

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE:

Meditation: Learning To Be Content

Editorials: Op De Lange Baan Geschoven

An Attempted Reformed Defense of Billy Graham

Billy Graham's Methods and Doctrine

Barth's Doctrine of Scripture: The Scriptural Basis

CONTENTS

Meditation -	
Learning to be Content	434
Rev. J. Kortering	
Editorials -	
"Op De Lange Baan Geschoven"	437
Prof. H. C. Hoeksema	
An Attempted Reformed Defense of Billy Graham	438
Prof. H. C. Hoeksema	
The Lord Gave the Word -	
The Divine Calling in the Preaching	440
Rev. C. Hanko	
All Around Us -	
The Christian Reformed Synod	
The Reformed Church and COCU	442
Prof. H. Hanko	
In His Fear -	
Handle With Care (2)	444
Rev. J. A. Heys	
From Holy Writ -	
The Good Shepherd of Israel	447
Rev. G. Lubbers	
A Cloud of Witnesses -	
The Lord's Anointed	449
Rev. B. Woudenberg	
Trying the Spirits -	
Billy Graham's Methods and Doctrine	451
Rev. R. C. Harbach	
Heeding the Doctrine -	
Barth's Doctrine of Scripture -- The Scriptural Basis	453
Rev. D. J. Engelsma	
Book Reviews -	
God is Dead	
God is Not Dead	455
First Church - Holland, Michigan	455
News From Our Churches -	
Mr. J. M. Faber	456

THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association

Editor -- Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, 1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Contributions will be limited to 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten. Copy deadlines are the first and fifteenth of the month.

All church news items should be addressed to Mr. J. M. Faber, 1123 Cooper, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

Announcements and Obituaries with the \$2.00 fee included must be mailed 8 days prior to issue date, to the address below;

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. James Dykstra, 1326 W. Butler Ave., S.E. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

Renewal: Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order. Subscription price: \$5.00 per year

Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN MEMORIAM

On the evening of July 5, 1966 we were grieved by the passing of one who was very dear to us, our sister

MRS. ANNE M. SPRUYT

Our prayer is that we may continue to find comfort in the blessed assurance that we are but pilgrims and strangers on this earth, and that have an abiding place in Heaven, where Christ our Lord is preparing a place for us.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord".

Mr. & Mrs. John Bartelds

Mr. & Mrs. Adrian Griffioen

Mr. & Mrs. Ralph H. Meyer

Mr. & Mrs. Gerard E. Bylsma

Mr. & Mrs. George De Vries

MEDITATION—

Learning To Be Content

by Rev. J. Kortering

"For I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content."

Philippians 4:11-b

Some lessons are not easily learned.

Contentment is one such lesson.

That's true for two reasons.

The subject matter itself is profound. It defies human imaginations! Its depth lies not in natural perception, but in spiritual discernment. We marvel at the child of God that has learned this lesson well.

Mark Job who lost all his possessions, even his children. His contented cry was, "The Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." David, the man after God's own heart expressed a similar thought while he gazed upon his dead son, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall

not return to me." Listen to Daniel's three friends, "If it be so, our God is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king." Here in our context, the Apostle Paul was imprisoned in Rome. The raucous shouts of reprobate Rome, being entertained with the blood of martyrs, filled his prison cell. He penned these words to his beloved church in Philippi, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

It follows from this that the learning process itself is difficult. One does not shout forth the language of our text, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content," unless one is educated in the school of trial. The great Pedagogue leads His children through the depths of suffering, in order to teach them this contentment.

Even though the lesson of contentment is very difficult, we do not despair. We desire to learn it well. We know that the more we plumb the depths of this subject, the more we are able to live to the glory of our God and be happy all our days. Paul did not say, "I wish I could be content;" rather, "*I have learned to be content!*" Thanks be to God that the learning of this lesson is not dependent upon high intellectual acumen, but rather on an abundance of sovereign grace which our Father promises to give unto us in a sufficient measure.

Contentment involves the proper inter-action between our inmost being and the outward circumstances of our life. You recall that God made man by a two-fold act: He formed him out of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Because of this we may properly distinguish two aspects in man's creation.

Man from an outward point of view is earthy. Our bodies are dependent upon the earth for its sustenance. We must eat food, we must breathe air, we need protection from the elements of nature and from the hazards placed around us by our fellow man. Our bodies are subject to disease and death, for, "dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." From this point of view we can live in human relationships. The fellowship within the home, of husband and wife, parents and children is an expression of this outward man. We have contact with each other in the church because we are able to see one another, to hear one another, and to speak together. We have our daily work to do as employer or employee. We are citizens of a certain country and are called to fulfill certain obligations.

We recognize, however, that our life consists of more than that activity which we reveal to one another. There is a certain inner life which is not subject to the scrutiny of one another, which is very personal, and which is the cause and source of all outward activity. We do much thinking, longing, and planning, some of which comes to outward expression and some does not. There is deeply within each man a spiritual core called the heart. It is within this heart that man knows that God exists and either loves Him or hates Him. From this inner dwelling, man reaches up far above his own environment and stands in relation to almighty God.

Contentment is the spiritual virtue that God gives to

His children in which they are able from their inmost being to look through all their outward circumstances and gaze into the face of God in Jesus Christ, acknowledge that all things which God is pleased to send their way are good, and rejoice in that goodness of God, and therefore give Him all their thanksgiving and praise.

It must be apparent that contentment demands that we stand in a proper relationship with God.

We must not confuse contentment with carnal satisfaction. There are many unbelievers who are able to adjust to certain circumstances in life and remain satisfied. This satisfaction, however, is always superficial; and in their inmost beings they know it, and have no real peace. When things go bad for them they try to do something that will make it possible for them to continue in life. The world tries two clever ways to remain satisfied in the face of difficulties. They first of all try escapism, they try to get away from the things that are unpleasant. Men and women try to drown their fears in alcohol. The world seeks the fantasy of LSD and other kinds of dope and drugs. They crave pleasures as a relief-valve for pent up tensions. The psychiatric couch is occupied day after long day with one patient after another. The second scheme they use is that of philosophically accepting troubles. Some stoically find some comfort in the fact that we all have to take our hard knocks; we can't do anything about them anyway, so we might just as well learn to live with them. Others idealistically claim that the troubles of life, sickness, pain, wars, and the like are all birth-pangs necessary to bring forth the great society and therefore must be recognized as necessary means to a great end. In that way they find some consolation in the midst of war, crime, sickness, and even death. Contrariwise, when things seem to prosper they express their satisfaction in themselves. They boast of their accomplishments and greedily seek to advance their own gain.

Yes, the world has a form of satisfaction. This is, however, rooted in their enmity against God. We must not confuse this sort of thing with the contentment of which Paul speaks here in our text. This carnal attitude has its roots in the spiritual whoredom of man in rebellion against God. It is a prostitution of the inner man before the god of this world, man himself. The natural man may be satisfied in his folly, but never can he be content.

Contentment can rest only in a heart that is in harmony with God. As children of God we know God as God. To us He is not simply a Supreme Being; He is our Father. He is the Father of creation. By His omnipotent Word He called all things into being, and by that same Word He upholds all things and continues to give them their being. He rides the clouds as His chariots, the wind is His breath. He can be seen in the fragile texture of the most delicate flower, or in the fatal blast of the desert wind. He is, however, much more. He is our Father in Jesus Christ. He has redeemed us unto Himself as His precious children. He laid upon Jesus, His Only Begotten Son, the curse due to prodigal sons. By that work of atonement God has prepared the way for us to enter into the joy of

family life with Him. He calls His children by name; we hear that call and come unto Him for rest. He draws us unto the cross and directs our troubled and weary souls to the covering of the blood of Jesus and tells us that though we deserve hell, He has transferred that judgment to One Who could bear it, and did bear it, and therefore has removed from us once for all the burden of sin. He assures us that we need not try to walk the weary course of life alone; He shall walk beside us by His Spirit to comfort us, and therefore He shall be our Guide even unto death.

Being engrafted into Christ by such a living faith, we perceive two truths which are fundamental to contentment.

The first is that Almighty God in His sovereign direction of our lives, gives us only good things. Nothing comes to pass by mere chance, but all things according to His direction. His direction is based upon perfect wisdom and love, whereby He knows what is good for us in this life in order to bring us unto Himself in glory. Therefore, we conclude, that no matter what may be our portion here, it is *good* for us. It is not a question of what we may happen to like, it is rather what does Father in sovereign wisdom, which is far greater than ours, consider to be good.

The second is that the strength to endure unto the end does not rest in human power, but in divine provision. Our Father does not deal out a certain measure of His counsel and expect us to make the best of it. Always we must remember even as God revealed to Paul in the context, "My grace is sufficient for thee". To this we respond with the Apostle, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

When we learn these truths, we are able to speak the bold language of Paul, "I have learned in *whatsoever state* I am, therewith to be content." In the immediate context it is apparent there are principally two states, that of abounding and being abased, that of being full or empty. It is our privilege to be content in either one.

There are many troublous times. Life is full of disappointments. We're fearful of losing our job or encounter financial hardships for no reason of our own. The power of nature consumes our crops and hours of work are reduced to nothing. We struggle with the fruits of sin in the church while we long for perfection. We bear persecution from those who hate our Lord Jesus Christ. Our eyes become faint through

a long road of suffering. Loneliness may mark our life. Probably you are experiencing such today. To be content means we may say, "My portion is of God; it is good, for by it I am drawn by His all-sufficient grace nearer to Him. I rejoice even now, not in the affliction itself, but in the God Who sends it. I am thankful to Him for His dealings because afflictions are for my profit." Then the inner man is able to be quiet and in peace, no matter how turbulent it may be on the outside.

The same is true for prosperous times. It's even harder to be content then. Don't be surprised at this. When we are able to work every day, and the work of our hands produces an abundance of earthly gain, pride so easily overrules and we boast and become selfish. If you today are well and healthy and can rejoice in fellowship within the home, the church, and among neighbors and friends, you also by grace may speak contented language. Then we say that we deserve none of these things, but God has given them to us to be redeemed unto Himself. We confess that God is good in giving them, and we rejoice that we may with all that we have serve Him and use it to His honor and glory.

We must needs learn this profound lesson. Contentment has its source in God alone. It is the fruit of sovereign grace.

Have you learned it?

We learn it in especially two ways. First, by searching the Word of God and in prayer. This is true on Sunday, but no less on every day of the week. When we have problems and are confronted by sorrows, we must not run away from them, nor run first of all to our fellow man; we must run to our Father. Too often we gulp down an aspirin and seek relief in medicine or psychiatry while we should be on our knees searching the Bible and pouring out our heart in prayer. Secondly, we learn it through the trials of life themselves. Paul wanted to get rid of the "thorn in his flesh," it bothered him. But God answered, "My grace is sufficient for thee". With each sorrow, each pain, each disappointment we turn to our Father in prayer; and He supplies us with a renewed measure of grace; and by that grace we learn to be content.

Contentment is a foretaste of heaven.

With trembling lips and feeble voices we now express our contentment; presently we shall declare the goodness of our God in the strength of a soul set free.

Besides, this doctrine (of sovereign election) affords us unspeakable consolation, and is the source of all true comfort and assurance. It dare not be objected to this doctrine that this truth offers no comfort to poor sinners, for nothing could be farther from the truth. True, this doctrine has no consolation for the impenitent wicked; but we ask: is there any form of presentation of the Gospel that could possibly comfort the wicked and ungodly? There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked! But is there a more comforting gospel than that of God's gracious election for the penitent, the seeking soul, the hungry and thirsty, the weary and heavy laden? He may be assured that he will be received, and be saved, for his penitence, seeking, hunger and thirst, are the fruit of electing grace.

EDITORIALS—

"Op De Lange Baan Geschoven"

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The above is an apt idiomatic Dutch expression which describes what has been done with the so-called Dekker Case in the Christian Reformed Church. The expression means "shuttled to the long track" and is used to convey the idea of maneuvering to delay the treatment of an issue or a troublesome problem in order to postpone or avoid a showdown.

The issue is the rank Arminianism which came to expression in Prof. Harold Dekker's writings in 1962, in which he defended the notion of a redemptive love of God for all men and, at the same time, the heresy of a death of Christ for all men. Both of these doctrines are key elements of the Arminian position. In 1963 an attempt to counteract these errors of Prof. Dekker suffered shipwreck on legal grounds. In 1964 an overture resulted in the appointment of a study committee. This study committee took two full years to "study" these simple issues. The fruit of this study was a 70-page report to the 1966 Synod, -- a report which, though very weak and inconsistent, principally because it attempts to maintain the First Point of 1924, nevertheless came to the conclusion that Prof. Dekker's doctrinal position was wrong.

And now the 1966 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church has once more avoided a showdown on this matter by recommitting the report to the Study Committee for further reflection and improvement. This I learned from personal correspondence and from published reports. Although the official decision is not yet available in full, there is a rather detailed report of this matter in "R.E.S. News Exchange," Vol. III, No. 6, p. 216. This report was furnished by Prof. Martin Woudstra (of Calvin Seminary). I quote it in full:

The 1966 Synod of the C.R.C. considered a report concerning certain writings of Professor Harold Dekker of Calvin Theological Seminary. (see R.E.S. N.E., May 1966) The advisory committee of Synod reported that it deemed the report to express "substantially the Reformed tradition in the areas discussed". It also judged that the grounds of the recommendations fail to reflect adequately the Biblical and confessional support found in the report. It furthermore pointed out that there are related problems which arise out of this context which need theological clarification and precise statement. Among these were mentioned: the relationship and distinction between the love of God and the grace of God; the relationship between election and the sincere offer of salvation; the specific role which each person of the Trinity has in the atonement and its

effectuation in the lives of men; the universal implications of the atonement.

The advisory committee made a serious attempt to reformulate adequately some of the Study Committee's propositions and to support them with adequate Scriptural and confessional grounds, but this proved to be impossible in view of limited time and research facilities available.

The Synod therefore recommitted the report to the Study Committee for further reflection and improvement, taking into account the above observations, and asked the committee to report in 1967.

Any kind of decision in this crucial matter, therefore, has simply been postponed until 1967. Moreover, there is no guarantee whatsoever that there will be a satisfactory decision at that time; in fact, the possibility is very real that there will either be further reasons for postponement or an indefinite postponement (as the *Reformed Journal* has proposed), or even a turning of the tide in favor of Professor Dekker's position. For: 1) If the Study Committee could not produce a satisfactory report in two years, what reason is there to believe that they can do so in one more year? 2) Additional problems have been assigned to this committee, some of them, as, for instance, the one concerning election and the sincere (why not well-meant?) offer of the gospel, knotty problems. It is indeed likely that when this committee reports on these additional problems, thereby lengthening, -- and further confusing, -- its already long report, there will be more problems and further disagreement, with the attendant necessity of postponing a decision for another year. 3) There is a very vocal segment of the Christian Reformed Church that has already expressed itself as in favor of the propositions of Dekker and as opposed to any binding decision along the lines of the committee's recommendations. In other words, there is radical disagreement as to the recommendations themselves. If this be true, -- and it is a disagreement that reaches into the seminary faculty itself, -- then no amount of clarification and reformulation will avoid the necessity of a showdown decision. Such a showdown decision, if its consequences are accepted, will require either cleavage or a complete retraction on the part of Dekker and those who agree with him. Neither of the two can I envision in the Christian Reformed Church. The alternative is the course followed up to the present time: postponement, or "op de lange baan schuiven."

Apart from the above, however, how plain it is that the Christian Reformed Church has been impotent to follow any course but that of postponement.

Consider the situation.

Here is the case of a seminary professor, — and others with him, — who has openly violated the Formula of Subscription. Moreover, he has militated publicly against two cardinal doctrines of the Reformed faith. The issues involved were settled clearly and with finality three hundred fifty years ago at the Synod of Dordrecht. And now a Reformed denomination takes years to debate and decide the issues at stake. Meanwhile Prof. Dekker, and others, are free to instruct future ministers of the Christian Reformed Church in these false doctrines; and ministers and professors are free to propagate these errors in theological journals.

The latter, of course, is always the danger of postponement. It allows time for false doctrine to be propagated in the churches. The final result is that the false doctrine is adopted into the official stand of the church, and the entire denomination officially departs from the truth.

And what, we may ask, is the reason for this impotence? How can it happen that a denomination which officially stands on the basis of the Canons of Dordrecht can for already four years not prevent the error of general atonement and the error of the universal, redemptive love of God from being taught?

The answer lies in 1924.

On the one hand, Prof. Dekker, Dr. Daane, and others, have done nothing but carry the position of the First Point of 1924 to its logical consequences.

On the other hand, the Study Committee (and others in the Christian Reformed Church) do not want to go so far. Meanwhile, they wish to hold on to the First Point and to its traditional explanation.

This places them in the impossible position of agreeing in essence with the position of Prof. Dekker and yet attempting to condemn his position as contrary to Scripture and the Confessions, and to do this without at the same time condemning the First Point. That this is true is evident from the Study Committee's long report, which I hope to criticize in detail later. But it is evident that the entire report was written with one eye on the First Point: by all means, the committee had to avoid agreeing with the Rev. Herman Hoeksema's criticism of the First Point of 1924. At the same time, however, the committee agreed on two fundamental elements with Dr. Daane, namely: 1) That the *nature* of the atonement is not limited; and, 2) That grace is not an attribute of God.

And how, then, can they ever condemn Prof. Dekker's doctrinal position in good conscience and in a satisfactory manner? No amount of postponement will enable the Study Committee to do the impossible!

And what is the price that must be paid?

It is a high one: the loss of the Reformed truth of the sovereign, particular, elective love of God; and the loss of the Reformed truth of particular and definite atonement.

I write this not in glee, but in sadness.

There is but one way out for the Christian Reformed Church. That is this: renounce the First Point of 1924, and return to the unadulterated Reformed truth.

Let those who still love that truth raise their voices in protest against its denial. But let them not emasculate their protests by holding to the First Point at the same time. And if their protests go unheeded, or if it already has become hopeless to protest in this fashion, let them take their stand with us. For by the grace of God we hold to the Reformed position without compromise.

An Attempted

Reformed Defense of Billy Graham

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In *Missionary Monthly* (June, 1966) Dr. Jerome De Jong once again reacts to my criticism of Billy Graham's doctrine. And, in answer to a question which I posed to him in my editorial of March 15, 1966, he attempts to agree both with Dr. Graham and with our Reformed confessions. In attempting to do so, however, he minimizes Billy Graham's denial of total depravity and he misquotes, and thereby corrupts, the Canons of Dordrecht. By doing this, as well as by

making some partial quotations of statements by Graham, Dr. De Jong succeeds in making it abundantly clear that he wants to defend Billy Graham at the expense of the Reformed truth, and that therefore he rather recklessly is ready to sing *Kom Susser Tod* (Come Sweet Death), as he suggests, in the face of the imminent danger of ecclesiastical suicide.

Before proceeding to reply to the doctor on this matter, however, I must remind him of two items.

The first is that in all fairness he owes an answer to several prior questions which I raised in my editorial of February 1, 1966, which was written in reply to his rather vitriolic attack on my criticism of Graham's doctrine of regeneration. If Dr. De Jong wishes to answer questions, he should follow the rule of "first things first."

The second item is that Dr. De Jong should be more careful with his quotations. Both in his previous article and in the article presently under discussion he misquotes me by quoting me only partially. And in the present article he misquotes Calvin, misquotes Graham, and misquotes our confessions, — again, by making partial quotations. There is nothing wrong, of course, with partial quotations, *provided* that it is indicated that the quotations are only partial, and *provided* that key statements are not deliberately omitted. On my part, I am very willing to discuss this matter of Graham's anti-Reformed doctrine with anyone and to defend the proposition that no Reformed man can consistently support Graham, that no Reformed church can do so without committing ecclesiastical suicide as a Reformed church. But such discussion must be on a fair basis; and Dr. De Jong should not attempt to destroy my arguments by omitting key elements from quotations.

* * * *

The reader will recall that I raised this entire question of Graham's teaching concerning total depravity in connection with his doctrine of regeneration. I claimed (*Standard Bearer*, Nov. 1, 1965) that Graham "denies the Biblical truth of regeneration and the absolute necessity of the new birth by making the new birth something that is in final analysis dependent on man." In this connection I pointed out Graham's denial of total depravity. Graham teaches that man must have and can have the willingness to yield to God and to decide to be reborn *before* he is regenerated. At that time already I quoted from our Reformed confessions to prove that this was a denial of the Reformed doctrine of total depravity. For all of our confessions insist that regeneration is solely the work of God, that it is the strictly divine exception to total depravity, that natural man in no way contributes to or can contribute to this work of regeneration, and that, in fact, natural man cannot even show a willingness or a longing for the new birth. All this I proved by extensive quotations both from Graham and from our Reformed confessions. And in this connection I stated that "for Reformed churches to lend their support to the teaching and preaching of Billy Graham is nothing short of ecclesiastical suicide." The latter was a very clear statement. For if Reformed churches support the teaching and preaching of Billy Graham, they are supporting the teaching and preaching of Arminianism. Arminianism stands diametrically opposed to the Reformed faith. This is historical fact; and this is doctrinal reality. Hence, if Reformed churches support Arminianism, they are supporting that which is opposed to their historical and doctrinal existence. And what is that but suicide?

To all this Dr. De Jong chose to give no direct

answer. For he never answered my argumentation. Instead, he ignored my argumentation and proof and engaged in a sarcastic and vitriolic attack on me, while he defended Graham. To this I replied in the *Standard Bearer* of February 1, 1966, at the same time asking De Jong several questions which have to this date gone unanswered.

Then, in the March 15 issue, I criticized Graham's doctrine of total depravity, quoting from his book, "World Aflame," and pointing out, with proof from our confessions, that though Graham uses the term *total depravity*, he does not at all hold to the Reformed doctrine of total depravity. Again I pointed out that Graham must deny the totality of depravity because he wants to proclaim a natural man who can choose for God, can yield himself to God, *even before he is regenerated*.

Now what does Dr. De Jong do in his reply?

In the first place, he attempts to modify Graham's doctrine. Commenting on my quotation from "World Aflame" with respect to total depravity, he states:

However I think that what Graham is trying to say is that although every sinner is totally depraved and enslaved by sin and is subject to eternal condemnation as a result not every sinner is as bad as he can possibly be. It is true that he is spiritually corrupt but there remains some natural good — on the horizontal level (man to man).

I make bold to say that if De Jong has read Graham's book, and if he ever listens to Graham's radio speeches, he knows very well that this is not Graham's doctrine. Graham teaches that the natural man (who, according to him, is supposedly totally depraved) is able to yield to God *before he is regenerated*. Though he is supposedly dead in trespasses and sins, he can nevertheless be *willing* to yield to God. Graham is not concerned with the so-called "horizontal level (man to man)," but with the relation of man to God. This is Graham's book. This is also Graham's "evangelism." I have heard him say that God is willing to save men, but that God is powerless to save, helpless, unless man is first willing to accept and make a decision for Christ.

Moreover, even that bit of philosophy about the natural good of natural man on the "horizontal level (man to man)" is just exactly that, — philosophy. It remains one, — although Dr. De Jong does not mention common grace in so many words, — of the Second and Third Points of 1924. Even the reference to Calvin's "Institutes" and to Canons III, IV, 4 remind one of this. But about this later.

In the light of the above, De Jong's conclusion as to Graham's doctrine of depravity cannot stand. That conclusion is as follows:

On this basis if Graham means, as I believe he does, that man is totally depraved but not as bad as he can possibly be on the human plane, I agree with him. If he is saying — I do not believe he does — that man is bad but not wholly lost then I agree with professor Hoeksema since we both accept our Reformed Standards.

Dr. De Jong has adduced no proof that Graham means to say what De Jong is trying to make him say. Graham himself says that total depravity "does not mean that man is totally sinful, hopelessly and irreparably bad, without any goodness at all." Graham himself says that sin only "has infected the totality of man's life," that sin only "darkens" man's intellect, that it only "enfeebles" his will. Graham himself teaches that regeneration is a possibility for all men, conditioned upon man's willingness to yield to God. Graham himself would never say what our confessions say about total depravity; nor would he ever say that regeneration as the unaided and unconditional work of God is absolutely and sovereignly first, before any willingness and any yielding to God on the part of the sinner.

That brings me to my second point of reply to Dr. De Jong. My critic refers to the fact that I adduced as proof Heidelberg Catechism 5 and 7 and Canons III, IV, 3. But here is a case of misquotation by partial quotation. For, in the first place, Dr. De Jong neglects completely to mention that I also cited Canons III, IV, 1. Secondly, even in referring to my proof from the Heidelberg Catechism, 7, and Canons III, IV, 3 Dr. De Jong omits the most crucial point. For in the Catechism the only exception to being "wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness" is our being regenerated by the Spirit of God. Graham

does not believe this. And in Canons III, IV, 3 Dr. De Jong omits the words: "and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation." Because Graham does not believe this, as I have proved, he does not really believe the doctrine of total depravity. Thirdly, Dr. De Jong completely neglects to mention my quotation from Canons III, IV, B, 4, which precisely condemns the very error that Graham teaches, namely, "That the unregenerate man is not really nor utterly dead in sin, nor destitute of all powers unto spiritual good, but that he can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life," etc. Also this Graham does not believe; if he did, he could never teach that the natural man could show any willingness to be regenerated or to yield to God.

My space for this issue is used up. I will continue my reply next time, D.V.

Meanwhile, let me remind Dr. De Jong that he must not try to take a "both . . . and" position. It is "either . . . or." That is: either our Reformed confessions or Graham's doctrine. He must choose; and I suspect that he has chosen.

Let me also recommend that he pay close attention to the articles on Billy Graham by my colleague, Rev. Harbach.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD— ...Psalm 68:11

The Divine Calling In The Preaching

by Rev. C. Hanko

A very beautiful and concise description of the divine calling in the preaching of the gospel is presented to us in the parable of the Marriage Of The King's Son. The Lord shows us in this parable that the gospel is always the glad tidings of the promise of salvation in Christ Jesus. He also informs us that God sends forth His messengers to preach this gospel of the promise only to those to whom He is pleased to send them. And He points out that this preaching always has a twofold effect as a savor of life unto life and a savor of death unto death, gathering those who are made worthy in the righteousness of Christ, and exposing and condemning those who are unworthy because of their rebellion and sin. So that the conclusion of the parable is that God gathers His own; the wedding chamber is filled with guests, even while the rebellious are cast out into everlasting torment.

For, as Jesus applies His Word, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Matthew 22:1-14.

How beautifully and accurately the contents of the gospel message are summed up in the simple statement, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son."

The figure speaks for itself. God is the King, Whose kingdom is eternal in the heavens. That kingdom is never in any sense of the word of this earth. It never belongs to the passing things of this world; flesh and blood cannot enter into it. The history of this present time only serves to realize that heavenly kingdom in all its glorious perfection in the new creation, where the "kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever." Then the highest purpose of all things will be realized, for every

creature will join its voice in singing that grand song of redemption, "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen." This already suggests that the chief content of the gospel is God, to Whom must be the glory forever.

The King's Son is Jesus Christ, the Crown Prince, to Whom is promised the kingdom of His Father. He is the Firstborn of God, Who through the deep way of suffering enters into the glory that is prepared for Him. As a reward on His accomplished work of the cross He receives a place at the Father's right hand, and all power is entrusted to Him in the heavens, on the earth, and unto the depths of hell. Ascension Day is His Coronation Day. And when all things are finally accomplished according to the decree of God, He will subject Himself with all the new creation unto the Father, that God may be all in all. All power is given to Him in heaven and on earth. He is carrying out the work of God unto that time when He will appear with the clouds to raise the dead, to judge the nations in righteousness, and to take His Church unto Himself in glorious perfection. The preacher must preach Christ crucified and risen, in whom is revealed the living God, the God of our salvation.

For Christ's Bride is the Church. It is exactly as Head of His Church that Christ receives the kingdom. Therefore Scripture speaks of that assembly of the redeemed as something very special in the eyes of God. She is God's chosen people, His peculiar possession, which He gives to Christ as His Royal Bride. What figure could better express that most blessed covenant fellowship which God eternally establishes with His people in Christ? What could better describe that most intimate bond of life and love that unites God's people to Him in Christ?

Therefore the marriage of the King's Son takes place at the time of His coronation. When Christ is exalted to heaven He also immediately proceeds to take His Bride unto Himself. Pentecost marks the beginning of the marriage of the Lamb. It is the fulfillment of the promise for Christ and for His Bride, and therefore it is also the realization of all their eager expectations. This grand event is worthy of a special recognition both by the King and by the subjects of His kingdom. God prepares a feast of oxen and fatlings and invites His guests to share His bounties and His joy at His table. He makes wedding garments that His guests may be properly attired at this royal feast. Their own wretched, filthy rags are replaced with garments of Christ's righteousness, which have been washed in the blood of Calvary. They know no higher honor that can be bestowed on them, but that they may be in the same room with their King, may sit at the table of the King's noble Son, and may express their praise and adoration to their sovereign King. And as if that were a small thing, they may even eat of the King's bounties to the praise of His glory. In anticipation of this marriage of the Lamb the poet of Psalm 45 sang,

Thy beauty and thy grace
Shall then delight the King;

He only is thy rightful Lord,
To Him thy worship bring.

Enthroned in royal state,
All glorious thou shalt dwell,
With garments fair, inwrought with gold,
The Church He loveth well.

In the parable the guests that receive a place at the marriage and the Bride are one and the same. The gathering of the guests constitutes the bringing of the Bride to the wedding feast. The blessedness of covenant fellowship at the wedding feast is the joy and blessedness of the Bride, the Church of Christ.

Indeed, blessed is that people whose God is Jehovah. And blessed are they that hear the joyful sound of the gospel.

Throughout the parable the emphasis falls upon the call that is issued by the king to come to the wedding feast. We read:

"And (the king) sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

"Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

"But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

"And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

"But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city.

"Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

"Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

"So the servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests," Matthew 22:3-10.

We notice at once that the parable distinguishes between two different calls that are sent out. There is the first call that announces the marriage, informs that the date has been set, and urges those who are called to come to the wedding. Later this same call is repeated with the added assurance that all things are now ready, the wedding is about to commence. But there is also a second call that is proclaimed upon the highways or crossroads of the world. Only after this second call has served its purpose are all the guests assembled and the wedding is "furnished with guests."

Jesus is plainly making a distinction between the preaching of the glad tidings in the old dispensation as it was limited almost exclusively to the Jews and the preaching of the gospel in the new dispensation as it reaches out to every nation, even unto the ends of the earth.

It is even possible that the text makes distinction between two phases of the preaching in the old dispensation. The Lord speaks of the call to the mar-

riage, which is later repeated with the assurance that the dinner is prepared. The first call most likely refers to the announcement by the prophets of the approaching marriage of the King's Son, urging those who were called to prepare to come and pay homage to their King. The second call was by John the Baptist and by Jesus Himself, proclaiming that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. But in any case, the preaching was addressed to those who were professedly citizens of the kingdom, to those who were historically in the line of the covenant. The preaching was limited within the narrow confines of Israel as a nation.

When the Lord speaks of the servants being sent into the crossroads of the world, He evidently is referring to the preaching of the gospel to the ends of the earth, and therefore to others than those who were within the narrow confines of the Jewish nation. Already in the old dispensation God had promised that Japheth would dwell in the tents of Shem. Besides, Abraham's seed is a spiritual seed, since he is the father of all believers. The multitude promised to him as innumerable as the stars of heaven is not complete until the elect are gathered out of every nation and people of the earth. Christ spoke of other sheep that He still must gather before His flock is fully gathered in.

Therefore the call that is referred to repeatedly in this parable is the general preaching of the gospel as it is sent forth wherever it pleases God to send it. Generally when we speak of the divine calling we distinguish between the external calling through the preaching and the internal calling by the Holy Spirit in the heart. Only when the external call is accompanied by the call of the Holy Spirit in the heart is the call of God powerful and efficacious unto salvation. But the emphasis of the parable falls upon the external aspect of the calling, as is evident from the fact that many

made light of it and would not come to the marriage. Only in some, that is, in the elect, was this external calling accompanied by the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart unto salvation. We have here the preaching of the gospel as it is proclaimed from the pulpit and on the mission field wherever that Word is preached in sincerity and truth.

The point I wish to make at this time is, that even this general preaching of the gospel is not universal, but is limited in its scope. In the old dispensation it was limited almost exclusively to the line of the covenant. We can trace that line very clearly in the generations of Adam, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel, or the Jewish nation. Only occasionally were some brought into that line of the covenant from among the Gentiles. But many nations never heard the gospel message in the old dispensation. Many people lived and died without having had any contact whatever with the law and the prophets. God sent His Word to whom He would.

Even Christ in His public ministry limited Himself to the small area of Palestine, rarely going beyond the border of Jewry, and then only for a short distance and a brief visit. If He had willed He certainly could have provided means whereby He could have reached the entire then known world with His ministry.

But also in the new dispensation the gospel preaching has been very limited. Paul is the only one of all the apostles who was appointed to go out among the Gentiles. And even his ministry was limited, so that finally he was writing as an apostle in chains. Yet he knew that the Word of God is never bound, but is always the power unto salvation, whenever and wherever God will use it to gather His people. And when that Word was preached it never returned void. And never does. It always serves God's purpose.

That we must discuss next time.

ALL AROUND US—

The Christian Reformed Synod The Reformed Church and COCU

by Prof. H. Hanko

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED SYNOD

This brief summary of the Christian Reformed Synod is not intended to be a complete survey of all the business which was transacted in Pella, Iowa this year. The official reports are not yet available. But some reports on the more curcial issues before Synod have appeared in religious periodicals and we offer the

information available. The evidence leads emphatically to the conclusion that this year's Synod of the Christian Reformed Church took the denomination another big step down the road of apostasy. It was very liberal; it opened the door yet further to propagation of false doctrine; it approved officially of a degrading form of worldly sin.

One decision was taken on the "Dekker Case". We shall not enter this matter extensively since this is being done by our editor. It will suffice to make a few observations.

The committee which had been appointed to study this whole problem brought a report to Synod which occupied some seventy pages in the printed agenda. The committee report was not only lengthy, but was also very unclear in many instances, even though in its final recommendations (quoted before in the *Standard Bearer*) it was condemnatory. An illustration of this was in the committee's assertion (which was also a concession to Dr. James Daane) that grace is not an attribute of God. It seems to me increasingly clear that at this point we come to the crux of the matter.

However, the Synod decided to refer the entire matter back again to the same committee. Dr. Henry Stob had pleaded in recent issues of the *Reformed Journal* for freedom of theological discussion and had pleaded that no binding decisions be taken. This advice was evidently heeded, and the matter continues for another year. A summary of this part of Synod's work appeared in the *RES News Exchange*:

The 1966 Synod of the C.R.C. considered a report concerning certain writings of Professor Harold Dekker of Calvin Theological Seminary. The advisory committee of Synod reported that it deemed the report to express "substantially the Reformed tradition in the areas discussed." It also judged that the grounds of the recommendations fail to reflect adequately the Biblical and confessional support found in the report. It furthermore pointed out that there are related problems which arise out of this context which need theological clarification and precise statement. Among these were mentioned: the relationship and distinction between the love of God and the grace of God; the relationship between election and the sincere offer of salvation; the specific role which each person of the Trinity has in the atonement and its effectuation in the lives of men; the universal implications of the atonement.

The advisory committee made a serious attempt to reformulate adequately some of the Study Committee's propositions and to support them with adequate Scriptural and confessional grounds, but this proved to be impossible in view of limited time and research facilities available. The Synod therefore recommitted the report to the Study Committee for further reflection and improvement, taking into account the above observations, and asked the committee to report in 1967.

To all intents and purposes this means that Prof. Dekker's views will never be condemned by the Christian Reformed Church. His heresy, against which the entire Canons of Dort were written, shall be allowed to prevail.

The Christian Reformed Church also faced the problem of theistic evolution. This problem was brought to Synod via two overtures which were directed against the teachings of theistic evolution in Calvin College and against the writings of a member of the board of trustees who openly supported this form of evolution. It ought to be understood that this is a matter also of vital interest to the Church, for it does not simply involve the question of creation vs. evolu-

tion—a question important enough in its own right; but it also involves the more basic question of the infallibility of Scripture and the absolute authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice.

Again Synod hedged. It has long been Synod's practice to postpone decisions on these prickly questions by referring them to a study committee and thus letting the matter die. This is what was done again with the whole "Dekker Case." But in this instance Synod invented yet another way to postpone action of any kind. It did not appoint a study committee to come with mature advice to next year's Synod; rather it appointed a committee of six members to study the question of the constituency of a study committee and the mandate which would be given to such a committee. So this committee will presumably, make preparations for a study committee to be appointed next year. Then the study committee, to be appointed (hopefully) next year will have another one or two years to consider the problem. But even then the purpose of such a study will not be to define the truth of Scripture on this question, but will only be to provide assistance to pastors in counselling their congregations and to serve ecclesiastical assemblies with guidelines.

It seems sometimes as if the Synod wants to postpone consideration of these fundamental questions of the truth until the Lord returns.

The matter of affiliation with the World Council of Churches was also up for consideration. This matter came about because of recent decisions of the Gereformeerde Kerken (a sister church of the Christian Reformed Church). A move was under way in the Christian Reformed Church to warn the Gereformeerde Kerken against affiliation. But the Synod never got around to warning her sister denomination in the Netherlands. Instead, this was taken as an opportunity to appoint yet another committee to study the Christian Reformed Church's own position in regard to this aspect of the ecumenical movement. The result is that it is entirely conceivable that the Christian Reformed Church shall, in the future, seriously consider membership in the W. C. C.

The World Council of Churches is no place for a denomination of the Reformed faith. It is the one association of Churches which, at present, comes closest to being a universal church and which presents the best avenue to union with Roman Catholicism. Surely there is no need to consider the matter of affiliation with this apostate organization. That Synod decided to do so bodes ill for the future.

Finally, there was a decision which the Synod took on the matter of movies. A couple of quotations will aptly illustrate what Synod did on this matter.

Christianity Today reports:

After long holding a standoffish position against Hollywood movies, the synod adopted an extensive, positive document on "The Church and the Film Arts." It asserts, "If our Christian witness is to have relevance and redemptive value in modern society, it is necessary for us to make the meaningful distinction between the film arts as art forms, which are to be judged as legitimate media of culture," and as "products, which are in each instance to be subjected to the moral

judgment of the Christian community." The report also declares that "although the film arts as a cultural medium is largely under secular control, its products are no more secular than . . . the daily newspaper, the radio, or the literature of our western world, and can be used similarly for cultural edification." One delegate asserted that the adoption of this document was a clear sign that the CRC has really changed. Another delegate was overheard calling home, "Ma, movies are legal now."

Concerning this matter, Martin Woudstra writes in the *RES News Exchange*:

The Synod considered an extensive report on the christian's relation to the film and to the world and adopted a set of directives. These directives recognize the film arts as actualized in the cinema and television as a legitimate cultural medium to be used by the Christian in the fulfilment of the cultural mandate. They further recognize that since the film arts are largely under the control and administration of non-Christian agencies, the Christian must exercise a Spirit-guided and enlightened discrimination in the use of the film arts. They state that the Christian should reject and condemn the message of those film art products which sanction sin and subvert the Christian interpretation of life. They declare that it is imperative that the Christian community engage in the constructive critique of the film arts, being led by those who are specialists in art and in Christian ethics. They also formulate a number of declarations with respect to the pastoral task of the church in this area.

From all this it is obvious that the Church made basic concessions in this important field of Christian ethics. It never faced, which, to my mind, is the fundamental question, the problem of drama itself. In a way this was inevitable since participation and attendance in movies and drama have long been advocated and even encouraged in the high schools and Colleges. The matter was not really considered a problem any more. What is ironic about the whole decision is that it was made. When it comes to the calling of the Church to condemn false doctrine, the Church hedges and

postpones. When a matter of worldliness is up for approval, the Church jumps at the opportunity to make a decision. It becomes increasingly apparent that the bridge of common grace built across the abyss of the antithesis is made of sturdy stuff -- strong enough to lead the Church into the world and the world into the Church.

THE REFORMED CHURCH AND COCU

In the last issue of the Standard Bearer we made reference to the decisions of the Southern Presbyterian Assembly to join the COCU talks -- "Conversations on Church Unity." This was important for two reasons: 1) The liberals strongly favored it within the Southern Presbyterian Church while the Conservatives were fiercely opposed. This is understandable since the COCU talks embrace churches who retain leaders who deny the truths of the trinity and the virgin birth and deity of Christ. 2) The conservatives were afraid that the decision to join COCU would endanger or, perhaps, scuttle other merger talks with the Reformed Church of America, a denomination considered to be somewhat more conservative.

The fears were entirely unjustified. The Reformed Church not only decided to continue these merger talks with the Southern Presbyterians, but decided to study its own participation in the COCU talks. It is therefore entirely possible that the Reformed Church of America shall, in the not too distant future, join in these super-church plans. However, a fraternal letter was sent to the Southern Presbyterians asking for some clarification of their decision.

The other decisions of the Reformed Church had to do mainly with political and social issues, which have become rather standard procedure today for ecclesiastical bodies.

One is amazed how swiftly the Reformed Churches are departing from the faith. How urgent becomes our calling to maintain our heritage without compromise.

IN HIS FEAR—

Handle With Care

(2)

by Rev. J. A. Heys

Handle with Care is not the same as Do not Touch. We may not take God's name in vain, but we surely must make use of it. We may not lift it idly, but we certainly must lift it. Silence may be golden when the alternative is gossip and slander. But silence is evil

when we do not use the name of God when it is required of us.

There is a classic example of failing to use God's name and of a silence that reveals perverse unbelieving hearts in Scripture. Indeed, some are going to object,

but the defence of God's name and glory demands it. And so we present it that we may understand the evil of silence, When there certainly was abundant occasion for calling upon and mentioning the name of God. Esther and Mordecai are so frequently lauded for their actions which are recorded in a book wherein the name of God does not appear even once. And that means, of course, that Esther and Mordecai did not use that name of God either. Nor is it recorded of any of the Jews in general that they gave thanks and praise to God for deliverance and life. All we read is that they made themselves, "days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another and of gifts to the poor." This could have been done by any heathen nation after a deliverance from an enemy.

The reason is at hand, if only we want to see it. Esther and Mordecai, yea, all the principal characters in the book of Esther, are unbelievers. The fear of the Lord was not to be found in them, only the fear of Haman and of the king. Let that be made plain at once. First of all, you have the fact that Mordecai is quite willing to have Esther commit the adultery of marrying a king who divorced his wife, not for fornication but because she was more honorable than he and abhorred fornication and adultery. And Esther on her part is willing to sell her soul and body to a king of incest and moral filth whose "beauty contest" was a following of the basest of the lusts of the flesh. Night after night the "contestants, each at her own turn, (and Esther with them when it was her turn) "went in, and on the morrow (they) she returned into the second house of the women."

Then there is the fact that at Mordecai's advice and, in fact, command, Esther had not all the time she was preparing for the "beauty contest" and lived as the queen up till the time that she was forced to do so, "had not shewed her people nor her kindred; for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it." In itself such an act need not be sin, but for a Jewess to do so in that day was quite a different matter. The Jews were set aside by God since the call of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees to be the people of His covenant. Only these knew Jehovah and worshipped Him. And to hide her people and her kindred was for Esther to hide her religion all these months. She neither prayed to Jehovah, nor sacrificed nor observed any of His feast days or ceremonial requirements. She lived as the heathen among whom she dwelt; and therefore you may be sure that she never lifted the name of God in their midst. The book is simply an indication in its utter lack of the mentioning of the name of God of what went on in the lives of both Esther and Mordecai.

And this was not simply true before the heathen in Shushan. It was characteristic of all of their own conversation. Mordecai does not say to Esther, "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall our covenant God Who cannot fail to keep His word to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Who has promised that David's Son will sit on the throne forever, give enlargement and deliverance". Instead he spoke these words which any unbeliever can and would say, "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall

there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed." Esther responds with equal lack of the language of faith, "If I perish, I perish." There is not the speech of Daniel's three friends who manifested their faith by the words, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God Whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

What is more, in order to seek to insure the safety and success of the venture, there is no prayer offered or requested or even suggested. The people are requested to fast. Elsewhere in Scripture the child of God cried unto Him, ran in prayer to God in connection with his fasting. We are reminded of the words of Solomon in Proverbs 15:8, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight." This outward manifestation of contrition of heart and of faith in God without the actual faith is hypocrisy. Faith without works is dead, but works without faith are an abomination to the Lord. Esther and Mordecai showed no faith. The essential element of prayer they omit and perform only the outward formalism of fasting. They do not use the name of God; and they sin in their silence, for here indeed was the place for the mentioning of His name and of seeking Him by and through that name.

They belonged to the remnant of Jews that had no interest in the kingdom of Christ, spurned the covenant promises, were not interested to return to the promised land, did not hang their harps on the willows in captivity and were not glad when the call came to those who desired to do so to return to the type of heaven and to fellowship with God in His temple in Jerusalem. With them it was not a matter of "Do not touch!" Nor was it a matter of "Handle with Care". With them it was a matter of unbelief, pure and simple, an avoiding of the name of Him Whom they hated and for Whom they had no use.

Surely our silence may not be such! It is true that we had better think twice before we use His name. It is proper for us to have Him consciously before our minds when we address Him, and when we speak concerning Him to others to do so as before His face. But it is just as true that we must use that name and that we ought to delight in the use of that name and appreciate our ability to do so.

There is then that matter of the oath wherein one takes God's name either in vain or to His glory. Conscientious objection has been raised to swearing an oath and still prevents many from doing so. To be avoided is swearing by heaven or by the earth or by any creature of the heavens or earth. "By George" is to be condemned, and "Cross my heart and hope to die." If we are going to swear an oath, then let us do so properly and render unto God the glory due to His name by using His name in that oath. For a proper oath is to the honor and glory of God's name.

An oath is an act whereby we stand consciously and

willingly before God. In the oath we come to stand before Him for a special purpose. We are always before His face. There is no place where we can flee from His presence. But in the oath we acknowledge that we are there, and we behave conscious of the fact that He sees and hears and reads the very motives of the heart. Therefore in the oath we confess Him to be the omnipresent, infinite God that He is. We honor Him with virtues that are not common to man. The judge who demands the oath of us cannot read the heart, is very limited in his dealing out of justice, depends upon our words and evidence in mute objects. He cannot always be sure, and perhaps we can say that he can never really be sure. Circumstantial evidence and the half truth of one of the witnesses may mislead him in his judgment. But when we take God's name upon our lips in an oath, we honor Him with being the reader of man's heart.

What is more, we honor Him with being a righteous judge who surely will punish only the evil doer and will never condemn the innocent. We honor Him, in fact, with being God! And what greater honor can you bestow upon Him than exactly that! He does not consider it vain use of His name when you use it to confess in the oath that He is the sovereign, all-knowing, everywhere-present and righteous judge of heaven and of earth.

The unbeliever had better not take an oath, for he can never so confess God. His unbelief exactly prevents him from taking God's name holily. He sins every time that he mentions God's name, because it is not and cannot be a use in love. Woe to those who say (and do not then live) "Lord, Lord" as unbelievers. It is better for the unbeliever not to use His name at all, as Esther and Mordecai, than as the false prophet to speak of Him and present Him as the god that He is not! Yes, again it is god and not God! Present Him to any degree contrary to what He says of Himself in His Word, and you are talking about a god to that degree and not of Jehovah.

The believer as he seeks to please God and as he seeks to promote the advantage of his neighbour must and can properly take God's name upon his lips in the oath. He may not bear false witness either under oath or outside of the oath. But he may have to bear witness against the neighbour in order to protect the innocent neighbour. He may have to choose—and really he has no choice in the matter of whom he will defend—between neighbours; and to assure the limited and weak judge that he speaks the truth, he may and must place himself consciously by an act of his will before The Judge of heaven and of earth.

The believer, then, will be—and because he is a believer he must be—a man who thinks big because he thinks right! Trivialities, things of little consequence and that simply give a few moment of earthly advantage for the flesh will not move him to lift this holy name of God in an oath—and for that matter not in prayer either. There is a long line of saints whose lives are recorded in Holy Writ who did swear an oath, and Jesus Himself heads the list of those who made proper use of God's name in the oath. Abraham was deeply concerned about the covenant matter of a

believing wife for Isaac, and he made his servant swear an oath that he would not let Isaac take a wife of the unbelieving Canaanites. The Israelites were instructed by God in Exodus 22:11 to swear an oath when they were protectors of another's cattle and the beast would die or be hurt or stolen, no man seeing it. There must have been a long procession of such oaths. David swore an oath to Saul to assure him that he did not try to take his life. The believer thinks big because he thinks of God's glory and is desirous of pleasing Him. He likewise is subjection to God in love seeks to serve rather than to oppose God's officebearer. He does not want to stand in the way of the duty and calling of the authorities whose mandate is to do justice and to punish the evil doer. He co-operates for God's sake and is not averse to using the name of His God to help that servant in his work of judgment. This likewise is no trivial matter but one of deep seriousness.

It is our carnality and our superficiality that makes us demand oaths of each other. We ought to so live that our yea is taken for yea, and our nay for nay. But we prove ourselves to be liars so often. We retain some of the fact and withhold part of the truth so often that, when this other part is learned another way, men do not trust us and do not trust human nature and therefore demand an oath of us. How often do men not reply to our remarks, "Not really?" It is a question and at the same time an evidence that we do not trust each other. Shame on us that we cannot take each other's word without an oath! It is not living in His fear.

In His fear we dare not speak the lie knowing that God not only reads our hearts but also will most assuredly punish all evil. Living in His fear, we do not, then, say, "But God punished mine already on the cross of Christ." If that is our attitude we had better stop to ask ourselves whether Christ actually did die for us. The fruit of the cross is not to make us careless but very careful. For the fruit of the cross is thankfulness and the fear of the Lord in our hearts. Living in His fear we will be glad to honor him with the use of His name in the oath when we can thereby confess and glorify Him as the God that He is.

Handle that name, but handle it with care.

Handle that name even more carefully than you want men to handle your name.

Your use of His name will reveal whether or not you are in His fear and to what degree His fear has a place in your heart and life.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mary Martha Society of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church expresses its heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. John De Vries, in the sudden death of her Mother

MRS. L. LANTING

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

Mrs. F. Ondersma, Pres.

Miss A. Reitsma, Sec'y.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

The Good Shepherd Of Israel

John 10:1-39

by Rev. G. Lubbers

THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR THE SON-SHEPHERD (John 10:17, 18)

Jesus is the good Shepherd of the sheep which the Father gave Him as His own. He is not an hireling whose own the sheep are not. The sheep are his peculiar possession. He loves all the sheep, both of the Old Testament dispensation and of the New Testament in his blood, with a love which causes him to lay down his life for them. Thus had Jesus spoken in the foregoing section of this chapter.

Now he will reveal another aspect, another dimension, so to speak, of his being the Shepherd. He is an obedient Shepherd. He is the eternal Son of God in the flesh. The life which he gives for the sheep is human life. He became like unto the sheep in all things, sin excepted. He is busy in the things which pertain to God as a high priest. It is all official ministry. He fulfills the command of His heavenly Father, so that of all which the Father has given Him He will lose none, but will raise them up in the last day. His authority to suffer and to die in behalf of the sheep is given him from the heavenly Father. It is very real; it is not usurped, but it is given Him; He is the solely authorized and appointed Shepherd. God declares from the decree: thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (Psalm 2:7)

This we must bear in mind constantly.

Jesus here affirms the Father's love for Himself. What is this "love"? In what capacity does Christ here speak of Himself as being the peculiar object of this love? And what is the legal basis of this love of the Father for the Son?

To be sure, Jesus is the eternal Son of God, very God of God, coequal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Ghost. Wherefore we might be tempted here to view this love of the Father as the love which the first Person cherishes toward the second Person in the divine Trinity. Of course, this is not to be ruled out. God is love, out of the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit. However, that is not the viewpoint here in the text. Christ is speaking here of Himself as the eternal Son in the flesh. He is here the Son-Shepherd, appointed of the Triune God in His covenant of peace. Here the Christ is David's great Son, and Lord. He is the First-begotten from the dead, the Firstborn of all creatures, the Firstborn Son among many

brethren. (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:16) He is the eternal Logos in the flesh, full of grace and glory. (John 1:14) He is the Wisdom of God in which the Lord has His daily delight. (Prov. 8:30)

Christ, the good Shepherd is here the object of the Father's love, the One in Whom the Triune God has all his good pleasure and delight. In our text Christ lays bare the mystery of this love of the Triune God for the Shepherd. Says Christ: "therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life in order that I might take it again." (John 10:17)

There is some difference of opinion amongst commentators concerning the grammatical construction in verse 17. Some hold that the "therefore" (*dia touto* in Greek) is resumptive and refers back to the immediate context. Then the thought is that the Father loves the Shepherd because He will bring all the sheep of all ages into one fold under one Shepherd. This makes good sense. Then the love of the Father toward the Son-Shepherd is based upon what He accomplishes in the salvation of all the sheep. Others hold that the "therefore" refers to what follows in the text, "That I lay down my life to take it again." This would emphasize the legal basis and reason of the Father's love for the Son-Shepherd. According to this construction, Jesus here unfolds the mystery of the cross and resurrection as the ground of the Father's love for the Son in the flesh, as this love is concretely shown in the Son's exaltation over all things, the Lord of glory, the great Shepherd of Israel. And this love for the Son in the flesh is at once also the love of God for all the sheep in Christ. We are loved for the sake of the love which God has for His suffering Servant, Who was wounded for our transgressions, Who was bruised for our iniquities, and upon Whom the chastisement of our peace is, and by Whose stripes we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5)

It seems to me that the latter interpretation is to be preferred. It agrees with the great emphasis which Christ places upon His laying down of His life in order to take it again. The question is: what does it mean, "I give my life"? The Greek text emphasizes that Christ emphatically states that "I, I give my life" (*egoo titheemi*) He is the giver of His life. He lays it down as a sacrifice. He is the subject. And this laying down of His life is pure *act*. In His passive obedience

He is wholly active in giving His life. No man ever gives his life. In the battlefields of the world a man loses his life; he is shot, killed by sword, or otherwise, but he does not lay down his life as a pure act of his will. But Christ is the Lamb Who is dumb before his shearers. This is so important an element in the suffering of Christ and for the consequent love of the Father for Him, that He repeats with emphasis: "No man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down of mine own self." vs. 18. This is borne out in the sufferings of Christ in every stage. No one could destroy him, for his hour was not yet, we often read. (John 1:39; 7:30; 8:20) Never was there a moment when Christ did not wholly give Himself unto death. With great longing and desire he longed to eat the passover with his disciples. (Luke 22:15) When Peter would defend Him in Gethsemane Christ speaks of the willingness to drink the cup. Had He willed, He could have summoned twelve legions of angels to His aid. But He laid down His life. He tasted death in our behalf. Such is the import of the phrase, "because I lay down my life".

However, the fine point of Jesus' instruction is that he lays down His life with the purpose of taking it again. All His sufferings were such that, in that suffering, He was laying hold on the crown. He endured the cross and despised the shame. He did this because of the "joy which was set before him." (Hebrews 12:2) Thus He went and sat down on the right hand of God, which is the exhibition of all the Father's love for the Son in His eternal good pleasure.

We should not overlook the import of Christ's teaching concerning His "taking his life again." This is more than a passive receiving of His life again. When the saints shall rise in the day of the resurrection they shall not *take* their life; they shall receive everlasting life and glory. In this case, however, Christ takes up His life again. He has the power and the authority to do this. (John 10:18) The pangs of death could not hold Him; it was not possible that He should be holden of death. (Acts 2:24) Had He not, through dying, destroyed him who has the power of death, the Devil? We read in Romans 1:4 that Christ is powerfully revealed to be the Son of God, according to the Spirit of sanctification, through the resurrection of the dead. Is He not the Firstborn of all creatures as the Firstborn out of the dead? (Col. 1:15, 18) Is He not the Begotten of God in God's counsel as the Firstborn out of the dead? Hence, He does not merely receive His life again, but He takes it to Himself.

When the Shepherd takes his life again, He is not where He was before He laid down His life. He has made a gain which no mortal ever has made. He has passed from the earthly into the heavenly. He has broken down the middle wall of partition in the temple, which made separation between the circumcision and the uncircumcision, between the sheep in the stable of the Old Testament sheep and the stable of the New Testament sheep. He removes the types and the shadows forever by His death and resurrection, and thus He makes a new man, a new creation, one fold and one shepherd in heavenly glory!

Thus the commandment which Christ received of His

Father in heaven is fulfilled, the word of prophecy is come to pass, and God is all in all.

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL - THE SWORD OF DIVISION. (John 10:19-21)

There is a certain sinful aversion which men have for "division." The Greek word for this is "schisma," from which comes our English term *schism*. We know that there is sinful schism which should not be. Of such sinful schism Paul speaks in I Corinthians 1:10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions (Schisms) among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." And again, in I Corinthians 11:18 we read: "For first of all when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it." For such schisms we may well have great disapproval.

But there is a division too amongst men and in the church which is due to Christ, His Word, His kingdom and the work of God's grace in gathering, defending, and preserving of the church in the world. This is the enmity between the two "seeds", the Seed of the Woman and the Serpent-seed in the world, as this enmity makes a division right through the church of God. The great question is: what say ye of the Christ? It is the division between believers and unbelievers, between those for whom the true preacher of the Word is either a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death. Of this division Christ speaks in Matthew 10:34: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

Such is the clear-cut language of Scripture.

Of this division the evangelist John speaks more than once. It was the common occurrence that, when Jesus spoke, there was the expression of faith's approval of Christ and of unbelief's disapproval. We read in chapter 7:43: "so there was a division among the people because of him." Again in chapter 9:16 we read: "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God because he keepeth not the Sabbath day. Others said, how can a man that is a sinner do such miracles. And there was a division among them." In our text we have the indication that this division was quite a common occurrence. We read: "There was therefore a division again amongst the Jews for these sayings." Ever and again the Word of God is the sword of division, the two-edged sword. O, those who believed in Him appeal to the works which He performs, particularly to the work of the opening the eyes of the man who was born blind. Can such work be ascribed to demons? But unbelief deliberately attributes Christ as being of the cause of the Devil. Therefore the sword of division is clearly manifest. He that is not for Me is against Me!

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

The Lord's Anointed

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

I Samuel 16:1

As unwavering as Samuel had been in announcing God's rejection of Saul as king over Israel, it had hurt him immensely to do it. Through the years he had come to feel a strong attachment to that man. From the first, of course, he had realized that Saul was not essentially a religious man. He knew very little about the service of Jehovah and possessed little religious discernment. Nevertheless, there had been something about Saul, a certain innocence, a certain eagerness to receive advice, a willingness to learn, which had led Samuel to hope and pray that Saul might develop into a real king for Israel in every sense of the word. But it had not worked out that way. He had had every opportunity. God had aided him with many great victories over all of his enemies. Some of them were very evidently miraculous, so that he might know beyond question the importance of God to his kingdom and office. He had the opportunity to call upon Samuel for all of the instruction and advice he might want. But somehow it never got through to him. He did develop from a certain point of view. He gradually took on a regal bearing, and his original innocence gave way to an attitude of authority and even a certain haughtiness. And as far as religion was concerned, Saul had always been quite willing to abide by the proper formalities too. He had even proved willing to impose certain good and proper restrictions upon the people, such as his refusal to allow anyone to engage in witchcraft or sorcery. But increasingly through it all one thing became ever more evident: Saul's first concern was with himself and his own glory. He was never able to grasp the fact that as king he was still and in a very special way a servant to Jehovah, Israel's God. It was for this reason, Saul's refusal to put the command of God first before his own glory, that Saul was finally rejected by God as king over His people Israel; and because of it Samuel grieved.

Perhaps it was not so much for Saul personally that Samuel felt so badly although he had so hoped for better things from him. It was for the people, and in a very special way for Saul's son Jonathan. He could see now

that Israel did need a king, a single governmental head to rule over all the nation and hold all its diverse elements together. This was good for the people. And, if Saul with his lack of spiritual discernment did not fill this place as completely as he might have, Samuel had long recognized that fact that Jonathan was due to follow in his place; and in Jonathan there was a young man of immaculate reputation. Here was a man of faith, a young man of courage and conviction such as was seldom found. And there was Samuel's problem. Even if Saul did fall rather short of what was to be desired in a king, why could not Jehovah bear with it until such a time as Jonathan was ready to take his place? This Samuel could not understand. Dutifully he had gone to Saul and pronounced the rejection of God upon him and his house; but it had not been his choosing, and when he returned home to think about it, it became even more displeasing still. Days passed by as moodily he brooded in his home. He thought that he only grieved for Israel; but in fact, he was displeased with the way of the Lord too.

When finally, therefore, the Lord returned again to speak to Samuel, there was a sharp note of reprimand in what He said. "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons."

But this was not what Samuel wanted to hear. He had thought about it long and hard and had become thoroughly convinced that there was only one who was fit to be Israel's king, and that was Jonathan. He didn't want to hear about any other man from any other household so that, when he heard this command of the Lord, he immediately reacted against it. Impulsively he blurted out an excuse why he could not do what God commanded. It was this, "How can I go? if Saul hear it, he will kill me."

The reasoning was poor and fallacious, and normally Samuel would have known far better than so to argue with his God. There was in actuality no reason at all

why anyone should know the reason for Samuel's going to Bethlehem. And the very argument of Samuel brought out how completely unworthy Saul was of ruling over Israel one moment longer than the Lord would allow him, for it acknowledged that the whole life of Israel had come to be dominated by the uncompromised pride of king Saul.

Accordingly the answer of the Lord was curt, and he spelled out for Samuel in simple detail what with a few minutes of quiet thought he could have figured out by himself. God said, "Take a heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD. And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do; and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee."

Being a faithful prophet, Samuel proceeded immediately to do what the Lord said even though it took some time and a good part of his journey to reconcile himself to the fact that the Lord's will concerning Saul and his house was not to be changed. But as he traveled he thought, and prayed, and repented from his past discontentment with the will of the Lord so that by time he arrived at Bethlehem his heart was much lighter and he even felt a certain eagerness to meet the one to whom the Lord was leading him.

When at last Samuel arrived at the gate of Bethlehem, he was met with a greeting of shocked surprise. This in itself was not so strange. Through the years Samuel had very frequently traveled to various cities and towns which had become deeply enmeshed in some sin so as to admonish them and, if possible, lead them in a sacrifice of repentance. Thus it was not at all uncommon for him to be met almost everywhere in much the same way that today many a parishoner will greet the unexpected visit of his pastor. The words spoken were cordial, but every uneasy gesture and expression cried out with the question, "And now what did we do wrong?" Only in Bethlehem the people were common and crude and spiritually very much concerned so that soon the question itself came out, "Comest thou peaceably?"

But Samuel was by now an old man of extended experience. This was his life and he knew exactly how to calm the fears of such troubled people. Quietly and with kindness he said, "Peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the LORD: sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." It was enough. In fact, once the simple folk of Bethlehem were assured that it was not to blame them but to bless them that the prophet was come, they were elated. Bethlehem was a community of spiritual people, and for them to discover that Samuel, the great prophet of Jehovah, had come especially to their village to hold a feast of sacrifice with them was an event of greatest importance. Quickly the word was spread through the town that everyone might prepare himself for the feast.

Neither was it surprising to anyone that while these preparations were taking place Samuel should search out the house of Jesse to visit there. For Jesse was the grandson of Boaz, and Boaz had long ago already become a legend in that community and beyond. In a day when sincere, spiritual life was hard to find, he

had stood as a rock in obedience and dedication to the worship of Jehovah. As a result, he had been blessed and had prospered at the hand of the Lord. And so had his children after him, for they had shared with their father the same spiritual love. And with Jesse his grandchild, and with his children too, it was the same. They together as a family stood as a monument of dedication to the Lord. It was almost to be expected that in coming to Bethlehem a special note of recognition should be given to that household above all the rest.

Once Samuel had given to Jesse his greetings, however, and bestowed upon him and his household the blessing of the Lord, he made known to him in private that there was also a further reason for his presence there which had to do particularly with Jesse's household. Careful to say no more than was strictly necessary, he explained to Jesse that one of his sons had been chosen unto a special duty and responsibility by the Lord, and his purpose there was to anoint that son unto that task. Moreover, being a faithful child of God with no reservations, Jesse was careful to inquire no further into the matter than Samuel chose to lead him; and when Samuel requested of him to make a feast after the sacrifice which was about to be offered and there to introduce him in turn to each one of his children, Jesse immediately consented.

Thus it was that a great sacrifice was held in Bethlehem, and thus it was that the feast after the sacrifice was held in Jesse's home. It was all just as might have been expected under the circumstances even when Jesse made a point of introducing his sons one by one to the old prophet, an act of common courtesy. Little could anyone but Samuel that day have realized the tremendous importance of that which was taking place. Eagerly, tensely, the old prophet waited for the children of Jesse to appear before him; and as soon as the first did, his heart jumped for here before him was a man of exceptionally fine appearance. Surely, he thought, that already his search was ended; and he waited for the approving word of the Lord to come to him. But instead there was only a rebuke. Samuel was old and experienced; but still he needed to be reminded as God said, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

Justly rebuked and more careful, Samuel watched as the second came while the word of God spoke to his heart and said, "Neither hath the LORD chosen this." And so it was with the third and the fourth on until seven sons had passed before Samuel, and still the Lord did not approve. With Jesse Samuel could see no more children, and in perplexity he turned to Jesse and asked, "Are here all thy children?"

To Jesse it had seemed perfectly logical that if one of his children was to be called for special service before God, it would have to be one old enough to perform the duties of a man. Thus his youngest child, as yet hardly more than a child, he thought to be naturally exempted. Thus when Samuel asked, he

explained, "There remaineth yet the younger, and, behold, he keepeth the sheep."

At the command of Samuel this child was also called, He was to the amazement of Samuel the most beautiful of all Jesse's handsome children, reddish of hair with the healthy look of the field. But what was more, when he appeared the voice of God also spoke, "Arise," it said, "Anoint him: for this is he."

Perhaps there was an element of jealousy among the older brothers as they saw this special attention given

to David. But when they thought of it, it was natural too. Farthest from their minds was the thought that this anointing could have anything to do with the office of king. As far as they knew, Saul and his family were firmly established on the throne and always would be. All they could conclude was that David was being appointed to take up the office of prophet, and that seemed natural, for David was surely the one more concerned with the things of God than were any of his brothers. Neither were they entirely wrong, for a prophet David proved to be, but also much more.

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

Billy Graham's Methods and Doctrine

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

Our last installment provided evidence that Billy Graham loves to be a great mixer with modernists and ecclesiastical liberals, in fact, that he himself disclaims Fundamentalism and insists he is a Liberal. The emphasis of the previous article was primarily on the ministry of Graham, while his doctrine was not particularly pin-pointed. Most of Graham's critics take him to task chiefly for his methods, rather than for his teaching. Fundamentalists contend that Graham is wrong in the former, but right in the latter. He is basically right and scriptural in doctrine, they say. It is just that he uses shockingly unscriptural methods. Therefore, Fundamentalists do concede that Graham preaches the Gospel. "I think we must agree that Billy Graham preaches the simple Gospel of salvation."¹ The trouble is that some Fundamentalists are not satisfied merely that "he preaches the true Gospel;" they want him to go farther, to identify and denounce "those who preach a false gospel," because he "fails to get across the fact that the gospel which he preaches is the *only* true gospel."² Agreed, say others, that Billy Graham is a preacher of the gospel; it is his *methods* that are not to be condoned "simply because the gospel is proclaimed and saving fruits accrue therefrom." This last quotation appears in a pamphlet where Graham is not specifically mentioned, but where the reference more than likely includes him.³ There are some Fundamentalists who, agreeing with the above, still have doubts as to what Graham believes. They say, "The statement is usually made that 'Billy preaches the Gospel.' And it is admitted that he can and does preach the Gospel, for he certainly knows what the Gospel is." But these Fundamentalists "wonder whether he believes it himself," since he employs "liberalistic methods."⁴ They make it plain that what they attack in Graham is not his preaching. "Let it clearly be understood that Dr. Graham in his

campaigns preaches the Gospel. So far as I know, his preaching does not partake of modernism..."⁵

Although this is the general thrust of most of the criticism made of Billy Graham, there is more to it than that he is simply a little off on his "evangelistic methodology." But there is the added charge that he does not go far enough, even in preaching the gospel. For, "people continually say that Billy preaches the Gospel. As I have stated, it is plain that he does not preach the whole Gospel—or anywhere near the whole Gospel."⁶ People are slowly coming to the realization that Graham is not to be recognized as the true prophet of this generation. The majority of his severest critics do not think he has as yet abandoned the gospel; but many feel, however, that he has "abandoned, completely abandoned the distinctive, glorious, intolerant *position* of the everlasting Gospel..."⁷ (ital. added), whatever that is supposed to mean! How is it possible to abandon the *position* of the gospel without abandoning the *gospel*? The position of the gospel is a firm, eternal stand on the truth of God's Word. Then, if *that* is the position of the gospel, doesn't a man abandoning that position abandon his stand on the Word of God? And if he does that, doesn't he abandon the gospel? Another eminent critic of Graham confirms this, saying, "God's people are waking up to the fact that Billy Graham has abandoned the historic Protestant position."⁸ He was raised a Presbyterian and was taught to memorize the Westminster Shorter Catechism. It is as plainly evident as it can be that he has abandoned the historic Reformed position that is so beautifully expressed in the Westminster standards. This means also that he has by that very fact abandoned the position of the Calvinistic Baptists as expressed in their Philadelphia Confession, which is but a mild form of the Westminster Confession. Therefore it is no surprise to read that his evangelism "is not the evangelism of the

New Testament."⁹ Graham does not stand the test of the Calvinistic confessions, nor, as we shall see, the test of Scripture. Then isn't it high time that people who call themselves Reformed cease holding with the world this modern flatterer as the world's greatest preacher of the Word of truth?

It is a lamentable fact that Graham cooperates with modernists. This causes many to wonder whether he is a true believer, after all. "True believers will never join hands with the modernists of the twentieth century to do the work of God or to confuse the church of Jesus Christ."¹⁰ This herein reviewed position of Fundamentalism, namely, that although "Graham's methods are questionable, his doctrine is acceptable," leads to the following reasoning and inference. 1. Billy preaches the gospel. 2. Billy is no believer. 3. Therefore, Billy is a Balaam. Now the latter was a false prophet who was compromised by the enemies of Israel, but who nevertheless, as far as the record goes, preached nothing but the truth (Num. 22:38). But does Graham preach the Scripture truth? Let us see.

"Thus because we are made in God's likeness," Graham avers, "we can know Him."¹¹ The "we" here refers to all men in the world, including the most fallen sons of Adam. That men *are* made in God's likeness means that even now, after the ruin of the Fall, they *still* retain the image of God. This is not the biblical doctrine that man not only lost the image of God, but in his fallen state is turned into the image of the devil (Jn. 8:44). Graham says such a man "can know" God. If he refers to the salvability of the reprobate, he is wrong. But even the elect by nature are incapable of knowing God, they lack the ability to know Him (II Cor. 3:5). For Scripture not only teaches that the world through its wisdom does not know God (I Cor. 1:21), but also that in its natural state it cannot know Him (2:14).

Pointing out that man is not a machine or a robot (Reformed language has it that he is not a senseless stock and block), he states that Adam "could choose whether he wanted God's friendship and fellowship or not," and that God "wanted man's love and fellowship because *man* chose to love God" (ibid., p. 63, ital. added). God wanted man's love, nor because He willed and sovereignly ordained to have it (Job 23:13 with I Jn. 4:19), but because of man's decision to requite God's love. The sovereign and everlasting love of God is made to depend for its fruition and realization upon the caprice of man, and man's vacillating love for Him. The covenant and its relation of friendship then does not depend upon the determinate counsel and eternal purpose of God, but on the indeterminate will of man. In the covenant, as Graham has it, God is not a Sovereign-Friend, but a would-be companion, and man is not a friend-servant, but "a little god."¹² (*Decision*, March 1966, p. 1), i.e., an absolute sovereign in his own invulnerable, impregnable and inviolable bastion of free will.

Referring to Christ's resistance to the devil, which, by the way, was the triumphant act of One who could not sin, the inference is drawn "that it is possible for man to resist the temptations of Satan."¹³ But how in

the world is it possible to lay down the principle of Christ's peerless and sinless person and work only to conclude therefrom the possibility of man, mere man, fallen man's resistance to temptation! Why no natural man does any good (Rom. 3:12), is because he cannot (Jer. 13:23). The Reformed have always believed that man was not merely partially disabled by the Fall, but completely ruined, so that he is "incapable of doing any good and inclined to all wickedness" (Heid. Cat., Q. 8). Consequently man is not merely weakened, but is "without strength" (Rom. 5:6). From the perfect example of a Man not able to sin overcoming all temptation and sin, it is not possible to infer that a man not able not to sin (i.e., one who can do nothing but sin) can "resist the temptations of Satan."

In defense of Graham it is said that "he is following the Canons of Dort (II, 3,5) in calling men to repent and believe." Graham follows the Canons of Dort about as much as Pike holds the deity of Christ. When Graham calls on men to believe, he at the same time tells them that they can believe. He admits that man is dead in sins, but he is dead something like that man who fell among thieves — only half-dead, or ninety-nine and forty-four one-hundredths per cent dead, so that despite his deadness, he can still believe!¹⁴ Man is devoid of spiritual life, but his spiritual death does not affect his will, leaving the will with native powers it can bring into operation, which enable man to believe or not to believe, as he may choose. "We can accept or reject God — that is our privilege" (sic!).¹⁵ "If you are willing...you can do it now...It is up to you. You must will to be saved. It is God's will, but it must become your will, too."¹⁶ Graham under cover of teaching man's *responsibility* to believe comes in with his error of man's *ability* to do so. Then he comes with an innovation the Reformed have always rejected because it elevates the fictional powers of free will as having a basis in reality (Canons of Dort, IV, R. III). For this is contrary to the biblical declaration not only that the natural man will not come to Christ (Jn. 5:40), but that he cannot come (6:44), and that he, accustomed to doing nothing but evil (Gen. 6:5), cannot possibly do anything good (Jer. 12:23).

While the truth of total depravity is the *first* of the Five Points of Calvinism, it is by no means first in Graham's "theology," for in his latest book, where by the way, he comes out about as clearly as he has ever done on what he believes, he does not get around to it until after 73 pages. There he says, "Thus man is described as being totally depraved. This does not mean that man is totally sinful...without any goodness at all."¹⁷ But "the true doctrine having been explained," we reject "the errors of those who teach that the unregenerate man is not really nor utterly dead in sin, nor destitute of all powers unto spiritual good, but that he can yet" do that "which is pleasing to God" (Canons, IV, R. IV). Scripture confirms this last statement. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores..." (Isa. 1:5, 6).

1. Rev. Robert Dunzweiler, "Billy Graham -- A Critique," Faith Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 74, Elkins Park, Philadelphia, Pa., 19117, 10¢, (p. 15).
2. *ibid.*, p. 37
3. "Cooperation in Evangelism," by John Murray, Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa., (p. 24).
4. "A Ministry of Disobedience," Christian Beacon Press, Collingswood, N.J., 35¢ (p. 20).
5. *ibid.*, pp. 29, 27.
6. *ibid.*, p. 68
7. *ibid.*, p. 38
8. *ibid.*, C. McIntire, (p. 53).
9. *ibid.*, p. 54
10. *ibid.*, p. 40
11. "World Aflame," by Billy Graham, Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1965, p. 61
12. "Decision," March 1966, p. 1.
13. "World Aflame," p. 68
14. *ibid.*, p. 109.
15. "Decision," March 1966, p. 1.
16. "World Aflame," 156, 159f.
17. *ibid.*, p. 73.

HEEDING THE DOCTRINE—

Barth's Doctrine Of Scripture

(9)

The Scriptural Basis

by Rev. D. J. Engelsma

The crucial question concerning that which Barth proposes as the true doctrine of Scripture is: does this doctrine have its ground in and does it conform to the teaching of Scripture itself? When we put Barth's doctrine of Scripture to the test of Scripture, we only heed Barth's own admonition:

"...the right doctrine of Holy Scripture cannot claim abstract validity, but its confirmation must always be sought and found in exegesis and therefore in Holy Scripture itself" (CD, I, 2, p. 462).

Although Barth acknowledges that the doctrine of Scripture, like all Christian doctrine, must be an expression of Scripture's own teaching, and although he also makes an attempt to prove his doctrine of Scripture from the Scriptures, he reveals himself to be guilty, nevertheless, of ignoring and disobeying the Reformed, Scriptural rule that Christian doctrine is not the Church's notions imposed upon Scripture but Scripture's own teaching, elicited from Scripture by exegesis and formulated systematically. Barth's verdict that Scripture is a fallible, human book, full of errors, contradictions and legends, has not been arrived at by a submissive listening to Scripture's judgment upon itself that it is the Word of God, that it came about by being breathed of God (II Tim. 3:16), that its human speakers and writers did not act on their own initiative but spoke from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (II Peter 1:20, 21), and that it is unbreakable (John 10:35). Rather, Barth and those who agree with him carry out their own learned, thorough, but private investigation of Scripture, scrutinize and judge all the data in the Old and New Testaments independently of the rigorous claim of Scripture to be the God-breathed (inspired) Word of God in its entirety, and unsur-

prisingly conclude that the facts in the case fail to substantiate verbal inspiration and infallibility. This bad conclusion is the inevitable result of every attempt to formulate a doctrine of Scripture which bypasses Scripture's testimony about itself, about its "apparent legends," about its "apparent theological errors," about its "apparent contradictions," in order to determine, open-mindedly, what Scripture really is. This way to an understanding of what the Bible is has been closed to the Church once and for all. It has been closed by the simple fact that Scripture itself plainly states what Scripture is. The only way now to an understanding of the doctrine of Scripture is the way of a believing and very humble acceptance of Scripture's description of itself. To try still to arrive at a doctrine of Scripture in any other way, for any reason whatever, is the disobedience of unbelief; that other way is a dead-end; the Church may not and will not go that way because it is not Christ's will for her that she die.

When Barth finally does take note of what Scripture says concerning itself in the classic passages on inspiration, he is amazingly brief. The interpretation he offers of the passages, apart from its truth or falsity, is scanty. This extreme brevity with respect to the very basis of the doctrine is a grave, formal weakness of Barth's doctrine of Scripture. The brevity at this crucial point indicates that the classic passages on inspiration do not have major importance in Barth's doctrine of Scripture. What Scripture says of itself does not control everything from the very beginning; by the time we come to these passages the question has already been decided; all that remains as far as these passages are concerned is to show that these passages do not contradict the conclusion

that the Scriptures are fallible words of men. In fact, one wonders whether Barth is actually serious when he dismisses the phrase, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God" (II Tim. 3:16), with the words: "a statement is made about the relationship between God and Scripture...which cannot...be expanded but to which only a -- necessarily brief -- reference can be made. At the decisive point all that we have to say about it can consist only in an underlining and delimiting of the inaccessible mystery of the free grace in which the Spirit of God is present and active before and above and in the Bible" (CD, I, 2, p. 504).

Barth does offer some explanation, however, of the passages in which Scripture speaks concerning its own origin and nature, especially II Tim. 3:16 and II Peter 1:20, 21. Because these passages and their meaning are and ought to be of crucial importance to us for the doctrine of Scripture, we must note what Barth has to say about them.

II Timothy 3:16 reads: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" (King James Version). The key word in this text is the word translated "given by inspiration of God." In the Greek original, the word is "*God-breathed*," so that we are told: "All scripture is God-breathed." In II Peter 1:20, 21, the apostle says: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (King James Version). A more literal translation of the 21st verse would be: "For prophecy never was brought forth by the will of man, but, being carried along by the Holy Spirit, men spoke from God." In this text, the apostle denies that the prophecy contained in the Old Testament Scriptures originated with the men who spoke and wrote that prophecy. On the contrary, those men spoke *from God* (not: "holy men of God spake," as the KJV has it), being carried along by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's activity of carrying along or bearing the prophets as they spoke is evidently the same activity as that referred to in II Timothy 3:16 by the word "*God-breathed*." II Peter speaks of an activity of the Holy Spirit which produces a *spoken* Word of God; II Timothy refers to an activity of the Holy Spirit which produces a *written* Word of God.

Barth recognizes that these two passages deal with the same subject, "the priority and character of Holy Scripture as such" (CD, I, 2, p. 504). He maintains also that, although the passages refer primarily to the Old Testament, they apply to the New Testament as well. His interpretation of these passages consists, in the main, of an explanation of the word "*God-breathed*", (*theopneustos*), in II Timothy 3:16.

Concerning this word and the reality of inspiration it describes, Barth says the following:

1. The word, *theopneustos*, ("God-breathed"), as a description of the Holy Scriptures, means that "the whole Scripture is -- literally: 'of the Spirit of God,' i.e., given and filled and ruled by the Spirit of God, and

actively outbreathing and spreading abroad and making known the Spirit" (CD, I, 2, p. 504). This definition of the word *theopneustos* is worthy of note since it shows that Barth allows the word to carry an active meaning, "God-breathing," as well as a passive meaning, "God-breathed."

2. The doctrine of inspiration is more a description of the *writers* of Scripture, than a description of the Bible itself. "*Theopneustia* in the bounds of biblical thinking cannot mean anything but the special attitude of obedience in those that are elected and called to this obviously special service" (i.e., the human writers-DE. CD, I, 2, p. 505). Barth comes very close, here, to saying that "inspiration" only means that the human writers of the Bible lived and wrote at the time when God revealed Himself, so that their writings can be regarded as rather reliable, eye-witness accounts by honest men. But he is quick to add that this special obedience was due to their being "surrounded and controlled and impelled by the Holy Spirit" (CD, I, 2, p. 505). In any case, their inspiration, their "special obedience," does not mean that they were safeguarded from errors. On the contrary, inspiration is a miracle, the truth of which is that "here fallible men speak the Word of God in fallible human words" (CD, I, 2, p. 529).

3. Inspiration is not, as the Reformed Churches insist, to be limited to the production of the Scriptures. This is only one part of inspiration. Inspiration in its entirety includes two elements: 1) God's revelation of Himself to the writers of the Bible and His "guidance" of them as they wrote. 2) God's revelation of Himself to the readers of the Bible through the words of the human writers of Scripture. "This self-disclosure in its totality is *theopneustia*, the inspiration of the word of the prophets and apostles" (CD, I, 2, p. 516). In proof of this contention, Barth points us to I Cor. 2, telling us to read II Tim. 3:16 in the light of I Cor. 2.

This very peculiar extension of the doctrine of inspiration to include God's revelation of Himself to the readers of the Bible may be due, in part, to Barth's strong aversion to the notion that the natural man has ability to read and understand the Scriptures. Every man needs the inner work of the Spirit to know God by the Scriptures. But it is due as well to Barth's equally strong aversion to any teaching of an inspired *Book*. Inspiration must be an *event*. There is "inspiration" at the moment that God flashes to me the knowledge of Himself through the human, fallible Bible. Otherwise, there really is not any inspiration, only an incomplete inspiration.

Does this interpretation of II Timothy 3:16 and II Peter 1:20, 21, even resemble the words of the texts? Is this explanation even an attempt to state the meaning of the words: "All Scripture is God-breathed"?

ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet in Edgerton, Minnesota, on Wednesday, September 21, at 9:00 A.M. All material for the Agenda must be received by the Stated Clerk thirty days before the convening of Classis, that is by August 22nd.

Rev. D.J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk

BOOK REVIEW—

God Is Dead

God Is Not Dead

GOD IS DEAD, by Kenneth Hamilton; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966; \$1.25 (paper).

GOD IS NOT DEAD, by Gordon H. Girod; Baker Book House, 1966, \$2.95.

The church of Jesus Christ is called to a sturdy and unremitting defense of the faith. This surely implies that the Church answer those who set about to destroy the faith and reiterate again and again the truth over against the lie. Yet, in spite of this calling, there comes a time when the defense of the faith seems to be out of place. This time comes, it appears to me, when men so blatantly deny the very fundamentals of the truth, when men so blasphemously corrupt the very essence of the faith that there is no part of the truth left in their confessions. Something like this may very well be true of the men who teach the current "death of God" heresy. If the unbeliever wants to deny God Himself, he is, according to Scripture's own words, a fool. Does a fool need answering, except according to his folly?

Nevertheless, a spate of books have been appearing ever since these evil men have raised their ugly and proud heads to deny God. These two books

are examples of books which are written to defend the faith over against the denial of God.

Kenneth Hamilton's book, "God Is Dead," has the subtitle: "The Anatomy of a Slogan." In his book he discusses the meaning of this new heresy and its relation to other theologians who, in the opinion of the author, have paved the way for this modern day "Christian atheism." The book is more philosophical and therefore rather difficult to read. The author speaks of the theology of such men as Tillich, Bonhoeffer, Heidegger, Barth, Jaspers, Nietzsche, and ties in the new heresy with their thinking. The value of this is, as the author also makes clear, that it is apparent that men like Hamilton, Altizer, and other modern atheists are not bringing anything new, but are merely stating what others have said, even though in somewhat different language.

Rev. Girod's book covers the whole field of modern day apostasy. He does not limit himself merely to the "God is Dead" thinkers, but discusses also such questions as the denial of Scripture, the new morality, secularism, universalism, evolution, etc. His treatment of the evil of civil disobedience is very good and should be read

by all who are concerned about this problem.

The weakness of Hamilton's book is that only at the very end does the author affirm strongly, "The God of the Scriptures is the Living God." If there is to be any worthwhile criticism of these evil men who deny God, it would be much better if the truth of God were positively set forth. Hence, too, the author fails to demonstrate that God is the Author of revelation, and that the revelation of Himself as the living God can only be accepted by faith -- a faith which God Himself gives to His people through Christ.

Girod's book is much like his other books, not at all profound, yet clear. It is good reading and is recommended to our readers. I would have liked the book better if the author had emphasized that in spite of all the evils of our age, God is gathering His elect according to His own purpose and is preserving His Church throughout all history unto final salvation and glory. Nevertheless, the book is a worthwhile addition to our home libraries as a readily understandable answer to the evils of our modern day.

Prof. H. Hanko

First Church — Holland, Michigan



Pictured here is the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, of which the Reverend George Lanting is pastor. The church, constructed in the summer and fall of 1964, is located at 290 East 18th Street, three blocks west of U.S. 31 on 16th Street, and two blocks south on Hazel Avenue. The auditorium has a seating capacity of 150; the annex (foreground) contains the entrance hall, three classrooms, and the furnace room.

The congregation was organized with 9 families in 1929, and today it numbers 16 families, comprising 83 souls. Besides the usual church societies, the

congregation has a church extension committee which is dedicated to the distribution of Protestant Reformed literature in the area. Holland also has a School Society which is active in the operation of a school bus, used to transport several of their children to the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School of Grand Rapids.

The members of Holland's congregation are grateful to our covenant God for providing these wonderful facilities. A hearty invitation is extended to worship the Lord with them when you are vacationing or visiting in the Holland area.

J.M.F.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

July 15, 1966

Rev. H. Veldman, of Hope Church, Grand Rapids, has received the call from our Randolph congregation from a trio which included the Revs. J.A. Heys and G. Vanden Berg.

Edgerton has announced a new trio: Revs. C. Hanko, G. Lubbers, and M. Schipper.

Hudsonville has scheduled a congregational meeting for July 19 when they will call a minister from the following trio: Revs. G. Lanting, G. Vanden Berg, and H. Veldman.

* * *

Redlands' pastor, Rev. C. Hanko, is gratefully experiencing recovery from his recent surgery. Rev. and Mrs. Hanko have received many, many cards and letters from the people of the denomination and are especially appreciative of this demonstration of the communion of saints as it exists in that bond of love that transcends time and distance.

* * *

Some of our young people's societies are in full swing even though most of them are in summer recess. Hull's society, in an after recess discussion introduced by Jerry Brummel and Andy Jansma, treated the question, "At what age should young people make confession of faith?" South Holland's society was host to that of Oak Lawn July 19; the guests furnished the after recess program.

* * *

Seminarian D. Kuiper and his wife are spending the summer in the Isabel-Forbes area, where Mr. Kuiper is supplying the pulpits.

* * *

Hull's congregation scheduled their annual picnic for the 4th of July, and invited Doon's pastor, Rev. R. Decker, to speak. His topic was, "Independence Day". Proceeds of the canteen were earmarked for "The Reformed Action Society".

* * *

Bulletin Quote (Oak Lawn's), quoting Chas. Hodge on the word, "Love": "The word used by the apostle expresses properly the strong natural affection between parents and children, but is applied also to tender affection of any kind. Here, no doubt, the idea is that Christians should love each other with the same sincerity and tenderness as if they were the nearest relatives."

* * *

One of the decisions taken at the 1966 Synod was to instruct the Mission Board to draw up plans for a program of on-the-scene instruction in Jamaica, to be submitted to the 1967 Synod. This nebulous promise

must remind the brethren in Jamaica of the proverb (we suppose they have it there also), "All good things come slowly". If this promise does develop into a reality, they will have had a solid foundation for that instruction through the means of the Correspondence Course prepared by Rev. Heys. In the meanwhile, Jamaicans, heed the words of our Lord Jesus, "Search the Scriptures..... they are they which testify of me."

. . . see you in church

J.M.F.

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

July 6, 1966

At Hudsonville.

Rev. R.C. Harbach led in the opening devotions. After the Classis was constituted, the Rev. G. Lanting presided, while the Rev. Harbach recorded the minutes.

All the churches were represented by two delegates each, and Prof. H.C. Hoeksema and Rev. R. Decker, who were in attendance, were given an advisory vote.

The transcribed minutes of the April Classis were read by the Stated Clerk and approved. His report re correspondence, as well as the report of the Classical Committee, was filed for information.

The brethren Herman Kuiper and Peter Koole were appointed by the chair to serve on the finance committee.

The Classical Committee was instructed to supply the next Classis with a copy of its constitution.

Classical appointments were granted to Hudsonville and Randolph as follows: HUDSONVILLE: July 17 — Harbach, July 24 — Schipper, July 31 — Van Baren, Aug. 14 — Lanting, Aug. 28 — Lubbers, Sept. 4 — Veldman, Sept. 11 — Van Baren, Sept. 25 — Schipper, Oct. 2 — Lanting.

RANDOLPH: July 17 — Lanting, July 24 — Lanting, July 31 — Veldman, Aug. 7 — Lubbers, Aug. 28 — Harbach, Sept. 11 — Schipper, Sept. 18 — Lubbers, Sept. 25 — Veldman, Oct. 2 — Van Baren, Oct. 9 — Harbach.

A letter from the Stated Clerk of Synod was read and filed for information.

Two appeals appeared on the agenda of Classis, which Classis decided could not be treated because the Consistory did not have sufficient time to give a final answer to them.

Mr. J. M. Faber was appointed to thank the ladies of Hudsonville for their excellent catering.

Classis accepted the invitation of Holland to meet there next time on the first Wednesday in October.

Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily.

After the concept minutes were read and approved, and the chairman expressed appreciation for the co-operation of the delegates, Classis sang Psalter Number 325, and the Rev. R. Decker of our Doon Church offered the closing prayer of thanksgiving.

M. Schipper, Stated Clerk