, etc., etc. There is a good deal of this kind of talk abroad in the Netherlands right now. It is directed especially against anyone of the "*verontrusten*" (concerned ones) who happens to speak his mind in no uncertain terms about the "new theology." But sometimes similar thoughts are expressed among the "*verontrusten*" themselves about the writings of those who outspokenly oppose the liberals. Words of apparent caution are sounded that "we must keep the channels of discussion open." In other words, everyone must be a "nice guy" and look on everyone else as a "nice guy." Everyone must do a good deal of "pussy-footing" when it comes to criticizing and opposing the views and statements of others.

What about this? Is it right? If we fail to observe such cautions, are we guilty of heresy-hunting, or, worse yet, of heretic-hunting?

This leads me to some further remarks.

First of all, it should be kept in mind that there has never yet been a heretic who stomped on the ecclesiastical stage with wooden shoes. There is a very good reason for this. Any false teacher who openly would say, "I am a heretic," or, "I am an unbeliever," or, "I do not believe the Bible," or, "I do not believe the creeds of our church," or even, "I do not believe this or that doctrine taught by Scripture and the confessions," would, of course, be recognized for what he is, a heretic; and he would get no following. A successful heretic must deceive people into thinking that he holds to Scripture and the creeds while he undermines and denies them.

In the second place, it is simply *naïve* to accept anyone at face value merely because he *claims* to believe Scripture and the creeds. This is precisely what any false teacher wants you to believe. This was the strategy of the Arminians at the time of the Synod of

Dordrecht. They did not want to be treated as suspects and defendants; they wanted to be accepted as being equally Reformed with the Counter-Remonstrants. This was the strategy of Dr. Kuitert when he spoke before the Christian Reformed Ministers' Institute. In his introductory remarks he pleaded to be accepted as one who believed the Bible. But does this mean that everyone must accept such statements? If they did, every heretic would achieve his purpose. The question is not what anyone *claims*; it is what he *actually teaches*. Does this mean that everyone is automatically under suspicion until he clears himself? By no means! But as a matter of practical common sense, in the first place, a little warning light ought to flash on when someone must go out of his way to introduce his remarks by assuring you that he is Reformed or that he believes the Bible. As a rule, people who are Reformed do not have to sound a trumpet before themselves. And, in the second place, it is the burden of a speaker or teacher to demonstrate that his teachings are in accord with Scripture and the creeds. On that basis he must be tested; and it is the calling of every believer to "try the spirits." And only on that basis may his claim be accepted.

In the third place, it should be remembered that in any doctrinal controversy this cry of "bloody murder" or of personal attack is frequently used as a "red herring," as a ploy designed to draw the attention away from the real issue and to gain sympathy for the false teacher. In fact, however, anyone who has the boldness to break out into print or to appear on the speaker's platform should also expect to have opposition, whether for good or for ill. An it should be kept in mind that if the heretic has the right (?) to express his views, then those who oppose him surely have the right to express their views. The issue is not the person or the personal faith of the false teacher, to be sure. The issue in doctrinal controversy is the issue of the truth of God. And do not forget, whether he admits this or not, it is the heretic himself who has made the church's heritage of the truth the issue. And when he does so, he must expect to be opposed. And does not any son of the church have both the right and the calling to defend his heritage with might and main? This is the aspect of controversy which is so often forgotten. We must not listen to the irenic blandishments of those who always call for peace and toleration. We must not listen to the crafty cries of those who are always ready to call a personal foul. It is indeed strange that so many can become "hot and bothered" about a lack of toleration or a lack of understanding or a lack of brotherliness, but can never become "hot and bothered" about sound doctrine and godliness and can never evince any concern, not to say alarm, when the church is being robbed of its most precious possession, the truth.

At the same time, in the fourth place, two things are

always necessary in doctrinal controversy. The first is that criticism and polemics must be objectively grounded, and the grounds must be Scripture and the confessions. This is the *sole* test! And the second is that he who engages in journalistic controversy against public utterances of someone in the same denomination may not leave matters there. He is morally

bound, when Scripture and the creeds are at stake, to see matters through to a proper conclusion ecclesiastically. If he is unwilling to follow this course, he does not have the courage of his convictions. Nor can it be said that he serves the church well who is content to treat only journalistically what ought to be dealt with ecclesiastically.

All Around Us

Attacks on Papal Infallibility Operation '76 and the Universal Church

Prof. H. Hanko

ATTACKS ON PAPAL INFALLIBILITY

The Second Vatican Council which had begun its meetings under Pope John and finished them under Pope Paul had discussed at some length the problem of papal authority. It had adopted the principle of "shared authority", i.e., the principle that the pope shared his authority in the Church with the bishops. But the Second Vatican Council had not specifically spelled out what this meant in actual practice. It was interpreted by each cleric in the Roman Catholic Church to suit his own ideas. The pope himself continued to insist on the absolute authority of the papacy and was supported by many conservative clergy. But many more liberal clergy were not of a mind to let the partial victory of Second Vatican slip away from them.

The clash came at a recent meeting of the Synod of Bishops. This Synod of Bishops includes one hundred and forty-four clergy from ninety-two countries. The meeting was in Rome.

From the outset it appeared as if the pope would surely dominate the meeting and have things his way. He personally drew up the agenda and it appeared as if his intent was to use the Synod to squash all liberal opposition. This appearance of papal domination was strengthened in Paul's opening speech. He made no bones about it that he held supreme authority in the church; that while he honored the College of Bishops, he was not about to permit his authority to be conditioned by their clerical status in the Church. He was the Vicar of Christ.

But there were liberals in the Synod who were determined to talk back. Among them were Bernard Jan Alfrink of Holland, Leo-Josef Suenens of Belgium, Julius Döpfner of Munich and Franziskus König of Vienna. They were sharp in their criticism of the pope

and were not afraid to castigate the pope's views — even in his presence. They were determined to state their views that the pope's authority had to be shared with the bishops.

As far as any concrete action accomplished however, there was disappointment. Every time a specific issue came up it was referred to the Theological Commission for further study. Yet it was apparent that a majority of the bishops present wanted greater power for the bishops even though they were not by any means agreed on just how this should be implemented.

While the Synod of Bishops was meeting, another group also held meetings in Rome. It was called the European Assembly of Priests, but was soon dubbed the Counter Synod. These were rebel priests who were weary of far more in the Church than the question of papal authority and who were dedicated to thorough and basic change in the whole structure of the Church.

They were not permitted a meeting place on any Roman Catholic property and met in a Waldensian Church. They asked for an audience with the pope but were refused. Their purpose was to form an international organization, but in this they failed. Partly they failed because of lack of unity; partly because the meetings were not well organized.

From the meeting emerged a document however. According to *Christianity Today*, the first part of the document called for

A Catholic Church free of the total authority of the Pope, decisions made on the local level by laymen as well as by clergy, and the opportunity for personal guidance of the faithful by the Spirit of God rather than by the direction of a priest as he sees the will of God. Systematic in its approach to reform for every major area of the church, it lays the foundation for a pattern of worship and life that could be truly universal.

The second part of the document, however, was social. The dissident priests demanded of the church that it involve itself in such matters as the population explosion, the problem of war, social discrimination, economic policy. Strikingly and threateningly, many saw the only hope of solving the many problems of the world in a single world church and a single world government.

There were some who viewed these recent meetings of the bishops and priests as giving evidence of a real reformation within the Romish Church. In fact, it was not uncommon to read of comparisons between recent changes within Roman Catholicism and the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. As a justification for such comparisons it was pointed out that the key issue with Luther, Calvin and the other reformers was also the issue of the authority of the pope.

This in itself is, of course, true. But the fact of the matter is that within Roman Catholicism the question is whether the pope shall exercise authority alone or whether he shall share his authority with other members of the clergy. This was not the question in the Sixteenth Century Reformation. For Luther and for Calvin the question was the authority of the clergy vs. the sole authority of the Scriptures. They unequivocally rejected the former and maintained the latter. Of this principle Rome wants nothing.

OPERATION '76 AND THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

A mimeographed sheet has recently been given me which contains a reprint of an article by W. Henry MacFarland which was originally published in the Summer, 1967 issue of *The American Mercury*. It contains material of a "fantastic plan to turn the church into an instrument of communist conquest." It describes how Communists in this country and abroad, with the help of liberal churchmen especially to be found in the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches intend to establish a world-wide and universal religion while outlawing all the true worship of God.

It is impossible to quote the entire document in the rubric. Nor am I reprinting parts of it because I believe the statements made in it are necessarily correct. The article is without any documentation of any kind and is quite obviously without any firm proof. But it contains a kernel of truth and gives some idea of the direction of events in our day and the threat of liberal churchmen.

The plan described in the article is called "Operation '76" since this is the target date for the accomplishment of the plan. The general plan is a blueprint for the "dechristianization of Christianity" by means of the establishment of a universal religion agreeable to all in the world. The plan is formulated by Moscow and the Communist regimes; it is steered by Communists in

many countries in cooperation with liberal churches and present ecumenical organizations; it is legalized through the governments of various countries.

The "dechristianized Christianity" will be some kind of "social gospel" which is compatible with Communism.

For this reason, the World Communist Conspiracy has nothing to fear from a "religion" based on a social gospel which is itself the product of thinking in terms of the individual's helplessness in the face of mass economic forces. Indeed, Communism can find in such religions invaluable allies in its quest for global empire, and if they feel the necessity for transforming "God" into an invisible earthly comrade prepared to lead "the masses" in battle against their "capitalistic oppressors" and keeping him as such, the Reds rightly judge that this profanation of Divinity is itself most useful to the Marxist cause.

At the 18th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., the Red faithful found "God-less religion" incorporated in "Operation '76" as an instrumentality, coequal with the racio-political modality reported in News-letter No. 72, for effecting our Country's surrender to a Soviet-dominated World State by July 4, 1976. . . . The plan of action is quite precise. It is geared to the creation of a single Church of World Brotherhood seated in the Holy Land by the mid-1970's. The ultimate goal is a Global State Religion in which the political and church powers are one and the same, but this objective extends beyond the terminal date of Operation '76, whose blueprint in this area is restricted to fostering a domestic interfaith union of the "mainstream" of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish denominations in an expanded National Council of Churches, which by a series of "guidelines" to be laid down by several agencies of the Federal Government, and later to be sustained by decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, will BY FORCE OF LAW, COME TO INCLUDE ALL CHURCHES, DENOMINATIONS, SECTS AND INDIVIDUAL CLERGYMEN AND EVANGELISTS LEGALLY RECOGNIZED AS HAVING THE RIGHT TO FUNCTION IN THE FIELD OF RELIGION! All seeking to operate outside either the Council or the guidelines will, in the earlier stages of the plan, be subjected to crippling economic disabilities, and later be included under statutory and prosecutable offenses. . . .

(The National Council of Churches), in collaboration with the political arm of Operation '76 will undertake to intensify the assault upon churches and individual clergy and evangelists who remain outside the Council and faithful to fundamental tenets which fail to yield to the secularizing of God and His forms of worship. The assault will take two approaches: one frankly political, the other psycho-sociological. In the first, resisting churches, missions, and individual religionists will be identified with the "lunatic fringe" in the political area — the so-called "far-right," the "extremists," "fascists," et. al. In the second, the resistors will be portrayed as "sick," "paranoid,"

“escapists” and a menace to the “mental health” of both the local community and the Nation.

As these twin onslaughts, perpetuated by the liberal-oriented mass communications media, are determined by professional opinion surveys to have sufficiently isolated the non-ecumenicals from the sympathy, and even the toleration, of the conditioned mass public, the Federal Government will move into position, first to circumscribe and then to render virtually unlawful the formal propagation of those religious teachings to which the National Council of Churches has objected. . . .

This will be done first of all by removing the tax-exempt status of all these Churches and imposing on them various financial burdens.

At the same time, the NCC’s psycho-sociological thrust will be reinforced by the Federal Government through another executive agency, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, under which is operated the National Institute of Mental Health. . . . Under the present plan as conceived in Operation ’76, the National Institute of Mental Health will receive and accept recommendations from the World Health Organization, a Socialized Agency of the United Nations, setting forth “standards” for “healthy mental attitudes on religion and moral conduct.” It is projected that these “standards” will parallel the “creed” of the National Council of Churches with respect to such matters, and that such concepts as Divinity, Salvation, “literalism” in Bible interpretations, chastity before marriage, abstinence from homosexual and perverted heterosexual relationships, etc., will be spelled out as latent signs of actual or potential “mental illness.”

The year chosen by the Kremlin’s blueprint is 1973, and the legislation (presently drafted by top Communist legal experts) provides for compulsory “observation, custodial care and such treatment as may be indicated by the patient’s condition and prescribed by competent medical authority” in cases involving individuals “whose behavior, demeanor or public utterances as an individual religious practitioner shall be such as to impair the emotional well-being of the community as defined in Article II of this Act.”

The article concludes with a quotation from some of the documents and with a description of plans to publish a new universal Bible which will “ultimately come to engage and reconcile the religious beliefs of all rational Twenty-First Century Mankind.” All that gives offense to any religion will be removed. The author claims that already legislation is being prepared to erase all records of the crucifixion of Christ as being offensive to Judaism. The legislation is being prepared by the Anti-Defamation League.

There is just enough truth in an article like this to give pause to the reader. Surely, for one thing, Scripture itself points clearly in the direction of a one-world religion under the rule of Antichrist which will tolerate any religious beliefs but the truth of the Word of God. For another thing, it is surely true that the liberal church of our day is dedicated to precisely such a one-world religion and is ready also to join with government in order to promote such plans. And there are other such elements of truth.

But the details are quite another matter. For one thing, the article does not give sufficient proof to claim belief in itself. Whether all these things which the article claims are really happening are true is an open question. For another thing, Scripture does not give us the details either. We are not told in Scripture whether Communist Russia will be the leader in such a movement as described in the article. We are not told precisely in what manner the Antichristian kingdom will suppress the preaching of the true gospel of Scripture. And it is always dangerous to speculate. It is dangerous because God usually surprises us when He does actually reveal the details of His counsel and will. Dangerous because if we swallow all these details hook, line and sinker, we run the risk of looking the wrong direction when these days actually come. It is safer to stay with Scripture.

Nevertheless, all this is but another indication that the days are short. We hasten rapidly towards the end. We may be nearer than we sometimes think or like to think. Watch therefore and pray.

Let the church beware that she is present when the Word is preached! We must feel it as a sacred obligation to be present when the Church of Jesus Christ gathers for worship. And we must receive it as a blessing of Christ, when the Word is ministered unto us. For we must be founded in the truth and grow in the knowledge and grace of Christ. And in this sense of our obligation and feeling of being blessed we must form the good church-going habit.

The Standard Bearer, VII, p. 512

Studies in Depth

A Stimulating Christian Scientific Journal

Rev. Robt. C. Harbach

The American Scientific Affiliation is a Christian organization established for the fellowship of Christian men and women of science. The organization offers "scientific counsel to Christian teachers, ministers, students and others" presenting the Christian position "to a generation characterized by materialism and skepticism." A service is provided to aid Christian writers and publishers toward maintaining scientific accuracy in their works. Scientifically accurate and biblically sound publications are available, including a journal which will prove of worth to the seminary library, the pastor's study and the Christian school teacher's desk. A lending library is available to membership, furnishing works on the relation of science to the Bible. Aims include evangelism among scientists, spiritual growth and intellectual development of constituency. Membership includes students, ministers, housewives, teachers and others only little or not at all conversant with science. A doctrinal form of subscription consists of two points, (1) the belief in the inspiration of inerrant Scripture, and (2) the deity of Christ, the only atoning Mediator between God and men. Many organizations today have already more than two *points* of unity, to say nothing of three *forms* of unity. Yet it is certainly scientific to have as a Christian basis a more comprehensive statement of faith, such as that expressed in the Westminster Standards, or in the Reformed Confessions. These great symbols have always been at the heart of the theological sciences, and provide the bases for the right interpretation of all the other sciences. Theology proper, conceived of as the doctrine of God, is the ruling power, the queen of sciences.¹ There is "one all-comprehending unity, the acceptance of one principle by which everything is governed," so that there "must be stability and regularity ruling over everything." That principle and ruling power is not man's capricious will, but "the unity and stability of God's decree."² The biblical (Calvinistic) doctrine of God forms the foundation of all creation and all history. Standing on the eternal counsel of God, this foundation provides the basis for the view that the universe is existing and developing according to God's foreordained plan. That one principle of the sovereign will of God stands antithetically to the Arminian ideas of chance, deistic dualism, contingent thought and emergency plans. A Calvinistic epistemology requires a broad, all-embracing interpretation of God's creation and of all reality, "refusing the scientific name to whatsoever investigator dare not unroll the colors of

his own banner, and does not show emblazoned on his escutcheon in letters of gold the very principle for which he lives, and from which his conclusions derive their power."³

Science, according to the Affiliation includes not only mathematics, engineering, medicine, physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology and geology, but also sociology and the so called "social sciences." Here caution is needed. As the editor of the Affiliation warned, "There are as many caricatures of science in the Christian community as there are of Christianity in the scientific community. He [the Christian scientist, RCH] is responsible for building an understanding of the differences between pseudo-science, science and scientism."⁴ This may also apply to the so called "social sciences," which do not rank with the technical sciences. Nor do we believe they developed out of the academic world. The origin of the term "social science," if checked, will lead through a most intriguing history.⁵ Over a hundred years ago the term was devised by self-styled "experts." "In the *International Encyclopedic Dictionary* (1897) the observation is made that 'Comte [August Comte . . . 1798-1857] may rightfully be claimed as having created *Social Science*.' However, since Comte was secretary to Saint-Simon from 1818 to 1824 it can be reasonably deduced that he acquired the term 'social science' from his master. The gist of Saint-Simon's socialist system included much . . . in the form of modern communism and fascism."⁶ Among notables who initiated and spread socialist ideas by way of "social science" were Horace Greely, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ralph Waldo Emerson.⁷

Another eye-catching term bombarding us on all sides is the one in the words "Judaean-Christian." "It is historically true that to a large extent the development of science in the Western world has close links with the perspective on the world derived from the Judaean-Christian faith. It is the emphasis on the objective rational reality of the natural world that gave rise to the philosophical presuppositions that nurtured science. It is the Judaean-Christian emphasis on the value of the individual and the value of work that fostered the industrial revolution and the development of scientific technology."⁸ This term may simply refer to the fact that Christ and the first Christians were Jews, or to the word *Jew* in its best sense, *praise* to God, or to the truth that anyone is a Jew who knows circumcision of heart (Rom. 2:28f). The meaning then is that the

only true Jew is the true Christian. There is then no more reason for speaking of Judaeo-Christian religion than to speak of Abrahamic-Christian or Davidic-Christian religion. The term "Judaeo-Christian heritage," for example, is certainly not Pauline, since he had enough trouble with the Judaizers than to deliberately confuse the church world with such a semantic device. Not this term, nor any other that applies to Christ, has its source in rabbinical speculation. The teaching of Jesus, as He made plain, was always antithetical to Judaism. When He said, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy'" He referred to Judaism. But when He said, "I say unto you, 'Love your enemies'" (Mt. 5:43f), He inculcated distinctively Christian principle. To John the Baptist multitudes went out from "all Judaea . . . but when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?'" (Mt. 3:5, 7). John did not think that his religion had any connection with Judaism. There was nothing in common between John or Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees, on the ground of anything Judaeo-Christian, so that rapport or reconciliation might be attempted from either side. The antithetical teaching of Jesus denies that our religion is Judaeo-Christian. "Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:20). The term has a rather ecumenical and evolutionary ring to it. It is as though "Heathenism was humanity upon its face in despair. Judaism was humanity upon its knees, hoping, praying and prophesying. In Christ, for the first time in history, humanity stood upon its feet."⁹ But humanity in Christ has always stood upon the promises of the covenant since the protevangelium.

Another interesting article in the journal relates to a joint project of World Vision and a school of Fuller Seminary known as MARC, Missions Advanced Research and Communication Center, in Monrovia, California. MARC is a data processing center which utilizes an IBM 360 computer, model 30. For more detail, see a former recent *Standard Bearer* article, "A Missionary Movement." For the operation of a computer systems socio-religious research center for Protestant Christian organizations the following are needed: sociologists, social anthropologists, systems engineers, computer an-

alysts, information theorists, operational managers and, yes, theologians. Note where this staff list begins and where it ends. The terms "sociologist," "social sciences," "social anthropology," "statistical sociology" are imposing titles which tend to so overawe the average person as to cause him to bow before "experts" at home in such a complicated field. They would lead us to believe that now all the arts and sciences, including history, geography, economics and law, are to be classified under "social sciences." Sociology, a pseudo-science, the brain-child of Claude Henri Saint-Simon and his collaborator Auguste Comte, has forced its way into general acceptance everywhere, including the universities, where it did not originate.¹⁰ Personal investigation of this field should reveal under the masquerade of harmless sounding labels, New Thought and other interesting specimens of poison. But what is the express purpose of MARC? It is the "giving of every man and woman in the world an opportunity to say 'yes' to Jesus Christ." This is the Pelagian-Arminian idea that spiritually dead man, who ever since the Fall has said 'no' to God, has the innate power to say 'yes' to Him. It implies that man has the power of contrary choice. It implies that given the opportunity and refusing it, it had been better not to have been given it. It denies election and the fact that God will save a given chosen one, even though he may never have had such an opportunity (offer) or may have refused a hundred of them.

There is also in this issue of the journal a fine article on the biblical term *firmament* (Heb., *raqia'*) under the title, "The Three-Storied Universe." Using the critical faculty as a sanctified sieve, the journal is recommended.

1 A. Kuyper, *Calvinism*, Eerdmans, 1947, p. 113.

2 *ibid.*, p. 114

3 *ibid.*, p. 141

4 *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*, March 1969, p. 6

5 This may be traced fully in the Veritas Foundation's *The Great Deceit—Social Pseudo-Sciences*, (1964), West Sayville, New York.

6 *ibid.*, p. 57

7 *ibid.*, p. 58

8 *Journal of the A.S.A.*, March 1969, p. 7

9 John B. Koehne, in "News & Notes," quoted in *Old Faith Contender*, July 1969, p. 189.

10 *The Great Deceit*, pp. 3-6, 45

Let the minister feel the heavy obligation that rests upon his shoulders, when he is called to instruct the youth of the covenant, to be a minister of the Word of God unto them! He is called "to feed the lambs"! A poor minister is he who is inclined to neglect this important part of his calling, who is tired (lazy, I should say), when the time is there to meet his classes, who makes as little as possible of this work and dismisses his classes as soon as he possibly dares to save his face before the congregation. He is unfaithful to his high calling, a betrayer of the Church of Christ to the devil, unworthy of his title: V.D.M.

The Standard Bearer, VII, p. 512

From Holy Writ

The Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. A. Lubbers

OUR HOPE DIRECTED TO CHRIST'S RETURN WITHOUT SIN — Hebrews 9:27, 28

Christ came to carry away our sins outside of the camp. He came to carry away the sins of many. Thus Isaiah had foreseen Him in the prophetic word from afar. (Isaiah 53:12) Thus He is described as the Man of sorrows, as one who is acquainted with grief. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. But this He will do only "once." He did this once at the consummation of the ages. And in this *one act* all things in heaven and on earth are united in Him. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things. (Ephesians 1:10; 4:10. Cf. Psalm 68:18)

Now Christ will return from heaven a "second time." This time he will not return by being born from a woman, coming under law. (Galatians 4:4, 5) He will return as the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven and with great glory. He will return with the ten thousands of His angels and saints, His holy ones, to judge the quick and the dead. He will return, as the angels spoke to the apostles, "in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." That will be the pattern. It will be a glorious return in which the Son of God is on the clouds. And every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced Him! Such is the general testimony of the Scriptures.

The point which the writer singles out here in Hebrews concerning Christ's return is the element that this return shall "be without sin." That it will be without sin, means, as the context shows, that Christ shall not come the second time as he came the first time. Concerning the first coming of the Savior the writer had taught his readers in Hebrews 2:14 "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Thus was the first coming of Christ. But the second time the Lord Jesus will not need to come once more to destroy him that had the power of death. He will come the second time to take his people home and to fulfil the will of the Father, that not one of those given Him perish, but that He may raise them up in the last day.

Thus is the plan of God unfolded.

It is thus that Cross and crown are united!

Each must be in its own place in history. The Cross

and the atonement in the end of the ages. And the return of Christ is the final period of history, when all is come to pass. We now live between the cross and the final return of Christ. That will be His Parousia, when the tabernacle of God shall be with man.

And this plan of God is depicted in the life of every man which is born from women.

It is as follows: It is appointed unto a man once to die and afterwards the judgment! That is the order. Whether this judgment be an acquittal at the judgment-seat of God, or whether it be final and irrevocable condemnation, the truth is: It is appointed to a man once to die, and afterwards the judgment. Here there is no return to this life after the appointed time of dying is come. The life's history of a man has then come to a close. There is not such a thing as a "second chance" as spoken of by the hypothetical universalist. This is also the death-blow to the Romish teaching concerning purgatory.

Thus also there is something very irrevocable in the order of the historical moments of Christ's suffering. When he shall have given his soul an offering for sin, he shall see His seed. It is the relation of seed-time and harvest-time, each in its own order. The first time Christ came to bear the sins of many; the second time he comes without sin. The cross of Christ will be raised up nevermore.

That is our hope. It is the hope of Israel which gives rest to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in their grave of Machpelah. It is the hope of the coming of the Lord from heaven with the sound of the archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet! He will then come not to remove our sins, but he will come to perfect our salvation. Fact is, that he will be made visible, manifested in all the glory of the saving work of His first coming. This will be the revelation of Jesus Christ, and of the glory of God in all the saints in the New Jerusalem. It will be our entering into the true and heavenly tabernacle which was not made with hands. This will be the time when all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and when all the firstborn Sons, the Israel of God, shall forever dwell with God; He shall be their God and they shall be His people. And God shall be all in all!

THE ALL-DETERMINING WILL OF GOD CONCERNING

PERFECT SALVATION — Hebrews 10:1-10

The Old Testament Scriptures have various names by which they are called. Sometimes they are called

simply "the Law," and then again "the Law and the Prophets." Sometimes the Scriptures are identified with the Holy Ghost and we read "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice . . ." (Hebrews 3:7)

Whereas the books in old time were in the form of a roll or scroll, the Old Testament Scriptures are designated as the "Volume of the book," and this refers then to the entire Old Testament Scriptures, thirty-nine books of the volume. These are the accepted canonical Scriptures. They are the rule of faith for the church of the time of the apostles and of Christ, and they are the last court of appeal for the church of God in the times of the writer of Hebrews and, therefore, the convincing testimony of the Holy Ghost for the believers, called the Hebrews.

Now it is the teaching here in this passage that two things are very evident. In the first place, we are told that the "law" has in it an innate inability to perfect those who came to sacrifice in the Old Testament Tabernacle. The writer to the Hebrews had pointed this out earlier in this book. The "law" was made after the pattern of the heavenly. It was not the very heavenly and the true temple itself. (Hebrews 8:5, 11; 9:9) The deepest reason is not that "the law" is impotent due to sin. That too is true. (Romans 8:1-4) However, here the reason is that God did not "will" such a sacrifice to remove sins. This gospel-fact the writer had pointed out earlier in Hebrews 2:9, 10 in the well-known words, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." Such is the deepest, the most profound theological reason why God disavowed the "law" as a means for perfecting (*teleioosai*). For this perfecting, although it includes our sanctification from the guilt and pollution of sin, refers to a different notion. It refers to the full development of God's plan and purpose concerning his temple, His covenant with man. The covenant must not and cannot be perfected with man in the way of "the law."

God did not will it!

The law could not bring about the perfection of the promised salvation!

It is God's all-determining will as contained in the volume of the book!

THE LAW A MERE SHADOW OF GOOD THINGS TO COME — Hebrews 10:1-5

The writer to the Hebrews is here speaking of the

yearly sacrifices which must be brought to the temple on the great day of atonement. The "law" concerning the offerings and sacrifices on the great day of atonement we find in Leviticus 16. This was the very epitome of all the sacrifices of the Old Testament law. But even this was not desired by the Lord, as we noticed above.

The law was a mere "shadow." It was not the "body," the image of the things itself. It was a mere shadow, a dim outline representing the things to come. Hence, they were merely parabolic, symbolical acts. The goat and the bullock died. But they did not die by their "will." It was a death on the part of the victim, which did not understand the nature of its own death. And it died, too, with the unwillingness of the brute beast that struggles to live. The sacrificial victim did not really bring a sacrifice to God. It did not come to do the will of God, and to love God, His righteousness and justice. The victim did not bring about satisfaction for sin, and, therefore, could not expiate our guilt !

Christ came to do exactly that when he came to bear away the sins of many. He came to destroy sin, and He did. For His is not a mere shadow sacrifice, but it is the real sacrifice acceptable to God.

Had these sacrifices in the day of atonement in the Old Testament taken away of guilt and sin they would not have been repeated yearly.

But now their very repetition is of such a nature that we do not simply remember that we are sinners, but the very sacrifices *remind us* that we are still in sin. It reminded the one who brought the sacrifices under Aaron that their conscience was not purified. The worshipper was conscience-stricken by his sins, that is, he stood in judgment with God as one whose sins were not yet atoned. And so his conscience drove him to the temple. He did not yet stand in the liberty of the sons.

What a terrible plight to live under! Never could the "law" remove sin and guilt. They were all weak and beggarly elements. Yes, it was keeping of days, months, years, sabbaths, new moons, etc., but these ordinances and the keeping of the same were all to no avail of themselves.

Small wonder that the cry arose: How long, O Lord, and let it repent Thee concerning Thy people!

But there is hope: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone that believeth, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For there is no difference. And this is evident from the law and the prophets which loudly proclaim a righteousness of God which is without law. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We are not saved by works of law, nor by the sacrifices of bulls and goats. We are saved solely by Him who said: Behold, I am come to do thy will, O God!

Contending for the Faith

THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

THE THIRD PERIOD — 730-1517 A.D.

PROTESTANT DOCTRINE OF SIN

ACCORDING TO CALVIN

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article, we called attention to the fact that the Word of God does not separate the things that are present and earthly from the things that are eternal, and surely teaches us to view them in the light of each other. And we maintain that this is also the position of Calvin.

It must be maintained that, although the prosperity of the wicked constituted a problem for Calvin, nevertheless he sought its solution by maintaining that the Lord shows the wicked temporal mercy, but he also attempts to solve the problem in the light of eternity and by maintaining that the Lord is God. In connection with the manifestation of God, one reads repeatedly that thereby the wicked are rendered inexcusable. We read this repeatedly throughout Book I of his Institutes. But, if we wish plain language that "Common Grace" fulfills the curse, and renders the wicked inexcusable before God, then we should note what we read in III, 25, 9:

How is it, then, that God not only "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good," but that, for the accommodations of the present life, his inestimable liberality is diffused in the most copious abundance? Hence we see, that things which properly belong to Christ and his members, are also extended to the impious; not to become their legitimate possession, but to render them more inexcusable. Thus impious men frequently experience God's beneficence in remarkable instances, which sometimes exceed all the blessings of the pious, but which, nevertheless, are the means of aggravating their condemnation.

This is plain language. And also when Calvin writes about those temporal gifts for the wicked which they share with the godly in God's covenant, we read the same thought, as in III, 2, 11.

And finally we note that the church of the present day refuses to speak of this purpose, because, so they declare, we have nothing to do with it. Calvin always ends in the doctrine of God's sovereign election, in an essential distinction between the Church and the World, and his common grace is the means to render the wicked inexcusable and to increase his judgment. In this Calvin does not remain silent. Calvin's common grace was a peculiar phenomenon in this natural life. God's grace is, according to him, exclusively particular and reserved only for the people of God.

Having concluded what Calvin has to say about Common Grace, we now wish to call attention, specifically, to the doctrine of sin as occurring in the writings of the reformer. He writes on this subject in Book II, chapters 1-3, of his Institutes.

He begins by calling attention to the old adage, which strongly recommends to man the knowledge of himself. He considers it shameful for man to be ignorant of himself. But then Calvin immediately calls attention to the preposterous use which some philosophers have made of this adage, and we quote, I, 1, 1:

For while they exhort man to the knowledge of himself, the end they propose is, that he may not remain ignorant of his own dignity and excellence; nor do they wish him to contemplate in himself any thing but what may swell him with vain confidence, and inflate him with pride.

This statement may well be considered the key-note of what the reformer has to say about the subject of sin. He states that man's knowledge of himself consists of two things: first, he must consider what was bestowed upon him as his creation, and, secondly, he ought to contemplate his miserable condition since the fall of Adam, the sense of which will tend to destroy all boasting and confidence, overwhelm him with shame and fill him with real humility.

One might almost conclude that Calvin wrote the following with his eye upon present conditions, establishing the truth that, while conditions may vary and change outwardly, issues and principles remain the same throughout the ages, so that we need not doubt what the reformer's position would have been had he lived today (II, 1, 3):

For, according to carnal apprehension, a man is thought to be well acquainted with himself, when, confiding in his own understanding and integrity, he assumes a presumptuous boldness, incites himself to the duties of virtue, and, declaring war against vice, uses his most strenuous endeavours to adhere to what is fair and honourable. But he, who inspects and examines himself by the rule of the Divine judgment, finds nothing that can raise his mind to a genuine confidence; and the more fully he has examined himself, the greater is his dejection; till, entirely discarding all confidence, he leaves himself no ability for the proper conduct of his life.

Having written this, the reformer, continuing in the

same paragraph, calls the attention of the reader to man's original condition and of that from which man is *wholly* departed, the viewing of which should confound him and almost annihilate him. What would have been Calvin's position were he living today, witnessing the church's social gospel (and I refer to the reformed church world of today), the church's efforts toward social improvement and the betterment of this world, all taking place in the Name of Christ, the King of His church, and as seeking the establishment of His Kingdom? What would be his reaction while witnessing the terrible defection from the truth, the ruthless trampling under foot of the very fundamentals of the Word of God, the corrupting of the truth and the denial of the infallibility of the Scriptures? How violently he would react and protest against the present day reducing of Genesis 1-3 to a myth, the attack upon the virgin birth and the miracles of our Lord! How he would cause his voice to be heard against the social gospel of today, the identifying of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ with a kingdom consisting of warring against poverty, social injustices and racial inequalities, and all this taking place without the cross of Calvary! Indeed, circumstances may and do vary, but principles and fundamental issues remain the same throughout the ages.

Calvin, in his doctrine of sin, maintained the Scriptural doctrine of original sin. Incidentally, he connects all the present sin and misery with the sin of Adam. This, of course, is well-known. He would have viewed with horror the position taken by many in the reformed church world of today, that Scripture's account of the fall of our first parents in Paradise is a myth, that Adam and Eve were not the first people, that sin, therefore, never entered this world as set forth in the first book of the Bible. He maintains Scripture's account of the fall, is unalterably opposed to the teaching of Pelagianism which would maintain that Adam only ruined himself and that his sin did not injure his descendants. He writes, II, 1, 5:

This is that hereditary corruption which the fathers called *original sin*; meaning by sin, the depravation of a nature previously good and pure. . . . There is certainly no ambiguity in the confession of David, that he was shapen in iniquity, and in sin his mother conceived him. . . . Every descendant, therefore, from the impure source, is born infected with the contagion of sin; and even before we behold the light of life, we are in the sight of God defiled and polluted. For "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" The book of Job tells us, "Not one."

Calvin defines original sin and sets forth the terrible extent of it in II, 1, 8 and we quote the following:

To remove all uncertainty and misunderstanding on this subject, let us define original sin. It is not my intention to discuss all the definitions given by writers; I shall only produce one, which I think

perfectly consistent with the truth. Original sin, therefore, appears to be an hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of the soul, rendering us obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls "works of the flesh." . . . These two things therefore should be distinctly observed: first, that our nature being so totally vitiated and depraved, we are, on account of this very corruption, considered as convicted and justly condemned in the sight of God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and purity. . . . Nevertheless we derive from him, not only punishment (original guilt, H.V.), but also the pollution to which the punishment of justly due. . . . And therefore infants themselves, as they bring their condemnation into the world with them, are rendered obnoxious to punishment by their own sinfulness, not by the sinfulness of another. For though they have not yet produced the fruits of their iniquity, yet they have the seed of it within them; even their whole nature is as it were a seed of sin, and therefore cannot but be odious and abominable to God. . . . The other thing to be remarked is, that this depravity never ceases in us, but is perpetually producing new fruits, those works of the flesh, which we have before described, like the emission of flame and sparks from a heated furnace, or like the streams of water from a never-failing spring. Wherefore those who have defined original sin as a privation of the original righteousness, which we ought to possess, though they comprise the whole of the subject, yet have not used language sufficiently expressive of its operation and influence. For our nature is not only destitute of all good, but is so fertile in all evils that it cannot remain inactive. Those who have called it *concupiscence* have used an expression not improper, if it were only added, which is far from being conceded by most persons, that everything in man, the understanding and will, the soul and body, is polluted and engrossed by this *concupiscence*; or, to express it more briefly, that man is of himself nothing else but *concupiscence*.

This is Calvin's doctrine of original sin, original guilt and original pollution. He is unalterably opposed to the heresy of Pelagianism which he calls profane, a devilish delusion and a teaching of consummate impudence. He includes in this original corruption also the children, and declares that their whole nature is as it were a seed of sin and that it therefore cannot but be odious and abominable to God. And he concludes with the observation that our nature is not only destitute of all good, but that it is so fertile in all evils that it cannot remain inactive. Everything in man, the understanding and the will, the soul and body, is polluted and engrossed by this *concupiscence*; or, to express it more briefly, man of himself is nothing else than *concupiscence*. And so Calvin also remarks that sin has possessed all the powers of the soul, since Adam departed from the fountain of righteousness. And he also

declares that man is so totally overwhelmed, as with a deluge, that no part is free from sin and that therefore whatever proceeds from him is accounted sin, even as

Paul says that all the affections or thoughts of the flesh are enmity against God, and therefore death.

In His Fear

Fear For The Future

Rev. John A. Heys

Fear is here!

And though we wanted it otherwise, we brought it with us into the new year.

Putting up a new calendar, calling the month by a different name, and the year by another number does not take away the fears we had in the year that is gone by with startling swiftness.

In fact, the very fact that we have to call the year by a larger number simply means that we are a year closer to the day of our death. And the thought of that death is what gives us fear and many an anxious moment. Did not the author of the epistle to the Hebrews write that Christ will "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage?"

We have not in the year gone by slowed down this process which brings us to the grave and to a confrontation with the God Whose we are and Whom we have not served with that diligence which is required. And nothing in the past has assured us that we will not meet head on the Anti-christ, that man of sin, who will not allow us to buy or sell. We have not erected an iron curtain to block his approach from us and from our children. And though at times we look to the morrow because of some joy we expect to experience on that day, the joy is always overshadowed by what we know will follow.

In spite of the rosy picture that men try to paint, there is nothing to which men can point that will give true assurance. The unbeliever sees clearly enough that although we fought two wars to "end all wars," we have only produced an armament race with such dreadful weapons of destruction that the chills run down our backs with fear of what man is now able to do in a moment! And ironically enough, men *fight* their fellowmen in our streets to call for an end to fighting the enemy and stranger in another land.

Although we do not suffer at the moment, there is the fear of a serious food and water shortage in the years ahead. The population explosion has many serious-minded planners for the future worried about what we will eat and drink in the days when these children born today beget their children. And in our folly and unconcern we still continue to dig up our

rich soil for housing projects and transport rich soil from fields to insure a nice green lawn. Meanwhile, for years we have poured tons and tons of filth and sewage and poison into our rivers and lakes, killed off our fish and made it necessary to go farther and farther away from the cities for some usable water for our drinking purposes.

We have been so eager to get rid of our pesky mosquitoes and to harvest bumper crops of food that we have resorted to powerful insecticides to kill our flies and bugs and beetles. And in the process we have killed our birds which accounted for many other insects. We have destroyed the balance that God in His wisdom placed in the creature world. These insecticides have also drained into our creeks and rivers and lakes to contaminate the fish which our filthy waters did not kill. And we live in fear of cancer-forming or cancer-producing meats from fish but also from other beasts. We have created a wonderful world of confusion and contradiction for ourselves and our children.

Then, too, there is the ever spiralling cost of living to worry about with another series of strikes to boost the cost of the objects we need and intend to buy. We cannot make ends meet, so we strike and get more money to spend. But the consumer is not one step ahead. He has not caught up yet with the wages he lost during the strike before the manufacturer raises his prices to make up for the higher wages he now has to pay his help because of this strike. And so we end up with more money to spend for items that now cost more money to buy.

Psychiatrists, psychiatry, psychiatric hospitals and psychiatric counselling are all in ever-increasing demand. The trend is not away from these but towards more use of them. We cannot relax. Tensions mount. The problems increase without any actual solution.

The space program with its astronomical cost continues each year to demand a higher piece of the finances. We cannot afford it now; and we cannot afford either to drop it. It is costing the money that ought to be put to use upon the inhabitants of the earth and not on the craters of the moon. We better

first solve a few of our problems here below before we go so far away to create new problems there. But we cannot drop the whole program either. The sky used to be the limit of our spending, but now we have to raise the limit to Mars and some distant star. And yet we cannot back down after getting to the moon, because the consequences would be tragic for the economy. What an amount is invested in buildings and electronic equipment! What a vast number of men are employed in this whole program! And if we were to drop it — and there is no sense, now that we have gone to the moon, to phase it out gradually or partially — what a terrific unemployment situation we have created! No, we have to go on till we are ruined.

More seriously still, there are those inroads into the church-world and those vicious and subtle attacks upon the faith and spiritual lives of our children. With all the amazing media of communication and instruction today the approach is so subtle and appealing to our youth. Shall we not have fear for the future for them? They are exposed to so much more than we were when we were their ages. The pleasures and treasures of the world are so much closer to them and more easily available with automobiles, radio and television. They make more money so quickly as to be in a position to seek all these. Family life is disrupted so soon and in so many ways because of the complexity of our life.

And then there is also the whole church picture to strike fear into the heart of the serious, concerned child of God. Mergers continue to be realized. The enemy of the child of God, who would remain distinct with the distinct truth of God's Word, grows bigger and bigger, more powerful and still more powerful. And the heretics become bolder and bolder. The church begins to look and to sound more and more like the world. It is NOT a case of the world looking more like the church. The world is not trying to join the church; but it is in the church that wants to look like the world that it is declared that God is dead. Once again it is the case of the "sons of God" seeing "the daughters of men that are fair" and that these sons of God "took them wives of all which they chose." There is not anything in Christianity that the world wants; but there is so much in the world that many in the church want.

Fear for the future there is.

And fear for the future there must be. Only, let it be then the fear of the Lord. We cannot avoid seeing all the dangers in the world today. We are not blind to the trend all around us in the world today. We, because we believe the Word of God, can "see the day approaching;" and we know that because man has set himself on a course of opposition to the living God, he is on a collision course with the Almighty; and dread disaster is just ahead for him. But then, seeing all this with the natural eye and by the natural intellect, let us by all means look also with the eye of faith. Let the fear of

God be the fear which we have for the future. Then the mists will all roll away. Then we will see victory and a blessed future.

Let our fear for the future be the fear that looks back to Calvary, to the open and empty tomb, and to Christ seated at the right hand of God in heaven. Let the eye of faith be fixed on Christ, and our fear will not be one of terror and fright but of reverence and awe, of amazement and respect before the God of our salvation. We take all of our problems and cares into the new year; but let us by all means take Christ along with us into that year and into all the days of our life here below. Let us walk in the new year in faith, even as we walked throughout the old in that fear of the Lord, which is faith and trust in Him as the God of our salvation.

The fear of the Lord, or, if you will, faith in the God of our salvation, is not going to change circumstances around about us. If all men in the world would suddenly receive the gift of faith from God, there would be a new society, a new outlook, a new world-and-life view, a new approach to the old problems and a new dedication and consecration. And in the new Jerusalem we will not have the problems that we now have. There surely will be no fear of the criminal, nor fear for want of food and drink. Fear of war will be no more. And unemployment will be a forgotten word. No longer will we fear that the minds and hearts of our children will be corrupted. We shall have one gloriously large church, for the prayer of Christ that "they all may be one" will be fulfilled by God in the return of Christ and the destruction of all sinful flesh. But in this life, there will be no such universal and total conversion. And instead we are to expect that the church remains a little flock in the midst of a multitude that will continue their evil course, and be a threat to the lives of the children of God.

Besides, even in the life of the individual child of God there is no sudden removal of all his problems when he is converted. The converted drunkard, who has wasted his life and has a body full of aches and pains and permanent damage to his liver, heart, arteries, and entire digestive system is not going to be healed by his conversion and new walk of life. And God is not going to lift the curse off the face of this earth because we now believe in Him. That curse will remain till the day of Christ.

But faith will give us a different goal in life so that what now is such a dreadful loss and calamity to us does not disturb us and fill us with such fear and terror as it did in times gone by, never to return. And death does not seem such a terrible woe to the believer, because he sees it as his servant instead of his enemy. He sees it, not as the doorway to hell and its torments, but as the gateway to heaven and its glory. For by faith he sees victory over death and the grave in Christ. And he fears God rather than death which God con-

trols so perfectly.

And faith keeps him steadfast and unmovable in the mist of all the sorrows and disappointments that the flesh experiences in this life. Faith, and its handmaid of hope, keeps the child of God anchored in Christ in the midst of all the storms, so that he is not driven upon the rocks of despair and ruin. Faith makes him sing:

Jehovah is my light,
And my salvation near;
Who shall my soul affright,
Or cause my heart to fear?
While God my strength, my life sustains
Secure from fear my soul remains.

Indeed, have fear for the future. But let it be the

fear of the Lord which brings a peace that passeth all understanding and assures that all is well, even though for the flesh things go bad. For faith sees that all things without any exception work together for good to those that fear God. For the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those that fear Him, Psalm 103:17. And if that mercy is ALWAYS upon us and was upon us from everlasting and will be everlastingly, what can or will harm us? Have fear for the future, is my counsel to you. Have the fear of faith that sees a *glorious* future in the day of Christ.

We are a year closer.

May that fear of the Lord also be here and abide in us till that day arrives.

A Cloud of Witnesses

The Numbering of Israel

Rev. B. Woudenberg

And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

II Samuel 24:1

The Lord was angry with Israel. We don't know just when this was or what occasioned it; but it was evidently toward the end of the reign of David. And when we give it thought, it is not really surprising. The circumstances surrounding the rebellion of Absalom had done much to expose the weaknesses, not only of those personally involved, but of the whole nation. They had been so ready and willing to throw in their support to a young and attractive rebel without consideration of the fact that he was a transgressor of the fifth commandment, and that he was by no means the anointed of the Lord. They were not just rejecting their king: they were rejecting their God.

We are not told what the cause of this all was, but it is not hard to deduce. Israel under David had attained unto prosperity, and prosperity is always a particularly difficult thing to be able to take from a spiritual point of view. All through the judges it had been borne out. In times of prosperity the people most readily fell into sin, and only the sorrow of judgment would bring them back to repentance. The same thing had, in fact, happened to David personally. In the hardship of his youth he had scorned to walk in the sins into which he readily fell in the prosperity of his later life. And so it had happened with the people too. Having tasted the pleasure of earthly plenty, they were concerned more for their own well-being than with the service of their God. And the Lord was angered by them.

We read at this point in II Samuel 24, "And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." If we turn to the parallel passage in I Chronicles 21 we read, "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel." The two are not contradictory. They only bring out different aspects of God's way of dealing with His people.

Satan, of course, is the enemy and opponent of God and of His people. His whole goal is to disrupt and destroy God's purpose of grace with His chosen. But Satan in all of his wiles is still subject to God and His infinite, sovereign power. In His wisdom and greatness, God is able to take even Satan at his worst and use him for the accomplishment of his own purpose. In this instance it was undoubtedly to bring out the secret sins of David and of Israel and to purge them through the means of judgment.

That about which all of this developed was the matter of the numbering of the people. Again we do not know the details, but it would seem that someone appeared to influence David to make a numbering of his nation and so determine the total size of his potential fighting force.

It was not really such a strange thing that David decided to do. After all, every major fighting power customarily knew and boasted in the number of men that it could field. Moreover, there was good historical

precedent to point him in this direction. Had not Moses himself numbered the people of God two different times by very command from God? Why shouldn't he do the same?

Nevertheless, there was behind this a very subtle difference that reflected upon the moral value of what David was doing. It was Joab that detected this immediately. Although Joab in his blunt and forward manner was often offensive and sometimes in error, there was a basic honesty in the man which David had always appreciated and trusted. Moreover, Joab knew his king and master well, having seen David in all his strength and also in his weaknesses. No sooner had David called him and commanded, "Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even unto Beersheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people," than Joab detected that something was wrong. This thing arose from David's baser nature and not from his best. It was of carnal pride and not spiritual strength. It was a sin akin to that which Hezekiah would someday commit when he would in that same city take in the messengers of the Babylonians to show them all of his wealth and all of his strength. Such are sins which unbelievers can never understand; but the righteous do. It was a contradiction of David's own words in Psalm 20:7, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD Our God."

Joab saw this, and, being the man that he was, he would not be silent. Directly he responded to David's command, "The LORD make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord's servants? why then doth my lord require this thing? why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel?"

As it was, however, Joab no longer maintained the influence over David which he had had before the death of Absalom. Although he had maintained his position as head of the army by sheer force of character, he was not able to gain the ear of the king as in former years. David merely ignored his protest and reiterated the command.

For nine months and twenty days Joab and his servants circulated throughout the land of Israel and Judah counting every man they could find capable of participating in battle. It was a disgusting occupation to him, to the point where he did not even finish it but stopped before he had included the Levites or the tribe of Benjamin. (It is perhaps for this reason that we have a difference between the totals as given in Samuel and in Chronicles: the one might contain his actual count and the other an over all estimate.) In the end, however, he did give to the king a list of figures telling him of his strength.

But to the king it brought very little of the satisfaction which he had expected. Instead it was just the opposite. Once again there closed in upon his soul the

dark shadow of despondency and guilt. We do not know how long it was in developing, but gradually David came to realize that Joab had been right and that he had committed a great sin against his Lord and God.

At last, David could endure it no longer. We have no indication that anything but his own feelings of guilt brought him to this point of repentance; but when he went to the Lord he went with all of his heart. In sorrow he cried out, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."

It would seem unlikely though that, even at this, David did not realize the real seriousness of that which he had done. Behind his action there was a motivation, an attitude of heart shared by the whole nation which was utterly abhorrent to the Lord their God. This was brought out in His answer to David's prayer.

The Lord came to Gad, the prophet with whom David commonly consulted at that time, and said, "Go and say unto David, Thus saith the LORD, I offer thee three things; choose thee one of them, that I may do it unto thee."

So Gad appeared before David, and these were the choices that he gave: "Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in the land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee? or that there be three days' pestilence in the land? now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me."

Suddenly it struck home to David. That which he had done had not been just a personal thing with personal responsibility. It involved the whole nation. His action had been performed in his capacity as king and for it the whole nation would have to suffer the results. It is something that every leader must learn always to bear in consideration. One is never as free and independent in life as we like to tell ourselves when our hearts are set intently on the ways of sin.

One can only imagine how grievously David struggled with the problem, and the seriousness with which he bore it can be seen from the answer which he finally gave, "I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." It was an answer filled with spiritual discernment, and in the end it would prove to be the wisest also.

Had David been a hard and wicked man, that which he had chosen would not have been so difficult. He had chosen the three days of pestilence, too short a time for any of his enemies to take advantage of him, and it appears that the pestilence did not even touch his own body or even particularly his own family. It was the people it devastated. From one end of the land to the other people came sick and began to die in vast numbers. Thousands upon thousands were immedi-

ately stricken. Soon the reports began to come into the palace from all corners, telling of the sickness, the pain, the death, the sorrow and the anguish. And each report was to David as that of a death in his own family. He was the shepherd who loved his sheep; and to hear of their suffering because of his sin was even worse than if he had been the one to perish. Slowly, so slowly, the moments and hours passed by, filled with the anguished cry of suffering, and each was as an age to the great king who had brought this upon his people. But all he could do was to huddle with his elders in sackcloth and ashes while crying to the Lord for mercy.

Neither was David's hope misdirected. At that very moment when it seemed the whole nation would perish before the pestilence was finished, there appeared an angel, hovering over Jerusalem and holding, as it were, the pestilence in abeyance. It was not removed; but it was kept from destroying as it seemed it would.

It was then that David saw his opportunity. He turned to God in prayer and cried out, "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued." It was a beautiful prayer, anticipating in truth the prayer with which the final Son of David would commit himself to pay for the sins of all Israel.

But the time for the fulfillment of God's purpose was not ready. It would have to wait until the fulness of time. Meanwhile, however, it could be set forth in anticipation through type and through shadow.

In answer to David's prayer God sent the prophet Gad to him again with this commandment, "Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite." It was at the altar only that God's mercy could be perfectly accomplished.

Contribution

Not By Human Might Nor By Government Force

We are grateful to our God and our Lord Jesus Christ that the Editor of *The Standard Bearer* has so ably defended the matter of parental financing of our Christian schools over against those who are misleading many Christian parents sinfully to transfer this parental duty and responsibility to government in part or in whole. Surely this issue is of such great importance and significance for the spiritual welfare of our schools that we should all become rightly concerned to do the will of God in this question.

These false slogans, such as "fair share", "justice", "educational freedom", may fool some parents; but these should not deceive those who know the Scriptures and the commandments of Christ. We ought to be very careful not to be so influenced, so that we also begin to say that if we can get this mis-called "fair share" of tax money without government control over the instruction of our covenant children, then we should take it. It is to be feared that if our Protestant Reformed parents talk this way, we have already lost the fight. Even if this should be the case, it would still be wrong and sinful to transfer this duty to government. We surely will succumb to the lure of easy money if we do not have the more solid foundation of God's word to stand upon.

There cannot be any such thing as "fair share", "justice", "educational freedom" when such proposals are based upon wrong principles. When we wrongly seek or take government taxes for our schools we say

in effect that the public school plan for financing their schools is right and good and that our Christian schools should also adopt this method of financing. But how can we do this when we have always maintained that the public school system is not according to God's commandments? Our God has not commanded government to administer and to finance the education of children. This duty and responsibility has been given to parents — not government. Parents must instruct their children in the home and family, and our Christian schools must always and ever be considered as the extension of home training and as an aid to parents. Teachers in the school act and instruct only in the name, and by the authority, of the parents. Financing of these Christian schools is as much the duty and responsibility of parents as is the instruction of the children. These two cannot be separated. In disobeying God's commandments by transferring the duty of financing Christian schools to government, we may not and should not expect God's blessing on the instruction the children receive. It is *man* who maintains that government should provide and finance schools for children. This is nothing other than sinful, devilish rebellion against God and His commandments. When parents send their children to public schools, they disobey God and Christ; and when we as parents accept government financing of our schools in part or in whole, then we too share in this disobedience.

When we in humble trust in Christ and from the love

of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit establish our own Christian schools and finance them as we should, we are a testimony for righteousness and a judgment of God against those who wrongly insist that government owned and operated public school systems are right. When we would accept government financing of our schools, our testimony for the commandments of God would be destroyed. We would lose our witness in this world for the truth of the holy Gospel that God saves His covenant people so that they are enabled to do his good commandments. It is not by human power nor by government force that we obey the commandments of Christ, but by His Spirit. How disgraceful to Christ if we should say with those that seek to have government take over the financing of their Christian schools – that if this government money is not received, the Christian schools will soon

be closing their doors. How shameful to talk this way! How dishonoring to Christ who sits on the throne at the right hand of God the Father in all his kingly power and majesty! He is a million times more powerful and able than any earthly government. Let us in all child-like humility and faith put all our trust in our glorious and wonderful Savior, and may we count it but a mild form of persecution that we are sinfully forced by government to pay taxes for non-Biblical and non-Christian public-school systems. Our blessed Lord Jesus said: "Ye are the light of the world". This is also so in the instruction of children in parental Christian schools. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven," (Matt. 5:16).

H. Tilma
Grand Rapids, Mich.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis East will meet, Dr. Wednesday, January 7, 1970 at 9 A.M. in the Southeast Prot. Reformed Church. Consistories will reckon with this in the appointment of their delegates.

M. Schipper, S.C.

NOTICE

There will be an Office Bearer's Conference January 6, at 8:00 P.M. in the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church.

Prof. H. Hanko will speak on the subject: "In the light of Article 25 of the Church Order, may we accept government aid, such as Medicaide or Medicare?"

John Dykstra, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

On November 28, 1969, it pleased the Lord to call home unto Himself our beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather

MR. JOHN KARSEMEYER

at the age of 84 years.

"For we know that if our earthly house of his tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, and house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." II Cor. 5:1.

Mr. Wm. Karsemeyer
Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Karsemeyer
Mr. James Karsemeyer
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Karsemeyer
6 grandchildren
3 great-grandchildren

But what is the teaching of our modern schools, colleges and universities? What is the message that is delivered from the modern pulpit, by men that pretend to be ministers of the Word of God unto the flock of Jesus Christ? What has been done with the Holy Scriptures? They have been discredited long ago and men of science (and who dares to remain erect when the trumpet calls us to bow down before its god?) have assured the masses that it is no more the authoritative Word of God than any other book. What has been done with the truth of creation? It has been substituted by the hypothesis of evolution, a mere philosophy of man. What has become of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of His people, Who shed His lifeblood for our sins, Who arose for our justification, Who ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God; Who will come again on the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and the dead? He has been transmuted by these modern wise men, before whom the masses bow in fear, into the good man of Galilee, a great teacher, a worthy example, a martyr for his cause, into anything but the Saviour of men! The virgin-birth is denied, the atonement is called blood-theology, the resurrection is spiritualized into thin air, the doctrine of the second coming is changed into that of man's improvement of the modern world.

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News From Our Churches

December 15, 1969

It's pretty evident, from a quick look over all the bulletins, that we have several vacant churches in our denomination. All our churches are, sooner or later, affected by classical appointments. Rev. C. Hanko had quite a distance to travel for his two week appointment in Hull! Our seminary (students, that is) is certainly made aware of the minister shortage. They're getting some valuable experience rather early in their training. As we mentioned before, first-year Seminarymen Wayne Bekkering and Marvin Kamps have already occupied pulpits. From Southeast we read, "The congregation of Southeast Church counts it a privilege to be the first to hear them, and assures them of her prayers that the Lord will strengthen and encourage them as they bring to us the Word of edification." And we find that two students are also conducting the catechism classes at Southwest during the absence of Rev. Lubbers. Two other students, Mr. Ron Van Overloop and Mr. Jim Slopsema went to Illinois on Sunday, December 14, to lead the worship services of our South Holland and Oaklawn congregations.

Speaking of vacant churches, Pella's days without an undershepherd are over. Rev. Kuiper has, according to Randolph's bulletin, "been led to accept the call from the congregation in Pella, Iowa." Randolph will call from a trio consisting of Revs. Engelsma, Kortering, and Van Baren.

Remember that Hudsonville's congregation decided against building an addition to their church? That, of course, necessitated a search for another solution to their problem. From their Dec. 14 bulletin—"anyone who is personally interested in a Protestant Reformed church in Jenison or Grandville is requested to sign a paper in the consistory room."

Following a request by the Jamaica Sub-Committee, many different groups in our churches have chosen to make contributions to aid in the traveling expenses of Jamaican ministers. The Sunday School of our church in Holland, Michigan, has decided to give \$150. And the Men's Society of that same church "is taking collections every second Monday for these Jamaican ministers. . . ." They need us, it seems. But it's also surely true that, as Rev. Lubbers put it in his farewell speech, "we need the spiritual exercise of loving them and sharing with them."

Mr. Meulenberg's slides and tape of Jamaica seem to be making the rounds—Michigan; Rock Rapids, Iowa;

Forbes, North Dakota; Randolph, Wisconsin; and, no doubt, that's not all. From Randolph's bulletin—"Let us gather with our children on this occasion, to see 'firsthand' what our offerings are being used for, and to hear the brethren there speak of our wonderful covenant God."

Several of our churches have "letter writing" schedules to make certain that our young men in uniform are not neglected. The Priscilla Society of First Church in Grand Rapids went a little further. On an insert in a November bulletin, they supplied the congregation with names, addresses, and *birth dates* of all the servicemen from that church. We quote from that insert: "We wish to remind each one of our congregation that these boys are far away, that they need, not only our prayers, but also a reminder from us that we *are* praying for them, that we *do* think of them, and that we wish them God's blessing wherever they are. . . . They will be more than happy to know that you are thinking of them. Are you?"

We've been sort of neglecting the schools, lately. How about a few excerpts from the November "Reflector", news bulletin of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Christian School. In an editorial on "The Christian Home and School", Mr. Lamm Lubbers, the school administrator, writes, "I believe that if the importance of these two spheres of influence could be weighed, the home would be found to leave a far more lasting mark than the school. . . . Christian instruction starts at home. . . . It is there that he learns his basic values—what he should strive for and why. . . . His attitude towards his neighbor and toward his God are implanted at home. The Christian school continues this instruction. . . . But values and attitudes are deep seated, and the school seldom changes these."

A complement to that is this quote from Martin Luther, used as a filler in Randolph's bulletin. "I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt."

These fillers are often the best parts of bulletins. Let's end with this from Augustine, found in a section of Southeast's bulletin called "Quiet Thoughts": "Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe."

D.R.D.