

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Meditation: Good Counsel For The Future

Editorials: Consistency, Thou Art A Jewel!

Willing To Come To Grips?

World Congress On Evangelism

Saul and David — Enemies

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D.V., on Wednesday, January 4, 1967, at 9:00 a.m. at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich. Consistories will kindly take note of this in the appointment of their delegates.

Rev. M. Schipper, Stated Clerk

MEDITATION—

Good Counsel For The Future

by 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

When you read this meditation, you will have entered into a new span of time. It will be the year of our Lord, 1967!

What this new year holds in it for each of us, only the Lord knows. He knows the end from the beginning! He planned and carefully laid out the scheme for all the ages. Surely also all the future is determined by

His wise and unchangeable counsel to its minutest details. He Himself hath declared: "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." But we know not the times, nor the things He has planned for our lives in the

year that is before us! In some respects, our entrance into this new year is like stepping into a great unknown!

The days in which we live already bring to men's hearts trepidation and perplexity; and the unescapable question concerning the unknown future can only add to the confusion and unrest!

We need counsel!

We need good counsel!

Good counsel for the future!

It is granted today, even in the world, whether men accept it or reject it, seek it or ignore it, that it is wise to have good counsel. The high school student is told at the beginning of the semester who his counselor is. The one who is troubled in soul is advised to see a psychiatrist for counseling. In homes where there is marital difficulty, advice is given to seek a counselor. The President will call in his advisors to counsel with them as to the future progress of the war and its possible cessation; the economic problems, such as inflation and the rising costs of living, etc. The business man and the farmer, the professional and the layman, all need advice; and if they are wise, they will seek it where it is best obtained.

The child of God also needs counsel!

Also as he enters into the unknown of 1967!

That good advice is given us in the words of our text!

* * *

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!

Trust in Jehovah!

That is, let all your confidence go in the direction of Him Who is your covenant God! To trust is to place confidence in someone or something, to set your hope on that object. Much the same idea is expressed in the middle part of the text, namely, to lean on, which means to repose confidence in or upon a substantial object. So that one who trusts looks away from himself and finds another or something else as an object upon which he relies.

Trusting is a principle element of faith! Faith is not only a certain, an assured knowledge, but also a hearty confidence. These two elements, though they may be distinguished, are always inseparably connected. You do not put your confidence in one whom you do not know. Therefore, shall we place our confidence upon one, we must first know him as a worthy object of trust.

Trusting is an activity of the heart!

The heart is the center of our spiritual, moral life! Out of the heart are all the issues of life: all our thinking, willing, and desiring. These all find their fountain and source in the center of our spiritual being, the heart. As man thinketh in his heart, so is he. All my outward actions, all the deeds of my body, find their motivation, their propelling force in the heart. Not only do I know the object of my trust with the spiritual, experiential knowledge of the heart, but also the confidence and implicit trust which I place

in that object has its source and fountain-head in that heart.

Trust with all thine heart!

O, it is possible that one does not place all his trust in its object. Sometimes we are double-hearted, and when this is so, our confidence is pulled apart in the direction of two or more objects of trust. And this situation can only bring with it mistrust and fear. Then confidence, complete confidence, is destroyed! Shall we obtain complete confidence, therefore, it must come from a heart that is single. The child of God is exhorted here to trust with his whole heart, not half-heartedly!

And let not that object of trust be our own understanding! Foolish that would be, indeed, when we need counsel, to then lean on, confide in, our own understanding! One who does this, clearly indicates that he is independent, not in need of help and advice. One who leans on his own understanding believes that he has great intelligence; he knows it all, and he needs not to be instructed! Moreover, leaning on our own understanding, that intelligent faculty of our mind, whereby we skillfully weigh and analyze things, has become darkness. The carnal mind which is enmity against God, no longer discerns correctly from an ethical point of view. Even the understanding of the regenerate man is not to be perfectly trusted. Indeed, it understands much. In principle it sees correctly, and as it is sanctified by the Spirit it is also to be trusted. But do not lean on it too confidently. For in the child of God the darkness of the old man of sin still is present. To will may be present, but how to perform that which he wills he does not often realize.

The only worthy object of trust is Jehovah thy God! Jehovah is the faithful One!

Faithful is He in respect to Himself; and faithful is He in respect to His own covenant people! What He promises He fulfills! His promises are YEA and AMEN in Christ Jesus!

Trust in Him Only!

* * *

In all your ways acknowledge Him!

In all your ways, is a figurative expression. One's way is his mode of life, the way he lives, and especially his lot, what he experiences in life. That the term appears in the plural evidently refers to the fact that life is made up of various departments. We have a way with our families. We have a way with our church. We have a way with our daily occupation. We have a way that relates to the world in which we live. We have a way with respect to the state, to the government, to the war, to the economic and social problems of our times.

Your ways, refers not to the ways of the ungodly, but the ways of the child of God; the child of God who has learned by grace to live antithetically, or shall we say, thetically in the midst of the world. He strives to live according to all the precepts of Jehovah his God. He lives out of the principle of regeneration, out of a heart that cannot sin because it is born of God. He lives from the principle that he loves God. He seeks the city which has foundations. He loves righteous-

ness, and strives to walk in sanctification. He seeks peace and pursues it. And because he so lives, he meets opposition. The antithesis surrounds him in all his ways. Even the flesh in which he dwells takes side with the enemies that oppose him.

Such are the ways of the child of God in the world, also in the world of 1967!

Therefore shall he walk safely, it is necessary that in all his ways he knows Jehovah!

That means, in all his ways he must discover Jehovah his God! Not merely does it mean that he sees Jehovah in all his ways. That, too, of course! But the meaning is deeper than that! It means that everywhere he goes, in whatever he does, and in all the experiences of life, Jehovah is his constant companion! When we acknowledge Him in all our ways, then we live in the spiritual consciousness that He holds us by the hand, and surrounds us with His love and tender care!

* * *

And this is the comforting promise Jehovah gives: I will direct your paths!

That means that He will make our paths straight!

Jehovah's paths are always straight, i.e., upright, good, never crooked and perverse. When He makes our paths straight, they coincide with His. Knowing Him in all our ways makes all our ways His ways!

Such is the promise that is given to those trusting in Jehovah!

The wicked and rebellious, the unbelieving and disobedient, always walk in crooked ways, that can only end in confusion, disappointment, and ultimately desolation.

The believer, on the other hand, who knows Jehovah his God, and then puts all his confidence in Him, and therefore discovers Jehovah in all his ways, and experiences His constant fellowship, finds his paths made straight!

Those trusting in Him shall not be ashamed!

The very trusting is His work in us to straighten us out within, the fruit of which will be seen also in the life we live, and on the paths we walk!

Therefore, beloved, commit thy ways unto Jehovah; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass!

And be sure not to lean on your own understanding!

EDITORIALS—

Consistency, Thou Art A Jewel!

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Although the statement that forms the caption of this editorial may not always be true (as, for example, when consistency involves being consistently wrong), it will nevertheless serve to express something of the intent of this editorial. For inconsistency one would not characterize as a jewel, — especially not inconsistency in ecclesiastical and doctrinal matters. And recent utterances in the official papers of the Christian Reformed Church betray an inconsistency which is far from commendable. One can have a degree of respect at least for the *consistency* of one who is consistently wrong. And one must certainly hold in high esteem and admiration the consistency of one who is consistently *right*. But how sorry is the sight of one who is inconsistent, who halts between two opinions, who attempts to straddle a fence, who talks double-talk.

On page 7 of *The Banner* (Nov. 25, 1966) Dr. John Bratt uses his department to sing the praises of Billy Graham, who "is a great man of God who is doing a magnificent work for Christ." Dr. Bratt supposedly does not want to minimize differences.

But he justifies his support of Graham as a taking "seriously the words of our Lord in Mark 9: 40: 'He that is not against us is for us.'" Meanwhile he asserts that he dissents "vigorously with those conservative Christian leaders who have recently denounced Billy Graham in sharp tones." And about this denouncing of Graham he writes: "That, to my mind, is doing despite to the cause of the gospel." Of course, if he were mindful of the full meaning of "doing despite to the cause of the gospel," he might just as well have applied to "those conservative Christian leaders" that other word of the Lord Jesus: "He that is not for me is against me." For this is surely the implication.

Meanwhile, Dr. Bratt *does* minimize the differences. If he did not do so, he would have to come to the conclusion that Billy Graham is indeed against the Christ of the Scriptures in his basic theology; and he would have to accuse Graham of "doing despite to the cause of the gospel."

For the editor of *The Reader Asks* states, first of all, that "it is true that Billy Graham does express

himself at times in an Arminianizing way." Then he goes on, very speciously (because Arminianism is not necessary to emphasize true responsibility), to excuse Graham's Arminianizing expressions by suggesting that these are only to make sure that man faces up squarely to his own duty and responsibility. In the second place, Dr. Bratt quotes some statements out of context to show, supposedly, that Graham can also express himself Calvinistically. He further alludes to Graham's view of total depravity, of Scripture, of Christ's divinity, of Christ's vicarious atonement, and of Christ's resurrection to show that "there is an affinity with us that is striking and encouraging and we can only conclude that he is a mighty man of God doing great things for Christ in our time."

Now either the doctor is not able to discern Arminianism when he reads it, — and he gives some evidence of this, judging from some of the quotations, — or he is deliberately playing down Graham's Arminianism for reasons best known to himself. For anyone who has read "World Aflame" knows that the one, underlying, recurrent theme in Graham's theology as set forth in that book is the false doctrine of Arminianism. To say the least, Bratt's statement about Graham expressing himself at times in an Arminianizing way would win first place as the understatement of the year! But when Bratt speaks of an affinity with us that is striking and encouraging, then one almost gets the impression that he tries to make Graham out for a staunch Calvinist. Graham's position on every one of the Five Points of Calvinism is that of thorough-going Arminianism. That he seems to maintain the doctrine of Scripture, of the deity of Christ, or of Christ's resurrection — this is nothing but broad-based Fundamentalism. And what, after all, does such Fundamentalism mean when its fundamental tenets are in practice denied by its other teachings? What does the doctrine of Scripture as inspired and infallible mean when one contradicts the plain teachings of Scripture? What does the doctrine of Christ's deity mean when this Christ Who is the Son of God is presented as impotent to save the sinner unless that sinner first asks Him?

But it was not my intention to debate about Graham's doctrine at this time: in my recent exchange with Dr. Jerome De Jong I demonstrated Graham's Arminianism rather in detail, especially with respect to the doctrine of total depravity and regeneration.

We were speaking of consistency and inconsistency.

I submit that Dr. Bratt's position in the article referred to is inconsistent with his vow in the Formula of Subscription to reject particularly the errors condemned by the Synod of Dordrecht and to be disposed to refute and contradict these and to "exert ourselves in keeping the Church free from such errors." Instead, of doing the preceding, Bratt praises Graham highly and by implication denies that Graham is a heretic who does despite to the cause of the gospel. Dr. Bratt's position is also inconsistent because the doctor happens to be on a committee which (for a Christian Reformed committee) rather severely condemns the rank Arminianism of Prof. Harold Dekker. It rather goes

beyond me when Graham is praised to the skies and Dekker, in Dr. Bratt's own church, is opposed.

But *The Banner* is also inconsistent.

For in the same issue of *The Banner* in a book review of "Billy Graham — The Pastor's Dilemma" I read: "This book will in no wise leave the reader complacent, but will help in rethinking our stand toward the Graham crusades and toward the ecumenical movement as a whole. Because of the ecumenical climate that prevails, we are so easily egged on to doctrinal compromise with the danger of making void the heart of God's Word: God's irresistible grace alone in the salvation of men. Is not this doctrine, so richly perfused in the Bible and also propounded by the Reformers, contradicted by Graham's emphasis on man's ability to make the right decision with regard to the kingdom of God?"

Certainly, the "perplexed Michigan couple" who sent their questions to Dr. Bratt must have been still more perplexed if they also read the book review by Jochem Vugteveen. In the face of such inconsistency, who must be believed?

Finally, the situation is complicated by *The Banner's* editorial for that same week, wherein Editor Vander-Ploeg, in connection with Bishop Pike's heresies, editorializes about "A heyday for heresy" and warns about sweeping differences under the rug and concludes: "Heresy may be having its heyday right now, but let's make no mistake about it; *the church that wants this heyday is sure to find that tomorrow will be its doomsday.*" To be sure, the editor does not refer in this connection to Billy Graham. But it fits. Translated it could read: "A Reformed church which supports the teaching and preaching of Billy Graham is committing ecclesiastical suicide."

But the following week's issue of *The Banner* further complicated the inconsistency.

For in it there is an article (scarcely a report) by the Rev. Henry J. Evenhouse about the World Congress on Evangelism, attended by several Christian Reformed ministers. To borrow an expression from Editor Vander Ploeg, that Congress was "a heyday for heresy," judging from the position papers published in *Christianity Today*. Especially the position paper by Dr. Harold Ockenga on "The Basic Theology of Evangelism" was thoroughly heretical. But about that World Congress, at which no soundly Reformed man should have felt at home, and which had as its leading lights such neo-evangelicals as Billy Graham and Carl Henry, there is no word of criticism in *The Banner*. The article is filled with high praise.

And Editor Haverkamp in *De Wachter*, (Dec. 6, 1966) adds to the inconsistency by means of a very deceptive statement. He also writes about the World Congress, and reports on "an interview" with "two of the representatives of our mission and evangelisation work, namely, Rev. Henry Evenhouse and Rev. Wesley Smedes." Just as in *The Banner*, so also in *De Wachter* there is not actually a report of what took place in this congress. In this connection, — although Editor Haverkamp does not relish unsolicited advice, — I would give him the friendly advice that he could serve

his readers better by giving a report on and a basic critique of the theology that prevailed at the World Congress, as exemplified in the position paper of Harold John Ockenga. But what disturbs me is the underlying assumption that this Congress was interested in the *pure preaching of the gospel*. This assumption appears in Rev. Haverkamp's article. For he writes: "*In verband met het bovenstaande moet ook vermeld worden dat sterke nadruk gelegd werd op de noodzakelijkheid van het paren aan zuivere verkondiging van het evangelie, het beleven van het evangelie in leven en dienstbetoon.*" (In connection with the above, it must also be mentioned that strong emphasis was laid upon the necessity of accompanying the pure preaching of the gospel with a witness of the gospel in life and service.) You see, the assumption in this statement is that the Congress stood for the pure preaching of the gospel. Mind you, for the most part the Congress means by the pure preaching of the gospel simply the gospel of Arminianism, and surely not the gospel purely preached according to the Reformed standards.

And thus, you have this picture. One warns against heresy's heyday. Another sounds off in favor of Billy

Graham. Still another recommends a book critical of Graham, and suggests that "our stand toward the Graham crusades" needs rethinking, characterizing Graham's gospel as making void the heart of God's Word, namely, God's irresistible grace alone in the salvation of men. Still others have high praise for a World Congress on Evangelism which was under Arminian leadership, and even suggest that said congress was interested in the pure proclamation of the gospel.

What a hodge-podge of inconsistency!

And how can the sheep who are supposed to be led by these shepherds be anything but confused?

And how could a synod possibly condemn the Arminianism of one of its seminary professors, — even supposing that a future synod will be strong enough to take such a stand, — except at the expense of hypocrisy?

Indeed! Consistency, thou art a jewel!

But in the case of the Christian Reformed Church that consistency is sorely lacking; and it has been lacking ever since the First Point of 1924 was adopted. That, after all, is the basic inconsistency in the entire hodge-podge of inconsistency pictured in this essay!

Willing To Come To Grips?

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In *The Banner* editorial, "A heyday for heresy," the Rev. J. Vander Ploeg makes a statement which reminds me of some unfinished business.

The statement is: "An honest and thorough heresy trial can clear the air for those willing to come to grips with accusations that are made in good faith."

The unfinished business of which it reminds me is the matter of reconciliation of the Christian Reformed Church and the Protestant Reformed Churches, about which Editor Vander Ploeg wrote shortly after the death of the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema. At that time he suggested a reconciliation based upon the idea that "what we have in common is so much greater than that which is keeping us apart." I suggested in reply that this was not genuine reconciliation, but compromise. I wrote, further: "That genuine efforts at reconciliation must honestly look at the causes of the breach and remove them. For *such* reconciliation the Protestant Reformed Churches have always been, and are today, ready. For we love the Reformed faith, and we stand opposed to any departure therefrom."

(cf. *Standard Bearer*, Nov. 1, 1965) To this the Rev. Vander Ploeg never replied.

Now, though in another connection, he writes as above.

But although the connection in which he writes above is different, the principle, it seems to me, is the same. In fact, with a slight change, the statement could be applied to the matter of reconciliation of the CRC and the PRC: "An honest and thorough official conference can clear the air for those willing to come to grips with accusations that are made in good faith." What is the difference between that and my statement: "That genuine efforts at reconciliation must honestly look at the causes of the breach and remove them?"

I take this opportunity to remind the Rev. Vander-Ploeg that this is not only his personal unfinished business, but a very serious item of unfinished business of long standing for his denomination. Let me remind him in this connection:

1. That the principals in 1924 never received an honest and thorough heresy trial, but were nevertheless cast out as heretics.

2. That in 1939, upon the initiative of the late Mr. Wm. B. Eerdmans, Sr., and the late Dr. Klaas Schilder, an unofficial conference was held at the Pantlind Hotel, in which the Protestant Reformed brethren were fully ready to discuss matters, in which Rev. Herman Hoeksema delivered a position paper, but in which the Christian Reformed brethren were unprepared, and, moreover, refused to discuss issues.

3. That the first Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1940 asked the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church for an official colloquy in the interest of coming to grips with accusations made in good faith. The reply of the Christian Reformed Synod at that time was: "We desire to inform you that no official colloquy is possible on the basis you refer to in your letter, since our Synods have expressed themselves definitely on all matters to which you refer."

4. That at the time of your centennial Synod in 1957 we again invited your Synod "to seek official contact with our churches to rehearse the entire history of 1924-'25, in order that, though the two churches may not amalgamate into one, the brotherly relations may be restored." Your Synod passed the unjustified pronouncement in response: "The tone and contents of the letter are not such as give promise of fruitful discussion."

5. In 1958 we expressed our grief about the above ungrounded conclusion, and we reiterated that we were willing to discuss the differences that have separated us at any time. Again, however, your Synod ruled out any discussion of differences by declaring: ". . . we judge these discussions must not be polemical rehearsals of past history, but should recognize a common Reformed basis, and should point toward a fuller expression of our oneness in Christ."

6. In 1959 our Synod replied as follows: "Brethren, we sincerely regret that you refuse to discuss with us the history that gave rise to our separate existence as Protestant Reformed Churches. It is indeed our desire that we labor together toward a fuller expression of our oneness in Christ." You will most certainly agree, however, that such an expression of oneness must be rooted in truth and righteousness. Whatever was wrong in the sight of the God we serve must, if at all possible, be rectified in the way of God's Word. Brethren, neither for you nor for us can there be blessing and spiritual peace in the way of sin. In all our preaching we exhort those who have made themselves guilty to repentance and conversion. The same calling and will of God applies to us as churches.

"We earnestly invite you, therefore, to a conference with a committee from our churches, wherein may be discussed the entire history of 1924-'25 as well as the doctrinal issues at stake between us, in order that, though our churches may not amalgamate into one, brotherly relations may be restored."

There the matter stands.

I am certain that Editor Vander Ploeg cannot show a lack of good faith on our part.

But then he faces the question whether he and the Christian Reformed Churches are "willing to come to grips with accusations that are made in good faith."

An honest and thorough conference characterized by such a willingness "can clear the air."

I repeat: we of the Protestant Reformed Churches have always declared ourselves ready for such a conference.

For genuine efforts at reconciliation must honestly look at the causes of the breach and remove them.

But we cannot and may not and will not sweep our differences under the rug.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD—

Some Principles Of Missions

by Prof. H. Hanko

We are discussing the relationship between the preaching of the gospel as the sole instrument of mission work and the coming of the Lord. It is our intention to demonstrate how the fact that this present dispensation is the age of the Lord's return determines

the character and principles of missions. We have already shown how that, inasmuch as this dispensation is the age of Christ's coming, this dispensation is the age of the *signs* of Christ's coming. And, if it be the age of the signs of Christ's coming, the preaching of

the gospel is the principle sign out of which all other signs come and upon which all other signs follow.

Before we proceed with this subject, I want to call attention to an editorial which recently appeared in the Presbyterian Journal, the issue of November 16. Because it is short, we quote it here in full.

We've seen it several times of late: "Historically speaking, the age of the missionary is drawing to a close."

All over the world a mounting hostility against the white man is making it harder and harder for missionaries to do their work where countries are stretching their muscles in new independence. Sober churchmen believe that we may even witness the day when missionaries, as we have known them since William Carey, will be no longer.

We were reading one such pessimistic evaluation of the modern scene when suddenly the words of the Lord came to mind: "This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matt. 24:14). Of course! The one "sign" of the return of Christ for which His disciples were especially to watch was that the gospel would have been taken around the world.

There is nothing in Scripture to indicate that the whole world must be brought to Christ before He returns. To the contrary. The Scriptures suggest plainly that the human situation will become worse and worse, with proportionately fewer and fewer obedient to the Gospel . . . even in the Church. But the Gospel will be taken everywhere for a witness unto all nations.

The end of missionary work will mark the end of an era, they say. Indeed it might be just that. It might mark the end of the age.

We agree not only that the end of missionary work "might" mark the end of the age; but that this is the principle sign by which the end of the age is pointed out to us. But the question remains: Why is this so?

When Christ ascended into heaven, He was exalted at the Father's right hand. This was the reward given to Him for His perfect work on the cross. When Christ suffered and died on the cross, He accomplished several things by His perfect obedience. In the first place, He bore the sin and the guilt of His elect people and paid the price that was demanded to satisfy God's justice. He suffered all the penalty for sin in the place of His people and took away sin's curse. In the second place, He earned for His people the fulness of salvation which includes the full perfection of heaven. In the third place (and closely connected with this), He destroyed the power of sin. He fought in fierce combat with Satan in His hours of suffering. He conquered over Satan and loosened his grip on God's world and on His elect people. He defeated all the enemies of God and gained a magnificent victory over every power

of sin and evil. This is why Jesus could describe His own suffering as being the judgment of the world and the casting out of the prince of darkness.

But Christ's ascension was closely connected to His cross. The result therefore was that, in the ascension, Christ was given a position at God's right hand. In this position of authority and power, Christ is given supreme rule over all God's works. From henceforth, all that God does is performed through Jesus Christ. To Christ is entrusted the full execution of God's counsel. All that God determined to do in His counsel, is now carried out through Christ. This means further, that the work of providence (a work which is actually the realization of God's eternal counsel) is also carried out through Christ. The sustaining, governing and directing of the whole creation and of all creatures in it belongs to Christ. This work He executes from His lofty position in heaven.

If therefore, Christ's ascension is connected with His cross, then surely we can see how the exaltation of Christ results in the absolute sovereign rule of Christ over all things. He rules as Lord of lords and King of kings. He rules sovereignly, in the name of the Father, over all things.

But in His rule, He has a purpose. This purpose is the goal of His Father's counsel, the realization of His Father's purpose. That is, the purpose of Christ's rule is the end of the world, the judgment of all men, the establishment of the new heavens and the new earth, the salvation of the elect. When Christ rules universally over all things, he directs the creation and men (and angels and devils) in such a way that they must be a means to serve that glorious end.

Christ rules over His elect. He died for them on the cross. And because of His cross He rules over them in such a way that they are saved from the kingdom of darkness and brought into His own kingdom which shall some day be everlastingly established. He saves them by the power of the preaching of the gospel. For He sends forth His gospel as the "power of God unto salvation." This gospel is His own powerful and irresistible word. It is the sovereign call of Christ, a call which cannot be turned down. For Christ calls, not only through the outward preaching of the gospel, but also through the operation of the Spirit in the hearts of His own. That gospel is the means of salvation to those for whom Christ died and who are eternally destined to live with Christ in glory.

Already Christ is the King of His people. He rules over them making them citizens of His kingdom while they still tarry for a little while in world. Already they are brought to allegiance to Christ. Already they acknowledge Christ as their Lord and King. They bow in humble submission to Him and worship

. . . He, therefore, whom Christ calls through His Church, is a preacher, and no one else. And such a preacher is, as far as his message is concerned, strictly bound to the Word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures. He may not add, nor subtract, a tittle or iota from that Word, nor may he change it to suit the fancy of his audience. The full counsel of God he must proclaim, nothing less, and no more.

H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," p.54

Him their sovereign Ruler. They anticipate the day when they shall live with Christ in the kingdom of heaven. And this anticipation is intense and eager. All this because the gospel has saved them.

But Christ rules also over all things. In the first place, this means that Christ has the sovereign rule over the whole of God's creation. This is why there are signs also in the physical world. Scripture speaks of such signs as the sun being darkened, the moon turning to blood, the stars falling from their places, all sorts of natural calamities such as earthquakes, pestilences, etc. Christ brings these signs into the creation to speak with a powerful voice of the fact that He is coming in judgment. All because His cross had cosmic significance. But this is not our immediate concern.

In the second place, Christ rules over the affairs of men. He is the sovereign Lord of all. On His cross He crushed the head of the serpent and defeated all the forces of sin and evil. Now, from heaven, He rules in such a way that also devils and wicked men must serve His purpose. It is true that they still live out of the principle of hatred and opposition to Christ and to His kingdom. They do all in their power to destroy Christ's cause and defeat His Church. They rouse themselves again and again to do battle with the armies of the elect saints. All they do, in the conquering of the creation, in the advance of science and technology, in the development of the arts and the humanities, they do in order to defeat Christ. But they are totally unsuccessful. And their lack of success is not simply due to the fact that Christ is stronger than they, so that Christ defeats them at last after a long and bitter struggle. Not at all. Christ rules sovereignly over them — also in all their wicked ways. Christ rules in such a manner that they cannot do anything apart from His sovereign rule. Christ makes all that they do serve His own purpose. He sets kings on their thrones, and casts them down again. He brings nations on the battlefields of the world where they are hurled at each other to their mutual destruction. He sets the boundaries of the nations and directs the forces of history in all their complexities. And all of it serves His purpose.

This is why even though the nations rage and the people imagine vain things, He that sitteth in the heavens laughs and holds them in derision. Cf. Psalm 2. This is why those who march in the armies of Christ are not only conquerors; they are *more than conquerors* through Him Who loved them. Cf. Rom. 8:37.

Thus the rule of Christ is twofold: Christ rules over His elect to make them willing and obedient citizens of His kingdom. Christ rules over the wicked so that they, even in their hatred of Christ, serve Christ's purpose.

Yet there is a principle of unity in this rule of Christ. This principle of unity is that everything must serve the goal of history and the end of God's counsel. And this principle of unity is attained through the preaching of the gospel. Christ accomplishes His rule in all things so that all things serve His pur-

pose through the power of the gospel. This is the thesis of these articles.

How is this possible?

In order to understand this, we must remember that the gospel is indeed, on the one hand, a power of salvation. But, just as really, and on the other hand, the gospel is also the power to harden. There is more than one text in Scripture which teaches this truth.

We find this purpose expressed by the Lord, for example, in Matthew 11:25, 26. Here the Lord is praying a prayer of thanksgiving for the reactions He has found to His preaching — reactions both of faith and unbelief. And He finds the deepest reason for gratitude in that the will of God is being done: God has revealed the truth to some and hidden the truth from others. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Now it is true that the power of salvation and of hardening is not, in this text, immediately ascribed to the gospel, but to God. But we must remember: in the first place, that, in the context, Jesus is speaking of the unbelief of those who saw His mighty works and heard His preaching. God hid these things from the Jews of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum — cities in which the Lord had brought the gospel of the kingdom. And, in the second place, the Lord Himself adds in vs. 27: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." And finally, the power of the gospel is, after all, the power of God Himself through the Spirit. The gospel has no power in the mere outwardly spoken word. It has power only because God gives it power.

But this truth is also expounded elsewhere. When Jesus began preaching in parables, the disciples asked the Lord why He taught in parables. His answer was that these parables were a means to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah in which prophecy Isaiah spoke of the fact that, through the preaching, Israel would be hardened. "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables; because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal

them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear." Matthew 13: 10-16.

Paul very emphatically teaches this in a well-known passage in II Corinthians 2. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God:

but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

We have mentioned this point — this important point, at length; it is a principle which underlies all missionary work. But we shall have to withhold further comment on this for the present. Our purpose now is merely to show that the gospel is a twofold power. And it is because the gospel is a twofold power, that the gospel is also the unifying principle in this sovereign rule of Christ over His people and the wicked.

We shall speak of this further, the Lord willing, in our next article.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

The Book Of Hebrews

by Rev. G. Lubbers

CHRIST'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD AND TO ALL THINGS PROVEN FROM THE PSALMS (continued) Hebrews 1:5

The writer cites one more key-passage from the Psalms to prove the point that God never spoke to the angels nor of the angels as He does concerning His Son, the Christ of God who came into the world. He quotes the very significant passage from II Samuel 7:14 which reads as follows: "and again: I shall be unto him unto a Father, and He shall be unto me a Son."

This passage is found in a very significant setting in the history of Israel and of King David. It is a direct word of God through the prophet Nathan to David. It contains the great promise of God to David concerning David's throne; David's throne shall endure forever. And God's word is here a correction both of King David and of the prophet's word to David. Nathan and David were both in error, even in their best intentions and in their holiest aspirations.

The situation was as follows. David was, at the time here referred to, established as king in Jerusalem. All the enemies had been subdued by the LORD before David and his armies. It was "when king David sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies." It was then that David had concern about the LORD'S house, particularly concerning the Ark of God. That Ark of God "dwelleth between curtains." David had brought up the Ark from the house of Abinadab, and finally the Ark had come to its resting-place in Zion. David had rebuilt the tent and placed the Ark in its place in the holiest

of all. But now David is troubled. For David was living in a beautiful house; he dwelt in a palace made of cedar wood brought from Lebanon. The contrast of tent and palace disturbed David's soul. The result was that he resolved to build a house for the LORD, so that the Ark of the Covenant might too dwell in a more respectable dwelling place. Before he actually proceeded to build this contemplated house for the LORD he inquired of the prophet Nathan. Said he "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." (II Samuel 7:2) And Nathan had given his blessing to this planned building of a house of cedar for the Lord.

However, they were both in error. They did not really understand the blue-print of God for the New Jerusalem. They were thinking only in the terms of the earthly city. They did not look to the end of the promise of God to Abraham, not understanding the design of God in his promise to Abraham, that is, they did not see that the entire institution of the types and shadows in general, and of the earthly tabernacle in particular, was "till the Seed should come." (Galatians 3:19) They were not submitting their thinking and planning to the fact that God is the architect and builder of the city which has foundations. (Hebrews 11:10) They are really thinking the things of man and not the things of God. High and noble as their plans and thoughts seemed to be, they were nonetheless not according to God. They were both very much in error.

It was here that the Lord spoke in "visions." (Psalm 89:19) God unfolds the deep things of the

Spirit at this point and causes the search-light of prophecy to shine across the ages of Israel's history to come. As the Psalmist puts it "I have exalted one chosen out of the people." This chosen one is the Son of God, the Heir of all things. And the Lord came and spoke to Nathan the prophet. He speaks to him the same basic message and promise which He made to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; He sheds new light upon this same promise here in this critical hour of David's resolution to build the LORD's Altar a house of cedar. Later, many years later, the LORD will have Isaiah prophesy concerning this promise as it relates to the LORD's dwelling-place. Cries the prophet in Isaiah 66: 1, 2 "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" David would build the LORD such an house on earthly mount Zion in the typical land of Canaan. But he is wrong. Many years later Stephen will stand before the Sanhedrin in this very city and proclaim in their ears the words of God spoken through Isaiah and paraphrase it as follows "But the Most High does not dwell (kataoikei) in something made by man's hands" (Acts 7:47, 48) All attempts to make the Lord dwell permanently in such a house must by its very logic lead to idolatry, and deny that God is a Spirit, and that they who worship him must worship him in Spirit and in truth. Thus did Jesus proclaim the hour at hand when men would no longer worship on either Samaria's mount nor on the earthly mount in Jerusalem. (John 4:21) Such is the Divine design of God in the history of David and of the Ark which dwelt "within curtains."

There is one point in which the Lord agrees with David's purpose. The Ark is here not really at the final resting-place. Truly, a house must be built; however, the Lord will not allow David to build Him a house, which is impossible. Says the LORD through Nathan to David "Furthermore, I tell thee that Jehovah will build thee an house." (II Samuel 7:11; I Chronicles 17:10b) And this house did not really refer to Solomon's building of the beautiful temple of cedar overlaid with gold, but most emphatically referred to the house of many mansions which Christ prepared for us in the heavens. (John 14: 1, 2).

In the first place because God in all of the dealings with Israel never spoke to them concerning their building him a house. In all the wanderings in the desert from Sinai on, through the period of the judges till this very day, did He ever speak of Israel building Him a house? Preposterous! Nay, it is just the other way around. Moses made the tabernacle after the pattern which the LORD showed him on the mountain. The earthly was but a pattern of the better and the heavenly. We shall have abundant opportunity to see more of this in the book of Hebrews. Our point is that the entire book of Hebrews and the New Testament teaching is contained in this Word of God through Nathan to David. And the very heart of this passage in II Samuel 7:1-17 is given here in Hebrews 1:5b. The key to the understanding of the promise concerning David's Son to build the house for David is here given. This Son is

not really Solomon but must be the Christ. He stands in the relationship to God of a *son*; He is the Heir of all things. Such is the place of the Son in God's covenant with man. For the "house" which the LORD will build is the tabernacle of God with Man in Immanuel, God-with-us! The Son is here not viewed primarily as the Son in relationship to the Father in the inter-trinitarian life, but rather as the Son in the flesh, a Brother amongst the brethren, the First-born Son, the First-born of all creatures as the First-born out of the dead! Thus he has received a name above the angels. He is the builder of the house, because he is God in the flesh. As God spake to and concerning this Son, the Heir, he never spoke concerning any of the angels. Only concerning this Son in the flesh did God speak to David saying "He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." (II Samuel 7:13) Hear, then, the angel Gabriel speak to Mary in the annunciation of Christ's birth" And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:31-33)

GOD'S WORD CONCERNING THE ANGELS AND CONCERNING THE CHRIST CONTRASTED Hebrews 1:7, 8, 9, 14

The writer contrasts the Word of God concerning angels and concerning the Son in these verses. The writer once more does so by quoting from the Psalms. He also makes a positive statement in the form of a question at the end of this Chapter concerning the angels, where we read "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" This question is put in such a form that an affirmative answer is presupposed.

Perhaps we should best begin by calling attention to the implication of this question in verse 14. The writer here speaks of the very *nature* and office of the angels of God. Angels, as their very name indicates are messengers, messengers from God's throne to earth to the heirs of the promise, more particularly as these heirs are about to inherit salvation. This places the angels in one bold stroke in a subordinate position not only to Christ the great Heir, but also in a subordinate position to the heirs with Christ, the church. They are thoroughly adapted to their office. They are spirits and their movement is not limited to the earthly as is that of the saints on earth. They are pictured as ascending and descending from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth in Jacob's dream at Bethel. (Genesis 28:10-22) They do appear in the form of a man at times and at different occasions in the Scriptures. But ever they are "spirites," moral rational spirits who minister in God's temple. There is a formal ministry. It is the heavenly liturgy (leiturgika) before the throne of God, as they ever behold the face of the heavenly Father of the heirs of salvation. (Matthew 18:10) and they

ever rejoice over the repentance of one sinner (Luke 15:10) and they stoop down in rapt attention beholding the work of God in the suffering to come upon the Christ and the eternal glory to follow. (I Peter 1:12) They are interested "spirits" who see the manifold wisdom of God displayed in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 3:10) And these angels ever minister to the needs of the saints, even as they ministered (diakonia) to the needs of Christ while on earth in his humiliation and suffering. (Matthew 4:11)

How could God ever have spoken to the exalted ministering spirits about His throne as He speaks to His Son? Nay, He could only command the angels to bow down and worship and glorify the Son as they glorify God Himself. Yes, all the angels of God must worship Christ, the First-begotten of God. Thus did God speak through David the prophet in Psalm 97:7 where we read "Confounded be all they that serve

graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him all ye gods." The KJV here translates from the original Hebrew Scriptures. The writer to the Hebrews here quotes from the Septuagint translation which reads "worship him all ye angels of him" but adds "angels of God." We hold that the Spirit here interprets the sense and meaning of the Psalm as given in the Hebrew version of the Psalm. The contrast in the Psalm is "idol" or the "Son." If he is not the eternal "Son" then worshipping him would be idolatry. But now he is exalted above the angels. No angels will permit any man to worship them (Revelation 22: 8, 9) But the Son of God in the flesh can be worshipped. All the angels must; they are not in a class with the Son of God. In this Son dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily. Such is the Christ as he came into the flesh, the effulgence of God's glory, the expressed image of His being.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

Saul and David - Enemies

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David... And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

I Samuel 18:28, 29

For a third time Saul was beginning to find relief from his fits of deep spiritual depression. The first time had been after Samuel had informed him that God had rejected him from being king over Israel, and only the soft playing of David's harp had revived him. The second time was when the giant Goliath, by threatening his kingdom and his life, had left him paralyzed with fear. Again it had been David, this time with his sling, that had given him escape. But now David himself had become Saul's curse. Suddenly one day, hearing David praised above himself, Saul had come to the realization that David was the very one whom God intended to make king in his stead. It had struck him cold with fear and again that cloud of dark depression had settled upon his heart. But once again it appeared that the way of relief was opening up before him; and this time it was the most satisfying of all, because it was his own doing.

It had come to him quite unexpectedly that day when David had to try to help once again by playing his harp for the troubled king. Suddenly, upon an impulse, he had snatched up his javelin and had tried with all of his strength to impale the young musician. It had been a

terrible thing to do, so that the whole palace had shuddered visibly before the horror of it. Even Saul himself had seemed almost relieved to know that the javelin had missed its mark. And yet when David had courageously returned once again to try to help his king, he did the same thing over once again.

Afterward, while sitting alone and reflecting on what he had done, the realization had gradually dawned upon Saul. His actions had been foolish, poorly timed and indiscreet. It was well that his javelin had not struck home, for, if it had, the people would have never forgiven him. David was generally liked, and that had to be reckoned with. But his goal had been right nonetheless. David had to be killed, he had to be gotten out of the way.

At first, Saul's own mind had recoiled at the thought. He, after all, had been raised in Israel, and he felt almost instinctively the terribleness of murder. But there was a certain fascination there which brought him back to it again and again. He only told himself that it was not seriously meant, but only a way to occupy his troubled mind. Soon, however, the whole

matter had gone beyond this point, and he found himself quite determined to do what he could to implement these thoughts. But even at that excuses were not hard to find, reasons why it was better for all concerned that David should be gotten out of the way. They were more than sufficient to satisfy his own mind. Soon Saul's whole conscious thought was given over to trying to find the best way in which David could be destroyed while doing the least harm to himself.

Actually, for what was perhaps the first time in his life, Saul had found an activity which suited his nature almost perfectly. It was true that all his life he had wanted only to be king, and when this dream had come to fulfillment and he had prospered in his work, he had thought that he enjoyed it perfectly. Nevertheless, even in those early prospering years, there had been one very disconcerting element. As king in Israel he was expected to be a spiritual leader in Israel and was constantly required to engage in various spiritual ceremonies of worship. This he had done quite willingly but always with that vague underlying feeling that he didn't know what it was all about. It had bothered him, especially when Samuel was standing near watching so closely his every deed. He had come to dislike those activities and avoid them as much as he could. Then too there had been the battles which he had always pretended to enjoy too. And it was true, he had always enjoyed each victory with all of the glory and praise that was sure to follow. But the battles themselves -- no one knew how inwardly he trembled before each one. No matter how he tried he could not seem to escape that feeling of fear that something might happen which would do him harm and perhaps even take his life. He was not a man of war at heart. But this time things were different. He knew who his enemy was; it was David. Neither did he have to fear from him any immediate, personal harm. David was one of his own soldiers subject to his own authority and discipline, and one who could be expected to obey his every command. All that Saul had to do was to see to it that David was put out of the way before the day could come when God could put David on his throne, and with all of his mental powers Saul threw himself into his task. Although Saul would have never admitted it even to himself, he really enjoyed what he was doing. It was a morose activity, just sitting there plotting and planning how to destroy an unsuspecting young man; but it held a certain sweetness for Saul, a certain attraction. It was the attraction of hatred and sin.

At first thought, of course, it did not appear to Saul that there would be anything at all difficult in disposing of David. He merely appointed David head of a special fighting force of valiant men and sent them out to where the battles were most severe. David being the kind of person he was, he could be expected to place himself in the most dangerous position of all. It seemed natural to expect, therefore, that sooner or later the sword of the enemy would find him, and he would be killed in a way in which no one would be able to lay any blame upon Saul.

But time went on and nothing happened except that

David won more and more victories for himself, and, behaving himself wisely, he grew in favor and love with all of the people. Gradually Saul began to realize once again that it was not a mere man against whom he was striving but against God Himself. It frightened him. In fact, he tried to keep the thought out of his mind because of the terror it struck in his heart. But never once did he consider repenting and desisting from his plan. He only became the more determined to win out in the end.

He was beginning to realize, however, that, if he was going to win, he was going to have to become more personally involved. Thus it was that he revived the plan once again of using his daughter for his end. Had he not succeeded once in getting David to go out against Goliath by promising him his daughter in marriage? It was fortunate that David had never dared mention the matter again afterward, and that he had not mentioned it to David either. Now once more he could use it as a lever to drive David deeper into the dangers of battle. So he called David to him and said, "Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles."

The answer of David was hard to evaluate. He said merely, "Who am I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" It was, however, enough for Saul to warrant the conclusion that such a marriage was to David a most desirable goal. Thus he could expect that David would go on to throw himself just as recklessly into battle as he had when he went against Goliath. Never once, though, did the thought cross his mind that there might be something sinister or ruthless about using his own daughter that way as a pawn in a wicked, diabolic game. To him nothing mattered but the destruction of David, and anything it required was worth the price.

Actually, Saul had never seriously intended to give his daughter to David. Promises were fine as bribes to get people to do his bidding; but he was king and who could demand that he should keep them. So it was one day that, almost without thinking, Saul gave this daughter twice promised to David to another. Or maybe it was not so much without thinking. Possibly Saul had planned it this way all along in the hope that he could thereby arouse the anger of David and incite him to say or do something that reflected unfaithfulness to the king. If only he could find one such thing, it would be sufficient to call David in to judgment and require of him the ultimate penalty. By it all, however, David remained quite unaffected.

It was while contemplating his lack of success in this matter that the thought came to Saul that maybe it wouldn't have been so bad if he had given his daughter to David. As a member of his own family, David would be less likely to suspect his intentions, and would be even more subject to his influence than before. Moreover, while observing David regarding this matter, Saul discovered the reason for David's lack of interest in Merab. While living together in the royal palace, an attachment had developed between

David and his younger daughter Michal. It all seemed to fit together very nicely into another plan. Quickly he called David to him and said, "Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the one of the twain," by which he evidently meant to suggest that David should be married to Michal. The only trouble was that David again remained very much unwilling to commit himself.

Saul, however, was by no means ready to give up his plan. He determined to find for himself the reason for David's evasiveness. For this he called some of his servants, who could speak to David much more freely than he could himself, and he instructed them, "Commune with David secretly, and say, 'Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law.'"

This was soon done, and the answer was brought back that David had said, "Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed."

This was exactly the opportunity which Saul was looking for. Being himself a cowardly man, he could not escape the feeling that somehow David had been avoiding the real danger of battle. But now that he knew that David was troubled by his inability to pay a high dowry, he could use that knowledge as an opportunity

to send David into a situation in which danger could not possibly be avoided. Once again he instructed his servants, "Thus shall ye say to David, 'The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies.'"

It was the foolishness of Saul. He knew that he was opposing a power much greater than himself and of all the Philistines; and yet he didn't know. He refused to know. He kept on telling himself that if only he could find a danger great enough David would fall. So once again, filled with hope, he waited while David went out to do as he had suggested.

It was not long, it was actually much sooner than he expected that David came back from his foray. The report was taken directly to the king, for everyone thought he would be overjoyed at the message. It was actually enough to set his heart to trembling. David had slain not just one hundred but two hundred for good measure, and he had returned himself without a scratch.

This time there was no choice for Saul. He had made the matter too definite. The date was set, and David became son-in-law to the king. The people were glad, and the festivities were great; but Saul was afraid and trembled. The power was indeed great which he had set himself to withstand.

EXAMINING ECUMENICALISM—

World Congress On Evangelism

(cont.)

by Rev. G. Van Baren

In the last issue we were noting what Dr. Harold John Ockenga, pastor of the Park Street Congregational Church in Boston, presented as the "Basic Theology of Evangelism." He insisted that proper evangelism must proceed out of the truth of the Trinity. We quoted some of his remarks concerning the position of the Father, the first Person of the Trinity, regarding evangelism. His idea of predestination by the Father from all eternity was nothing else but arminian. The same arminianism becomes apparent in his discussion of the work of the Son and the Spirit in evangelism.

GOD THE SON IN EVANGELISM

Ockenga emphasizes the divinity of the Christ. He insists too on the real virgin birth of Christ. But his view of the atonement is plainly arminian. He is ready to accept a variety of views concerning the work of atonement:

Various theories concerning the Atonement have been taught, such as the governmental view, the exemplary view, the piacular view, and the view of vicarious redemption. All these emphases are to be found in the Scripture, but they are found as manifestations of the basic teaching that Jesus Christ satisfied the demands of divine righteousness, substituted for us in his act of passive obedience to justice, and thus demonstrated in his life and death a divine justice and love. From this derived the governmental, the moral, and the exemplary views of the Atonement. It is this Gospel of redemption that is able to affect the will; nothing will move men to repentance and faith as does the preaching of the propitiation of Calvary. (Christianity Today, Oct. 28, 1966, pg. 12)

Although Ockenga denies universalism, he does insist that Christ died for all:

...Universalism is hardly compatible with biblical

teaching. The Bible declares that the Gospel must be preached universally, that the death of Christ is sufficient and applicable for all but is efficacious only to those who believe. The Bible emphasizes the responsibility of acceptance of Christ. The plain alternative to this is the state of being lost and of suffering eternal torment (pg. 13).

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EVANGELISM

Ockenga then proceeds to show how the Holy Spirit works in evangelism — and his view again is strictly arminian. He considers the Spirit as He Who works common grace:

...Contemporary theology discloses a new interest in and emphasis upon the Holy Spirit's ministry. This applies not so much to the Spirit's ministry in common grace as to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in special grace. The Holy Spirit restrains the destructive processes of sin and thus enables humanity to maintain an orderly life. The Holy Spirit also is the source of the renewing processes in the churches and in society. The emphasis upon spiritual renewal in the Roman Catholic Church and the various branches of Protestantism is directly attributable to the work of the Holy Spirit... (pg. 13).

Ockenga insists further that his arminian view of the work of the Spirit "alone stimulates evangelism." Conversion he places before regeneration:

Evangelism may be equated with the public proclamation of the good news of the Gospel or the private witnessing to the good news of the Gospel, with the purpose of bringing individuals to faith in and confession of Christ as Savior. This is called "conversion," and conversion has two meanings. It may be the active turning on the part of an individual as a response to the Gospel. This is the lesser sense of conversion and is within the ability of the individual. The New Testament uses the word *epistrepho* in the active sense. Theologically, conversion is often used in the larger sense of being equated with regeneration. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who convicts, converts, and transforms the life of the individual. There is no possibility of an evangelistic outreach without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The twentieth century has seen the growth of the so-called third force, which is the Christian movement emphasizing the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Regeneration, or the new birth by water and the Spirit (John 3:5), is the requirement for any spiritual and evangelistic movement. Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) Too much religion omits the necessity of the new birth. Some theology minimizes the place of evangelism in regeneration. Some Lutherans and Anglicans teach baptismal regeneration. Some Reformed theologians teach that regeneration by the Holy Spirit precedes conversion. The evangelical position is that regeneration is conditioned upon repentance, confession, and faith. This alone stimulates evangelism. (pg. 13)

CONCLUSIONS

The above "theology" for evangelism seems to

be the "theology" approved by most of those attending the conference. At the conclusion of the conference, a formal statement or "message" was adopted by voice-vote (I understand that only the affirmative vote was called for; there was no opportunity for those opposed to the idea of the "message" to express their dissent). This "message" reflects the same theology set forth by Ockenga — as one could expect, since the conference was the work of Billy Graham and associates. Some of the thoughts expressed by the message:

On behalf of our fellowmen everywhere, whom we love and for whom our Saviour died, we promise with renewed zeal and faithfulness to bear to them the Good News of God's saving grace to a sinful and lost humanity....

...Our goal is nothing short of the evangelization of the human race in this generation, by every means God has given to the mind and will of men.

...All men are one in the humanity created by God Himself. All men are one in their common need of divine redemption, and all are offered salvation in Jesus Christ....

...We extend our hands to each other in love, and those same hands reach out to men everywhere with the prayer that the Prince of Peace may soon unite our sorely divided world.

...Recognizing that the ministry of reconciliation is given to us all, we seek to enlist every believer and to close the ranks of all Christians for an effective witness to our world....

While not all who hear the Gospel will respond to it, our responsibility is to see that every one is given the opportunity to decide for Christ in our time....

Finally, we express to Evangelist Billy Graham our gratitude for his vision of a World Congress on Evangelism. To the magazine *Christianity Today* goes our debt of thanks for bringing it into reality....

What did this Congress accomplish? From the reports that have come from Berlin, one would conclude that there is yet no evidence that anything was accomplished. When, before the meeting, this Congress was compared to Pentecost, one could expect something tremendous to happen. It didn't. According to the *Presbyterian Journal* of Nov. 23, 1966:

What did it accomplish?

No pronouncements were issued, no resolutions were passed. A "sense of the assembly" message was approved by applause but not by a formal vote.

Congress backers and participants will feel that Berlin was worthwhile if the organized Church hears once again its marching orders: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

This same paper, which is opposed to the World and National Council of Churches, points out: "While the difference between such a gathering and those of more ecumenical organizations was not accented, and the negative note was not heard, one could not help but noticing that names associated with evangelism in the National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches circles were missing in Berlin." However, the *Christian Beacon* of Carl McIntire (Nov. 17, 1966) mentions that "ecumenical leaders were commended

to the evangelicals. Chandu Ray, chairman of the World Council's Commission on Mission and Evangelism, delivered a major address...." Dr. McIntire also refers to a confrontation he had with a Rev. Walter Hollenwerder, secretary of evangelism for the World Council of Churches. So there were represented at this Congress at Berlin those who favored and pressed the cause of ecumenism. Dr. McIntire, following the usual form of criticism, points out also that leaders of churches in Communist countries were also invited and present — men whom McIntire claims are communist agents. Present also were observers from Judaism and Roman Catholicism. Could any expect the blessings of the Spirit of Pentecost on such a gathering?

I would conclude that this Congress was no place where a Reformed churchman should be found — not

one who yet maintains the Canons of Dordt. He knows that arminianism can never be the foundation-theology of evangelism. Besides, no Reformed man could favor this somewhat obvious attempt to promote ecumenism. The reports of the Congress seem to indicate a deliberate effort to ward off every evidence of disharmony and disagreement — and to emphasize only the agreement. On the only "message" coming out of the Congress, not even a negative vote was allowed.

Evangelism we must have. It must be based on "Calvinistic" theology — that is, on the theology of Scripture. Such evangelism meets with the favor and blessing of God. This evangelism will not evangelize "the human race in this generation," but it will serve to bring God's elect people from darkness to light. May the church continue to be faithful in such evangelism.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

The Providence Of God

Miracles

by Rev. H. Veldman

Hodge, we noted in our preceding article, defines the miracle as an event, in the external world, brought about by the immediate efficiency, or simple volition of God. This is a rather common definition of the miracles of Scripture. We also called attention to the objections lodged against this definition. And Hodge answers these objections rather decisively, as follows:

As to the other form of the objection, which assumes that the laws of nature are in themselves immutable, and therefore that they cannot be suspended, it is enough to say, (1) That this absolute immutability of natural laws is a gratuitous assumption. That a thing has been is no proof that it must always be. There is no absolute certainty, because no necessity, that the sun will rise to-morrow. We assume with confidence that it will thus rise, but on what ground? What impossibility is there that this night the voice of the angel should be heard, swearing, "That time shall be no longer?" If time began, time may end. If nature began to be, it may cease to be, and all about it must be liable to change. Scientific men have no right to assume that because physical laws are, and, within the limits of our experience, ever have been, regular in their operation, that they are, as Professor Powell says, "self-sustaining and self-evolving." It is a great mistake to suppose that uniformity is inconsistent with voluntary control; that because law reigns, God does not reign. The laws of nature are uniform only because He so wills, and their uniformity continues only so long as He wills. (Hodge's reasoning here is plain. God controls

the so-called laws of nature, and they are uniform only as long as the Lord wills them to be such. To say that something has always been is no guarantee that it will ever continue thus. Incidentally, the assertion of Hodge in this quotation that "this night the voice of the angel may be heard, swearing that time shall be no longer," must not be construed as if he teaches the premillenarian teaching that Christ may come at any moment in history. We realize that this night of sin cannot come to an end until all things have been fulfilled and the counsel of God has been realized.—H.V.)

(2) It is utterly derogatory to the character of God to assume that He is subject to law, and especially to the laws of matter. If theism (that God is God —H.V.) be once admitted, then it must be admitted that the whole universe, with all that it contains and all the laws by which it is controlled, must be subject to the will of God. Professor Powell indeed says, that many theists deny the possibility of the suspension or violation of the laws of nature, but then he says that there are many degrees of theism, and he included under that term theories which others regard as inconsistent with the doctrine of a personal God. It is certain that the objection to the definition of a miracle given above, now under consideration, depends for its validity on the assumption, that God is subject to nature so that he cannot control its laws. (to this we need not add much. How true it is that there are many degrees of theism, even as today there are many degrees of protestantism! Imagine what sails today under the flag of protestantism! How many "protes-

tants" are there not today who care nothing for the principles of protestantism, who are interested in the modern movement of ecumenism and this at the cost of the truths of the Word of God! — H.V.)

(3). The authority of Scripture is for Christians decisive on this point. The Bible everywhere not only asserts the absolute independence of God of all his works, and his absolute control over them, but is also filled with examples of the actual exercise of this control. Every miracle recorded in the Scriptures is such an example. When Christ called Lazarus from the grave, the chemical forces which were working the dissolution of his body ceased to operate. When He said to the winds, Be still, the physical causes which produced the storm were arrested in their operation; when He walked on the sea the law of gravitation was counteracted by a stronger force — even the divine will. In 2 Kings 6: 5, 6, we are told that an "axe head fell into the water," and that the man of God cut a stick and cast it into the water, "and the iron did swim." Here an effect was produced which all known physical laws would tend to prevent. The Scriptures, therefore, by word and deed, teach that God can act, not only with physical causes, but without and against them.

(4) After all, the suspension or violation of the laws of nature involved in miracles is nothing more than is constantly taking place around us. One force counteracts another; vital force keeps the chemical laws of matter in abeyance; and muscular force can control the action of physical force. When a man raises a weight from the ground, the law of gravity is neither suspended nor violated, but counteracted by a stronger force. The same is true as to the walking of Christ on the water, and the swimming of the iron at the command of the prophet. The simple and grand truth that the universe is not under the exclusive control of physical forces, but that everywhere and always there is above, separate from, and superior to all else, an infinite personal will, not superseding, but directing and controlling all physical causes, acting with or without them. God is the author of nature: He has ordained its laws; He is everywhere present in his works: He governs all things by cooperating and using the laws which He has ordained. He has left Himself free.

Also of interest, according to Hodge, is a second objection lodged against the usual definition of miracles (a miracle, then, the reader may possibly remember, may be defined as an event, in the external world, brought about by the immediate efficiency, or simple volition of God), that they should be referred to some higher, occult (mysterious) law of nature and not to the immediate agency of God. What Hodge writes about this objection (page 622) is, I am sure, very interesting:

This objection (that miracles should be referred to some higher, occult law of nature — H.V.) is urged by two very different classes of writers. First, those who adopt the mechanical theory of the universe assume that God has given it up to the government of natural laws, and no more interfered with its natural operations than a ship-builder with the navigation of the ships he has constructed (Deism — H.V.) This is the view presented by Babbage in his "Ninth Bridgewater Treatise." He supposes a man placed before his calculating machine, which for millions and millions of times produced square numbers; then for once

produces a cube number; and then only squares until the machine wears out. There are two ways of accounting for the extraordinary cube number (incidentally, whoever heard of such a phenomenon? — H.V.). The one is that the maker of the machine directly interfered for its production. The other is that he provided for its appearance in the original construction of the machine. The latter explanation gives a far higher idea of the skill and wisdom of the mechanist; and so, Mr. Babbage argues, it is "more consistent with the attributes of the Deity to look upon miracles not as deviations from the laws assigned by the Almighty for the government of matter and of mind; but as the exact fulfilment of much more extensive laws than those we suppose to exist." (so, the deist even would claim that his God-dishonoring theory adds to the glory of the Lord. — H.V.) In like manner Professor Baden Powell contends that every physical effect must have a physical cause, and therefore that miracles, considered as physical events, must be "referred to physical causes, possibly to known causes; but, at all events, to some higher cause or law, if at present unknown.

Secondly, this same ground is taken by many who do not thus banish God from his works. They admit that He is everywhere present, and everywhere acting, controlling physical laws so as to accomplish his purposes; but they insist that He never operates immediately, but always acts through the established laws of nature. Thus the Duke of Argyle, whose excellent work on the "Reign of Law" is thoroughly religious, says: "There is nothing in religion incompatible with the belief that all exercises of God's power, whether ordinary or extraordinary, are effected through the instrumentality of means — that is to say, by the instrumentality of natural laws brought out, as it were, and used for a divine purpose."

Although the Duke of Argyle is a theist, and admits of the constant operation of the Divine will in nature, he is still urgent in insisting that the power of God in nature is always exercised according to law, and in connection with physical causes. Miracles, therefore, differ from ordinary events only in so far as the law according to which they come to pass, or the physical forces acting in their production are unknown. He quotes with approbation from Locke, the following most unsatisfactory definition: "A miracle, then, I take to be sensible operation, which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and, in his opinion, contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine. (that this is a most unsatisfactory definition is established by the following — H.V.) This is the precise view held by Baden Powell, who in the essay repeatedly referred to above, makes a miracle a mere matter of opinion. It is not a matter of fact to be determined by testimony, but a matter of opinion as to the cause of that fact. The fact may be admitted, and one man may say it is due to natural law, known or unknown; and then it is no miracle. Another man says it is due to the immediate power of God. In that case it is a miracle. Which of the two is correct, cannot be decided by testimony. It must be decided by the general views of nature and of God's relation to the world, which men entertain. The doctrine that God works in the external world only through physical forces, and even that He can act only in that way, leads, of necessity, to the conclusion that miracles are events in the external world brought about by

unknown physical causes. They prove only "the presence of superhuman knowledge and the working of superhuman power."

It is certainly true what one writer wrote, namely: "Belief in the supernatural is the special difficulty of our time; that the denial of it is the form taken by all modern assaults on Christian faith; and that acceptance of it lies at the root, not only of Christianity, but of all positive religion whatever." We do and will object to the definition of a miracle, that it must be viewed as an immediate, supernatural work of God. We believe that the essence of the miracle in Scripture must be sought elsewhere. Nevertheless, it is certainly

true that Christianity believes in the immediate works and workings of the living God. And it is also emphatically true that this belief in the almighty power of God is becoming more and more "the special difficulty of our time." And this does not apply to the world, but to that which calls itself Church. Questions which relate to the origin of the world, that this world is millions and millions of years old, and also whether Adam was the first man, certainly do not speak of and breathe respect for the infallible Scriptures and for the truth of the Word of God that He is God alone, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, by Whose word and the breath of His mouth were made the heavens and the earth and all the host of them.

HEEDING THE DOCTRINE—

Barth's Doctrine Of Scripture 10

The Scriptural Basis (continued)

by Rev. D. J. Engelsma

A glaring example of this perverse method of handling the Scriptures is Barth's interpretation of Romans 9. Barth does not come out with the blunt declaration that Paul is wrong in Romans 9, as many of his liberal colleagues do. But, in the face of Paul's plain teaching that God sovereignly distinguishes between persons by showing mercy to some and hardening others according to an eternal election of some in love and an eternal reprobation of others, Barth comes to the amazing conclusion that Romans 9 teaches that God loves and elects *all* men. The estimation of Scripture that allows for such a violent distortion of Scripture's words does not differ from that estimation of Scripture which permits one forthrightly to say that Scripture is wrong in Romans 9. Indeed, Barth's procedure is more dangerous since he pays lip-service to Scripture's authority, while in fact he disregards that authority.

Now, it is our contention that Barth's "explanation" of II Timothy 3:16, and of II Peter 1:19-21, manifests Barth's low conception of Scripture, in that it is no explanation of Scripture's words at all but a reading into Scripture of Barth's ideas. He makes II Timothy 3:16 say what he thinks it *should* say and this is the opposite of what the passage itself teaches.

First, Barth suggests that the word *God-breathed* (the word translated "given by inspiration of God" in the King James Version) should be rendered "God-

breathing." Barth himself does not make very much of this in the *Church Dogmatics*. He merely includes the idea of "breathing forth God" as part of the meaning of the word *theopneustos* so that it complements but does not replace the idea of Scripture's being breathed forth by God. Others, however, carry this further than Barth himself does. They maintain that the meaning of the word *theopneustos* in II Timothy 3:16 is exclusively that of Scripture's breathing forth God. In this way, they effectively oppose those who maintain that Scripture has a divine origin and, therefore, cannot possibly contain errors. When a defender of Scripture's infallibility appeals to II Timothy 3:16, the adversary counters by saying that the passage does not teach that Scripture is breathed forth by God but that Scripture breathes forth God, that is, Scripture teaches the things of God and has a kind of divine influence upon men, which it can do and have even though it is full of errors. The reason, of course, for rendering the word, "God-breathing" instead of "God-breathed," is the aversion of these men to the doctrine of an inspired Bible. That which makes it possible for them to challenge the translation of the King James Version is the fact that the word occurs only once in the Bible, in this passage, so that there can be no comparison of the use of the word here with its use in other passages. Also, scholars tell us that words of this type are occasionally used actively in secular authors.

But the word itself, as used in II Timothy 3:16, and the entire context prove conclusively that the meaning is the one expressed by the King James Version, "God-breathed" or "given by inspiration of God" and that the meaning cannot be "breathing forth God." Neither are they correct who say that the exclusive meaning is that Scripture breathes forth God, nor is Barth correct, who says that this is partially the meaning. The sole and exclusive meaning is that Scripture is breathed of or by God. The simple truth is that Scripture does not breathe forth God. Scripture indeed testifies of God, *speaks* of God and objectively *reveals* God but this is quite different from saying that it breathes Him forth. The word, *theopneustos*, is a strong word, a word that refers to a *creative* activity. To apply this word to Scripture, as if Scripture breathes forth God, would be tantamount to saying that Scripture *produces* God, *creates* God, or *makes* God. This is not only false, it is blasphemy. And when we consider that the word *theopneustos* is made up of the word *God* and a form of the word *spirit*, the idea of the text becomes still clearer. The Bible does not "spirit forth" God, even in a loose sense — it lacks such a power. For this reason, it is necessary, as the Reformed Churches have always insisted, that in addition to the Bible there be an activity of the Holy Spirit to apply to our hearts the revelation of God in the Scriptures. On the other hand, it is literally true that God breathes forth the Scriptures, that is, produces them, creates them and makes them. And He did this by the Holy Spirit — He "Spirited" the Scriptures. Scripture is God's *Word* and, just as our words are the product of our "outbreathing," God's Word is the product of His Divine "outbreathing." This leads us to note that the statement "Scripture is God-breathed" accords with other passages in Scripture, e.g., II Peter 1:19-21, where Peter states that holy men spoke from God, being moved or carried along by the Spirit, and that this is the reason why it is true that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation, that is, where Peter teaches that the author of the words spoken *and written* by holy men is God. The same idea is implied in all the passages that refer to Scripture as the Word of God and that quote Old Testament passages as words, not of the human writers but of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1:16). Those who adopt the translation, "God-breathing," in II Timothy 3:16, weaken the force of this very strong word so that it merely has the figurative sense, "Scripture has a divine influence," and even then cannot find elsewhere in Scripture a similar statement to back up their explanation of II Timothy 3:16. Nowhere does Scripture teach that the Bible breathes forth God, even in a figurative sense.

This is sufficient to prove that *theopneustos* has and can only have the meaning, "God-breathed" or "given by inspiration of God." Those who contend for another meaning are blinded by their stubborn rejection of Scripture's plain and universal claim to be God's, and emphatically, not man's Word. But the context in which the word *theopneustos* occurs substantiates the meaning, "God-breathed." In verse

15, Paul calls the Old Testament books "holy scriptures" or "holy writings." These books are set apart from all other books; they are sacred; they partake of the holiness of God. It is evident that they are holy with God's holiness because they are the holy words of the Holy God — as He is holy, so are His words holy. Thus, *theopneustos*, "God-breathed," follows the phrase, "holy scriptures," very fittingly, explaining why Paul has called the scriptures holy. The same harmony holds between *theopneustos* and that which follows in verses 16 and 17. Paul declares in verse 16 that Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for education in righteousness. Evidently, the reason why Scripture is profitable in these respects is that Scripture is God-breathed. One who takes *theopneustos* to mean "God-breathing" or "having a divine influence" makes Paul guilty of a redundancy in verse 16. For then Paul says that "Scripture has a divine influence and (what amounts to the same thing — DE) is profitable for teaching" etc.

The second element of Barth's explanation of II Timothy 3:16 consists of the notion that Paul merely teaches that the human writers of the Bible were especially obedient so that they wrote down a relatively accurate and reliable account of God's revelation, although they certainly included in their writings many errors. Now it is a puzzle that the Bible can be accurate and reliable on the one hand and filled with mistakes on the other hand. This is the queer, illogical "faith" we are solemnly called to exercise not only by Barth but also by all proponents of a fallible Bible. We are no longer to regard only the truth as reliable but also falsehood. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that we have no "Bible" or appendix to the Bible that lists the errors. What we are concerned with now, however, is this statement of Barth as an explanation of II Timothy 3:16. Then, it strikes us that, although Barth lays all the emphasis upon the *writers* of the Bible and their special obedience, the text says absolutely nothing about the human instruments at all. We do not read that Moses, David and Isaiah were inspired but that *all scripture* is inspired or "God-breathed." As far as the text is concerned, it makes no difference what means God used to produce the Scriptures. The statement of the text is a statement about the finished product, about the 39 books of the Old Testament — they have the attribute of being breathed of God. The text says that the Bible, the *whole* Bible and by implication every part of the Bible, is, as such, the product of the breathing forth of God, that the Bible fell from God's lips. When Barth offers the explanation of this plain phrase, that human writers were especially obedient, he deliberately ignores the main point made by the text. Barth must not say something about the writers, at least, he must not stop with the writers, but he must say something about the *product*, about the 39 books of the Old Testament. He must say they are God-breathed, inspired, so that, as far as the holiness, the authority, the reliability, the accuracy, the infallibility and the inerrancy of these books are

concerned, it is as if God wrote these books with His own finger. To talk merely about the human writers is to ignore the words of the text. But to go on to say, as Barth does, that the product of the efforts of the human writers is full of errors is to drag into the text a most violent (and disobedient) contradiction of what the text itself declares. For this is to maintain that Scripture is, at least in part, *man*-breathed. And this the text denies: "All scripture is *God*-breathed." If Scripture is breathed forth by *God*, it is free from errors no matter what means God used to have it written down. Again, our conclusion can only be that Barth pays no attention to what the Bible says of itself but feels free to ignore and distort and impose his own notions upon the words of Scripture.

The third element of Barth's explanation of the phrase, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," is the claim that the inspiration of the Bible consists not only of the inspiring of the human writers to write but also of the human readers to read with understanding. This also is a claim that lacks a shred of evidence in the passage. The passage teaches, to be sure, that the Bible, as an inspired book, is also profitable for teaching and the rest but it does *not* say that inspiration itself *includes* the element of our reading the Bible in faith. The Bible rather is inspired apart from anyone's understanding it or not understanding it. If no one in the world believed it, the Bible would still be inspired. Because the Bible is inspired, the Holy Spirit can work in the hearts of the elect to accomplish in them a right reading and a right understanding of Scripture, so that they become wise unto salvation. But this right reading is not *inspiration*; it is *revelation*. Inspiration refers to the origin of the Bible and, in connection with this Divine origin, to the Bible's character as the Holy Word of God. Barth imposes on the text his notion that inspiration includes our believing reading of the Bible, by this notion disagrees with all Reformed theology, and muddles two distinct activities of God simply because he rebels against the truth of an inspired book.

If the highly influential champion of the "new orthodoxy" and the outstanding spokesman of the movement to "advance" the Reformed faith fails so

miserably in his "Doctrine of Scripture," we will expect to find consequences in all his theology. Nor are we surprised. Put on guard by his wrong view of Scripture, the standard and source of the faith of the Church, we discover that he does not carry on the principles of Luther and Calvin, purified and developed, but rather adulterates them. On the subject of creation, on the subject of redemption, on the subject of the last things, alien notes are struck and foreign chords are sounded. For all his genius and for all the appealing elements in his theology, Barth does not represent the Reformation nor carry on its principles. And he does not, in large part because he will not, with Luther, Calvin and the genuine sons of the Reformation acknowledge all Scripture to be God's Word and God's Word only.

This is sad, bitterly sad for everyone who loves the Reformed faith, the faith of Scripture, the truth of the glorious Jesus Christ in its richest and fullest manifestation. How powerfully might not Barth have been used by Christ for the firming up of the Reformed faith and for its development in Reformed Churches which are losing the first love, for the stimulation of others who become weary, and for the effective witnessing of the Reformed faith in all churches across the world. How mighty an instrument he might have been with his incredible learning and scholarship, his creative genius, his forceful expression, his large spirit, and his dauntless courage. On the contrary, he attacks our foundations and must be resisted in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Would that he had listened, on the doctrine of Scripture, to H. F. Kohlbruegge, to whom Barth is otherwise respectful:

"The holy men of God were borne by this Spirit personally, not only to bring forth the acts but also to give every single word, just the way it is recorded. This is a truth which every one who knows it by experience would not hesitate to seal with his own blood. What a presumption and want of understanding, what lack of attention, what deplorable blindness and ingratitude is manifest when a person questions the verbal inspiration by the Holy Spirit." (*I Believe in the Holy Spirit*)

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TRYING THE SPIRITS—

Dispensationalism An Ancient Error

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

The premillennial view is the doctrine of the visible and personal reign of Christ on the earth for one thousand years after the Antichrist, the False Prophet and apostate Christendom have been judged and condemned to the lake of fire. This view, in sharp contrast to Postmillennialism, teaches that Christ will not come into a perfect, converted world, but to one of mixed good and evil, with evil, largely, predominating. The slogan of premillennialism is "No millennium until Christ comes." Premillennialists hold that at the Lord's coming, all the elect, of both dispensations, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, which is the rapture, to be immediately followed by His return with all the saints to the earth for the millennial reign.

We are not to confuse the above with Dispensationalism. The most popular form of Premillennialism is Dispensationalism. Its theme is, "Rightly dividing the Word of truth," which means the dividing of Scripture according to seven periods of time, or, as so-called "ultra-dispensationalism" has it, according to ten periods. Usually these eras, ages or dispensations are distinguished in the following order: innocency, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace and the kingdom. The sixth dispensation, that of grace, is the dispensation of the Church. It is said to be *distinguished* from the other periods as a parenthesis in history. But if so, then we must understand the word underscored not to mean "to make eminent, illustrious and worthy of special regard," but merely to separate or divide by some mark or quality. For a parenthesis indicates something of lesser regard, something not of the general trend or main connection. Accordingly, this view sees the Church age as having not only no connection with the preceding one of law, but as standing in sharp contrast to it. The same may be said of the following kingdom age. Although no one has objection to the dividing of Scripture according to periods of time, as such, yet because so much is made of this "mystery parenthesis" as it is called, it ought to be referred to as Mystery-Parenthesis Dispensationalism. The term "dispensationalism" itself does not sufficiently indicate what is so offensive in the system. But to speak of Parenthesis Dispensationalism identifies it,

on the face of it, as a system which puts the Church out of the main stream of God's plan for the ages.

What we have attempted to do above is to set Dispensationalism aside from Premillennialism, historically considered. The latter does not go to the bizarre extremes of Dispensationalism. It does not view the second coming of Christ in two widely separated stages, with a rapture into the air and a coming down to the earth divided by a period of years. Nor is it so narrow as to hold that the "rapture" concerns the church only. For these and other reasons it should be understood that Premillennialism and Dispensationalism are not synonymous terms. All Dispensationalists are premillennial, but not all Premillennialists are dispensational. Therefore, it would be fairer and more clarifying to speak of "historic premillennialism" as over against "dispensational premillennialism" than to attribute dispensationalism as such flatly to the premillennial school. The following were notable historic premillennialists: Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Bengel, Alford, Bonar, Ellicott, W. J. Erdman, H. G. Guinness, W. G. Moorehead, George Muller of Bristol, B. W. Newton, Ryle, A. Saphir, Tregelles, R. C. H. Trench and Nathanael West. Some notable Bible expositors of this school were: Godet, Lange and Zahn. On the other hand, well-known Dispensationalists we have in J. N. Darby, Wm. Kelly, W. E. Blackstone, James M. Gray, A. C. Gaebelien, Wm. L. Pettingill and especially C. I. Scofield. These representatives should by no means be herded into the same corral. Staid pacers do not belong with wild broncos.

The slogan of Dispensationalism is, "All Scripture is *for* us, but it is not all *to* us, or *about* us." Explaining, they say, "Some parts of Scripture have particularly the *Church* in view. Other parts belong to the *Jews*. Therefore, certain sections of the Bible have nothing to do with this present age, but belong to the past and abrogated old dispensation, while other sections concern the future great tribulation, a period which occurs after the Church has departed the earthly scene. Still other portions apply only to the earthly millennial kingdom of Christ." This hacking method of interpreting Scripture chops the Bible into such small fragments that the Christian is robbed of much

of the promises of God. The inspired "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15) does not mean we are to dissect the Bible into pieces, making it a sort of crazy-quilt. Rather it means "to hew a straight line through the Word of truth." But the line Dispensationalism makes through Scripture is disjointed, slip-knotted, sheep-shanked, strained and broken with many gaps intervening along its shabby, ludicrous length.

Dispensationalism has close comparison to Modernism, despite the fact that the former vehemently repudiates the latter. For Dispensationalists claim the evangelical school, accepting the infallibility and divine authority of Scripture. But they become guilty of approaching the Bible according to modernistic methods. For both Dispensationalism and Modernism have a subjective theory of Bible structure. The latter reads the Book of Isaiah applying its subjective method and decides that chapters 40-66 could never have been written by the same prophet, but must have come from a later period. The former reads the Gospel According to Matthew applying its subjective hypothesis, and decides that the Sermon on the Mount is not intended for the Church today, but for a future age, after the Church has gone. These two methods are basically the same, yet the one comes from Modernism's "critical school" and the other from Dispensationalism's "prophetic school."

Although Dispensationalism is a questionable hermeneutical method relatively new, arising as it did in England and Ireland about 136 years ago, its ideas were in some places prevalent 280 years ago. For Puritan John Owen in his *Doctrine of Saints' Perseverance* wrote, "Some labour much to rob believers of the consolation intended for them in the evangelical promises of the Old Testament, though made in the general to the Church on this account, (affirming) that they were made to the Jews, and being to them peculiar, our concernment lieth not now in them" (ital. added).

But it is really no new teaching that God's promises are divided, some to the Church, embracing a heavenly people, and some to the Jews, an earthly people. The Church of England in its Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion was correct when it over three hundred years ago denied this error. The Reformed Episcopal Church in its Article VI puts it thus: "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises..." If any Jews had the faith of Abraham, they were not an earthly people, did not mind earthly things and did not expect earthly promises to be fulfilled to them, but heavenly promises, as Gen. 15:1 and Heb. 11:13-16 clearly and convincingly show.

Over 400 hundred years ago John Calvin wrote in his *Institutes* a beautiful refutation of modern dispensationalism. Says he, "From the preceding observations it may now be evident that all those persons, from the beginning of the world, whom God has adopted into the society of His people, have been federally connected with Him by the same law and the same doctrine which are in force among us: but because it is of no small importance that this point be established, I shall show, by way of appendix, since the fathers were partakers with us of the same inheritance, and hoped for the same salvation through the grace of our common Mediator, how far their condition in this connection was from ours. For though the testimonies we have collected from the law and the prophets in proof of this, render it sufficiently evident that the people of God have never had any other rule of religion and piety, yet because some writers have raised many disputes concerning the difference of the Old and New Testaments, which may occasion doubts in the minds of an undiscerning reader, we shall assign a particular chapter for the better and more accurate discussion of this subject. Moreover, what would otherwise have been very useful, has now been rendered necessary for us by Servetus and some madmen of the sect of the Anabaptists, who entertain no other ideas of the Israelitish nation, than a herd of swine, whom they pretend to have been pampered by the Lord in this world, without the least hope of a future immortality in heaven." (From *The Similarity of the Old and New Testaments*, Bk. II, X, 1). In the next paragraph Calvin says, "The covenant of all the fathers is so far from differing substantially from ours, that it is the very same; it only varies in the administration." But dispensationalism has eight different covenants! Calvin further on adds, "Carnal opulence and felicity were not proposed to the Jews as the mark towards which they should ultimately aspire, but that they were adopted to the hope of immortality, and that the truth of this adoption was certified to them by oracles, by the law, and by the prophets." This being so, the Old Testament brought to the Jews the same high spiritual truth of the New Testament, and proves that the chosen people of the old dispensation were not an earthly people with only material aims and seeking only "earthly blessings." Indeed, "the end of the Old Testament was always in Christ and eternal life." "Then let us drive far away from us this absurd and pernicious notion, either that the Lord proposed nothing else to the Jews, or that the Jews sought nothing else, but an abundance of food, carnal delights, flourishing wealth, external power, a numerous offspring, and whatever is esteemed valuable by a natural man" (II, X, 23). Calvin also points out where the Jews were wrong and are wrong today, namely, "in expecting an earthly kingdom of the Messiah." He calls this expectation a stroke of blindness and also a keeping of "themselves in voluntary darkness." Dispensationalism is then such a grave error that it is both a mark of the righteous judgment of God and the wilful sin of man.

BOOK REVIEWS—

The Acts of the Apostles

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, Vol. II (Calvin's New Testament Commentaries), translated by John W. Fraser; Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.; 329 pp., \$6.00.

Calvin's Commentaries actually need no introduction among us, nor a recommendation. The reissuance of these commentaries, and that too, in a new translation, is a worthwhile project of the Eerdmans Company. This is the kind of literature that must be kept on the market and that must continue to be used by our people. And these are commentaries that should be found in the library of any serious student of Scripture.

This does not mean that we worship John Calvin: in that sense we are no Calvinists. Nor does it mean that we slavishly accept Calvin's explanation of a text of Scripture: Calvin's explanations are not always the correct ones. Besides, it is even true that Calvin's various commentaries are not all of

consistent quality: some are less thorough and give evidence of less study than others.

But Calvin is Reformed, and he always gives evidence of desiring the truth of the Word of God, even when that truth is severe. He is not one who obviously attempts to squirm away from the evident meaning of the text. And this is always refreshing in his commentaries. Thus, for example, when he comes to a passage which plainly teaches God's sovereignty in the matter of salvation, both as far as elect and reprobate are concerned, he is ready to accept what the text teaches. An example of this is found in this particular commentary in his explanation of Acts 28: 25, ff., where the passage from Isaiah 6 which is quoted six times in the New Testament is applied by Paul to the unbelieving Jews to whom he had expounded the Scriptures while he was a prisoner

in Rome. A sample of Calvin's comments on verse 27 will illustrate my point: "We gather from this that the Word of God is not declared to all so that they may return to soundness of mind, but the spoken words ring in the ears of many without the effective power of the Spirit, only so that they may be rendered inexcusable. But here the pride of the flesh rashly cries out against God; just as we see many protesting that it is in vain, yes even absurd, for men to be called, unless they possess the ability to obey. For even if the reason why God appears to the blind, and speaks to the deaf, is hidden from us, yet His will alone, which is the rule of all justice, ought to be like a thousand reasons to us."

Once again, therefore, I recommend Calvin's Commentaries, and this new edition of the Commentary on Acts in particular.

H.C.H.

ATTENTION MEN TEACHERS!

The Board of the Society for Protestant Reformed Secondary Education plans to appoint a principal for our High School in the near future. This appointment will be on a part-time basis initially with the understanding that this can become full-time in September of 1968. Send all correspondence as soon as possible to the Secretary—

Mr. C. Doezeema,
1936 Plymouth Terrace S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church wish to express their Christian sympathy to Rev. M. Schipper, in the death of his sister-in-law:

MRS. HAROLD SCHIPPER

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose.

Gerrit Pipe, Vice Pres.
William Faber, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, mourns the loss of one of its faithful members

MRS. HAROLD SCHIPPER

who at the age of 38 years, entered her eternal rest on Thursday, December 15, 1966.

We also express our deep sympathy to her husband and children and mother-in-law, Mrs. P. Schipper, and commit their needs to the God of all grace. The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Psalm 103:17.

Mrs. J. Van Kampen, President
Mrs. B. Windemuller, Secretary

ATTENTION TEACHERS!

The Board of the Society for Protestant Reformed Secondary Education announces the opening of positions in our High School effective in September of 1968, D.V. All qualified teachers who are interested in accepting a position in the High School at this time are requested to contact the Board. Send all requestes for information to the Secretary:

Mr. C. Doezeema,
1936 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

Dec. 15, 1966

Rev. C. Hanko, of Redlands, Calif., received the call from our church in Holland, Mich.

Rev. D. Engelsma, of Loveland, Colo., declined the call from Hull, Iowa. The consistory has announced a new trio consisting of the Revs. C. Hanko, G. Lubbers and M. Schipper.

* * *

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

October 5 and December 7, 1966

At Holland, Michigan

Rev. G. Lanting presided over the preliminary devotions, and after the credentials were accepted, pronounced the classical session properly constituted. Rev. G. Lubbers, following the order of rotation then presided, while the Rev. Lanting recorded the minutes. All the churches were represented by two delegates each.

The brethren T. Elzinga and S. Bylsma were appointed to serve on the finance committee. Prof. H. C. Hoeksema was granted an advisory vote. And the Rev. G. Van Baren, and Elders D. Meulenberg and M. Klop were appointed to arrange the classical appointment schedule. Classis West requested supply for the churches in Randolph, Edgerton and in the Dakotas. Hope Church also requested pulpit supply.

The following schedule was adopted: Hope - Oct. 23 Lubbers Nov. 6 Harbach Nov. 20 Van Baren Dec. 4 Lubbers Dec. 18 Harbach Jan. 8 Lanting. Randolph - Oct. 30 Van Baren Nov. 13 Lanting Nov. 27 Harbach Dec. 4 Van Baren Dec. 18 Lanting. Jan. 8 Lubbers. Edgerton - Dec. 4, 11 Veldman. Isabel & Forbes - Jan. 8, 15, 22 Schipper.

Classis then considered two appeals and the answers from the consistory of the church from which the appeals came. Classis decided to put this material into the hands of a study committee, consisting of the Revs. Lanting, Harbach, and Lubbers, and the Elders J. DeVries, M. Klop, and D. Engelsma.

Classis voted for two members to serve on the Classical Committee, namely, the Rev. G. Van Baren and the Rev. H. Veldman. They will serve for two years.

The Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily. After the concept minutes were approved, classis adjourned until December 7th.

On December 7th classis continued its October meeting, Rev. Lubbers leading in the opening devotions. Elder S. De Vries took the place of Rev. Lanting who had accepted the call to our Edgerton Church. The committee appointed in October to study the appeals and the answers of the consistory gave its report. Classis dealt with the matter in executive session.

A word of appreciation was expressed to the ladies of our Holland Church for their catering services.

Classis also accepted the invitation of Hope Church to meet there the first Wednesday in January.

After the chairman expressed his appreciation to the committee of pre-advice for their service, and to the classis for its cooperation, classis adjourned. Prof. H. C. Hoeksema offered the closing prayer.

M. Schipper, Stated Clerk

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The Holiday Singspiration sponsored by the Beacon Lights Staff was held in First Church, Grand Rapids, Dec. 11 after the evening service. Don Jonker opened the program with prayer and then turned the meeting over to Jim Schipper to lead the people in singing. Special numbers were: a duet by Mr. and Mrs. C. Jonker, with daughter Marilyn at the piano; a trumpet duet by Don Knoper and son, John, with daughter Donna at the piano. The audience joined in singing appropriate Psalter numbers and Christmas carols, and contributed to the needs of Beacon Lights with an offering.

* * *

Holland bade farewell to Rev. G. Lanting and family in a public gathering Friday evening, Dec. 2. Elder T. Elzinga led in opening devotions. Representatives of the societies - Wilma Haveman of the Young People's, Mrs. Van Kampen of the Ladies, J. H. Kortering of the Men's, each gave a word of farewell to their departing pastor and Elder S. DeVries did so for the consistory. The musical part of the program included a quartet, a trio, and a flute solo. Mr. B. Windemuller made the presentation of remembrance to their pastor of seven years. The program ended with the poignant hymn, "God be with you till we meet again." Time was then given for the enjoyment of refreshments, and the tendering of personal farewells.

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The "Studies in Biblical Doctrines" as prepared by Rev. B. Woudenberg of Lynden, Wash., is finding its way to mail boxes in widely scattered sections; from the southern states of Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee to the wintry north Province of British Columbia in Canada. A British Columbia reader writes, "My name has been sent in by a dear Christian friend. I must say that I am glad as I certainly do enjoy your Bible Studies. Thank you so much for sending them to me..." Indeed, "*The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed ...*"

* * *

Hudsonville's consistory has decided to alternate the preaching schedule so that the Heidelberg Catechism will be preached every other Sunday evening.

* * *

When you look back in '66 and then turn to peer into '67 remember that the Exalted Jesus, the Bright and Morning Star said, "Behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Rev. 22:12.

... see you in church

J.M.F.