

The
Standard
Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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MEDITATION—

Remembering the Source of Our Wealth

by Rev. M. Schipper

"But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day."

Deuteronomy 8:18

But thou shalt remember!

In the context this expression in one form or another may even seem to be hackneyed. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee. . . ." "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God" "Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God"

And then you have the text: "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God"

It is not only possible, but the sad proneness of the human heart to forget, to lose sight of the gracious Giver, and to rest in His gifts! Alas! We cannot deny it! We often rest in the stream, without getting up to the Fountain! We turn the very mercies and

benefits which lade our path in rich profusion into an occasion of self-complacency and gratulation instead of finding in them the blessed ground for continual praise and thanksgiving!

But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God!

For it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth!

That He may establish His covenant! The covenant which He swore unto thy fathers!

Remembering the Source of our wealth!

Truly a theme to contemplate in this thanksgiving season!

Remembering! The Source of the power to acquire wealth!

Jehovah, thy God!

How contrary this is to the imagination of the natural and depraved mind of man! Of man who plans, who lies awake nights laying out the strategems which he will use in the morning to bring about his financial returns, to amass his fortunes! Of man who plunges deeply into the stock market, and who watches greedily the ticker tape to determine the precise moment to sell for quick gain! Of man who, when he becomes religious, may be willing on the day set aside for the nation to enter the houses of worship and to gather there with others to rejoice in the abundance of wealth he with bony fingers piled up before him, and who gleefully exclaims: "Behold what I have amassed by shrewd thinking and careful planning, while others slept, carelessly neglecting their opportunities! What I have acquired with hard work and patient endeavor, while others relaxed and wasted their time and energies!" Of man, who rejoices in the abundance of things, but without God!

Moses knew of the fickleness of the human heart when he declared in the verse preceding our own: "And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." This the children of Israel, according to the flesh, would say when they prospered and became fat in the land.

But God says: I am the One Who gave thee power to acquire wealth! I am He Who giveth thee power to become powerful, the ability to produce riches!

Jehovah thy God!

The I AM THAT I AM! The eternal One! Who did not become, but always was what He is! The Unchangeable, Covenant God!

Jehovah! The Name by which He particularly reveals Himself to His people. On the basis of which He establishes an everlasting covenant with them, a covenant that cannot be broken!

God! The Almighty One! Whose is all power in heaven and on earth! Apart from Whom there is no power, or it must find its source in Him, and in Him alone!

God! The Majestic One! Who shines forth over all the idol gods of the heathen! Whose very Name implies His Self-sufficiency! the great, the glorious God!

He is *our* God!

The text noticeably is directed to God's covenant people! A people redeemed from Egypt, the house of bondage! A people whom He had formed for Himself, and to whom He was revealed as their God! He is not the God of all men! But He makes Himself to become the possession of a people whom He has chosen before the world began, whom He redeems through the blood of His Only Begotten Son, whom He calls out of darkness into His marvelous light, whom He separates from the world, and to whom He reveals Himself as the God of their salvation. A people to whom not only it can be said: He is Jehovah thy God; but who themselves declare: He is Jehovah our God!

He is the source of their power!

Of the power to acquire wealth!

O, to be sure, whatever our estate may be, it is of Him!

Also of weakness and poverty! For He makes not only the rich, but also the poor. He makes not only the strong, but also the weak. He forms the light, and creates the darkness. He makes peace, and creates evil. He, the Lord, does all things! Make no mistake about it!

But the text emphasizes the fact of prosperity, of wealth!

And in this thanksgiving season, when we are surrounded with wealth, and we bathe in luxuries, it is well that we see it all in its proper perspective. Let us acknowledge that it was not acquired by our own power or initiative. Let us say it together: God is the sole Source, both of our strength, and the wealth produced by it. Jehovah, our God, He is the Giver of all we possess!

And He gives not without a definite purpose in mind!

That He may establish His covenant! The covenant which He swore unto thy fathers!

Not that we may consume it upon our lust, has He given. Not that we might conclude that this world is a pretty good place in which to live, and the luxuries of our wealth an aromatic suds in which to relax to the enjoyment of our flesh, has He given. Not for our purpose did Jehovah our God give power to acquire wealth!

But His covenant!

For His covenant's sake, He gave it! That friendship relation between Himself and His people, which is based upon and arising out of the very Essence of God, out of the Trinity of life, love, and friendship which constitute the very nature of His Being! Into which covenant He has incorporated Christ, the Firstborn of all creatures, and in Christ a people chosen by Him!

His covenant! Not a relation we conceived of, or desired to realize; but of His conception, and realized solely by Him!

The covenant He establishes! He causes it to be. He sets it up. He confirms it. This He did eternally in His counsel of peace: a covenant between the Triune God and Christ, the Mediator of His covenant. He establishes it also in history, in

time. This He does in the line of succeeding generations of the believers and their seed. Centrally He realizes it in The Seed, which is Christ, and through Him and His redemptive work, with all the elect of all ages!

The covenant which He swear unto the fathers! To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! And from them to all the fathers in Israel! To these fathers of His covenant promises He swear to fulfill them! All covenants must be ratified and sealed to give assurance of fulfillment. And God swears with an oath for confirmation to these fathers. He swears by Himself, for there is none greater by whom He can swear, that surely blessing He will bless them. (Hebrews 6:13,14).

But in what way is the giving of wealth and the establishment of the covenant related? Is the divine purpose in giving us wealth that we may remember Jehovah? Or, is the giving of wealth that it may be the means to establish His covenant? And if the latter be the purpose, what are we to understand by that wealth? How can it possibly fit into the realization of God's covenant?

The wealth, and the power to produce it, must undoubtedly be understood in the literal, material sense of the word. It refers to material abundance. However, we hasten to add, that material abundance for Israel was always typical, a symbol of spiritual prosperity. In the old dispensation and among the people of God material wealth was typical, as the very land of Israel which flowed with milk and honey was typical of heaven.

This can no longer be said today. Material abundance is no longer a sign of special favor from heaven. It may very well be that one who has the abundance of this world's goods is the object of God's curse, while the child of God who is poor is the object of His favor. Material wealth for the child of God today can only make it more difficult for him to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said: It is easier for the camel to go through the eye of the needle than for the rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Unless the rich of the children of God use their riches as servants to attain unto that kingdom, as means to glorify and to serve God, they can only serve as so many testimonies against them.

But in the text, in the deep sense of the word, wealth spoke to the true Israelite of the grace of

God which was upon him. In the deep sense it referred to all the grace of Christ, through which God would realize His eternal covenant of friendship with His people. And among these graces would be the praise and adoration wherewith that redeemed and covenant people would remember Jehovah their God. Such is undoubtedly the meaning of the text!

God, therefore, in the giving of His gifts realizes His covenant with us. And we, in turn, respond with the praise and adoration of His Holy Name!

But thou shalt remember Jehovah thy God!

To remember is to recollect, to bring to mind! To remember our covenant God is to recall His Name, Jehovah; to recognize Him as our God! And in relation to our gifts, it is to remember that He has given them to us; it is to bring to mind that He has given with a purpose, that He may establish and realize His covenant, the covenant which He made with our fathers and which He is still keeping with their believing seed!

Thou, Israel, church of the living God, which has been redeemed from the bondage of sin and death, of which bondage the enslavement in Egypt was only a type; thou shalt remember! Remember Jehovah, thy God!

Not the world!

How could the world remember what it does not know, what was never made known unto it? Never has Jehovah our God ever signified to that world that He loves them, or that He wishes to establish with them His covenant. All that the world ever hears of God is that He is God and He must be served; and that all who turn their necks from Him shall experience His wrath and hot displeasure. But the world cannot know, and therefore cannot remember that He is Jehovah their God!

Only the redeemed!

Those who have tasted Jehovah's sovereign grace, the grace of redemption in Christ Jesus, Who was greater, much greater than Moses, who led out from that typical bondage! Who belong to that people which Jehovah, our God, is forming by His Word and Spirit, and gathering out of all nations! Who have been formed for His praise!

They shall remember!

And remembering, they shall praise Him!
For all His benefits!

...Even though the calling takes place through the preaching of the gospel, it is not that preaching, nor the preacher, but Christ that calls through the preaching and by His own Spirit. In fact, unless Christ Himself calls there is no preaching. Christ, Who died and rose again, Who is exalted at the right hand of God, and received the promise of the Holy Ghost, is not only the contents of the gospel, He is also our chief Prophet, Who calls His own unto salvation by His mighty Word. It is He that gathers His Church out of the whole world, not we.

H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," p.55

EDITORIAL—

The Nature of the Atonement - Limited or General?

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

THE CONFESSIONS ON THE DEFINITE AND PERSONAL ELEMENT OF THE ATONEMENT (continued)

To some it may seem rather tedious to pass in review the doctrine of the atonement in our confessions in detail. To me it appears highly necessary.

For in all the discussion, both unofficially in the various religious journals which have dealt with the Dekker Case and officially in the Report of the Doctrinal Committee, there is very little appeal made to the confessional position of our Reformed confessions, and still less real, basic appeal to the current teaching of our confessions. Even a superficial consulting of the confessions would have guarded against many of the errors which have made their appearance both in the position of Dekker and Daane, *cum sociis*, and in the position of those who have in vain attempted to gainsay them. But the failure to produce a thorough-going exposition of the confessional teaching concerning the atonement has been characteristic of the entire discussion of these current issues; and it has been fatal.

For this reason I have continued to make a careful, step-by-step study of the current teachings of our Three Forms of Unity concerning the nature of the atonement.

We now turn, therefore, to our Belgic Confession and its teachings concerning the definite and personal element of the atonement. What does this creed have to say on this subject?

We must remember that the Belgic Confession, while it does not follow the subjective, experiential order of the Heidelberg Catechism, but rather the dogmatic, objective order, is nevertheless not entirely objective in its method and statements. The Belgic Confession is a *creed*, a *credo*, in its form. What does this mean? It means that the form of this confession is such that, while it makes many objective statements of the truth of the Word of God and while it follows the dogmatic order, its form is that of a *confession of faith*. It presents the objective truth as the object of the faith and belief of the church. For this reason you will find that every article of this confession is stated in personal form. Each article is introduced by "We believe..." or, "We know..." or, "We confess..."

Now what might be the importance of this?

It is evident, first of all, that this form is quite different than the form of our Canons of Dordrecht. The Canons are also one of our confessions, and as

such they also give expression to our faith, our belief. But the Canons are entirely objective in their form. The Canons of Dordrecht are just what their name implies, namely: canons, rules, norms, standards. And therefore one never finds any personal, subjective statements in the Canons. Article after article our Canons pile up purely objective statements of doctrine about God, about men, about the elect, about Christ, about the cause or blame of this or that, etc. But while their are many objective statements in the Belgic Confession, these are usually, though not exclusively, couched in personal language. That is, even as an article begins with "We believe," so it frequently continues to refer to that "we" in the contents of the article in the same personal form. And it therefore speaks of "us" without further defining it.

This, in the second place, makes it incumbent to ask the question: who is that "we" speaking in the Belgic Confession?

One might be inclined, at first glance, to answer: that "we" is all the members of a given congregation or denomination which holds to the Belgic Confession as one of its standards. And there would be a certain amount of truth in this, as long as one considers the Belgic Confession merely as a *standard*, a *form of unity*, as a doctrinal statement to which the members of that church or denomination formally subscribe and by which they must abide. Thus, for example, if one does not subscribe to the Belgic Confession and promise to abide by it, he cannot be a member of a Protestant Reformed Church.

However, as soon as one begins to view the Belgic Confession as a *credo*, a statement of *belief*, it will be evident that the above explanation is at once too inclusive and too exclusive.

First of all, it is too inclusive: for it includes many false, hypocritical, dead members who do not truly believe and confess what the Confession states. For one reason or another they outwardly and formally subscribe to this doctrinal standard; but in their hearts they do not believe it, and their outward confession is actually a lie. That this is true will be evident as soon as in your imagination you put the personal statements of the thirty-seven articles in the mouth of an unbelieving member of a church which holds to this confession. And especially does it come into sharp focus when you look at the opening statement of the Belgic Confession: "We all believe with the heart, and

confess with the mouth....” What a horrible lie that is in the mouth of an unbeliever! Hence, the preceding explanation is too inclusive.

On the other hand, however, it is also too exclusive. A congregation or denomination, — viewing the Belgic Confession, now, as a doctrinal standard, — certainly expresses that this confession is a standard and ensign which distinguishes it from every other church-denomination as holding these doctrines to be the expression of the truth of God’s Word. But as surely as this confession is held to be the expression of the truth of God’s Word, the faith once delivered to the saints, so surely those who hold this confession express at the same time their unity with all who hold the same truth, the same faith, and therefore their unity with the church of all ages, the holy catholic church, and with all believers, those who profess a like precious faith.

Hence, in all these personal expressions we have the church speaking, the church organically, as it consists essentially of believers and their spiritual seed, that is, God’s people, that is, the elect.

And it is of the utmost importance to remember this, especially in those articles which use this personal language and do not make purely objective statements.

With this in mind, let us see what the Belgic Confession has to say about the question whether the atonement is definite and personal.

Let us turn, first of all, to Article 16. Because of its importance I will quote it in its entirety:

We believe that all the posterity of Adam being thus fallen into perdition and ruin, by the sin of our first parents, God then did manifest himself such as he is; that is to say, merciful and just: Merciful, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all, whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness, hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works: Just, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves.

The reader will perhaps wonder why I quote this article: for it says nothing directly about the atonement.

But I do so for the following reasons:

1) This article confirms what I wrote above concerning the meaning of the personal “we” and “us” in the Belgic Confession, and it does so very beautifully. Notice that in this particular article we have an *objective* statement. The article indeed begins with the usual “We believe....” But when it states *what* we believe, it uses objective language. It does not say, for example, “....Merciful, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition *us*, whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness, hath elected....” But it uses the objective form: “....*all*, whom he....hath elected.” At the same time, however, the article makes plain that the “We” who believe this are those “all” whom God has elected. For notice that in this very article the Confession reverts to the personal form. The “all” are elected “in Christ Jesus *our* Lord.”

2) While this article does not speak directly and precisely of the atonement, it nevertheless includes it; and again, it does so in a very beautiful way. It speaks of the work of God whereby “he delivers and preserves from this perdition” the elect. In that work is included the atonement, for the atonement belongs to this delivering work of God. And the beauty of this statement is that it emphasizes the *unity* of the work of salvation. All the work of salvation, from election, through atonement, through the application of that atonement whereby we are actually delivered from perdition, through the work of preservation, — all the work of salvation is *one*. At no point can you make a break in it, as those attempt to do who try to insist that while the atonement is general, the actual salvation which follows from that atonement is particular.

3) And the root of the entire matter lies in that significant phrase, “in Christ Jesus our Lord.” There you have the key to the whole issue concerning the atonement, the key to the entire issue at stake in the Dekker Case, the key also to the understanding of the error of those who try to oppose Dekker’s views but nevertheless want to maintain that there are some kind of “common grace” benefits in the atonement. It is absolutely impossible to find anything in Christ’s atonement for any others than the elect, for the very simple reason that only the elect, none others, are in Christ Jesus! I am reminded, in this connection, that Dr. James Daane has on more than one occasion, for some inexplicable reason, tried to make a great point of this being *elected in Christ Jesus*. Well, I believe and our confessions believe, this doctrine of election in Christ Jesus. And for this very reason I also believe that it must be plain beyond a shadow of a doubt that the atonement of Christ is in its very nature, according to its very divine design, and that too, from all eternity in the divine decree, LIMITED, that is, PARTICULAR, DEFINITE, and PERSONAL. Our Lord Jesus Christ is God’s elect *par excellence*. God chose Him, chose Him first, chose Him to stand at the head of all the elect. There is no election, except in Him. And for that very reason, there are no men in Him, except the elect.

The matter is very simple, after all.

The question is this: *who are in Christ Jesus?* Who are in Christ Jesus when He is born in the fulness of time? Who are in Christ Jesus when He suffers all His lifetime on earth? Who are in Christ Jesus when He goes to the cross and sheds His atoning, justice-satisfying blood? And who are in Christ Jesus when He is raised from the dead and exalted?

Certainly, there are no benefits for anyone who is not in Him! A little child can understand this. There are benefits, of whatever kind they may be, only for those who are *in Him* when He accomplishes all His work and obtains those benefits. If a man is not *in Christ Jesus*, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that pertains to Christ Jesus, — no justification, no righteousness, no forgiveness, no holiness, no sanctification, no preservation, no glory, no life eternal, — nothing in Christ Jesus for him.

And who are in Christ Jesus?

Our confessions have but one ultimate answer to that question: "all whom he, (God), in his eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness, hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works."

4) Finally, while this is not directly related to the question under consideration, we should not fail to note that this article tells us something about the important question whether grace is an attribute of God. True, it does not mention grace literally; it speaks of God's mercy. But God's mercy is closely related to His grace; and you may be sure that if mercy is a divine attribute, so also is grace. And notice what this article

says: "...God then did manifest himself *such as he is*; that is to say, merciful and just...." This is plain language.

But in concluding this installment, I want to emphasize once more the important point that there is absolutely nothing in Christ Jesus and His work, including the atonement, for anyone except those that are in Him, that is, the elect. The atonement is definite and personal in its very nature and design.

And, as we shall see, the rest of the Belgic Confession, when it speaks specifically of that atonement, confirms this fundamental principle of Article 16.

(to be continued)

ALL AROUND US—

Pike on Trial Troubles from Vatican II Another Kind of Resurrection

by Prof. H. Hanko

PIKE ON TRIAL

October 23-28 was the date set for the meeting of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church. The bishops meeting here will have a matter on their agenda which seldom appears any more on the agendas of ecclesiastical assemblies: the trial of a clergyman for heresy. The clergyman under attack in this case is Bishop James A. Pike. This is not the first time that he has been charged with heresy, nor is this the first time that controversy has swirled around him. In the last years Pike seemed to have derived a peculiar delight from creating storms of controversy with his views. He was always speaking out on something or other; and what he had to say was inevitably heretical.

Earlier this Fall he resigned his position as Bishop in the Diocese of California and became a staff research fellow with the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California. He still retained the title of auxiliary bishop, a title which a short time ago he also resigned giving as his reason his unwillingness to involve his successor in the present quarrel. But he still retains his office and the attempt is now being made to unfrock him.

What is different about the charges brought against Pike this time is the fact that they are being brought by a fellow bishop—one who is a very influential prelate within his Church. Bishop Louttit of Southern Florida has filed the charges and has persuaded at least thirty other bishops to support him and endorse his request. His prediction was that he would gain as many as one hundred on his side. Bishop Louttit explains his request for a heresy trial on the grounds

that he is weary of the trouble created by Pike's liberal views. He charges Pike with heresy, violation of his ordination vows, and conduct unbecoming a clergyman. Although the outcome of the trial is uncertain, what is certain is that Pike is indeed a heretic even by Episcopalian standards. He openly denies such fundamental doctrines as the truth of the Trinity, the Virgin Birth of Christ, the Physical Resurrection of Christ, and consequently, Christ's divinity.

While Pike is no longer an active bishop in the church, he intends to fight the charges made against him to the end. It is his opinion that the issue is not one of heresy, but of whether "the Episcopal Church confines itself to a narrow interpretation of theology or allows its traditional wide range of freedom in seeking the truth." In other words, to Pike the issue is whether or not the church will give him the freedom to believe anything he chooses even though his views may conflict with Scripture and the historic confessions of the church. In his warped opinion, this is the true conception of pursuing the truth.

Although there are many Episcopalians who have, for a long time, been alarmed by Pike's views, still the leaders in the Church are deeply worried. They are concerned about what disastrous effects a heresy trial will have on the Church's image and what will be the result of the bitter conflicts created in the Church by such a trial. They have tried to persuade Louttit to abandon his charges, but have not succeeded.

At this writing, it is not yet known what the House of Bishops decided, although reports are that the House of Bishops will let Pike off with a severe rep-

rimand of one sort or another, thus permitting him to retain his office and hoping that, out of the active work of the ministry, he will not be such a bother to the Church.

In a sense, not Pike is on trial, but the Episcopal Church itself. Any Church which can tolerate such heretics as Pike obviously is, cannot claim the right any longer to be a Church. The very fact that Pike has been permitted to speak his views so long without official censure is clear evidence that the Church has lost her heritage; and it will be hard put to reclaim it — even should Pike be condemned and ousted.

Of broader interest is the fact that in this day of ecumenism, heresy trials are increasingly unpopular and few in number. The point is, quite obviously, that the church cannot be ecumenical and at the same time maintain the truth. It must make a choice between the two, for they in this day are mutually exclusive.

TROUBLES FROM VATICAN II

It is just possible that Vatican II, finished last year in Rome, may have lit a fire which cannot be put out. It appears that many prelates within the Romish Church have taken Vatican II as a signal that they are released from the authority of the Church and are given the green light to pursue their theological studies with complete freedom. This is apparently the chief issue in the troubles of the Roman Catholic Church. There have always been many within the Church who have not been in agreement with the teachings of their Church, but have kept a discreet silence for the most part since there is no room for deviation from accepted dogma. There was always just as much heresy in this denomination as anywhere else. Only it did not come to the surface very often. But now this seems to be changing. Members of the hierarchy are daring to speak publicly of their forbidden views; and what they have to say is often a challenge to the Church's position.

Two recent events make this clear. And these two events show also that the Pope is quite alarmed by it all.

The first event is a meeting of twelve hundred Roman Catholic scholars held in Rome with Protestant observers and called the International Congress on the Theology of the Second Vatican Council. The official Vatican Radio had one explanation of the reason for the meeting. Speaking of the treasures of truth contained in the Council's decrees, it spoke of the purpose of the meeting as being to reflect on the effects they have caused, and interpret the spirit of the Council and the whole concept of conciliar theology. But the Italian Radio was a bit more blunt — and to the point. It described the purpose of the meeting as being to mend the serious rifts within the Catholic Church over interpretations of Vatican II decrees.

That the latter description is probably more correct is substantiated by the greetings which the Pope sent to the meeting, in which he warned sharply of the dangers present in the Church to separate theologizing from the teachings of the Church and described this tendency as the road to heresy. He spoke of the danger

of ignoring the hierarchy's authority in matters of doctrine and faith; and made it quite plain that he was not about to surrender his own authority in these matters.

The second event which emphasizes the dangers following upon Vatican II was the publication of a secret letter sent to all the bishops signed by Cardinal Ottaviani, secretary of the congregation. The letter was sent last July and just recently made public.

Some quotes from the letter will demonstrate its purpose. (The quotes are taken from *Our Sunday Visitor*).

It is the grave duty of the entire people of God to see that the doctrinal and disciplinary decisions of the council are brought into effect.

It is the right and duty of the hierarchy, however, to regulate with vigilance, direct and promote the movement toward renovation begun by the council....

However, we are compelled to grieve at the sad news we have received concerning abuses in the interpretation of the council's doctrine prevailing in various areas, and the strange and audacious opinions arising here and there which are more than slightly disturbing the souls of many of the faithful.

Studies and undertakings designed for a more accurate investigation of the truth by properly distinguishing between what must be believed and what is a matter of opinion are praiseworthy; but from the documents examined by this sacred congregation it is clear with regard to not a few opinions that they easily transgress the limits of a mere opinion or hypothesis and seem to affect dogma itself and the foundations of faith to a certain degree.

Some of the doctrines and abuses referred to are:

- 1) The attack on sacred revelation; i.e., treating Scripture without consulting tradition.
 - 2) The teaching of evolution of dogma with the resulting doctrine that dogma is subject to change.
 - 3) The neglect of the authority of the hierarchy.
 - 4) The denial of objective truth, making all truth relative and subjective.
 - 5) The denial of miracles, the divinity and resurrection of Christ.
 - 6) The denial of the Romish interpretation of the sacraments.
 - 7) The denial of the teaching of the Council of Trent on the matter of original sin.
 - 8) The acceptance in some circles of the "new morality" and "situation ethics".
 - 9) The fostering of a spirit of ecumenism which is willing to sacrifice fundamental dogmas of the Church.
- The letter was intended to be secret and remained so for some time. But it was made public because "certain daily newspapers have not hesitated to publish some parts of it — in spite of the fact that the nature of the letter demanded complete discretion — and have misrepresented the proper substance of the document." So it was said, "We are publishing it lest doubts arise concerning what the letter does indeed contain and what purpose the Holy See intended it to have."

It appears as if the winds of change are blowing into a gale. And this gale is blowing the Church in the direction of the same modernism which is running rampant in so many other denominations. All this will

surely enhance the possibilities of union and advance the ecumenical movement.

ANOTHER KIND OF RESURRECTION

A new society has been formed with the name, "Life Extension Society". Its periodical is called "Freeze-Wait-Reanimate" which rather clearly expresses their purpose. They propose that a person, when he dies, have his body frozen rather than buried or cremated. This will cost a mere \$4,000.00 plus \$150.00 a year for maintenance. The idea is that at some time in the future, science will succeed in discovering the secret of life and will be able to "resurrect" these bodies and restore those who have died to a long life in the world.

Such foolish ideas are really of very little interest to us. What does interest us, however, is the fact that this is put into a Christian perspective. Proponents of this program claim that their ideas conform precisely to Christian teachings since the sacredness of

life is stressed by Christianity and the old Christian explanation of the resurrection is surrounded by a great deal of myth. In other words, this is science's explanation of the resurrection from the dead. What Scripture says is myth; this is what we must look forward to.

It is intriguing also that while theologians generally scoff at the whole idea, the reasons why they scoff are quite different from what we would expect. They are not concerned about the denial of the truth of Scripture involved. They are rather worried about what reanimation will do to the problem of overpopulation. Or what reanimation will do to man himself who is a profoundly historical being and cannot likely live in a different historical setting than the one into which he was born.

How blessed is the hope of the child of God who awaits the final resurrection of his body, when he shall be made like unto the glorious body of Christ, to dwell forever in heaven!

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

Assurance A Phantasm In Modernism

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

Christianity has a very strong view of personal assurance of salvation. This is so because the Christian believes that the objective word of his sovereign Lord determines being, reality and destiny. He said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." The Christian believes that Christ spoke these words, and believing them he has that eternal life through His name. He knows that Christ's word was written and recorded in order that he might know that he has eternal life. The Christian has the blessed assurance of possessing eternal life more fundamentally because he believes a little theology, than merely because he can boast of "Christian experience." His theology comes from the revelation of God, and begins with the doctrine of God. He stands on the word of Christ who said, "I am the Son of God" (Jn. 10:36), and "I and the Father are one" (v. 33). He much prefers the testimony of Satan's cohorts to that of lying liberals. The former were as truthful on this point as elect angels, because they knew Him (Mk. 1:33) and confessed Him to be Jesus of Nazareth, not only, but also the Holy One of God (v. 24), and Jesus, Son of the Most High God (5:7). Before he will take the word of a modernist churchman, he prefers the testimony of more honest enemies of Christ who rightly

charged Him, "Thou...makest thyself God" (Jn. 10:33). The modernist has no such doctrine of God. In fact, because he does not ascribe the honor of Godhood to the Son, he does not honor the Father (5:23). But he does not want any doctrine of God. He cannot stand theology. Nor can he tolerate any Christology. He prates about Christian experience and Christian conduct. He wants to interpret Christianity in terms of "the common consciousness." The essence of Christianity, he will tell you, is moral integrity. What does this mean in relation to Christian assurance? According to modernism, the assurance of faith is the certainty that moral integrity is a good thing. One would suppose this rather obvious; no question about it. But how do they ever arrive at such a conclusion, when they have always considered all moral standards and religious truth as relative? They have never had a doctrine of God, have never believed that God is the God of truth, and is the absolute standard of all truth. To them, there is no absolute truth. What then makes a general prevailing morality so desirable? Certainly they cannot expect to keep their ethical sanity in balance with their own God-is-dead Frankenstein running around loose! How can they talk of moral integrity when their own illegitimate child, the New Morality, goes around screaming that evil is good, good is evil, black is white and white black!

There are some who still talk of morality as the one essential ethic of man, yet who do so without the least pretense to religion. The ethical culture societies, with their Hollywood and Broadway conceptions of morality, have advocated virtue while refusing to be known as religious, and actually repudiating all theology. But their moral standards, not as high as those of Ann Landers, are about as commendable as those of an American judge. The modernists and others of the liberal establishment, like the Unitarians, are great with their pious moral platitudes, and claim to have for their ethical philosophy a religious basis. The Unitarians still keep up this religious pretence. They have not yet openly taken a stand where in all honesty they belong, namely, to some such far left as the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism. For they still claim to be religious, although their religion is a sort of ersatz "theology." It is really not a substitute for theology, for the simple reason that religion cannot be substituted and still be religion. When nothing is taken from nothing, the remainder is nothing.

The ethical culture societies do not speak of a theological hope or of a religious assurance. They have a boot-strap philosophy. They keep telling themselves, "Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better." Now the jargon of the liberal churches is really no different from this purely secular ethic-ism, yet they hide behind the Christian name, while at the same time they try to renounce all Christian theology. They want to interpret the fundamentals of the faith Auburn-Affirmation style, that is, for example, they want to be free to say that the virgin birth may just as well mean, among other possible understandings of it, that Jesus was born of a virgin who became pregnant by a Roman soldier. One wonders why they, like the Unitarians, continue under the least semblance of church and moral theology. For they have no theology; the latter especially boast of having none, yet they maintain theological seminaries, church buildings, public worship services and want government recognition as religious organizations. When they do speak of any spiritual assurance, they do not mean that they can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, whom I shall see for myself." (Job 19:25, 27) Their theme song is, "Nobody Lives Forever."

Though the religious liberals deny the verbal inspiration and divine authority of Scripture, and so disown theology, they still appeal to a chameleon theology or a "front" theology of their own devising. They obtain it not from Scripture, for they are constantly rejecting the Scriptures, would do away with it entirely if they could, as is evident from their Good-speed, Moffatt and Revised Standard Versions of the Bible. Yet they continually appeal to Scripture as an authority for their non-theology. A generation ago the religious liberals made religious experience, not Scripture truth, man's guideline. This means that relative to all that beyond human experience they were agnostic. Now the reference of religious experience must advance to a higher level in the realization of Socialism.

It is possible to have Christian experience based on theology, but it is not possible to build a theology on the basis of religious experience. For the question is, Whose experience shall be the norm of religion? the man-centered liberal's experience? or the anti-theological agnostic's? Modernists see that experience is not the best teacher, because it is not a sufficient ground for religion. There must be another foundation for a "new theology." But apart from Holy Writ, no adequate foundation has been found, nor can be. So the liberal religionists have claimed that their religion needs no foundation. They say that the religion of Jesus would stand even if it could be proved that Jesus never existed. For modern liberalism is a method rather than a system of doctrine. Modernism does not concern itself with *what* to think; merely with *how* to think. This will surely prove to be a waste of time, for why spend hours learning how to think when there is nothing to think about? There is no absolute truth. There is nothing true in itself, true always, under all circumstances and conditions. Truth is relative, that is, it is actually not true, but is to all practical purposes merely a quasi-truth. The best that man can do to arrive at the "truth" is by a gradual evolutionary process to proceed from the false to the less false. Religious experience may then be *considered* true, or at least we let it pass. We use it, rather than accept it as true. Then there is no need to think of assurance. The assurance of faith is superfluous. There is not one proposition in our entire religious scheme that is objectively true. How then can we honestly speak of assurance with reference to it? Take, for example, the proposition, I believe the resurrection of the body. Where is there place for assurance in reference to a statement not claimed to be true?

You see, with the religious liberals, truth has been dead from the beginning. From them, not from the academic atheists, came the god-is-dead "theology." They all along have believed that truth has been dead. Then they have really believed that the God of truth is dead. Some will admit this flatly. One of the most representative of the religious liberals is Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, known for his ministry at New York City's Riverside Baptist Church. He pretends to disagree with the God-is-dead fad. This is like a Romney-Republican or a Scranton-Republican debating a Democrat. Democrats-in-disguise debating Democrats deceive only the sophomoric. When liberals debate liberals, there is no controversy, no contest. Fosdick pretends to disavow the God-is-dead philosophy, yet he claims "the God Who Will Take Care of Everything" is dead. "Certainly," he explains, "the King of Glory ruling the universe from a golden throne is dead. The God That Walked in the Garden in the cool of the day... is dead, too." He avers that in the age of The Bomb, "the God of Battles" must die, and thinks that the hardest God to bury is the one who makes things come out right. "It takes real maturity to get rid of him!" It is perhaps more difficult, however, to make the infallible God who defines right and wrong to die off. Fosdick wishes the, as he calls Him, anthropomorphic God of the Scriptures dead, while he dreams that his

pantheistic god lives. His god who demands that we work for Socialism and world peace is not dead. Fossdick has a pious god reached through a conditional philosophy. "If we want physical results, we must fulfil physical conditions. If we want spiritual results, we must fulfil spiritual conditions...Modern religion says: Go out in God's world and fulfil His conditions. If you want health, fulfil the conditions of health...Sow good will and reap a better world..." He gets close to his god wherever there is truth. Truth "does not come to man through magical handwriting on the wall, or spelled out on stone tables, but from the inner counsel of the heart" (*Reader's Digest*, Oct. 1966, p. 67). This

brings us back to the abandoned religious ground of human experience. "God" is nothing more than the mental projection of man's two-by-zero brain.

Christian experience, genuine and valid, is based on the standard of infallible Scripture, the doctrine of the triune God, the person, work and teaching of Christ, the doctrine of the vicarious atonement, the particular redemption. For without this foundation one may speak of some fantastical, ethereal, mystical experience, but not Christian experience. Deny these fundamentals of the faith, and your vocabulary is not entitled to the concept *God*, nor to the word *assurance*.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

The Book of Hebrews

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS

by Rev. G. Lubbers

The book of Hebrews is part of the sacred, canonical Scriptures. Although there were some, both in the Eastern and Western ancient church, who entertained doubts as to its having a proper place in the Canon, it was nevertheless gradually acknowledged as belonging with the authentic books of the Bible. In the third Century, Origen wrote concerning the book of Hebrews, "God alone knows who wrote it". He accepted it as Scripture. It was at the Council of Carthage in 397 A.D. that the N.T. Canon was definitely established. The decree of this Council was "that aside from the canonical Scriptures nothing is to be read in the church under the Name of divine Scriptures". Among the Scriptures mentioned the book of Hebrews also finds a place. The emperor Constantine assigned to Eusebius the task of publishing "fifty copies of the divine Scriptures". This established the standard and precedent which gave recognition to all doubtful books, including Hebrews. The publication of the Vulgate virtually determined the matter.

It has been the testimony of the church universal that the book of Hebrews too belongs to the sacred Scriptures, which are God-inspired, and therefore are profitable for instruction, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, in order that the man of God be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. (I Tim. 2:16, 17) It is in the conviction that Hebrews is the Word of God, written by a holy man, moved by

the Spirit, and that it is not of private interpretation, that we set ourselves to the task of writing somewhat at length on this epistle. May it please our covenant God that we may finish writing on this book in its entirety.

I have no vain pretensions of adding a new chapter to what able scholars, ancient or modern, have written on this subject. We will benefit from their labors, whether we agree or disagree with them. Those readers who would further pursue the study of the book of Hebrews beyond the scope of what we offer here in these essays we refer to such works as the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, pages 1355-1362; *New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia*, Vol. V, pages 192. For a rather complete survey of the writers on Hebrews we refer to the Commentary of Franz Delitzsch, pages 22-35, where the author gives a list of both ancient and modern writers, no less than 70 in number. The book of Hebrews has ever been a source of inspiration for the church, and in every generation there have been those who taught the people and gave them to drink from its rock-bottom truths concerning Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament shadows and types!

The letter to the Hebrews is designated by the writer himself to be a "word of exhortation". (Heb. 13:22) Writes he: "And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation; for I have written a letter unto you in few words." Many are these ex-

hortations in this letter. Each exhortation is based upon the solid basis of some aspect of the work of God in Christ, the great High-Priest. The central exhortation which constitutes the key-note exhortation we find in Hebrews 2:1-4. If this exhortation is not heeded, then there is no heeding of any of the warnings, threatenings and admonitions of the writer. For a catalogue of such exhortations we refer the reader to Hebrews 3:1: "Let us consider the apostle and high-priest of our confession"; Hebrews 3:12, "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there be in anyone of you an evil heart of unbelief"; Hebrews 4:1, "Wherefore let us fear lest we do not enter into the rest"; Hebrews 4:14-16, "Let us draw near to the throne of grace in full assurance."; Hebrews 6:1, "Let us press on to perfection"; Hebrews 10:22, 23, 24, "Let us draw nigh. . . Let us hold fast. . . Let us consider one another unto good works"; Hebrews 12:2, "Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us"; Hebrews 12:25, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh"; Hebrews 13:1, "Let the love of the brethren continue", etc. Surely it is a word of exhortation. And when we read that it is a "word of exhortation," this is very evident from the entire epistle.

However, we have more than mere exhortation in this letter, treatise or sermon, or whatever it be called. We have here solid instruction from the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the meaning and intent of all the prophecies and shadows as they have their fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The writer is a man who thoroughly understands the Scriptures; one who is mighty in the Scriptures. He understands and hears what God spoke of old time through the prophets to the fathers, and what God hath spoken in these last times through a Son. (Heb. 1:1, 2) And that which God hath spoken of "old time" and what He "spoke in these last times" the writer will unfold together with the exhortation to stand in the fulfilment of the promises by faith.

The book of Hebrews takes in the entire field of the Old Testament Scriptures: Moses, the Psalms, and all the prophets. This does not mean that Hebrews quotes from every "book" of the Old Testament Canon. Of the 39 books of the Old Testament Hebrews quotes from 13 books, either directly, key sections, or makes merely allusions to certain passages. All told, there are some 52 quotations from the Old Testament in Hebrews. These quotations are from the 5 books of the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) from II Samuel, I Chronicles, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Haggai and Zechariah. This means that there are 26 books which are not mentioned. Nonetheless, the chain of argument from the books quoted is such that all the teaching of the remaining books is included.

We take serious issue with those who hold that the writer to the Hebrews has a "working concept" which is the "Logos-doctrine of Philo," which he relates to the "religious history of Israel, as it culminates in Christianity." We freely concede that the history of Israel as culminating in Christianity" is the warp-

and-woof of the Hebrew-argument. However, we reject the "working concept" which is purported to be Philo's Logos-doctrine. So little does the writer to the Hebrews in any way even suggest or allude to the "Loges-doctrine of Philo" that one is amazed that it is asserted. The writer begins with God speaking of old time through the prophets (in prophets) to the fathers and now speaking in these last times through His Son. This is a far cry from the attempt of the learned, yet ignorant Philo, who lived about the time of Christ. He was born about 20 years before Christ at Alexandria. He was a thoroughly Hellenistic Jew, who had sat at the feet of learning of the Greek poets and philosophers, such as Homer, Hesiod, Pinder, Plato and others. His was the attempt to weave into one pattern Plato and the teaching of Moses and all the prophets. His was the teaching not of the living God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and the creature which was made very good, but rather the Persian dualism of spirit and matter, the former being good and the latter evil. And to bring this good All-Spirit with the evil material world, he needed the so-called intermediate being called the Logos. "The Logos of Philo is shadowy, unreal, not a Person; there is no need of atonement; the High-priest intercedes, but has no sacrifice to offer as the basis of his intercession, least of all that of Himself; the Old Testament types are only typical ideas, not typical facts; they point to the Prototypal Idea in the eternal past, not to the antitypal Person and Fact of History; there is no cleansing of the soul by blood, no sprinkling of the Mercy-Seat, no access for all through the rent veil into the immediate Presence of God; nor yet a quickening of the soul from dead works to serve the living God." Thus Edersheim writes in his "The Life and Times of Jesus," Vol. I, page 49, 50. And Prof. Edersheim continues, "If the argumentation of the Epistle to the Hebrews is Alexandrian, it is an Alexandrianism which is overcome and past, which only furnishes the form, not the substance; the vessel, not its contents."

If the latter were true, then we would needs have to assume that elements of divine revelation were borrowed from the philosophers by the Holy Spirit to interpret the Old Testament Scriptures. However, the life-and-world view here given was taught in the Old Testament Scriptures, was spoken clearly in "these last days" by God in the Son, who spoke of the reconstitution of all things through the coming of John, the Forerunner. (Matt. 17:11; Mk. 9:12) Thus the Holy Spirit spoke of John by the mouth of the prophet Malachi, 4:5, 6: "...before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." The entire reasoning of the writer to the Hebrews is not from a formal Logos-doctrine, but it is arrived at by the sound exegesis which the Holy Spirit gives concerning the teaching and implications of the entire Old Testament Scriptures! Did not Abraham already see the heavenly country? And David in the Spirit prophesies of what "the LORD said to my Lord." (Psalm 110:1)

We have spoken above, in passing, of the sound exegesis of the Holy Spirit here in the writer to the

Hebrews. A rather careful study of the book of Hebrews will indicate that the Key-passages for the proper interpretations of the Old Testament is found in the Psalms. The meaning of the Psalms, the Christ in His exaltation through suffering, is placed strikingly on the foreground. The constant reference to Psalm 110:1 and 4 shows that this is the pivotal truth which explains all of the types and shadows as to their glorious fulfilment. Here we may learn an infallible hermeneutical principle, that the Scripture must be interpreted in the light of Scripture, as well as the axiom that the less clear must be interpreted in the light of what is more clearly expressed. Such a touchstone we have here in the case of the Psalms quoted in Hebrews.

Psalms indeed are poetry. True poetry interprets life and reality and history. And the poetry of the Spirit in the mouth of David, who is a prophet (Acts 2:30), is the Holy Spirit's interpretation of the meaning of

Israel's history and existence "till the Seed should come." (Gal. 3:19-22) Nowhere is that meaning of the throne of David set forth more clearly than in Psalm 110:1. So clearly is this stated that Christ Himself used it to shut the mouth of the Jews, so that they durst ask Him no more questions. (Matt. 22:41-46) The Spirit by whom David prophesied testified here in the hearts of these Pharisees. The same Spirit infallibly interprets this same Psalm in Hebrews, showing the bearing that this has when the Priestly reality of the temple is connected with the throne of David. It is the teaching of the King-Priest after the Order of Melchisedek.

May we search the Scriptures and be led by the Spirit along sound exegetical paths, applying the correct rules of Biblical Hermeneutics! It is with this resolution that we will begin our study of the epistle to the Hebrews!

IN HIS FEAR—

Honour To Whom Honour

2

by Rev. J. A. Heys

Might does not make right!

Might often usurps right and destroys those who have the right. But might never makes right. There is a tremendous difference between power in the sense of ability, force, strength to accomplish and power in the sense of authority, right to rule. And it is because man today has such a potential, such a power to disregard and defy those with the right to rule that we have the chaos which is so evident in today's world of revolution and riot, revolt and rebellion. What the individual could never do without being apprehended and punished, the mob can do today. You just cannot arrest a whole city of evildoers and put them in jail. Crime punishment has become just too expensive a matter to make it possible for the authorities to pursue it except for the isolated case of an outstanding evildoer. You just cannot for financial reasons imprison a whole city that disregards the law. And men are quick to learn this. The mob gets away with that which the individual fails to "pull off" with impunity.

This is so evident not only in race riots but also in the many strikes that plague our nation. Both, of course, are taking the law in your own hand and proceeding from the premise that might does make right.

You have the ability to do it, and therefore it is proper to do so. You have the other "over the barrel," and there are so many with you performing the same evil practice that the authorities are going to "let you get away with it" because they have not room enough in their jails, and it would cost too much to feed and lodge you till the trial. Right then bows before might.

Now both come from God. Let us bear that in mind. The right to rule comes from God, but so does the power wherewith men seek to overthrow right. No, it is not given them with the calling to disobey and to overthrow the authorities. It is given man in order that he may serve the Living God in a walk that honours those in authority, and therefore in order that they may walk in His fear. God has one purpose with every gift which He bestows upon man. He declares through the mouth of Solomon in Proverbs 16:4, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea even the wicked for the day of evil." That last phrase may raise some questions and even objections, but there it is nevertheless. Our concern at the moment is with the first part of the verse. God has made all things for Himself. And that means that when He gives us physical power, abilities and talents, position and office, it all is that you may serve Him therewith.

When, then, He has also appointed men over you to rule in His name, He commands you with this physical power, ability, talent, position and even office to be subject to Him through honouring those whom He has placed in authority over you.

The right to rule does not of necessity imply sin. Authority over others is not a temporary arrangement of God from the fall of man until the return of Christ. Adam was king by virtue of his creation; and Eve, although there was no evil in her yet, nor yet in Adam's soul, was in subjection to Adam. And so were the beasts of the field and all the earthly creation. Genesis 1:26 does not look at a point after the fall when it declares, "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Did you ever go fishing? And they would not bite! What could you do about it? Very plainly *after* the fall man has no such dominion over the fish of the sea. Did you every try to rule a balky mule? Try to load a truck with cattle? The right may have been there, if they are your cattle, but the might so often is sorely lacking. Today we have no dominion — either as physical power, nor right to rule — over all the earthly creatures. Certainly we have no right in ourselves. For we are sinners who have forfeited the right even to live in God's glorious creation. We do not deserve to live, to be born, to beget a family, to breathe God's air and eat His food. We have it, and the human race receives these, because in God's counsel there is a particular work for each of us to do. But we certainly do not deserve these. We deserve only the wages of sin, which is death.

Adam was created as the head of the whole human race. But he was also created as the king of the whole earthly creation. And to this Genesis 1:26 refers. God created him in His own image to have, the moment he came into being, dominion over all the earthly creatures. He was king of the earthly creation as well as its priest who must dedicate and consecrate it all to God, must live from the principle: The Lord hath made all things for Himself." Further, if we wish to argue that Genesis 1:26 looks to the new creation in which man will have such dominion with Christ over the new earth, we do no violence to Scripture; but let us remember then that exactly thereby we establish the truth that authority and the giving of authority do not imply sin necessarily. There will be no sin in that new creation; and yet there are some shall "rule" over ten cities and some over five. Luke 19:17-19. Besides Christ will be on the throne in the new Jerusalem. He is our Eternal King and will never give up His throne.

The moment you get two people together, one must have authority over the other, be they ever so sinless. We read also, therefore, of ranks and degrees in the world of holy angels. Michael is called the Archangel, that is, chief messenger. But even then, this indicates an authority over other angels. The host of holy angels needs rule and regulation, authority and dominion. All the singers or orchestra players who

desire a perfect rendition, in harmony with that desire will readily agree to have a conductor to tell them the exact moment when to start singing or playing, at what speed to sing or play, when to come in with their part, with what volume to come in so as to let the melody sing through, and all that which makes for a perfect and pleasing rendition. Does that mean that such a conductor implies that they all hate each other and want to spoil the rendition? Of course not! Whenever you get two or more people together, one has to have the right to say what they will do.

How much more mandatory is this when you deal with sinful men. Adam and Eve were created facing God. One joint and mutual desire they had: To serve and glorify God with all His earthly creation. Eve needed Adam's leading and authority to tell her how they could perform this joint work. They were to dress and keep the garden. But Adam had the right to decide in what corner of the garden they would do this today and in what corner tomorrow. And there was no argument from her, for she was without sin. Her might she did not try to use to usurp Adam's right. His love for her she did not try to use to get her own way. They had no children yet to honour their father and their mother. But Eve had Adam to honour. And it cannot be denied that much of the failure of children today to honour their father and mother is learned in the home where the wife does not honour her husband. But let us leave this for later. The point here is that after the entrance of sin into the world, there was an added need for rule being invested in men to make laws, enforce them and punish the evil doer. This is evident in the little dialogue that followed in paradise when God came and spoke to Adam and Eve. Eve did not honour God nor her husband but blamed the whole sorry mess on the serpent. Adam did not honour God Who had made him king over such a vast domain but blamed God for giving him this woman. Plainly both had lost their true knowledge and their fear of the Lord. They did not stand in awe and reverence before Him; and they were still walking in rebellion. That is no way to talk to God! God must put enmity in their hearts against the devil and his works, and love into their hearts for Himself, before they will again behave in His fear. But now, as this dialogue also shows, each and every individual goes his own way and seeks his own flesh. Each now seeks self. Each behaves proudly and becomes a law unto himself. The unifying element in the life of man was gone! The human race was so very small yet at that time; a man and his wife. But they no longer sang together the praise of God. They no longer tuned their instruments to make sweet music unto Him. They wanted no "director" because they wanted to go their own selfish ways. Eve wanted to be like God, and so did Adam want to be like God. Eve wanted the ability to decide for herself and the authority to determine for herself what is good and what is evil. Adam threw off the "yoke" of having God tell him what is good and what is evil. He wanted that right and ability for himself. Satan succeeded masterfully in detaching man's love from God to turn

it into love of self.

And so we are born today as individuals not only but as individualists who have each of us our sinful ambitions and desire to decide for ourselves what is good and what is evil. There is such diversity of opinion on all things in the world today on every subject, because man is not united in his thinking concerning God. "There is no fear of God before their eyes." It is one thing that two people need one of them to have the right to decide what they will do and how they will do it, when they are agreed that it ought to be done and that they want it done. It is quite something else when they have a calling to do it but do not want to do so. And God Who appoints those with authority over others in the sphere of holiness among the sinless angels, also appoints and ordains men to rule over other men, that all things may be directed in the way of His sovereign and unchangeable counsel.

He is the One Who gives all authority. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power (authority) but of God; the powers (authority) that be are ordained of God." Romans 13:1 And there is added the warning in the next verse, "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." The fifth commandment addresses this to the children in the home. But it applies to all, as the passage in Romans 13 indicates. The wife is under subjection to her husband; and Scripture nowhere suggests, advocates or approves of a fifty-fifty proposition. And the woman was not created in any such relation to the man. She has authority in the home with her husband over the children. She is and should be an help meet, that is, an help fit and suitable to his needs. She was created physically and psychically to be the counterpart of man, that which is necessary for the full and complete man. But being an *help* in itself condemns the fifty-fifty

idea and shows that she is in subjection to one with authority over her. It applies also to the servant in respect to his master, to the working man in respect to his employer, the citizen in his calling before the ruler of the land, the pupil in the classroom before his teacher.

We do well to take note of the history recorded of Israel in the days of Rehoboam. They that resist the power resist God; and they that resist shall receive for themselves damnation. There can be no question about it that Rehoboam did foolishly. His taxation was *unjust*. The temple and his palace were built. There was not the need for taxes that there were in Solomon, his father's day. There surely was no reason to double it as he threatened. All this did not change the fact that the Israelites were to honour him as their king and to submit themselves under his foolish and cruel reign. In fact Romans 12:17-19 applies here as well, "Recompense to no man evil for evil....Dearly Beloved avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." And it is only a few verses later that we get that warning in Romans 13:1 ff. against resisting the authorities. But the ten tribes that rebelled here began a swift journey to oblivion. They rebelled against God, the giver of all authority, and The Authority over Rehoboam to Whom they should have committed their cause. But the flesh wants vengeance. The flesh moves us to resist God. The fear of the Lord keeps us honouring all those whom God has placed over us, the just but also the unjust, the thoughtful but also the cruel, the easy taskmaster but also the greedy and tyrannical employer. If we have the fear of God in our hearts, we will wait for The Authority to recompense, yea we shall forgive and pray for grace to be found faithful ourselves in the trying circumstance in which He has placed us.

.....it should be perfectly evident that it (the new birth) is a sovereign work of God pure and simple, in which the sinner himself has no part whatever, in which he does not in any sense cooperate with God, but in which man is wholly passive. It is important that this be emphasized in order to maintain the truth of salvation by grace only. And all the more important this is, in view of the fact that in our day this truth is usually distorted and misrepresented. Those who insist to present salvation as contingent upon man's will, do not know what to make of this new birth, though they often speak of it. Rebirth as a new creation, or as resurrection from the dead, has no place in their conception of salvation. Hence, they make of regeneration something that depends upon the will of the sinner. If man will only accept Christ, he will be regenerated. They offer to the sinner regeneration! They plead with him, and beg him to be regenerated! But this is absurd. As well might a man go to the cemetery and beg the dead to come out of their graves! For no more than Adam cooperated in his own creation, and no more than Lazarus cooperated in his own resurrection, no more does the sinner cooperate with God in his own regeneration. It is a work of God alone, without our help.

- H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," p. 47

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

The Providence of God

God's Providence and Sin

by Rev. H. Veldman

We concluded our preceding article with the remark that man, although never sovereignly free, is morally free. Indeed, he does not possess the true freedom of the service of Jehovah. Only Adam, in the state of perfection, was able to choose the good and the evil. The natural man is unable to choose the good, can choose only the evil. The regenerated child of God, in heavenly perfection and immortality, cannot choose the evil, will never again be able to choose the evil. Man, however, although never sovereignly free, is morally free. Although he is controlled and directed, wholly and sovereignly, by the living God in all his activity, in all his thinking and willing and doing, by the alone living God, we can speak of his freedom in a moral sense. This demands some elucidation.

Man is a rational-moral being and therefore a responsible being. The animal is not God-conscious. It never acts in conscious relation to the Lord. But whatever man does he does as in relation to God. He is God-conscious because he has been created as adapted to the living God. He understands intellectually the speech of the Lord in creation and in the Scriptures. In this speech of the Lord, in creation and in the Scriptures, the Lord speaks of Himself, that He is God, and that it is mandatory for all men, exactly because they are creatures, to serve and love Him. And man understands this speech of God in the intellectual sense of the word. Whatever he does he performs most emphatically in relation to God. He hates the Lord or He loves Him. He walks from the principle of sin and enmity or of love. He seeks the glory of the Lord or he opposes that God. This is because of his rational-moral nature. Always he walks in conscious relation to his Creator. And it is exactly this that constitutes his responsibility, and that he is held accountable for his action. We must understand this correctly. We must not be confused in our conception of man's responsibility. Of course, the natural man is never free in the true, spiritual sense of the word, as God is free and His people are free through the grace of the Lord. Neither is he ever free in the absolute, sovereign sense of the word, as if he for one moment were independent of the Lord. In this sense he will ever remain the instrument of Jehovah, His agent. And his responsibility surely does not consist in this,

that he is able to choose both, the good and the evil. If this were his responsibility, then there would be no responsibility of man, and this for the simple reason that no man, apart from the regenerating grace of God, is able to choose the good. This is clearly established in the Scriptures, as when the apostle Paul declares in Romans 8 that the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither can be. But, he is, relatively, morally free, always as in subjection to the Lord. For, in the final analysis, we may not speak of man merely as an instrument, because an instrument is wholly passive, whereas man is an active, moral creature. Man is spiritually, morally free in his sin. He sins consciously, not because he is forced to sin, but because he wills it. He sins out of himself spontaneously, is never forced to commit iniquity, never forced to act contrary to himself; he is always the conscious author of his own evil. He is never "driven" to anything he does. This is man's moral freedom, the moral freedom of his will, that he sins, rejoices in it, choosing the evil always as the object of his own will.

Herein lies the distinction between origin and author. An origin is the willing, determining cause of anything. That man sins surely has its determining origin in the Lord. From where else would sin come, in this determining, causal sense of the word, if not from Jehovah? But wholly different is the conception of author. An author is the conscious, active perpetrator, doer of a deed, himself spiritually in accord with the same; an author, therefore, of sin is he who loves iniquity, does iniquity because he desires it, and who is consciously free in his sin. So, we reject all determinism, as if man were ever a mere stock and block, but we maintain him as a responsible, free-moral agent. In this sense God is never the author of sin, but He hates all sin with all that is in Him, although He is its origin and cause. Sovereignly and eternally the Lord willed what he hates. For sin is the active operation of our nature against the living God and in this sin man rejoices. The operation of the Lord in connection with sin, also as far as His sovereign counsel is concerned, is always such that man is its author, doing it not because he is forced to commit iniquity, but as the desire of his own heart and mind.

This places us before an unexplainable mystery. We readily confess this. Man is a free-responsible being. He performs iniquity because he loves to do so. He is unmolested in his sinning, never wills or desires anything else, is surely a slave of iniquity, but always a very willing slave. This is man's free will, provided we understand this in this sense of the word. On the other hand, God is God. He performs all His good pleasure. Also this truth we must maintain, proclaim, confess unceasingly. He is the sovereign, willing Origin and Worker of all things, also of all the spiritual deeds of man. It is He alone Who turneth man's heart whithersoever He wills, Who carries out in minutest details the counsel of His own will, Who is the Divine Ruler, carrying out His eternal counsel, through Whom are all things, which include every curse-word, every evil thought, even unto minutest details. How all these things take place we do not know. How a holy God at all times causes sin to be and man remains responsible we confess to be a mystery. Even man's responsibility is surely called into existence by the Lord. That Jehovah hates sin and therefore causes all sin to occur in such a way that man is morally free, loving iniquity, committing evil unhindered and always as the object of his own choice, without ever being able to choose the good, we acknowledge to be the mystery. This is not the mystery, that man is morally free; this is plain, and it is also every man's personal experience. But what we cannot understand, and undoubtedly never will understand, is how God works the reality of sin, Himself hating all evil. This is surely Scriptural and taught us in the Word of God. Unfathomably deep are all the thoughts of the Lord; His ways are ever higher than our ways; He transcends whatever we shall know.

This truth must be maintained. Upon this rests the continual admonitory tone of the gospel. We must understand that the Word of God is never proclaimed but that the wicked are always commanded of God to repent of his evil way and to turn unto the Lord. Besides, it is not the will of the Lord that His gospel must be brought exclusively to the elect. How could the church ever proclaim the gospel exclusively to the elect? This does not mean that the gospel is a well-meaning offer of salvation, that the Lord desires to save all men; but it does mean that God demands, as God, of His creatures that they serve and love Him with all their heart and soul and mind and strength. Because I am a moral-rational creature, conversion, faith, hope, love, although worked by God, are deeds of men. The godless surely have no right to walk upon the way of sin, and it remains his calling, how impossible it may be for him to fulfill it, to love the Lord and to praise His Name. But also from this viewpoint the gospel is at all times particular. Only God's people believe, turn from their evil way unto the Lord. Hence, the gospel is primarily the proclamation of the promise, is the light of God's mercy and love in the midst of our sin and darkness. Continually we are admonished, as the people of God, unto faith and repentance, because the truth stands sure that God does all things, but He causes us to stand in His grace. Is it God Who works in

us the willing and the doing, then we, as the result of that work of God, must will and do. And as far as the wicked are concerned, who refuse to walk in the way of the Lord, who reject the living Christ because Christ saves from sin, and they love sin, they will be held accountable for the fact that they loved darkness rather than the light and walked in ways of iniquity because they hated the living God.

How tremendously comforting is this truth! First, this truth is comforting from the viewpoint of God's Church in the midst of the world. This subjective viewpoint of the comfort of the child of God is primarily the viewpoint of our confessions. This comfort is very apparent. If all things are controlled by Jehovah then the Church is surely perfectly safe in the midst of the world. Then no harm can befall us, no devil can really do us any harm, because all things are in the hands of our heavenly Father. However, this is not the only comfort which we may derive from the truth of God's providence and sin, particularly as they are related to each other in the light of the sovereignty of God. Indeed, the Lord causes all things to work together unto the good of His people. But, of what benefit is it to us to know that God has willed sin? Would it not have been far better for us to enter into heavenly glory without the way of sin and grace?

We must also understand that the eternal glory of the alone living God is my comfort. First of all, this conception maintains God as God. We must face the reality of iniquity, its awful reality, especially in our present day. To view sin as having its origin in the devil gives us no comfort. Then we lose God. To know God, the only true and living God, is eternal life. It must be and is the desire and longing of every child of God that God remain God. There is none other god beside Him. That He is God, Whom we love, that He works all things, that He holds the reins of all history in His hands, is of supreme importance and comfort to the child of God. We may never support or entertain any conception which would detract in any sense from the glory of that living God.

This, however, is not all. God did not simply will sin without anything more said. God must be God, but He must also be God as the holy and omniscient Lord. Hence, I know that man loves sin, but to the Lord it is an abomination. And I do not hesitate to say that we rejoice in the fact, in connection with the presence of all this evil in the midst of the world, that the good and holy God has willed this night of sin and death. If the devil held the reins of history in his hand I would not have a moment of peace and rest. If an accident had taken place in Paradise, or if sin had entered this world even through God's permission, then all things now would be "repair work." But if the Lord willed sin, then all is well. Then it must serve the highest glory of His everlasting Name. For, this means that God would realize the glory of His Name also in the way of sin and iniquity. All things shall unite in the glory of Jehovah, positively in heaven, but also in hell as the eternal manifestation of His adorable holiness and righteousness. Well may we say, how truly we may abhor

all evil: O Lord, if this sin, all this darkness must serve the light, what shall then the light be, the everlasting glory of Thy Name! What depth of the wisdom of the Lord! Who, Lord, hath been Thy counsellor? None, and none could be! All things shall glorify His Name. Let us, therefore, praise Him, as the people

of the Lord, also in connection with sin, not because of iniquity itself, but as God's means through which His glory is alone possible. Then our position in the midst of the world is never in doubt; then our glory is sure; then nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

Saul's Jealousy

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands and what can he have more but the kingdom?

And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

I Samuel 18:7-9

It was a bitter and evil spirit that had descended upon the heart of King Saul. It had come at the moment that Samuel had told him that he was rejected as king over Israel, and from that day it was never far from him. The fruits of Saul's sinfulness could no longer be successfully suppressed within him.

It was not, of course, that Saul gave in to it willingly. He was quite convinced that somehow in some way he was going to conquer over this curse, and at times it even looked as though he were going to do it. One such time was when he had called in that young musician from the hills to play for him. It had seemed as though those moody fits of depression were going to destroy him; but before the gentle playing of that harp they had been driven away, to leave him almost completely free. Everything would have been all right then, except that the Philistines had invaded the land and pitched by the valley of Elah. Saul was forced to set himself over against them, and before the arrogant demands of Goliath it had all returned upon him. For a good forty days he was held paralyzed by fear and dark foreboding thoughts of uncertainty. But once again things had swung in his favor. The fortunate shot of that young shepherd lad placed a stone squarely in the forehead of the Philistines' giant and he was felled like a mammoth piece of timber. With a sudden surge, Saul's heart leaped within him as he watched from his viewpoint overlooking that valley. Now let Samuel say that he had been rejected. Look once again and see his enemies the Philistines turn and run, completely scattered. Once again Saul knew it, he was going to win out in the end regardless of what Samuel had predicted.

With the excited joy which only a man suddenly released from great danger and fear can know, Saul

called Abner to him and inquired, "Whose son is this youth?" If Saul's mind had made any identity between the youth that had played the harp in his court and this lad who had just slain Goliath in the valley, it was only vaguely so. But now he wanted to know all that he could about him. He was determined to reward this young man handsomely, and his father's house too if need be. When Abner didn't know, Saul commanded the youth be brought to him, and his first question was, "Whose son art thou, young man?" to which the simple reply came back, "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

To Saul it was all just too wonderful. Suddenly out of nowhere had appeared this youth to save him, not just from the Philistines, but from that cold grip of fear that had held him paralyzed week after week for over a month's duration. And even more, once he had ascertained that this was actually the same young man which had done the same thing once before with his harp in the court, Saul was determined that David was going to stay with him wherever he went. Here was one who was able to drive away that curse which Samuel had placed upon him, or at least so it seemed to Saul; and he sent a messenger to David's father telling him that henceforth David was going to live at the royal court. Here was the kind of strength that Saul needed.

In the court of Saul, David was soon a favorite of almost everyone. It was true that nothing more was said or done about the promise of Saul to give his daughter in marriage to whomever would destroy Goliath; but this was not too surprising. Saul was not one to be overly concerned with any promises he made. After all, he was king and it was quite within his right to keep or not to keep, to remember or forget any

promises he chose. And now as far as marriage was concerned, David just seemed too young for that. In fact, it was much the way David felt himself. For him it was enough just to be in on the excitement of the king's house. Everything to him was wonderfully new, to live amid the riches of the king's house, to eat at the king's table, and especially to be able to go out and circulate among the king's soldiers, by whom he was received with respect in spite of his youth because of what he had done to Goliath. Moreover, it was exactly this unconscious enthusiasm of David which seemed to revive the whole household of the king out of the cold chill of depression that had marked it in recent months and to fill it with a warmth and radiance that was entirely different. Everyone felt it, from the servants to the great men of the court and to Saul himself. In fact, so pleased was Saul with David that he insisted that the lad should accompany him wherever he went. To him who had become so accustomed to the pain of dark depression, David's presence was like a healing balm that drove away all those moody thoughts which so often troubled him. David seemed to do for him now what Samuel had done in the past, he gave him a feeling of well-being, an assurance that things were bound in the end to work out in his favor.

Meanwhile, a much deeper relationship was developing between David and Saul's son Jonathan. Saul's concern for David was finally only selfish and self-centered; but Jonathan found in David the attraction of a faith in God and a love which he shared as his own. It had begun already at the valley of Elah. Jonathan, perhaps more than anyone else watching that day, had known full well what it was that gave to David that courage to move so quickly against that huge Philistine. It was a confidence gained from a living faith in the power of Jehovah, Israel's God. He had known it himself many times, as at Geba and at Michmash. It was true that before the imposing figure of Goliath even his own courage had faltered; but once he had seen that same faith working in another of God's servants, it had thrilled him just as greatly as though the victory had been his own. From that day on his heart went out to David; and when the will of his father brought the young man into their own home, it provided him the opportunity to meet and know the one in whom that faith lived. It was not long before the hearts of those two young men were knit together as closely as human hearts can be bound. Theirs was the unity of two hearts sharing mutual love in their God.

Those days which followed David's victory over Goliath were undoubtedly the happiest of Jonathan's life, and perhaps of David's too. Although Jonathan was somewhat older than David, the two young men had more than enough in common to bind them very closely together. Both of them had come to the strength of life and still as yet its responsibilities did not weigh too heavily upon them. Both of their interests were inclined toward the battlefield, the preoccupation of most kingdoms in that day and of almost every day thereafter. Jonathan already had experience in battle beyond what could be expected for his years, and he had led Israel in some of the first

and greatest victories of his father's reign. Surely David had known of the exploits of Jonathan and had admired them ever since. As yet David had but one short battle behind him, but it was the most amazing victory of all, won singlehandedly by himself. But what truly cemented the young men together was the realization that in all that they had accomplished the strength was not their own; it had been given to them of God. Those were blissful days, as the two young men wandered together sharing in relaxed friendship the mutual joy which they had in their God. And Saul, too, saw the mutual joy of the two young men and was glad.

Neither was it that the lives of David and Jonathan lacked excitement. Now that Saul was recovered from his paralysis of depression, there were a great many things to be done. The enemies of Israel had not neglected the opportunity to close in upon Israel's borders, and this now had to be attended to. Thus for some time Saul was busily engaged in pressing back the enemy forces from one place after another, and always wherever he went Jonathan and David were with him.

Also in this way it soon became evident that the valor of David was not a momentary thing confined to that one conflict with Goliath. He was a man whose whole nature was attuned to the needs of the battlefield. He had a mind capable of understanding the strategy of battle, he had strength and agility and courage, and above all he possessed the faith in Jehovah God which made the true warriors of Israel stronger than those of any other nation. He was a man committed to defending the cause of Israel and of Israel's God against every enemy, regardless of whom he might be, and the Spirit of God rested upon him. "The battle is the Lord's" was his cry, and before it the enemy melted away as dew before the heat of the sun. Soon it was evident that David was the most valiant of warriors that had ever taken up sword in all of Israel's great army.

For Jonathan, just to watch and mark the exploits of David was the greatest joy, an even greater joy than what he found in his own accomplishments. Again and again he was found giving to his young friend his own robes, his sword and bow and girdle, anything that David might need to equip himself for the needs of battle. And neither did Saul object to all this. He too found a special satisfaction in having a man like David beside him. David's presence was for him a sort of living proof that Samuel was wrong and that the power which guarded Israel had not really turned from him. Willingly Saul promoted David from position to position until he was over the most valiant men of battle. Once again all was going well it seemed for Saul and for his kingdom -- until, that is, they came back one day from battle, and as was the custom, the women of the city came out to meet them and to sing the songs of victory. But this time the women had made up a new song, and as they entered the city the words of the song rang in their ears, "Saul hath slain his thousands," the women sang, "And David his ten thousands."

Suddenly those words did it, they pierced deep into the very depth of his feelings, they opened a wound more ragged and tender and painful than any sword of iron could ever inflict, they turned and twisted and pulled at the most sensitive part of his nature. Saul was a man of immense pride, and the women should have known better than to praise anyone above him. It was fine and well to have a valiant man under him, but to have someone glorified above him, that he could not endure. And this time it was more than just wounded pride that troubled him. Suddenly, in a moment he saw it. David was being given greater praise than he because David was greater than he was. The spirit of God, that spirit which had once rested at least in part

upon him but now was departed, that spirit rested upon David. David after all was not the proof that the curse of Samuel was really false. David was that curse himself. With the piercing quality of a trumpet's call to battle, once again the words of Samuel racked their way through his brain, "The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou." Now Saul knew who that neighbor was. In the shock of that realization, all Saul could do was to mutter to himself, "They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?" Saul's life indeed had become bitter.

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP—

"O Worship the Lord in the Beauty of holiness...."

Psalm 96:9a

Readmittance

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

It is not very often that the Form for Readmitting Excommunicated Persons is used by the church. This stems, first of all, from the fact that the Form of Excommunication is not used very often. Usually those members of the church who are worthy of excommunication do not allow themselves to be publicly excommunicated with the form. They rather resign their membership after they have been placed under the first or second step of ecclesiastical censure. Then, in the second place, of those few who are publicly excommunicated, it is a very small minority that repents, is willing to confess their sin before the church and seeks readmittance into the congregation. The majority continue in their impenitent way and become hardened in sin. Nevertheless, the question of few or many has no bearing upon the fact that the church must always be ready and must stand with open arms to receive the penitent. In readiness for this eventuality the church has the "Form for Readmitting Excommunicated Persons" as an essential part of her liturgy. It is this form that is our present concern.

The above mentioned form is divided into two parts which are read in the church service on two separate occasions. In the past we stressed that the process of excommunicating a member from the church is a very slow one, and now we must observe that readmitting such a member is never done hastily. The actual readmittance takes place at the time of and in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Before that time, however, the Consistory, having decided to receive this member again into the communion of the

church, has the first part of the Form for Readmittance read from the pulpit. This part of the Form consists of a lengthy announcement informing the congregation of the Consistory's intention to receive this member into the church at the time of the next celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Concerning this announcement we may notice the following important elements:

(1) It informs the congregation that the member to be readmitted has come to repentance, is ashamed of his sins and seeks readmission into the church. We are to remember that all of this was accomplished by the means of excommunication and the good admonitions and prayers of the church. The former means is, as we have emphasized in the past, a remedy to save. It is the final remedy that is used by the church. The admonitions and prayers of the church are additional means which are employed during and after the censure process, and are also directed toward the salvation of the brother. It can now be announced that it has pleased the Lord to use these means to effect repentance and to bring back the sheep that was lost.

(2) It enjoins the congregation to fulfill its God-given obligation to receive such a person with joy. The attitude of the congregation is important and it follows that if the church was really grieved when it performed that disagreeable task of excommunicating this member, it will abound with joy when it is able to receive him back again.

(3) It emphasizes the necessity of this readmittance

being done according to proper order. All things, of course, must be done in good order in the church of Christ and this is no exception. That order necessitates that the actual readmission must wait until the next celebration of the Lord's Supper, and in the meantime, if there are members of the church who know of reasons why this member should not be received again into the communion of the church, they must give notice of this to the consistory. A mere objection without sound reason will not prevent his being admitted. Any objection brought to the Consistory must be well-founded. These objections must be considered by the Consistory and then the decision concerning his readmission rests with them. But suppose that the Consistory overrules certain objections that are brought, and the members of the church who brought them decide to appeal these decisions of the Consistory to the Classis? What should be done in such a case? The Consistory, of course, as an autonomous body, has the right to go ahead and receive this member into the church, but it would be the part of wisdom, if at all possible, to wait the outcome of the decisions of the Classis.

(4) It exhorts everyone in the congregation to thank the Lord for the mercy shown this poor sinner and enjoins them to pray that the Lord will continue His work in him to his eternal salvation.

In the way of repentance, rejoicing, approbation and thanksgiving the fellowship of the church is open to the sinner who once was cut off. In this process the readmittance is based, not on any mistake which the Consistory may have made in this person's excommunication, but solely on his sincere repentance, which implies his acknowledgement that his excommunication was just. Now suppose that you have a case in which the Consistory actually was in error in imposing the sentence of excommunication upon a member. What then? When this is finally brought to light and the member, unjustly excommunicated, seeks readmittance into the church, how is this to be accomplished? It ought to be evident that the Form for Readmitting Excommunicated Persons which we are discussing could not be used in this instance. It simply would not fit. The above announcement with its various parts could not be made and the actual Form for Readmittance that follows could not be truthfully read here. In such a case the proper way is that the Consistory would make confession of their wrong to the brother, and this would be announced to the church so that by that very act the excommunication would be nullified. This could happen many years later, when perhaps none of the original men are still serving in the Consistory and that body now consists of all new members. Nevertheless the Consistory as a body is responsible for its decisions, and if these prove to be wrong, that same body must confess so that the evil may be removed from its midst. And, finally, the whole congregation, for its complicity in the excommunication, must confess to the brother and manifest that confession by receiving him with joy into her fellowship.

The Form of actual readmittance, which is read to the congregation on the occasion of the celebration of

the Lord's Supper, consists of two main parts. First of all, there is a didactical part consisting of a statement to the effect that no one has alleged any reason why this readmission ought not to take place, and this is followed by a reference to various passages of Scripture which relate to the readmission of penitent and excommunicated sinners. The first of these passages is Matthew 18, in which the loosing of a sinner is applied to the readmittance of the excommunicated sinner. The Form explains the verse, "that whatsoever his ministers shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," to mean that when any person is cut off from His Church, he is not deprived of all hopes of salvation; but can again be loosed from the bond of condemnation. Reference is also made to Ezekiel 33 to show that since God takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but that he turn from his wickedness and live, so the church always hopes for the repentance of the backslidden sinner, and keepeth her bosom open to receive the penitent. More directly still are the references to I Corinthians 5 and II Corinthians 2 where the apostle Paul admonishes the church to receive again the sinner whom he had declared ought to be cut off from the Church but who had now repented. Thus the sentence of absolution is sure and confirmed by the Word of God in John 20, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them," and therefore no one ought to doubt in the least that God will certainly receive in mercy those who truly repent.

The liturgical part of the Form consists of two parts. In the first part the person who is to be readmitted is asked to declare before the congregation and before the face of God that "with all his heart he is sincerely sorry for his sin and stubbornness, for which he has been justly cut off from the Church." Also, that he truly believes "that the Lord has forgiven him, and doth forgive his sins for Christ's sake," and, finally, he is asked to promise, as one desiring to be readmitted into the Church, to live in all godliness according to the command of the Lord. To this the brother answers, "Yes, verily."

With this the readmission of the brother is in effect accomplished. To this liturgical rite, however, is yet added words of the minister to both the readmitted brother and the congregation. The former is informed that "in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ" and through the office bearers of the church he is absolved from the bonds of excommunication and received again into the church. This places him in communion with Christ and of the holy sacraments and of all the spiritual blessings and benefits of God, which He promises to and bestows upon His Church. The minister then expresses the solemn desire that God through Christ will preserve this brother to the end, and then, addressing him as "my beloved brother," he assures him that the Lord has received him in mercy and admonishes him to be on his guard against the subtlety of Satan, and the wickedness of the world and to love Christ!

The congregation is enjoined to receive this beloved brother with hearty affection and to rejoice greatly because "he that was dead is alive, and he that was

lost is found." With the angels in heaven they are to be glad, and this joy must be evidenced as they count him no longer as a stranger, but as a fellow citizen with the saints, and of the household of God.

Most appropriately this service is concluded with prayer to God. The prayer that is rendered is brief but complete. It contains an expression of praise and thanksgiving to God, together with several petitions for His merciful goodness in behalf of the penitent brother and the congregation. The subjective necessity of this prayer stems from the awareness that we can of ourselves do no good and therefore also do recognize the manifestation of repentance in the brother who has been readmitted into the church as the evidence of Divine mercy. No honor or credit for this do we ascribe to ourselves, but we praise and magnify the Name of Him from Whom all blessings flow. He has given our fellow-brother repentance

unto life and in that very work He has given occasion of great rejoicing to His Church.

The congregation asks for mercy in behalf of the brother, that he may be assured of forgiveness, may have joy and delight in the Lord's service, may by his conversion edify many even as his past sin has given offense to many, and may walk steadfastly in the Lord's way to the end.

In behalf of the congregation the prayer is raised that she may learn from this example that with God there is mercy and He is to be feared. Further that she may receive the brother as co-heir of life eternal, and with him may jointly serve God in obedience all through life. All of this is possible only through Jesus Christ, our Lord, in Whose Name the perfect prayer which the Lord Himself taught us to pray is uttered as the most fitting conclusion.

PICTORIAL NEWS—



Shown here is the Hope Protestant Reformed Church and parsonage of Redlands, California, of which Rev. C. Hanko is pastor. The property was obtained in 1959 and is located at the corner of Colton Avenue and Webster Street. The church has a seating capacity of about 150, with a pastor's study, a consistory room and several Sunday School classrooms upstairs. Between the church and parsonage is a two-room kitchen and social hall in which various societies meet. The congregation was organized in 1932, and today has 35 families comprising 136 souls.

Although Redlands has not had a Protestant Reformed Christian School since 1954, a School Society has been formed which has been active in studying the possibility of re-opening their own school.

Being separated by many miles from our other churches, the people of Redlands often miss the fellowship of the saints in our widely scattered denomination. Therefore they welcome the many people who come to worship with them when visiting on the West Coast.

J.M.F.

BOOK REVIEWS—

THE GRACE OF LAW, A Study of Puritan Theology, by Ernest F. Kevan; Baker Book House, 1965; \$4.95.

This is the second printing of the book, first published in 1964 in England as a doctoral thesis. It is intended to explore the teaching of the Puritans on the subject of God's law. A justification for such a study is found in the foreword where the author says: "It is at this place in the discussion (i.e., that many Christian people believe that the teaching of Jesus goes beyond the Law of Moses and therefore the law is no longer binding) that the teaching of the Puritans on the Law of God shows itself to be so appropriate to the modern situation. The Puritans stemmed the tide of moral indifference in their day by the use of the Ten Commandments, and it may well be that part of the answer to the modern dilemma is to be found by listening again to the voice of the Puritans and receiving the truth to which they bore testimony."

This is a good book and an interesting one. After briefly discussing the Puritan scene, the author investigates the teachings of the Puritans in chapters entitled "The Law of God for Man", "The Law and Sin", "The Place of Law in the Purpose of God", "The End of the Law", "The Continuation of Moral Obligation", "Christian Law-Keeping", "Perfect Freedom",

concluding the book with an assessment in the light of recent critical studies. Especially is the author concerned with demonstrating that the Puritans maintained the teaching of Scripture and the Calvinistic tradition on this subject over against the Antinomians—some of whom were themselves Puritans and who denied the validity of the law for the believer, and the Neonomians—who wanted to return to the law as a means of salvation. In the latter group belonged Richard Baxter, who taught that Christ did not satisfy the law but secured instead a change in the law—the common Arminian interpretation.

There is also some history given on the covenant of works. The author points out that the covenant of works did not originate with Calvin but was introduced into British theology by William Perkins.

The many quotations from Puritan authors bring out the colorful writing of the Puritan divines. The book is highly recommended.

Prof. H. Hanko

Barnes' Notes on the New Testament, Albert Barnes; Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1463 pages, \$14.95.

To many Bible students "Barnes'

Notes" needs no introduction. It is a familiar work, found in many a library, and probably used rather frequently in preparation for Bible discussion in society meetings, etc.

This is a new issue of Barnes, and it has the advantage of being in one neat, well-bound volume.

Two facts must be remembered when using Barnes: 1) Although Albert Barnes was a Presbyterian and a graduate of old Princeton, he is not strongly Reformed in his comments. In fact, the Reformed reader will be compelled to disagree with his explanations at more than one point. 2) These are notes, not a thorough-going commentary. When using this volumen, therefore, the reader must expect this, and not be disappointed when these notes are not more detailed.

Nevertheless, I can recommend this volume as a very handy source of quick reference material. It is informative; it suggests many a good thought in connection with the text; and even though it is brief, it stimulates the thinking and understanding of the text by its brief insights. Use of the original Greek is not abundant; and where it is used, it is parenthetical, so that the popular style of the commentary is not spoiled.

H.C.H.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church wishes hereby to express its sincere sympathy to Mrs. Gysbert A. Van Baren and her seven children, in the sudden passing of their husband and father and our fellow elder. We are comforted by the knowledge that what God has done is indeed well done. Ps. 72:18 "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things".

John Flikkema, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Ben Bleyenbergh, in the loss of her brother

MR. JOHN VAN MAANEN

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints". Psalm 116:15.

Rev. J. Kortering, Pres.
Mrs. John Hoekstra, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies' Society of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Perlin Schut, in the loss of her brother,

MR. GISE VAN BAREN

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Harry Zwak, Vice Pres.
Mrs. G. Vander Kooy, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the Holland Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express their sincere sympathy to one of their members, Mrs. Peter Schipper, in the loss of her sister,

MRS. MARY SCHUILING

May our Covenant God comfort the bereaved in their sorrow, "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you". I Peter 5:7.

Mrs. J. Van Kampen, Pres.
Mrs. B. Windemuller, Sec'y.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

Nov. 1, 1966

Rev. G. Lanting, of Holland, Mich., is considering a call which came to him from our church at Edgerton, Minn.

The consistory of Hull, Iowa named the trio, Revs. D. Engelsma, G. Lanting and M. Schipper, from which the congregation chose Rev. Engelsma to be called.

* * *

NOTICE: Classis East has appointed Rev. G. Van Baren as secretary of the Classical Committee, and all material for this committee must be sent to his address.

* * *

The Eastern Ladies' League meeting was held October 13 at our Southwest Church in Grand Rapids, with Rev. M. Schipper as speaker. He called the ladies' attention to an, "Exhortation to be Submissive to the Government" under the following points: The Idea of Government, Reason for Submission, the Way in which this Submission Can and Should be Manifested. The passages of Scripture on which his talk was based were, I Peter 2:13-16, and I Timothy 2:1-3.

* * *

The Western Ladies' League met October 5 in an afternoon meeting in our Hull Church. Rev. R. Decker, of Doon, was selected to address the league, and his topic was, "Consecrated Conduct." Rev. Decker delineated the conduct, or conversation, to be a reflection of the *one spirit* that pervades the church, and which manifests the striving for the faith of the gospel with *one mind*. A panel discussion followed the speech which further pursued the subject of this unity of the believers in their striving for the faith, while pilgrims and strangers in this world in which we are surrounded by our adversaries. The speech and the discussion were based on the Apostle Paul's admonition to the Philippians as found in the twenty-seventh verse of the first chapter. Musical numbers by members of the various societies were enjoyed and refreshments were served before the ladies returned to their homes — with a renewed resolve to strive to manifest a consecrated conduct in their daily walk.

* * *

We found this item of interest in Southeast's bulletin Oct. 16: "Here are the countries into which the booklet, 'In the Beginning God' has been sent so far: England, Finland, Hungary, Netherlands, Jamaica, Ceylon, Canada. Here are the States (a partial list, J.M.F.) besides our own: Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin, Kentucky. Most of these have been sent out on request of those who have read the booklet and enjoyed it."

* * *

Isn't it remarkable that a series of lectures held in First Church in Grand Rapids, having been incorporated

into one booklet, is being read in so many states and countries? This small effort of our Mission Board is being felt far and wide under the Providential care of the King of His Church, Who has His "remnant" who have not bowed the knees to Baal — those who are not numbered with the people described in the New Testament those whose "love has waxed cold".

* * *

The Second Annual Reformation Day Rally was held Oct. 31 in the Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids, Mich. This second event did not bring out a larger audience than last year (probably due, in part, to the competition of the heathenish festival of Halloween), but was characterized by silent and rapt attention. Prof. H. C. Hoeksema spoke on "Children of the Reformation," and in his introduction remarked that he would speak *to* as well as *about* those children. His approach to the subject was one that required self-examination by each of the hearers. The subject was treated in three divisions, headed: Reformatory Hearts; Reformatory Obedience and Discernment; and, Reformatory Militance. The speaker defined the sharp distinction between reformation and rebellion, and exhorted his hearers to choose the former and reject the latter in all circumstances that demand our bowing to the authority of the Word of God or that of the Church Institute. A specially trained choir of "untrained voices" under the direction of Mr. Roland Petersen, provided the musical portion of the program which augmented the message of the evening by means of the God-given talent of song — a vehicle specially suited to render praise to our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, the God of our Salvation. According to the printed programs this speech will again be printed in a booklet, and the entire program (almost two hours) has been taped. Either, or both, may be had by sending your request to Rev. M. Schipper, 1543 Cambridge Ave., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. The printed message is free, but there will be a small charge for the tape to cover expenses.

* * *

The Young People's Society of Hull, Iowa, sponsored a Reformation Day Program Sunday evening, Oct. 30. Rev. J. A. Heys, of South Holland, Ill., was the speaker; his topic, "An Ecumenical Approach of the Reformation". The offering taken at this meeting was for the Scholarship Fund of the Young People's Federation.

* * *

Our Mission Board is sponsoring a series of lectures, beginning in January, and covering the Five Points of Calvinism. The plan is to have one lecture a month. The first two will be delivered by Prof. H. Hanko, the third by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, and the last two by Rev. G. Van Baren. All these lectures are scheduled to be held in First Church, corner of Franklin and Fuller Avenues in Grand Rapids. *Deo Volente!*

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.