

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE:

Meditation: Instructing Our Children

Editorials: An Attempted Reformed Defense of Billy Graham (2)

The Nature of the Atonement

Liars Deny Infallibility of Scripture

The RES Regional Conference

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches will begin its fall term, D.V., on Wednesday, September 7, 1966 at 9:00 a.m. We commend the cause of our school to the prayers of the churches. Consistories are reminded that requests for student supply for pulpit or catechism classes must be directed to the rector.

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, Rector

MEDITATION—

Instructing Our Children

by Rev. J. Kortering

"We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done...."
Psalm 78:1-8

The church rejoices when a babe is born.

A mother clings to her newborn, her moistened eyes reflect a holy awe. Father lays a calloused hand upon its tender flesh and light glows in his eyes as he looks at mother; a depth of love draws two hearts united in one flesh. Even brothers and sisters are caught in the ecstatic excitement, eager for the first

glimpse and all the nudging, cuddling, and pulling that inevitably follows.

Children are a blessing to the home.

They are no less a blessing to the church.

The joy of the church rings heavenward when we celebrate the sacrament of Baptism. It is especially then that we are made conscious of the place of children

in our midst. The promise of God is sounded forth, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." The response of parents to this promise is heard, "We acknowledge that although our children are conceived and born in sin....yet they are sanctified in Christ and therefore as members of his church ought to be baptized." The whole congregation sings with the Psalmist, "Lo children are a heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

Asaph detected the significant place of children in the church. His first concern in Psalm 78 was not the enrichment of the home, but rather the important role children play in the generation of the church. Notice in verse 4, he does not even refer to the children of his generation as *our* children, but *their* children, viz., the children of "our fathers". These children are the progenitors of the generation to follow who in turn will also beget children and must instruct them, "that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children." The generation of believers have their roots in the past, and the branches reach into the future.

This is important for us to see in order that we may have a proper perspective concerning the instruction of our children. Children are not only born into the home, they are born into the generation of the church.

Asaph is dealing here with the all-important question, why does God command parents to instruct their children.

We find a three-fold answer in these verses.

The first is in verse 5, "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come *might know them*." This is basic to all instruction. It is the imparting of knowledge, particularly by those who know to those who do not know.

The second reason is given in verse 7, "That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments; And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God." This follows immediately from the first reason. They must know the truth not only, but this knowledge of the truth must make them free! They must know the will of God not only, but learn to walk in the will of God. By doing this their hope is set upon God, and God is glorified by us and our children. This is the joy of the covenant.

Finally, Asaph points out in verse 5 that our children must have this knowledge in order that they may "declare them to their children." The church is the gathering of believers and their seed. In order that this gathering may take place it is important that each generation instruct the next generation. In this way each generation is qualified to continue that instruction in subsequent generations. If we fail to instruct our children, we can never expect the covenant to continue in our generation. Asaph mourns this only too obvious

fact in Ephraim, who, according to verse 10, "kept not the covenant of God and refused to walk in his law." The reason is, "they forgat his works and his wonders that he had shewed them." In other words, they didn't instruct their children.

It is obvious, then, that instruction of our children is not primarily for the sake of our homes, that is, that our sons will be good fathers, have good jobs and support a family well, and our daughters will be able wives, love to cook and sew and be good hostesses. We do not principally instruct our children in order that they may be good citizens of our country, that is that they may be law-abiding citizens, respect authority, and pay taxes. Neither is the instruction of our children for the sake of society. We do not center our education in such things as community improvement, appreciation of the arts and sciences, train them to be good singers and players of instruments and so to cultivate esthetic values. Rather the principle of instruction is that our children may know God and learn to serve God.

This is the idea of our text. What will we teach our children? "The praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he has done. For he established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel."

The hub in the wheel of knowledge is God!

There are many spokes, many aspects of knowledge, yet they all have their source and center in God. This we must tell our children.

When we do this, we provide covenant instruction.

Our children must know God, not simply *about* God, but know *God!* This knowledge is given them within the sphere of the church. As we take our children to church, God works in their hearts by His Spirit and Word. Don't forget, we testify at Baptism that they are members of the covenant. At conception God has prepared them for the preaching, for they are regenerated already then. In the worship service and while our children are in catechism, the Holy Spirit applies this milk of the Word to their hearts. The revelation of God, the law of God, the wonders of God, especially that central wonder, the cross, are unfolded before their eyes. Through this instruction, our children learn to know God as their God in Jesus Christ; otherwise Jesus could never have said, "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

With His knowledge they are prepared for further instruction. They must learn the full counsel of God. This includes the created wonders of God and the works of God's hands in history. Even here we understand that the wheel of knowledge is one. It is not divorced from the hub, but has its center in it. The knowledge of God revealed in the Bible is central, and therefore must be carried into every area. Even as the Bible is the source of the preaching, so it is the source of all teaching. It must be THE textbook at all times.

Within the sphere of the church our children learn to love God, a love whereby God demands of us obedience to His law, and a love whereby we seek to glorify

God in all things. Within the sphere of the home our children learn that all of life is an expression of this covenant of God. The home is the most intimate manifestation of God's covenant with His people. We teach our children that the relationship of a husband and wife is a picture of Christ and His church. As Christ loves His church, so a husband must love his wife; as the church is obedient to Christ, so a wife must be obedient to her husband. As a father loves his children, so our Father loves us and dwells with us. Children must obey their parents even as we all who are children of God must obey our Father in heaven. The school is an extension of the home wherein teachers reveal to our children the wonders of God as found in creation, in history, in government, in the knowledge and skills of men.

As this wheel of knowledge turns, it guides our children through their daily life. Only with such knowledge are they able to be living members of the church, faithful husbands and wives, worthy citizens of our country, respected employers or employees, and good neighbors. Then our children as they come to years of discretion will be able by the grace of God to acknowledge God in all their ways.

Let's say with Asaph, "We will not hide them from their children, we will shew them to generations to come."

Our children need this instruction. They need it because they do not have this knowledge in themselves and they will not seek it for themselves. They are conceived and born in sin. By nature they are at enmity against God. They need the grace of the Holy Spirit as He applies this knowledge to their hearts. Besides this, our children are called to join us as pilgrims in a hostile world. We have the calling to serve God in the midst of the world. That world hates the church, and under the power of the devil seeks to overcome the children of God. They come with their temptations of pleasure, of worldly fame, and riches. Our children must be instructed in such a way that they can discern evil, learn to resist it, and serve God even unto death.

This instruction is the concern of all of us as children of God. Our children are born into the covenant. Not the natural bond arouses our interest, not blood ties, rather spiritual ties. As living members of the covenant, whether young or old, we are interested in the babes of the faith that they with us may be

instructed in the praises of our God.

Let's say emphatically: we will not hide them, we will show them!

Let's confirm this resolution with our deeds. It becomes manifest in many ways.

Our homes reflect this attitude. We as parents realize the one most important thing we must do for our children is instruct them. Yes, mothers wash dishes and fathers earn the daily bread. Never may we be so busy that we have no time to show our children the praises of God in our homes. We must take them by the hand and lead them through the Word of God and guide them in their thoughts, words, and deeds. We must teach them the right from the wrong. In love we must insist that our children walk in the right and resist the wrong. This demands not only words, but especially that we will be an example to our children.

Our schools reflect this attitude. We recognize the need for daily instruction in the wheel of knowledge in which God is the hub of all truth. As parents we are willing to work long and hard for Protestant Reformed education. We desire that our teachers whom we hire in our places will bring these praises of our God to our children every day. Even then we will not simply pass the task on to teachers, we will take an interest in our schools and our children as they learn.

Our churches reflect this attitude. As office-bearers we recognize the ministry for the youth; we need a thorough system of catechetical instruction. We need to remember the youth in our sermons and prayers. We need to labor to the end that the home, church, and school are brought into harmony as spheres in which the knowledge of God as God is taught our children.

Yes, this is everyone's work. Our young people may well consider the calling to the ministry or teaching in the Christian school; we have great need. Young and old have a wonderful opportunity to contribute financially as the collection plate is passed in the cause of Christian education.

This showing to our generation involves much work. It is an important work for it is only through instruction that God gathers His church unto Himself. We labor with weakness, with tears and sorrows. It often demands more than we can possibly give. Yet we are confident that in laboring to the utmost of our power, God will surely realize His covenant in this generation and in that which is to come until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That sovereign grace must needs be particular grace, and that particular grace presupposes free and sovereign election, is a truth which by many is looked upon as belonging in the ecclesiastical or dogmatical antique shop. Much more popular are they in our day who openly and boldly deny the doctrine of God's sovereign predestination, and who preach salvation as a possibility, a chance for all. God on His part seriously seeks the salvation of all men; and He offers it to all. And man has the power by an act of his own free will either to accept or to reject the proffered salvation. There can be no doubt that, if the truth were to be determined by popular vote, the doctrine of sovereign election would be rejected by an overwhelming majority.

— H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," p. 18

Editor's Notes

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

BE SURE TO READ the report on the recent Regional Conference of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod which the Rev. Van Baren begins in this issue.

* * * *

Sometimes our readers wonder whether the witness of the *Standard Bearer* on a matter like the Billy Graham movement receives attention and is worthwhile beyond our Protestant Reformed circles and our usual readership. This witness, of course, is necessary for our own instruction and enlightenment. But it is interesting and encouraging to note that it gains attention elsewhere. Recently, for example, there came to my address (though they should have been sent to our Business Manager) several requests from places like Oklahoma, Texas, and California for the July issue, which contained Rev. Harbach's "Billy Graham's Ministry of Error."

* * * *

Speaking of Billy Graham, a little paperback published in England just prior to the recent crusade, though rather mild in its criticism, is nevertheless worth reading, both because of its criticism and because of its thorough documentation. The title of this book by E. Hulse is "Billy Graham: A Pastor's Dilemma."

* * * *

From the *Baptist Examiner*, July 30, 1966, which quotes Graham's syndicated column, we quote this bit of "Graham-ese" in answer to the question, "What is predestination? Some say a person is predestined to heaven or hell at birth. I know that Jesus Christ is my Savior. In your opinion was I predestined to accept Christ as my Savior?" Here is Graham's answer, which ought to be convincing evidence against Reformed support of him and in favor of Reformed opposition to him:

The Bible says: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9).

Unfortunately God has no power over the will of man. That is to say: He cannot save a person against his will, but at the same time, HE IS NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH. He has made it possible for all men to be saved. But the Bible indicates that salvation depends on man's willingness to be saved. It would be a kind of tyranny if God saved people against their will.

But His heart embraces all men, and in the word "whosoever will may come," is the universal invitation, with no one excluded. Were you predestined to be saved? Since it is His will and desire that everyone be saved -- in that sense you were of the elect. But this does not imply that if a person is lost, that God ordained it so. It is because that person was not willing to place himself within the scope of God's redemption, by yielding his will. The Bible indicates that God will do everything short of coercion to redeem people. But even He cannot save them against their will.

I do not ask merely: is this Reformed? But I ask: is this the Gospel of Scripture?

* * * *

A recent article of the Rev. J. A. Heys received special attention, by way of reprint, in *Old Faith Contender*. The article was "Worshipping the Unknown God."

* * * *

EDITORIALS—

An Attempted Reformed Defense of Billy Graham

-2-

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

As I promised, I now return to what I characterized as "philosophy" in Dr. Jerome De Jong's explanation of total depravity.

I have already shown that De Jong's explanation is not Billy Graham's.

But Dr. De Jong's presentation of total depravity is itself a denial of that doctrine. For consider that his presentation is on the very surface of it a contradiction in terms. The doctor holds that total depravity does not mean that every sinner is as bad as he can possibly

be. This in itself presents some insoluble problems. For either total means indeed partial, or the totally depraved man is as bad as he can possibly be. For how can there be a worse or a more complete degree of badness than total? Moreover, there is the problem of a so-called "natural good" which is, after all, not good. What kind of "goodness" is this? Is it sin? Then it is not goodness. Is it truly goodness? Then man's depravity is not total. Or does Dr. De Jong mean to suggest that there is a relation of "man to man" that does not at the same time involve the "man to God" relationship? Moreover, presupposing now that this "natural good" is indeed real, how is it possible that from a naturally corrupt (totally depraved) tree there can come forth good fruit?

In this same connection Dr. De Jong falls into the same error as did the Synod of 1924. He quotes only the first part of Canons III, IV, Article 4. If he had only paid attention to what the second part of this article says, he would never say that the totally depraved sinner is not as bad as he can possibly be. For in the second part of the article we read this: "But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, *that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil.* Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways *renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness*, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God." (italics mine, H.C.H.)

Dr. De Jong also appeals to Calvin's "Institutes" in this connection. He makes a very incomplete quotation from Book II, Chapter III, 3. If Dr. De Jong had quoted Calvin in context and quoted the complete paragraph in question, it would have become very evident that while Calvin speaks of a certain common grace (by no means the same as that of 1924), he never attributes any good to the mere natural man. It would also have been evident that Calvin never teaches that "not every sinner is as bad as he can possibly be." It would also have been evident that Calvin is explaining how and why not every man commits all possible sins. The latter, of course, is a patent fact; but it is by no means the same as saying that not every man is as bad as he possibly can be. It would also have been plain that Calvin in no instance detracts from the truth that man is by nature "wholly incapable of doing any good and inclined to all wickedness." It would also have been evident that Calvin and Canons III, IV, 4 (including the second and crucial part which Dr. De Jong failed to quote) are in full agreement. It would also have been evident that Calvin is exactly dealing with some examples which "seem to teach us that we should not consider human nature to be totally corrupted," but that he does not accept this suggestion.

However, I will leave it to Dr. De Jong to correct his own misquotation of Calvin. Any of our readers may check up on the above statements in the Allen translation of the "Institutes," Vol. I, pp. 315, ff.

Besides, of course, it must be remembered that while Calvin is an illustrious authority on Reformed doctrine, all that Calvin writes is not authoritative doctrine as are the statements of our confessions.

* * * *

But Dr. De Jong has more objections.

In connection with what I wrote about Graham's doctrine of depravity, I wrote the following: "Graham with all his supposed doctrine of total depravity must leave room for what he writes a bit later in his book, p. 76: 'The need for spiritual rebirth is evident to the most casual observer of human nature. Man has fallen. Man is lost. Man is alienated from God. Man's recovery must begin at the point of his fall. He chose self rather than God. If he is to be recovered, he must choose God over self. Man lives under the sentence of death. *This* condemnation can be lifted only if man, by a free act of his own will, makes a complete reversal of his original choice.' (emphasis supplied, H.C.H.) I submit that this italicized statement is worse than Arminianism: it is rank modernism! It is surely utterly contrary to the truth of the Word of God as it is set forth in Canons III, IV, B, 4..."

Concerning this the doctor writes:

This, of course, is *not* modernism. I agree it is surely not the way I would state it. It emphasizes man's responsibility, which we need to emphasize, but it does seem to place too much on the lost sinner. However I would suggest to the professor that he should not have stopped reading yet.

Over against Dr. De Jong's above position, I would point out: 1) That Dr. De Jong does not even characterize this as anti-Reformed and Arminian. He makes it a matter of degree of emphasis. 2) That this is indeed modernism. For: a) There is no Christ in it. b) It teaches that man simply by an act of his own free will, — an act which is the complete reversal of his original choice, — can lift his condemnation. This makes salvation nothing but a modernistic "operation boot-strap." c) It passes by the Scriptural truth that God Himself lifted the condemnation from all His elect at the cross, and that there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus.

* * * *

Next, Dr. De Jong quotes some aphoristic and partial statements of Graham which would seem to prove that I should have read farther. Now let me assure De Jong that I have read Graham's entire book; and I found nothing to change my opinion of Graham's false doctrine. But let me also deal with the statements of Graham which he quotes. The first is this: "Salvation is an act of God. It is initiated by God, wrought by God, and sustained by God." (page 108, "World Aflame")

Concerning this statement, first of all, Dr. De Jong writes: "I submit to you, professor, doesn't that sound pretty Reformed? I don't know that I could improve on these statements very much."

To De Jong's question my answer is as follows:

1) Statements such as the above are *not necessarily* Reformed.

2) It must always be remembered that Graham makes this salvation which is an act of God, initiated, wrought, and sustained by God, completely dependent upon man.

3) If De Jong had not stopped quoting here, his *Missionary Monthly* readers would know that in this very connection Graham is thoroughly Arminian, and that he really means that salvation is only a *possibility* initiated, wrought, and sustained by God. For on pages 108 and 109, in the very next paragraph, Graham writes:

The second important thing about John 20:31 is that the effect of faith in Jesus Christ is "life." "And that believing ye might have life through his name." The result of a well-placed faith of this specific nature is described as "life." The Bible describes man as alive physically, but dead spiritually. A dead man needs life. The whole human race is described as being "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). This means they are dead to God. They are incapable of producing divine life. This can be done only by God. They are capable only of believing and receiving. (Mark well: dead men can do this! H.C.H.) This life was made available to all humanity by Christ's death on the cross. He said: "I am come that they might have life" (John 10:10). This is the life you can have -- now. This is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

Now apart from the fact that Graham is utterly reckless here in quoting Scripture (John 10:10 refers only to "the sheep"), it is evident that Graham does not really believe that God initiates, works, and sustains salvation, nor that salvation is an act of God. On the contrary, salvation is only a possibility wrought by God, available to the (contradictorily) dead sinner who is capable of believing and receiving. And if Dr. De Jong cannot improve on these statements, he should learn anew the a-b-c of the Reformed faith.

The same is true of the following (mis-) quotation from p. 149:

The word "conversion" means simply "turning." From the beginning of the Bible to the end, God pleads with man to turn to Him.... However, *it is impossible for man to turn to God to repent, or even to believe without God's help! All you can do is call upon God to "turn" you...* The Bible never asks man to justify himself, to regenerate himself, to convert himself, or to save himself. *God alone can do these things.* (italics supplied by Dr. De Jong)

Also the above is supposed to be Reformed, according to Dr. De Jong, -- in fact, so Reformed that De Jong could not improve on it very much. However:

1) Even the above quotation is far from Reformed. God does not "plead" with men to turn to Him; He *commands* them to repent. God does not merely *help* men to repent and believe. This means that man repents and believes with God's assistance. The Reformed truth is that God *works* faith and repentance *sovereignly* and *efficaciously*. Nor is it true that man can call upon God to turn him. The regenerated, converted child of God can indeed pray, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." But the natural man is incapable even of calling upon God to turn him. Nor is it particularly Reformed to say, "God alone *can* do these things." It is Reformed to say that God not only

can do these things, but that He surely does them, accomplishes them, in all His elect.

2) But again, Dr. De Jong omits a significant statement in this quotation and indicates it by "...". This statement brings out Graham's Arminianism in this connection very clearly. It is this: "When a man calls upon God, he is given true repentance and faith." As always, Graham always gives man the deciding vote in the matter of salvation, you see.

* * * *

Finally, Dr. De Jong quotes a few general statements about Graham's doctrine of Scripture, the atonement, the deity of Christ, and the resurrection. Concerning these, the following:

1) These statements are very general, not specifically Reformed.

2) Graham may teach the inspiration of Scripture; but he does not bow before the *authority* of Scripture in his teachings. If he did, he could not teach the false doctrines which he teaches. If he did, he could not violate the Scriptures as he did recently in the Soho district of London, and say: "I am here to tell you that God loves every one of you!" Scripture gives no one a mandate to say this.

3) It is not specifically Reformed merely to say that Christ "stood in the guilty sinner's place." It is Reformed to say that Christ stood in the place of *elect sinners*, and of them only.

4) It is indeed possible to point to many aphoristic statements of Graham which are in themselves true. But the current teaching and "preaching" of Graham are contrary to *the* truth of the gospel.

In the light of De Jong's defense of Graham's doctrine, and in the light of the statements which Dr. De Jong calls Reformed, I cannot accept his statement that he accepts "unequivocally and without apology the position of the Reformed Confessions."

And again, if Dr. De Jong accepts, as he says, "as from God, the work of the evangelist Billy Graham," I can only conclude that Dr. De Jong himself is not Reformed and that he leads his congregation in the direction of ecclesiastical suicide.

For as between Graham's doctrine and the Reformed faith, it is "either...or," not, "both...and."

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church and the Congregation were deeply saddened in the death of elder

PETER OFFRINGA

Confident that brother Offringa went to be with the Lord, we are comforted in the hope of the blessed resurrection, and the reward of grace for the faithful.

"And when the chief Shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away". I Peter 5:4.

Rev. G. Lubbers
Elder H. Kuiper

The Nature of the Atonement

Limited or General?

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

A WORD OF RE-INTRODUCTION

The last time we were able to discuss this subject of the nature of the atonement was in the May 1 issue. There were various other matters which demanded immediate editorial attention; besides, due to the fact that our magazine appears only once per month during the summer, there was not sufficient space to deal with everything that required our attention. Now, however, we return to this subject.

Meanwhile, this discussion and study has not become out-of-date.

For, in the first place, the entire matter of the Dekker Case and the Report of the Doctrinal Committee was postponed (*op de lange baan geschoven*) by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. And, in the second place, this very subject of the nature of the atonement continues to have an important place in the Dekker Case. This is evident from the fact that the Doctrinal Committee apparently agrees with Dr. James Daane on the *nature* of the atonement. For they write: "For, whenever we speak about the *nature* of the atonement, no reformed person would ever maintain that the atonement is limited." (*Agenda*, p. 294) And Dr. Daane rejoices in this, as follows: "And the study committee saw some real daylight when it declared in its Report that no Reformed man would hold that the atonement is limited in its nature." (*Reformed Journal*, July-August, 1966, p. 7). Apart from the fact that the Doctrinal Committee also holds, with Daane, that grace is not an attribute of God, — a very crucial error, by the way, — this is about all that Daane can find in the Report that pleases him. And it is indeed a question whether the agreement between Daane and the Committee on this score of the nature of the atonement is more than superficial. For the Committee refers in this connection to the "infinite worth and value" of the atonement. And in this regard, surely, every Reformed man must agree that the atonement of Christ was of infinite worth and value. I do also, — provided that "infinite worth and value" is Scripturally and confessionally understood. But this does not change the fact whatsoever that the nature of the atonement is limited, or particular, not general.

However, as I have repeatedly stated, it is necessary to define, in the first place, what is meant by the *nature* of the atonement. This neither Daane nor the Commit-

tee has done. And once such definition is made, it is important not to *confuse* the various elements belonging to that nature of the atonement. Moreover, it is necessary also to remember constantly that when we speak of the atonement, we are speaking of something very definite and concrete, of one particular wonder of grace that is very plainly set forth in Scripture, one concrete fact of salvation. The subject is not merely atonement in the abstract. And the subject is not any human conception or interpretation of atonement or even of the death of Christ. It is *the* atonement, the atonement of Christ, revealed by the Holy Scriptures. In that atonement there are, according to Scripture and the confessions, the following elements: 1) The element of *satisfaction*. 2) The element of *substitution*, which we are presently discussing. 3) The element that the atonement is what I would denominate as *definitely personal*. This element we must discuss in the future. 4) The element that the atonement is, qualitatively speaking, *of infinite worth and value*.

To the above elements one might expect, perhaps, in the light of the Dekker Case that the element of efficacy would be added. This, however, is not an additional element in the nature of the atonement, but is simply implied in the four above-mentioned elements and in the very nature of atonement. If atonement is not efficacious, then it simply is not atonement. To speak of an atonement that is not efficacious is a contradiction in terms: an atonement that does not actually atone is no atonement.

SCRIPTURE AND SUBSTITUTION

We have already completed our discussion of the element of substitution according to the confessions; and we have begun our discussion of this element in the nature of the atonement in the light of Scripture.

The latter we now continue.

The reader will recall that there are especially two prepositions in the Greek which are used to express this idea of substitution, both of which are usually rendered by our English word "for." The first of these words means literally "instead of" (*anti*); the second of these words is more literally rendered by "in behalf of, for the benefit of" (*huper*). The first term, to which we already called attention in the May 1 issue, occurs in connection with Christ's atonement in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45.

There is one more passage in connection with that first term to which I would call special attention. It is important because both terms occur in the same text. I refer to the text in I Timothy 2:5, 6: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom (*antilutron*) for all (*hyper pantoon*), to be testified in due time." The interesting aspect of this text is that the term "instead of" (*anti*) occurs here in combination with the term "ransom" (*lutron*), thereby enforcing it. The term "ransom" in the English rendering of the text, therefore, could very properly be rendered by "substitute-ransom." This makes it plain that the

(to be continued)

idea of "for" or "in behalf of" (*hyper*) can only be maintained on the basis of the fact that Christ gave Himself a ransom *instead of* all. At this point in our discussion we are not concerned about the "all" in the text though it should be very evident, again, that if this "all" is every individual human being, then the substitutionary-satisfactory-atonement must needs imply the justification and salvation of every individual also. We are interested, however, in this connection only in the idea of substitution as taught by Scripture's use of the terms that are commonly translated "for" in our English Bible. And this idea of substitution is very forcibly set forth in the text just cited.

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP—

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." (Psalm 96:9a)

Ecclesiastical Censure

by Rev. G. VandenBerg

The last time we emphasized the *necessity* of christian discipline. In every institution founded within the society of mankind there must not only be laws by which that institution is governed, but there must be proper maintenance and enforcement of those laws. This enforcement constitutes the indispensable discipline upon society through which order is maintained, transgression is punished and without which society is destroyed by lawlessness. The latter is characteristic of our age and is a root factor in the massive disruptions of civil, industrial, social and even ecclesiastical life. Discipline is the backbone of a well-ordered society.

We have a few more comments to make yet with respect to the discipline of the church before we enter into a discussion of the Form for Excommunication. Our next observation deals with the idea or nature of the censures of the church. It must be remembered that christian discipline is one of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and by this is meant the power to open and to shut that kingdom to believers and penitent and to unbelievers and impenitent respectively. The church of Jesus Christ in the midst of this present world has this power. It is given to her by Christ Himself according to Matthew 18:15-18. The importance of this must not be minimized, nor must this power of the church be confused with a certain right to exclude one from the fellowship of a particular church or denomination of churches. In effect this is what happens when one is excommunicated from the church, but the matter is far more serious than that. The discipline of the church closes the doors of heaven to unbelievers and

impenitent. It also opens these same doors to those who believe and are penitent. This is reality, and in the function of this disciplinary power order is maintained in the Kingdom of God.

This must be further clarified so that an answer may be given to the objection that is frequently raised against this position. It is argued that by the "church" is meant the consistory, the ruling body, and that the consistory is composed of men. These men are sinful men who are very capable of erring in their judgment and because of the human element involved the very real possibility may not be ruled out that in their using this authority to discipline members of the church, injustice is perpetrated. Therefore, it is claimed that when a member is excommunicated from the fellowship of the church, we may not say that he is excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

In answering this objection there are several considerations that must be kept in mind. In the first place, it may be conceded that there is a measure of validity in this argument. Without reference to any particular instance, I would say that it is not only possible that a consistory unjustly excommunicates a person from the church but that historically this has also happened more than a few times. But, in the second place, let us remember also that it is not our position that the church in herself possesses the power to open and shut the kingdom of heaven, but she has this in dependence upon the Word of Christ and through the operation of His Spirit. Christ, and Christ alone, can have this power. He is "the one that is holy, that is true, that hath the key of David,

that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." (Revelation 3:7) Thirdly, then, we must conclude that when the church exercises this disciplinary power unjustly, that is, in a manner that is contrary to the Word of Christ, she, in reality, is not exercising the key power at all. She is not *using* but *misusing* this authority. She is corrupting the holy ordinances of God, and through such corruption the Spirit of Christ does not work. But this does not alter the fact or change the reality in any way that where the church maintains christian discipline according to the Word of God, Christ, through that function, opens and shuts the doors of His Kingdom, so that what is bound on earth according to the Word of God is also bound in heaven, and whatsoever is loosed on earth according to that same Word is unalterably loosed in heaven. From this two significant admonitions ensue. Consistory members are enjoined to exercise extreme caution and engage in incessant prayer in these matters, so that everything done may be in harmony with the Divine will and carry away His blessing. And members who are, for whatever cause, made the object of discipline, must never attempt to justify their sin or escape the judgment of God under the invalid and flimsy excuse that the consistory has fault in the matter too. Even if this is the case, two evils never make one right. Let the sinner confess his sin and then if there be sin in the consistory too, labor in love, that this also may be confessed, for in this way alone the *purpose* of christian discipline is attained. This is not reached when the sinner, because of some error or wrong by the consistory, refuses to confess and thus compels the consistory to proceed with ultimate excommunication.

Our second observation deals with this *purpose* of christian discipline. Concerning this there is either general misunderstanding or much ignorance. Another alternative is that the members of the church know very well what the purpose of christian discipline is, but refuse or fail to take cognizance of it when involved in an actual disciplinary situation. The attitude frequently prevails that the consistory is picking on me, has it in for me, wants to get rid of me as a member of the church, etc. Discipline is then regarded as a humanly instituted device whereby those who hold office in the church can have things their way and can rid the church of all who would dare to manifest any dissent. Needless to say, this conception is both untrue and wicked. The sole purpose of christian discipline in the church is three-fold. It aims first of all to honor and glorify God in Christ. It purposes, secondly, to purify and to maintain the purity of the church in the world. And, finally, its objective is the salvation of the sinner. We will not go into detail here, but we note that each aspect of this three-fold purpose is inseparably related to the others. It is when saved sinners, members of the church, walk in the way of their salvation that the church becomes manifest in the world as the gathering of saints (holy ones), the assembly of God's elect, and in that sphere of holiness the honor and glory of God are positively manifest. Conversely, when sin and evil are found in the church,

His honor and glory become obscured. Where the latter situation prevails there is a manifestation of Divine wrath, whereas in the former circumstance the blessings of His grace abound, and in these is manifest the excellency of His glory and honor.

In light of this our next observation should not be difficult to understand. It is this. The exercise of ecclesiastical censure is inseparably connected with the preaching of the Word. The principle key-power of the church lies precisely in the preached Word. That Word preached is not the proclamation of a general love of God to all men without distinction. Neither is it a well-meaning offer of salvation to all who hear it. Rather it is the savor of life unto life and of death unto death. It is like a sharp, two-edged sword, quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12) Specifically, in the preaching of the Word, Christ proclaims the message given through the prophet Isaiah: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him." (Isaiah 3:10, 11) Is it not then obvious that through the preaching of His Word Christ opens and shuts the doors of His Kingdom? And this is just what He also does through the censures of the church. Christian discipline then is a subordinate and assistant form of the preaching of the Word. The former can never be exercised without the latter. The power of discipline is resident in the preached Word of God. It is God Himself Who says to the impenitent sinner, Woe unto you, for unless you repent and forsake your evil way there is no place for you in My church or My Kingdom.

If it is necessary to distinguish these two we may say that the preaching of the Word is general, addressed to the whole congregation, not to any particular person and appeals to the consciences of men, while christian discipline as exercised by the church is a personal labor dealing with specific individuals and with certain known sins. The preaching of the Word deals with sin in general, warns against all sin as displeasing to the Lord, while christian discipline deals with specific, gross sins. In this connection it may also be noted that not every sin can be regarded as an object of christian discipline, but only those sins which are dishonoring to the name of Christ and are a shame to the church. Of course, ultimately it may be said that *all sin* dishonors the name of Christ and *all sin* is a shame to the church but there are sins which, in their very nature, are such that the official function of ecclesiastical discipline cannot touch them. The sin must first come to manifestation. It must be open or public, and either it is that in its very nature, such as sins of adultery, theft, murder, etc., or it may become that in the way of Matthew 18. The sin of one, made known before witnesses, is ultimately reported to the church and, if guilt is established, the church then must proceed with disciplinary measures. We must remember, too, that in the final analysis all *impenitence* is gross sin and that therefore the only sin for which a member is ex-

communicated from the christian church is the sin of *impenitence*.

This is an interesting and significant point. If a member of the church falls into the sin of stealing or murder, is labored with by the consistory and after much prayer and many admonitions must finally be excommunicated from the church, that member is not excommunicated because he is a thief or murderer. If this would be the case, not only he, but all of us would have to be excommunicated. But the fact of the matter is that the excommunication takes place because of impenitence. If you ask the question: "For what sin was this person excommunicated from the church?" the answer must be and can only be, "For the sin of impenitence".

Yet this is not all that is to be said here. Let us for a moment leave out of consideration the *official* ecclesiastical censure and consider the censure that each of us is obliged to place upon ourselves, particu-

larly when we come to the table of the Lord. Also here there is but one sin that bars us from the communion and fellowship of Christ. It too is the sin of impenitence. The consistory may not know about it and we may not perhaps be told by the elders of the church that we may not come to the table of the Lord but if there is sin remaining in us which we have not confessed, concerning which we have found no repentance and with respect to which we have no desire to flee, we are in our own consciousness barred from the table of the Lord. In our experience there can be no reception of the blessings of Christ as long as impenitence remains in our hearts. From a subjective point of view, impenitence obstructs spiritual communion, and although this may not be objectively discernable it is nevertheless just as real as with him who has been excommunicated from the fellowship of Christ through the Divinely appointed ecclesiastical censure.

ALL AROUND US—

The Growth of Lawlessness

by Prof. H. Hanko

One of the most alarming trends to be found in our degenerate age is the growth of lawlessness. We are rapidly becoming a country which totters on the brink of anarchy.

There are many evidences of this.

The streets of our cities are filled with crime. We are told by law-enforcing agencies that a murder is committed in our country at least every five minutes. Within the past two months two mass murders -- one in Chicago where eight nurses were systematically butchered and one in Austin, Texas where fifteen people were killed and thirty-one wounded by a rifleman who was himself killed -- have shocked the nation. But all kinds of crime increase yearly at an alarming rate. So much is this true that it has attracted the attention of our national legislators. And all this is abetted by the recent Supreme Court decisions which weight the law in favor of the criminal and make it increasingly difficult for law-enforcement agencies to maintain order within our society. It has become all but impossible to convict a murderer with the full force of the courts on his side. Gangs fight in the streets. Mobs of hoods, riding high-powered motorcycles create mayhem; and the law seems helpless to stop them. The result is that one is no longer safe walking at night on many streets within our larger cities. And one wonders how long he will be safe behind the doors of his house.

The courts seem little concerned with the agony and suffering, the rights of the victims of crime, but overwhelmingly concerned with the rights of the criminal.

This growth of lawlessness has become especially evident in the whole field of the civil rights struggle. Demonstrations, freedom marches, sit-ins are so common that they scarcely warrant space in the newspapers any longer. But demonstrations have become riots; and our cities this summer are being torn by looting, burning, strife, murder, and bitter racial war. This is not limited to the South; indeed the cities of the North are the scenes of racial upheaval. Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Detroit, Lansing -- these are but a few of the cities which have had to contend with riots this past summer. Looting and arson have been carried on before the eyes of watching police who do nothing to prevent these crimes from taking place, either out of helplessness or fear.

Encouraging this sad state of affairs has been, on the one side, the government, which does not consider, evidently, this rioting to be criminal and a violation of law and order, but which rather excuses it all on the grounds that these underprivileged masses have been so badly treated that they cannot help what they do. Social studies and psychological analyses take the place of law-enforcement. Increased government grants to build new homes and businesses are poured

into the areas when the participants ought to be prosecuted. Even our vice-president was recently quoted as saying that he too would riot if he was forced to live in a ghetto.

On the other side of the picture, encouraging this massive resistance to the law stands the church. The National Council of Churches has long encouraged lawlessness in the mad pursuit of civil rights. Many church assemblies have gone on record as favoring "civil disobedience" — something which the Reformed Church of America accomplished yet at this summer's synodical meeting. By civil disobedience is meant the right of every individual to obey those laws only which he chooses to obey while being given the full right to disobey the laws which he does not care to obey. And while all this is supposed to be limited to the field of civil rights and racial equality, these limitations were not expressed in synodical decisions, and can therefore be applied to all relation to authority, so that any man at any time has the right to disobey any law which he does not happen to like — if those pompous ecclesiastical assemblies are to be believed.

From this lawlessness in the civil rights movement has grown what is referred to as the movement for "black power". Floyd McKissick of CORE and Stokely Carmichael of SNICK have joined the militant negro movements and brought their civil rights organizations into the struggle to attain black power. Carmichael has called for Negroes to unite themselves with colored people all over the world to attain this goal. McKissick calls for Negroes to unite against white people to gain their ends by force and power. They are determined not only to attain *equal* rights, but to gain for themselves power over the whites. And they are quite outspoken about their intent to gain this power by forces outside the law when legal processes move too slowly to suit them. They will use a gun when the courts fail them. Their speeches ring with violence, threats, hatred of white people, and contempt for the nation.

These are the latest evidences of lawlessness in a nation which has been lawless for many years. In fact, *Time* was moved to report recently that the country, born in rebellion against authority has not outgrown the effects of her birth.

What is new is the alarming increase of lawlessness and the backing which lawlessness gets from the churches. There is this indication also of wholesale apostasy in ecclesiastical circles. The church, which ought to stand as a barrier against lawlessness, has come out forcibly in favor of it. There was a recent incident in California which strikingly illustrates this. Unions in this country are founded on the principle of lawlessness and have the right of existence in coercion and defiance of constituted authority. But the churches have taken a role in this violence of unionism as well. Grape-pickers in California recently finished a month-long, 300 mile march from Delano to Sacramento as part of their bitter fight with grape-growers and to be recognized as a union. With them marched Roman Catholic priests and nuns and Protestant ministers. Their right to organize was endorsed by California's

eight Roman Catholic bishops, including Francis Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles and Archbishop Joseph McGucken of San Francisco. Bishop James A. Pike also urged his congregation to join the march. The National Council of Churches formally endorsed the strike. This was done because these leaders believe that they are called to join the fight to attain justice and equality; but they throw justice and law to the winds.

All this has spread rapidly to the whole field of Christian morals. Not only the law of the land is being violated on every side, but the law of God is trampled. It is not surprising that this should be so, for obedience to the authorities in the state is obedience to God who has given them their authority. When the laws of the land are despised, this is only because the law of God is hated.

There are increasing evidences also of man's total unconcern for the moral law of God.

It was only about eight years ago that advocates of planned parenthood were agitating for the removal of laws banning birth control. Today they have not only accomplished their purpose, but have succeeded in gaining the approval and financial support of the government.

A short time ago some agencies in the country were beginning to press for the legalization of abortion. They did this rather quietly and with a great deal of emotional appeal. But today the movement has grown to such an extent that there is an open campaign to permit abortion in the case of known or suspected mental and physical deformity (such as in the recent thalidomide scare). And these same advocates are arguing that no woman should have to give birth to a child she does not want. If she believes that the birth of her child would bring economic hardship or nervous tension or too much work, she should be permitted to request abortion through legal means. Some countries (Japan, e.g.) have adopted this; there is no reason to believe our country will not follow.

From birth control and abortion, it is but a small step to euthanasia — mercy killing. And the advocates for this position are increasing in number. Not only aged people, but also infants born with handicaps should not be permitted to put their burden on society, but should be put, mercifully, out of the way. In fact, with respect to the aged, these insist that every man should be permitted to determine the time of his own death.

And from euthanasia it is but another short jump to eugenics. In this field also there is increased progress and agitation. Scientists are promoting the idea that the most basic processes of life can and ought to be tampered with to produce children of pre-determined physical characteristics and of unheard of intellectual capacities. They advocate artificial insemination of barren mothers or the birth of children through unknown donors for barren fathers.

We have commented before on the increasing influence of the "new morality". Bishop John T. A. Robinson was recently quoted as saying: "I recognize to the full that all of us, especially young people, have to have working rules. My point is that when these are

questioned as they are being questioned, the Christian is driven back to base them not on law (fornication is always wrong) but on love, on what deep concern for persons as whole persons, in their entire social context really requires."

Following this lead, Rev. R. N. Waugh, a Presbyterian clergyman wrote: "When maturing people are given their heads and are capable of weighing their responsibilities in the light of pre-marital or extra marital sexual experience, then, given their situation their decision *may* be moral. . .yes, even the Christian thing to do."

The next step is quickly taken. A certain Margaret Mead (quoted in *Our Sunday Visitor*) proposes destruction of marriage as it now exists. She proposes that people who decide they would like to live together be given permission to do this. This will give them opportunity to learn whether they wish to be married. They would not be permitted to have children, however, during this trial period. If they later decided it would be best to be married they could apply for a "parental marriage," which is a more permanent form and in which they would be allowed to have children. But before they could enter this state, they would first have to show that they are economically and psychologically prepared to have children -- perhaps to some government agency. If they could not show this, they would have to abandon thoughts of marriage at least for the time being.

And you may be sure that presently the church, tickled by any new doctrine, will soon be pressing for this too.

And so it goes. How many more instances could not be cited in our lawless society.

What must we say to all this?

It ought to be evident, in the first place, that Scripture itself points us to lawlessness as a sign of the return of Christ. Jesus tells His disciples in Matthew 24:12: "And because iniquity (literally, "lawlessness") shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Paul writes, in II Thess. 2:7, 8: "For the mystery of iniquity (RV has "lawlessness") doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed (RV has "And then shall be revealed the lawless one"), whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."

All this surely means that what is now so terrible will get much worse until it reaches its climax in the days of Antichrist, just before the return of the Lord.

And the basic evil is that men despise God's law. They toss it aside in contempt and set up laws of their own fashioning which will give them the liberty to live in moral degradation. Despising God's law they despise all law and become a law unto themselves. It has to be admitted that there is no hope now or in the future for such a world as this.

But the people of God have a solemn obligation in the light of all this. They have an obligation both towards themselves and their children. They must impress upon their children the overwhelming impor-

tance of obedience to God's law. They must emphasize anew that the law of God has, through the power of the cross, been engraven on the hearts of the people of God; that this is the perfect law which alone can give liberty -- the liberty of obedience and love to God. They must show the solemn obligation of fulfilling the perfect law of gratitude.

There is another point that needs to be made. It is sometimes argued that civil disobedience is condoned by Scriptures' principle of "obeying God rather than man." It is ironic that those who rail at Scripture's authority nevertheless find it convenient to quote Scripture at times. But be that as it may, this deserves an answer. The fact of the matter is that the Christian must be a law-abiding citizen. But his obligation is also to obey God rather than men. Yet this implies:

1) That he obeys man for God's sake, recognizing that he is duty bound to subject himself to all in authority over him.

2) That if those in authority over him in the state demand of him something that is contrary to the will of God, he must indeed disobey for God's sake.

3) That this disobedience is a far cry from the civil disobedience so openly advocated. He has not the right in himself to determine what laws he shall obey and what laws he shall not obey; he has only the Scriptures before which he must bow. And only when he cannot bow to the authority of men without doing violence to his supreme commitment to Scripture does he have the right to refuse obedience.

4) But even then this is different from the "civil disobedience" of which men speak. The disobedience of which men speak is rebellion and revolution; it is defiance and contempt of law. The disobedience which is the Christian's sacred trust is a passive disobedience which permits him to continue to recognize the authority of those over him. He bows before a heavenly King.

The child of God must not sink into the moral cesspool of our modern age. He must not be persuaded to drift into the devious paths of evil while straying from the road of righteousness and truth. He must be obedient to God and to man for God's sake.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The song "Perfect Peace," written by the late James Jonker (from First Church) has at last come from the press. If you are interested in obtaining a copy of this sheet music, published by the Rodeheaver Company, please contact Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema, 1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. For mail orders send 65¢ (50¢ plus 15¢ for mailing). Be sure to enclose your own address! Proceeds from the sale of this music will go to the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund.

TRYING THE SPIRITS —

Liars Deny Infallibility of Scripture *

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

"Verbal inspiration of Scripture is only a theory and not a matter of great importance for the Christian faith." That statement was not made by Karl Barth, Martin Luther King, James A. Pike or some other modernist-liberalist freethinker of the day. It was uttered by none other than Billy Graham, ostensible champion of the cause of orthodox, evangelical Christianity. But those same modernists are telling us that there is much in the Bible that is unacceptable historically, that therefore it must be interpreted mythologically in order to distil any relevant meaning from it. Then those same modernists also have the courage to tell us that the question of the inspiration of Scripture is of no importance. This has always been the liberalistic view of the Bible. Now in such a statement as the above, neither Billy Graham nor his liberalistic friends want to be understood as denying the inspiration of Scripture. That is not what they do. They deny the *verbal* inspiration of Scripture. The modernist speaks of the Scripture being inspired the way a poem or a bright idea strikes us with a moment of inspiration. The inspired Word of God, then, is not to be found only in the Bible. It may also be found in Shakespeare, Goethe, Tennyson, Longfellow, Whittier, Milton, Darwin, Emerson and Thoreau. How dare say we that the Spirit dwells in us, then to teach that the canon of Scripture has been closed since the Apostle John? Are we not interested in what the Spirit has to say in the twentieth century? Then why should not the above classics be included in the canon of Scripture? The Protestant and Reformed doctrine holds that the canon of Scripture closed with the writings of the Apostle John. The liberals hold that the canon of Scripture is continuous with the physical and spiritual evolution of mankind. The source of inspiration, then, is not exclusively the Bible, but is to be drawn from the world in which we live. The Bible of the Christian has had its day, says the modern rationalist; now a richer Bible has come into existence, the Bible of humanity. This is a Bible in which we all may be an inspired writer. But the Bible of the Christian claims our undivided attention. "To the law and to the testimony (of holy Scripture — RCH), if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them!" Isa. 8:20.

Now the doctrine of verbal inspiration of Scripture is no misty theory, but is taught in the Bible, and is the only inspiration the Bible knows. But with modern

men like Billy Graham, verbal inspiration is regarded as an untenable hypothesis that is repulsive to the majority of people. So called mass, co-operative evangelism is concerned with avoiding repulsion in order to provide an open field for inoffensive dialogue and discourse. Nevertheless, we care nothing for an inspiration that is not verbal, for that is the only biblical inspiration there is. This principal of verbal inspiration is the blue thread of truth interwoven and intertwined with the scarlet thread of vicarious atonement and the golden thread of unconditional election, all running through the warp and woof of Holy Writ. The meaning of this principle is that Scripture is the infallible revelation of God. For verbal, plenary inspiration renders the holy Scriptures infallible. It is evident that this is the doctrine of inspiration taught in the Reformed Confessions. For the Belgic Confession states that the Word of God was uttered not by the will of man, but that holy men of God spoke as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Then God by a special providence commanded His servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit His revealed Word to writing. Therefore we are bound to call such writings holy and divine Scriptures (Art. 3). These writings are so truly the Word of God that against them nothing can be alleged. This is the fact, not so much because the church receives and approves them as such, but because the Spirit witnesses in our hearts that they are from God, which is exactly their own testimony. The doctrine of this Word of God is in all respects most perfect and complete. Nor do we consider any writing of men, however holy or capable, to be on a par with these divine Scriptures. Nor do we regard tradition, custom, antiquity (cf. the "Bible" of Humanity), or any school or succession of persons, ecumenical councils, encyclicals, decrees or statutes of equal value and inspiration with the Scripture of truth. For the truth is above all, while men of themselves are but liars and their productions more vain than vanity itself. Therefore, we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule! (See Arts. 5, 7).

To this the Westminster Confession agrees, recognizing Scripture to be of divine inspiration and of divine authority, which it received not upon the testimony of any man or church, but upon the testimony of God who

*See Belgic Confession, Art. VII.

cannot lie but is truth Himself. This Word of God is the infallible truth, the whole counsel of God, immediately inspired of God, which by His special providence was kept pure in all ages. (Chap. 1).

Today's modern theologians and evangelists try to obscure this plain doctrine of Scripture by shifting the emphasis from an infallible Word of God to an infallible Christ. They would have us believe that we would still have an infallible Christ, even if the Scripture could be proved untrue. But how would we know there is an infallible Christ if the record we have of Him were fallible? How could the Bible come to us with the truth that God is God, that He shall save His people from their sins, and infallibly lead them to glory, and then leave us with an errant account of it all -- an unreliable record such as the religious socialists of the hour believe the Scriptures to be? Liberal theologians, seeing the folly of an infallible Christ in a fallible Scripture, have gone on to claim that the ultimate authority is neither Scripture, nor Christ, but the knowledge of God. They want not creeds, nor dogmas, nor the Bible, nor the Master and His teachings; they want God. It always happens: rejection of a verbally inspired, inerrant Scripture leads to the rejection of Christ. The rejection of Christ is the rejection of God. Read John 5:23; 14:6. Besides, when men say they want not dogma, but God, what do they mean by God? They themselves hardly know. Small wonder now that they go along with the "God-is-dead" fad! The god described in their vague platitudes is not the God revealed in Scripture. Nor can we perceive how the only true Almighty God can be seen to be the highest good if we do not have an infallible divine Scripture so revealing Him.

Not to appear to deny inspiration of Scripture in every sense of the word, modern churchmen employ the sleight that inspiration has to do with the thought of Scripture, not with its words. The writers of the various books of the Bible set down the thoughts God gave them, but were under no special guidance from God as to the exact formulation of their thoughts. The religious freethinker does not wish to appear disloyal to the Scriptures, hence he professes loyalty to them, but explains that by this he does not mean loyalty to a *theory* about the Scriptures. (Recall Billy Graham's statement that *verbal* inspiration is "only a *theory*.") What these churchly liberals object to is any definite teaching of the divine character of Scripture. In reality, they do not hold any doctrine which regards the Bible as inspired. But to hypocritically pose their ostensible loyalty to Holy Writ, they state that inspiration has to do not with the very words of Scripture, but only with the thoughts, that is, in their opinion, with *some* of the thoughts found in Scripture. But unless the inspired penmen were so led of the Holy Spirit as to make such a choice of words as to write inerrantly, then what we have in the Bible is not an infallible revelation of God, but a mere human production necessarily imperfect in character. The thought in Scripture cannot be firm, while the words which convey the thought are wavering. If the script is vague the sense will be vague. This view of Scripture sees it as

semi-truth. That will afford us no more than a semi-faith. That in turn will leave us at every page of the Book benighted with doubts. Then it can never be what it claims to be, "a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path!"

If the very words of Scripture are not inspired as well as the ideas, then we cannot be certain that in the divine canon we have the mind of the Spirit. Divine ideas could find their way into Scripture only accidentally and very corrupted, if men's words expressing them were left to the guidance of their own minds. Furthermore, ideas cannot be conveyed as truth to the mind, except in words. No one can think a distinct and reasonable thought except in the form of a word. Inspiration of Scripture then means that the record God has given of His revelation is inerrant and infallible as to both the thoughts and the words. The Scripture itself teaches this. "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think (and rightly -- RCH) ye have eternal life." Rebuking the liberals of His day, Christ said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures," which implies that the Scriptures are an inerring rule. Referring to the infallible authority of the Old Testament Christ said, "The Scriptures cannot be broken." The apostles believed the Scriptures to be an infallible standard of truth. John did: "For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, 'A bone of Him shall not be broken.'" And again, another Scripture saith, "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced." "The holy Scriptures" alone are "able to make...wise unto salvation...All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." What is comprehended under the classification "all Scripture"? Certainly all the books of the Old Testament, which Timothy knew from his childhood, for at that time no others had been written. But the Gospels are also Scripture, as Paul teaches in I Timothy 5:18, "For the Scripture saith... 'The laborer is worthy of his reward'" Where does Scripture say that? In the Gospel According to Luke, chapter 10, verse 7. "The Scripture saith, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.'" Where does Scripture say that? Not only in Deuteronomy 25:4; but also in I Corinthians 9:7, 11. Peter also calls Paul's epistles Scripture (II Peter 3:16), regards the major and minor prophets as Scripture, as well as the writings of the other apostles as Scripture (cf. II Peter 3:2 with 3:15, 16).

The battle for truth lies along the line of the true, real and verbal inspiration of Scripture. If this doctrine may now be proved to be no more than a theory, a dream, then the church's ship of state has lost its rudder, compass and mainmast; a fundamental loss, a tragical loss of the worst kind!

SEMINARY STUDENTS

Pre-seminary and seminary students in need of financial assistance in attending our Protestant Reformed Seminary should contact the following: J. M. Faber 1123 Cooper Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich., 49507

IN HIS FEAR—

Holiday or Holy Day?

by Rev. J. A. Heys

"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."
Mark 2:27

But the sabbath was not made so that man could have an holiday. It was made for man as he came forth from God's hands in righteousness and holiness. It was not made for sinful man to use in the way of his flesh. Yet the words of Jesus in the text quoted above are often used as an excuse for all kinds of deeds of the flesh. The sabbath was made for the believer, the regenerated child of God, that he might have an holy day.

An holiday and an holy day have this in common that they are both days set aside and made to be distinct from the other days of the week. The holiday is a day set aside by the proclamation of man and for man's earthly and fleshly satisfaction. It is a day when he gets off from his regular work and sweat of his brow(?) whereby he earns his daily bread. It is a day given to him by man so that he can pursue the satisfaction of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It is a day of rejoicing in carnal, material, earthly matters. It is a day wherein he can show to himself and to the world how much he belongs to the group of those that are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. A holiday has no spiritual content except that which we put into it.

An holy day is one set aside by God wherein we may perform spiritual *work* unhindered by the labor and toil of our natural lives. It is a day, and that is particularly true of the sabbath as an holy day, given him that he may enter into and enjoy the things of God's kingdom. It is a day for intense and concentrated activity rather than idleness and sleep. In fact, let us not fail to take note of the fact that it is a DAY! *And it is* an holy day. We may not make full use of the day. We may be satisfied to use the very smallest fraction of it and complain if we are required to make longer use of it. But that does not change the fact that IT IS an holy day. It is by God's decree and by God's command unto us. And it is *holy*. Nothing in all the world can change that. All of our unholy practices on the day do not change it at all. All the bold and open desecration of it by the world does not take away from its holiness in the life of the regenerated child of God, but only serves to accentuate it in his life and mind.

Where do you stand as far as the Sabbath is concerned?

Or better still, where are you found standing on the Sabbath?

How sincerely can we say with the psalmist, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord"? If we had to write a Psalm and express our true disposition of mind, would we not write? "I was glad when it was all over, that I might return home?" Are we not like the little boy who was asked how he liked church, when he returned from his first church service, and replied, "The singing was good, but the commercial was too long?" And then when the service is over, the whole long afternoon and evening is made for man to use for the earthly pursuits and lusts of man?

Here is one commandment which, by deeds, if we dare not say it with the lips, we consider outdated, not relevant to our times, old-fashioned and meant for another generation gone by. Although God with His finger cut the words also of this commandment into the granite to signify that which time would not wear away, man has succeeded, at least in his mind, to wear the granite smooth so that the fourth commandment is gone! It is not there for you and me to read anymore. The other nine are left, but they also are badly worn and in places hard to read.

Could it be that our eyes are going bad instead?

Could it be that the pleasures and treasures of this world shine so brightly that our eyes are dazzled and cannot adjust themselves to focus upon God's law? Is it that we are so busy with the things of the flesh during the days from Monday through Saturday, and even late Saturday night until the wee hours of Sunday morning, that we cannot read the fine print not only of that law but that the words of God in the fourth commandment particularly seem to disappear -- though they actually stand there in bold relief? Well, before we begin to defend our eyesight and find fault with the law, let it be stated that God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and forever according to Hebrews 13:8; Hebrews 1:12; Malachi 3:6, among many other passages. And it is so often because we have our eyes on the world and the things of the world, which in I John 2:15-17 we are warned not to love, that we have(?) to travel and perform deeds on the Sabbath, lest these material things and our pursuit of *them* suffer.

No, during the week we do not have the time. During the week it would cost us something of this earth's goods. And so the Sabbath becomes the holiday that

our flesh would not let us take during the week. The holy day becomes a few *moments* of hurried worship cut short for the sake of the flesh, and the *day* becomes for the greater part -- if indeed our minds even during the short service were not already on what we intend to do for the flesh -- an holiday! Meanwhile God has not changed, Who declares, "Love ME! And show this on the Sabbath!"

We are not interested in becoming legalistic. Do not bring up that accusation. But we are emphatic when we say that our Sabbath conduct reveals the measure of our love of God. We are stressing the point that a child of God is pictured in Psalm 27:4 -- and then a New Testament child as well as an Old Testament child of God -- when the psalmist says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." How strange even those words sound. We sing it, O yes, in our services of divine worship we sing:

My one request has been
And still this prayer I raise,
That I may dwell within
God's house through all my days,
Jehovah's beauty to admire,
And in His temple to inquire.

But do we mean it and do we live that way? Does our action and attitude on the Sabbath as well as during the week show this? Without treating the text itself but using it to bring out the point expressed in our theme above, there are elements here that need stressing. The psalmist speaks of ONE request; and that means that all the desires which he has are controlled by that desire. He SEEKS after it, or as the Psalter versification, he still *prays* this. He comes to the living God with this prayer. That is how sincere he is and how much he means it. You can tell people that. O, yes, we are glad that we can go to church. We are thankful for the preaching of the Word. We are ready to defend our doctrine -- and clamor perhaps for practical preaching, provided it does not find fault with our Sabbath conduct. But the test is whether we tell God these things in prayer and sincerely thank Him and ask Him for these. We support it financially and are liberal givers. But are we moral supporters of that preaching and of activities on the Sabbath that show that it is not an holiday for us but an holy day? If you love God, the keeping of the fourth commandment is not difficult at all. For that reason we said that our Sabbath conduct -- what we allow and what we disallow, where we go and from what we will stay away -- reveals the measure of our love to God.

Are we a peculiar people, or are we more and more becoming a worldly people? Are we a royal priesthood of God, or are we in the service of the kingdom of darkness on the Sabbath? Is our rest a peculiar rest of a peculiar people? Or does this word even have an unpleasant sound in our ears? We do not want to be a different and distinct people. We do not want the world to see that we are different from them and that we are pilgrims and strangers here below.

And so their holiday crowds more and more into our holy day in our hearts and lives.

All this, of course, belongs to the development of sin. But it also belongs therefore to the evils that make it necessary for the days to be shortened, lest even the elect of God would be deceived. James tells us, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law." Apply that here! The same God Who said, "Thou shalt not kill," said also, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." If now thou dost not kill but makest the Sabbath an holiday, thou art become a transgressor of the law." If in murder you show no love toward God, in Sabbath desecration you surely also show no love to Him. And if we love Him, the day is not long enough to fill it with service and praise to Him. Therefore, once again, we said that we can test the measure of our love to Him by observing ourselves on the Sabbath. Holiday or holy day, what is it in our lives? Well, in that measure you do not or do love God. In all those moments when it becomes an holiday for us, God is not in that day for us; and we are not performing a work of love.

Who is sufficient for all these things? How that law shows us that we can never, no never be saved by our works and that none of us is ready to enter into the kingdom. It shows also why we enter the kingdom through death, when God takes away all that flesh with its lusts and sin. The old man of sin does not enter the kingdom; and death brings an awful and sudden end to his holiday. But the new man of Christ enters, for he is the one who has this one desire and seeks after it.

It is only because God has prepared the rest that remaineth for the children of God that we will enter into that rest. It is not of our manufacture. It is not that we deserve it, and the whole idea of the law is not to show us how we can become worthy of entering into that rest. No law ever shows the sinner how to make himself righteous. The law God gave to Adam in paradise taught him how to retain his righteousness. That purpose the law still serves today. Because God made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin and made us to be righteous in Him, the law shows us how to walk to be righteous. But the law will never show the sinner how to get rid of his guilt and to make himself righteous before God. The cross does that. The gospel points to the Restgiver and the rest which He prepared. But the law serves to show us how sinful we are and in need of that Saviour. The law shows us that it is not of him that willeth, -- nor of him that runneth, but of God Who showeth mercy.

And as the vine bears fruit on the branches and living branches will always bear fruit from the root, so the regenerated and engrafted child of God will keep the law and have an holy day while the world celebrates its weekly holiday. It is the fear of the Lord that makes the difference between his Sabbath and the Sabbath of the world. Examine your life, then, and examine your Sabbath. And listen to the psalmist

whose heart was renewed to love God:

A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand (elsewhere). I had rather be a doorkeeper in house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Psalm 84:10

That is the alternative. On the Sabbath, by all

means, it is dwelling in God's house or in the tents of wickedness. In the tents of wickedness you can have a holiday for a little while until the judgment day. In His fear you have an holy day of joy that grows in its blessedness even when you are but a doorkeeper in this life.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

The Good Shepherd of Israel

John 10:1-39

by Rev. G. Lubbers

THE SHEPHERD CONTRADICTED OF SINNERS (John 10:22-24)

It seems rather obvious that some time had elapsed between Christ's expressed declaration that he is the good Shepherd, as recorded in verses 1-21, and the discussion in the temple in Solomon's porch as recorded in the verses 22-39. John states expressly that it was the occasion of the dedication of the temple. This feast was not one of the three feasts prescribed by Moses in the Law. Those feasts were the feast of the Passover, of Pentecost, and the feast of Tabernacles. This feast dated from the time of the Maccabees at the time of Judas' deliverance of the temple from the hand of Antiochus Epiphanus. In I Macc. 4:59 we read the following,

"and Judas and his brethren and the whole congregation of Israel ordained, that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their seasons from year to year by the space of eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Chislev, with joy and gladness".

It was on this day and occasion that Jesus was at the temple, where the congregation and the multitudes of Israel were gathered. Was not this day a day to remember the heroic battles of two centuries before? Was this not an occasion once more wherein the hope of Israel is expressed, the hope to be delivered completely from the bondage of Babylon and the nations? Was this hope not altogether connected with the expectation of the Messiah, the Christ to come? However, the popular and fleshly expectation of the national Israel, and that which is portrayed concerning the Shepherd of Israel in the prophecies, differ rather radically. It is the question of either returning to the Old Testament typical kingdom or pressing on to the heavenly kingdom in Christ, through His death and resurrection!

The question therefore of whether Christ is the Messiah, the One to come, is a persistent one. It is

the question which ever is a burning one: what say ye of the Christ, whose Son is He? Thus it was with these "Jews". They are called a class, "the Jews," in the Greek text. They are the leaders of the people, the ruling class, and not simply the common Israelite in "whom there is no guile". These Jews do not belong to Christ's sheep and flock. But they are occupied with the question: is Jesus *the* Christ? Should this one be the Christ, then all their plans for the earthly kingdom are never to be realized, and all their trickery and politics with the nations shall come to nought. They are concerned not about the kingdom of heaven, but about "our place and nation"!

They feign to have an interest in the Christ which is genuine. They surround Jesus as a Jewish rabble. They are saying (*elegon*) in vehement tones, 'How long do you hold our soul in suspense?' They pretend that they are like those who are watchmen and who say, "We wait for thy salvation, o God!" They accuse Jesus of not having spoken clearly and plainly that He is the Christ. They say, "Tell us plainly." Now surely, Jesus had been going up and down the land performing his wonders, of whom Peter says on the day of Pentecost, "a man approved among you by miracles, signs and wonders, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Christ did not plainly state Who He was? Unbelief seeks the excuse, and Christ must be blamed for his defective ministry and self-manifestation.

THE PLAIN SPEECH OF CHRIST'S APOLOGY (John 10:25-29)

Jesus is surrounded by a Jewish rabble in the temple in Solomon's porch. He is forced (?) to reply to the charge concerning the lack of clarity of his teaching. Of course, his reply is not to those who are willing to learn, nor does Jesus address them as such. It is a reply to the hostile and unbelieving Jews. 'Jesus answered *them!*' He answers them most pointedly and

completely so that there is no doubt about the fact that he is the Christ of God.

Jesus turns the charge about. He does not merely deny their affirmations and allegations, but He makes a counter-assertion, stating that the fault lies with them, with their not *believing* his words. "I have told you, and you do not believe." They do not believe at this very moment! The great Physician accurately diagnoses these unbelievers. Did He not know what was in man? While He was speaking, their hearing was not mingled with faith. From such is taken what they think to have. (Matt. 13:12) To them it is not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. It is more the charge of the unbelief of the Jews that is underscored than the Savior's denial of not having spoken clearly.

Our Lord does not merely claim that He told them. His words were fully and wonderfully confirmed by the works which He did in their midst. First of all, it is asserted by Jesus that they are the works which emphatically He does. They are the works which "I do." He does these works, and no one else. The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers are cleansed, and dead are raised to life. And these are not some isolated cases. They are legion which He performs. Even the very waves of the sea obey Him. Secondly, it is asserted that Jesus does these works, is still doing them. In a never-ending, constant labor Christ is doing these works before the very eyes of these Jews. He had recently opened the eyes of the man who was born blind.

These works bear testimony. They are not simply physical effects, but added to the words of Christ. They abundantly testify concerning the Christ, who He is, and that He is the Son of God. For no man can do these works which He doeth except God be with him.

If these works testify so clearly, why do these Jews not believe Him while others do believe? The answer of Christ is: ye are not out of my sheep. They are reprobate! Here we must remember what John writes in Chapter 12:37-41: "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and

I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him." Although the efficient cause for not understanding that Christ is the Son of God is unbelief, yet the deeper reason is: ye are not of my sheep. And here one must not resort to the Pelagian error of the Arminians, who would make the matter of faith or unbelief the sum total of the counsel of God to be preached, without regard to the deeper question of God's eternal decree of election and reprobation.

THE FIVE POINTS OF CHRIST'S PLAIN SPEECH TO THE JEWS (John 10:26-30)

These five points of Christ plain speech are briefly:

1. Efficacious grace. "My sheep hear my voice."
2. Total depravity, "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep."
3. Sovereign election: "Which the Father hath given me."
4. Particular atonement: "and I give to them eternal life."
5. Perseverance of the saints. "And no one can pluck them out of the hand of my Father."

Behold then the five points of Jesus Christ. They are the points in which Christ tells the unbelievers "plainly" that He is the Christ, and how one can believe and what His abiding relationship is to the sheep. Strictly speaking, therefore, these points are not the five points of Calvinism, but they are the "five points" of Jesus Christ. This is the only effective polemic against all unbelief. Small wonder that these points are hated. They are the object of the hatred of unbelief against the very Christ of God!

Do you desire to understand believingly the faith of the believers in Christ, your own faith in Him? Then begin with the confession that by nature you and I are not sheep, but that we are as the wild and ferocious beasts. But God makes us a sheep by His efficacious grace alone. He enlightens the mind and bends our wills, and makes us docile as sheep toward the Shepherd of Israel to hear and heed His voice. It is for this reason that Christ can state so dogmatically: my sheep hear my voice! There is not one sheep which does not hear the Shepherd's voice. It is all because of the efficacious calling, the calling from darkness into God's marvelous light. Thus we are partakers of the heavenly calling, the upward calling in Christ Jesus. (Hebrews 3:1; Philippians 3:14) He who truly holds to this reality of the efficacious calling has the assurance of faith in that He is faithful who has called us. Leave it up to man's alleged free-will, and all certainty of faith is forever gone.

Secondly, we must hold to the truth that those who do not receive this gift of faith, nor are called with the upward calling in Christ, are not called because they were none of Christ's sheep, which were given Him from the Father. Such is the full import of: ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep. This may not be reversed into: ye are not my sheep because ye do not believe. Our faith is the gift of God to the sheep!

Thirdly, we should notice that there is God's sovereign election. God gave a "certain number" of people to Christ out of the entire human race before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:3,4) He elected

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church expresses its heartfelt sympathy with the Peter Offringa family in the death of their husband, father and grandfather

PETER OFFRINGA

'Mark the perfect man and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace'. Psalm 37:37.

Rev. G. Lubbers
Elder H. Kuiper

us not because we were holy and without blame, but He elected us so that we should be holy and without blame before Him. Wherefore Jesus says, "whom the Father hath given me."

Fourthly, we should notice that Christ speaks of "giving eternal life." This does not simply mean that Christ gives the opportunity for people to be saved, making salvation possible! No, this means that He has merited eternal life on the Cross for as many as the Father has given Him, and that to these and these only He gives this merited life.

Fifthly, this means that no one can pluck the sheep out of the Father's hand. None can frustrate his purpose. The saints will persevere. It is the power and strength of God in which the saints are kept. The "hand" of the Shepherd and the hand of the Father are the same hand. For the Son and the Father are one!

Such is the "golden chain" of the five points of Christ's polemic against the unbelieving Jews. The

chain is: Election -- atonement -- efficacious calling -- preservation of the sheep. This is done by the Father through the Son, and They are one. The works of God are manifested. Yet, this is not a dogmatically formulated doctrine, but it is apology of the hearing of the sheep and the unbelief of those who are not sheep. It is plain speech. Standing in the midst of the sheep, the sheep are portrayed in their listening and hearing activity. This is explained by contrast: those not my sheep do not hear, and I do not know them. I lay down my life for the sheep, and I give them life more abundantly. And I shall never allow anyone to pluck them out of my hand.

Paul picks up this polemic and makes it a confession: those whom He has predestinated He has also called, and whom He has called He has also justified, and whom He has justified He has also glorified. The golden chain not of human logic (who could conceive of it), but of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

EXAMINING ECUMENICALISM—

The RES Regional Conference

by Rev. G. Van Baren

This past July 26-28 there was held a regional conference of churches of reformed persuasion, called by the three North American members of the R.E.S. (Reformed Ecumenical Synod), which met in the beautiful Calvin Seminary building at their Knollcrest Campus.

This conference was held in harmony with decisions taken at the last R.E.S. meeting in Grand Rapids in 1963. The following decisions were taken:

1. That Synod encourage the constituent members of the R.E.S. in particular areas to hold regional conferences for the purpose of cultivating fellowship, of bearing a more united and effective witness to our common faith, of deliberating on questions of peculiar concern to the churches within those areas, and to devise ways and means of putting into effect decisions of the R.E.S.

2. That Synod encourage member churches within particular areas to invite those churches that have sent observers to the R.E.S. as well as congregations which are in agreement with the basis and objectives of the R.E.S. but whose denominations do not belong to the R.E.S., to participate in these regional conferences provided this is deemed practicable and proper by the member churches within the area concerned. (Art. 106).

Our last Synod decided to send the members of our "Committee for Foreign Correspondence" to this conference. In addition to them (Rev. M. Schipper and Prof. H. C. Hoeksema), the undersigned together with Prof. H. Hanko and Rev. G. Lubbers were present at some of these meetings. Besides, there were men from the following thirteen denominations present: Associate Presbyterian Church; Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church; Christian Reformed; Free Christian Reformed; Orthodox Presbyterian; Presbyterian Church of Canada; Presbyterian Church of Korea (Hapdong); Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern); Reformed in America; Reformed Church in U.S. (Eureka Classis); Reformed Episcopal; Reformed Presbyterian -- Evangelical Synod; Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (Covenanters). Of these, the Christian Reformed, Orthodox Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America are members of the R.E.S. and sponsored the conference.

GENERAL REMARKS

One almost hesitates making remarks about a conference as that recently held. First, such remarks might be construed as that which merely attempts to "throw cold water" on a different sort of venture. Secondly, it is probably easy (maybe too easy) to

criticise any first attempt, for usually first attempts are marked also by certain failures which might not be so evident in subsequent meetings.

The recent regional conference was the first of its kind and scope in this country (of which I am aware). It was a gathering of men from denominations which hold to the major creeds of the Reformed faith. Such a united meeting could in many ways prove advantageous. As was also stated at the meeting, this is an opportunity for those of other denominations to become acquainted with, and hear discourses by, men who are highly esteemed in their own denominations—but are hardly known outside their own group of churches. Besides, churches of Reformed persuasion face many similar problems. There are the gross errors of our day which must be exposed and condemned. Then too, there are the old heresies which constantly arise in slightly different garb. Conferences such as was held can serve the purpose of discussing and encouraging one another to combat these errors. A third advantage of such conferences of those who claim to adhere to the Reformed faith is that face-to-face discussions can be held respecting differences between denominations. Why not discuss such differences on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions?

THE THEME: CHRIST OR CHAOS

The theme of the conference mentioned above was, "Christ or Chaos." There is good reason to be very unhappy with such a theme. Where it came from or what suggested it, I would not know. I can not find any Scriptural passage which might have suggested it. Scripture speaks much of "chaos", it is true; especially is such chaos evident in these last days. And, of course, Christ is the heart of the revelation of Scripture. But the alternative, Christ *or* chaos, hardly seems Scriptural. To my mind this theme seems to imitate some of those used by the W.C.C. (for instance: "Christ the Hope of the World" was the theme of the W.C.C. meeting of 1954). The theme is striking, but very vague. One could detect this clearly at the meetings too. Both speakers and listeners appeared confused concerning the intent of "chaos" in the theme. Were we to be warned concerning the danger of chaos in the world about us? Some seemed to think so. Or was the danger of chaos in the church-world of our day? Or was this threat of chaos that which confronted the Reformed community of our day?

The difficulty is that from an objective viewpoint there is not such an alternative as Christ *or* chaos. Scripture emphasizes repeatedly the "chaos" of the last times: a chaos in which the antichrist arises, in which apostasy abounds, etc. But such "chaos" is not an *alternative* to Christ; it does not push Christ from the "picture"—though admittedly such is the intent. Rather, it is Christ Who gathers His people and realizes His kingdom in and *through* this chaos. All these things also work together for good to them that love God. To a large extent, I fear, that truth was ignored at the recent conference. It is true that from a subjective viewpoint, whether this be of an individual or of a denomination, the alternative for Christ and His

cross can not be world peace or utopia—but only chaos as a result of rebellion against the Word of God. That chaos is measured not by the standards and "success" of men, but by the standard of the Word of God. But this last idea received very little (if any) emphasis. The approach was rather, "We as Reformed communities hold to the Christ of the Scripture. How, now, can we make use of this fact in order to prevent the development of chaos about us?"

THE CONFERENCE

The conference itself consisted of four major speeches and one panel discussion. Opportunity was given for those attending to discuss these speeches in smaller groups, and later the individual groups would present their questions to the speakers in a plenary or "full" session of the conference. The speeches (I can not judge the last one, since I was unable to be present) were quite scholarly, ranging in length from one hour to an hour and a half. The panel discussion was very disappointing. Its subject was "Christ the Critic of His Church: testing our differences by His Word." We had probably expected too much of this panel—at least a comparison of differences between the various groups represented and a study of these differences in the light of Scripture. But very little of this was done. Four speakers addressed themselves to four areas in which differences arise: doctrinal, political, involvement in society, and concern with education. One received the impression that the speakers sought not to emphasize and point out differences (these were somewhat jokingly dismissed), they sought not to "test our differences by His Word", but rather blandly presented very general statements concerning each area of "difference." Probably one difficulty for the panel was that far too much area was supposed to be covered. Better it would have been if one question in one of the four divisions had been discussed (for instance, one doctrinal point could have been presented for discussion and "testing" by Scripture).

The first speaker on the conference program was Dr. J. Nederhood, Christian Reformed minister and speaker of the "Back to God Hour." This man has a tremendous command of the English language. He had a delivery which was "spellbinding." And he had a masterful way of evading the giving of direct answers to the questions submitted at the close of his speech. His speech was entitled: "Christ the Power of the Gospel: The Bible's Message to a Lost World." It had three parts. First he spoke on Christ as the "material power of the gospel." He pointed out that Christ is the heart of Scripture and the sole weapon for the church. Secondly, he emphasized that Christ is the "legal power of the gospel." The presentation of Scripture, said he, is not that man delivers himself. Salvation does not occur when men accept the Savior, but when the power of Christ explodes in them and His will becomes their will. He condemned modern-day evangelism as being Arminianism. Thirdly, Nederhood pointed out that Christ is the "efficient power of the gospel." Rather nicely, I think, he emphasized that Christ always accomplishes His purpose. He surely

saves His people. Nederhood emphasized the fact of election, quoting the traditional texts, and pointed out that it was these elect, chosen from before the foundations of the world, that are surely saved. It did one's heart good to hear such emphasis upon the power of Christ unto the salvation of His own.

But the speech suffered from three serious flaws. First, (and this was pointed out during the question period) there was no mention of the work of the Holy Spirit through Whom the power of Christ is realized in the hearts of His elect. Secondly, there was no mention whatever of the power of Christ in its negative aspect: that His Word is a *two*-edged sword which also works to the condemnation and damnation of the reprobate. In fact the word "reprobate" (as far as I recall) and proof-texts for the same were not mentioned at all. This "negative" aspect of the power of Christ must never be ignored or denied. Thirdly, the speech suffered from a "practical" post-millennialism. Doctrinally Nederhood professes the truth of a-millennialism. In its practical walk, such seemed to be the contention of Nederhood, the church must be post-millennial -- that is, the church must live and work as though we will make of this earth finally the Kingdom of Christ. The church must labor with all its might to prevent the chaos of this present age. In this, Nederhood accurately reflected the present idea within his own denomination.

The second speaker was Dr. E. Clowney, Orthodox Presbyterian, and acting president of Westminster Theological Seminary. His speech is rather difficult to report in a few sentences. He crowded more words

into one minute than any man I ever heard -- and he used a full 90 minutes. He went into great detail concerning two points: the Headship of Christ over the church and the Church as the body of Christ. Very thoroughly he considered the various points under each division. Finally, he pointed out how this headship of Christ unites the Church. He ignored (and this was very good in my estimation) the general theme of the conference: Christ *or* Chaos. He emphasized rather the positive position of Christ within His Church. One basic criticism I have is that the speech presented far, far too much material for assimilation and discussion. The speaker could more profitably have concentrated on a few points which merit discussion within reformed circles.

The third speaker, Dr. J. Sanderson (Reformed Presbyterian, Evangelical Synod) addressed himself to the subject: "Christ the Key to our Unity." He pointed out first on the basis of John 17, 11, 21-23, what true unity is. Secondly, on the basis of Eph. 1:22-23 he showed that the Church is the *fulness* of Christ. Finally, he showed the fruit of that fulness on the basis of Eph. 4:10ff. His conclusion was that the only basis for division in the Church is geographical. He emphasized that the church must unite not on the basis of ignoring differences but on the basis of resolved differences through discussion and study in the light of Scripture. He repeatedly stated that the "gifted men" which God gives to various denominations could more profitably be used interdenominationally. His was a strong plea for a unity based upon the truths of Scripture. I hope to continue next time.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church expresses sympathy to Mrs. P. Ipema and family in the loss of their husband and father, whose earthly pilgrimage the Lord brought to an end on August 10, 1966. This loss is shared by the Consistory in that

MR. P. IPEMA

was a charter member of the Oak Lawn congregation and was serving at the time of his death as one of its elders.

"In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God". Psalm 62:7

Consistory of the Oak Lawn
Protestant Reformed Church
L. R. Regnerus, Clerk

IN MEMORIAM

After a lingering illness of several months, it pleased the Lord to call home unto Himself into the church triumphant our Beloved Husband, Father and Grandfather,

MR. PETER IPEMA

at the age of 68 years. We are comforted in the assurance that he has departed from this present life which is nothing but a continual death and is now rejoicing in the things which the ear hath not heard, the eye hath not seen, and hath never entered into the heart of man, for he also confessed with the Apostle Paul, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain".

Mrs. Peter Ipema (Jennie Bosma)

Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Poortenga

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Ipema

Theresa Ipema (deceased)

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Wieringa

Mr. and Mrs. James Triezenberg

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ipema

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hoving

Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Medema

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Haak

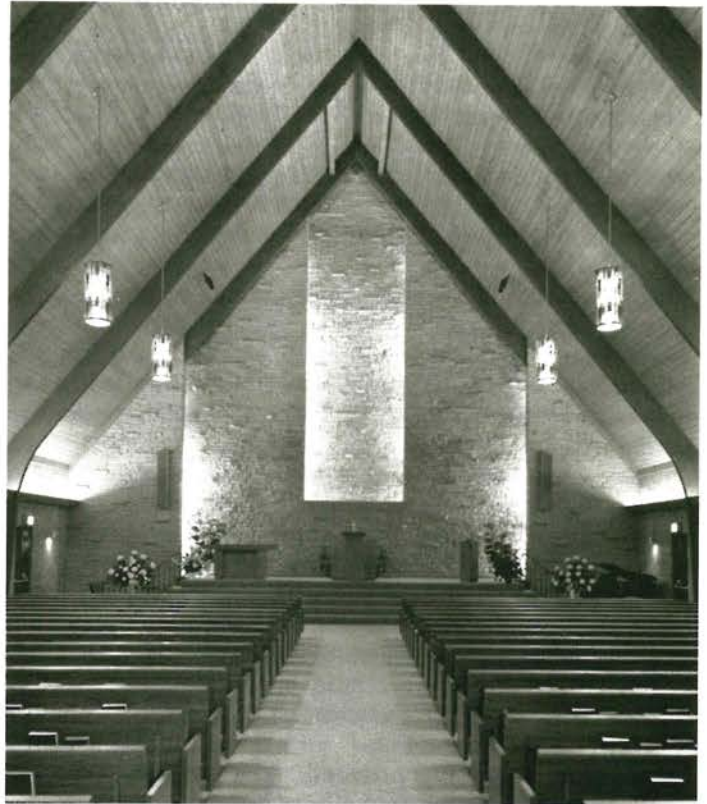
40 Grandchildren

7 Great-grandchildren

Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois

The exterior view shown is from the west, and very admirably highlights the main element of the building, —the one hundred tons of Wisconsin stone which comprises the entire front of the church. This wall is built in five staggered tiers; and between them are vertical windows of stained glass, through which the afternoon sun glows in many colors upon the inside wall. These are the only windows in the auditorium and are not visible from the pews, but are only appreciated by the reflected colors which set forth the uneven surface of the front wall in bas relief. The platform descends to the floor in a series of carpeted steps which run the entire width. As the interior view shows, the baptismal font and the communion table are situated on the platform in full view of the congregation, symbolizing the truth that the sacraments are a supplement to the preaching of the Word, which occupies the center of the worship of God in Reformed churches. The auditorium is furnished with a new type of spring-cushion pews. The indirect lighting is supplemented by colored glass chandeliers. The basement features various rooms well suited for catechism and society activities, as well as a large assembly room and a modern-equipped kitchen. The entire building is air-conditioned.

The congregation was organized in 1926 with seven families, and for two years worshipped in Lansing,



Illinois in Bock's Hall, a second story room over a hardware store. In 1928 a new church was built, without basement or plumbing, in the village of South Holland. Five years later, the congregation having grown to forty families, the church was enlarged and a basement added. The congregation now numbers some sixty families, with three of the charter members left to celebrate their fortieth anniversary: the brethren Steven Poortinga, Wm. T. Terpstra, and John Haak, Sr.

In 1961 South Holland and her sister church in Oak Lawn, having organized a Protestant Reformed Christian School Society, began construction of a school building. This school has faithfully instructed their children in grades one to nine in harmony with the training of home and church. (If you look closely, you can see a bit of the school building in the exterior view of the church; the school is situated on four acres of land directly behind the church.)

Two sons of the congregation became ministers in our denomination: Rev. G. Lanting, who at present is serving the church at Holland, Mich., and Rev. G. Van Baren, pastor of First Church in Grand Rapids.

The new church was dedicated the evenings of July 19 and 20 in conjunction with the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of their existence, an account of which may be found in the Church News of this issue.

J.M.F.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

August 15, 1966

The Rev. H. Veldman, of Hope Church in Grand Rapids, has received (and declined) a call from our Randolph congregation, and is considering a call from our Hudsonville Church, his nearest neighbor.

Edgerton, Minn. has extended a call to Rev. G. Lubbers, of Southwest Church in Grand Rapids.

* * * *

South Holland's congregation planned two evenings, July 19 and 20, for a double celebration; their 40th anniversary and the dedication of their new church. The first program centered around the dedicatory message by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema. Organ music was furnished by Mrs. George Vroom; and the choral society sang three numbers. Rev. M. Schipper, of Grand Rapids, gave the "charge to the congregation." This charge he found in Hebrews 12:23, "Let us hold fast the profession of faith without wavering." Rev. Schipper reminded the flock that they profess their hope at every service; that objectively it is impossible that the Church, the Elect of God, can ever lose that hope; but, subjectively, it is possible, and therefore the Word of God comes with the exhortation to hold it fast. The speaker closed with the comforting word, "Our hope is in the heavens, from whence the Lord shall come to take us unto Himself."

The main speaker, who gave the "dedicatory message," based his message on Psalm 52:9, under the theme, "Undying Praise of God For His Work." This was divided under three headings: what God has done; that God has done it; and the proper acknowledgement thereof. The speaker summed up what God has done in the physical and in the spiritual realm for the congregation these past forty years. That God has done it: -- that the house of God, the church, was in God's counsel before the world, was established in the blood of Immanuel, realized by the Spirit of Christ, preserved in His providence, and to be perfected in the day of Christ, -- that this is all the work of God by sovereign grace only. The professor found the proper acknowledgement in the text: undying praise, before our children, among ourselves, and in the world. The speaker comforted the congregation with the promise that in the midst of our unfaithfulness we still have a hopeful expectation *because* God has done it and *will* perfect it at His coming.

At the July 19 meeting the keys of the new church were accepted for the congregation by Elder B. Worries, vice-president of the consistory, from the hands of Mr. Gise Van Baren, of the Building Committee. Rev. Heys led in prayer and in the reading of Psalm 84, which had been chosen as the Dedication Psalm. After the program opportunity was given to tour the building and enjoy refreshments in the basement.

The second evening of celebration brought some disappointments to the congregation. Two of the "sons of the congregation" scheduled to give greetings

were unable to attend. They were the Rev. G. Lanting, pastor of our Holland Church, and Rev. G. Van Baren, of First Church in Grand Rapids. Rev. H. Veldman, a baptized member at the time of their organization, was present to voice his greetings, as also Rev. R. Decker, of Doon, Iowa, who appeared on the platform to give his greetings. This program included the choir, a trumpet solo by William Lenting, a poem by Miss Beth Van Baren, and Mrs. Ernest Medema at the console of the organ. This meeting was opened by their pastor, Rev. Heys, and closed by Rev. H. Veldman.

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Rev. C. Hanko was in his familiar pulpit again for one service on July 17, and hoped to fill it twice the next week. He writes, "I am making a very good recovery, for which we are all very grateful."

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A notice appeared in the July 24th bulletin of South Holland that the clothing (1400 lbs.) and shoes (400 pairs) were so gratefully received by the Jamaican congregations of Rev. Elliott and Rev. Frame. One of the recipients wrote, "Let me first give thanks to our Covenant God, for it is He Who has provided all things through you and the Spirit which He puts in your hearts and love towards us as brothers and sisters, to send us these material things which we need." The notice also gave credit to the churches of Pella, Randolph, and Hudsonville for helping in the expenses of shipping and of duty.

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The following important notice was found in First Church's July 31st bulletin: "Rev. and Mrs. Van Baren are the grateful recipients of a son, Daniel Glenn, born to them last Thursday evening at Blodgett Hospital. We extend to them and to their family the indispensable blessing of our God, and commit them now and in the future to His care and keeping."

* * * *

Redlands' congregation experienced a mild exodus this month. Five of their young people left for Michigan to attend the Young People's Convention; and six families took car and trailer on a trip through the Northwest, converging on our Lynden Church for two Sundays, making new and renewing old acquaintances amongst our own people while on a vacation.

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News Flash: The newly acquired church in Forbes, N. Dak. suffered extensive damage from a tornado Sunday evening, July 31. The steeple was blown down, and the entire building was set askew on its foundation, wrecking much of the interior. It is estimated that repairs would cost more than the original investment.

* * * *

....see you in church.

J.M.F.