

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Meditation - Fervent Love

Editorials - Dr. Stob, Synod, the Committee, and Professor Dekker

Added Reason For Alarm

Billy Graham's Ministry of Error

All Around Us - Report of the Synod of 1966

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene, D.V., on Wednesday, July 6, at 9 A.M. at the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Consistories will please take note of this in the appointment of their delegates.

M. Schipper, S.C.

MEDITATION—

Fervent Love

by Rev. J. Kortering

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

I Peter 4:8

We need to love each other now more than ever.

That's what the Apostle Peter tells us, "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

We are in the last days, for the end of all things is

at hand. This fact demands fervent love. The reason is apparent. The last days are characterized by a multitude of sin! The Word of God gives us the lurid details of such evil days: men shall be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. God will give men over to seducing spirits so that they shall believe the lie. This will bring about the great apostacy and the falling away of many who dwell in the sphere of the church.

We are not immune to sin. We know from the history of the church and past experience that as we face temptations we often fall. This multitude of sin is the multitude of our sins, not just the sins of others.

It is here where love shines forth. Love, fervent love, "covereth a multitude of sin." The strength of our love is manifest in the way we deal with each other when we sin. "Love covereth a multitude of sin." That can happen only in one way: when we sin we visit one another in the love of Christ and show to one another the way of repentance and confession and thus fall together under the covering of the blood of Jesus Christ.

We need to heed this exhortation today.

There is only one love that can accomplish such things, that is divine love. There are in the Greek language particularly three words that are translated love. The word *eros* is found only in Classical Greek and not in the New Testament. Our word erotic is derived from it and denotes sensual, especially sexual lust. Another word is *phileo*, which is found in the New Testament and conveys the idea of love as a friend especially as human concern and kindness. The third word is *agapao*, which emphasizes the love of God which is manifest to us and dominates our lives.

In our test this third word is used.

It is a sad commentary on our times, that that which calls itself church all too often fails to distinguish the love which believers have for each other in Christ Jesus from the love which the world expresses. There is a fundamental difference: one is human; the other is divine.

We in America are cultured by democracy. Within the framework of this democracy our cherished tradition has become the right of the individual. Our constitutionally guaranteed four-freedoms (speech, press, worship, and assembly) give to the citizen the right to do things as he pleases as long as they conform to a law determined by majority. It follows from this that a good citizen "respects" the opinions of others and grants to each individual the right to give expression to his views on any subject. Since in democracy there is no ultimate criterion for what really is right or wrong, as for example the Bible, we are not to assume that we are right and our neighbor wrong, but we must always allow for the possibility that we may be wrong and the neighbor right. This is carried over into the realm of faith and morals as well. Practically, this means there is no room for criticism of others. If one does this he is labeled arrogant, unkind, or unloving. This same evil notion all too readily creeps into the church, and as soon as it does the exhortation of our test goes out the window.

Let us see how this is true.

The love of which our test speaks is God's love to us, which in turn we share with one another. This means two things. First, God is the source of love; apart from Him there is no true love, there is only human concern. Secondly, the character of our love for one another is a reflection of this love of God. To put it differently, our love for each other in Christ is the same kind of love God has in Himself and which

He gives to us.

What can we say then about God's love? Briefly, it is the desire of the three Persons of the Trinity to seek each other in the perfect bond of friendship. This indicates the following elements: love is personal, love is mutual (seeks another person), love is giving and receiving (friendship), and finally love is exercised in the sphere of perfection.

This love which God freely exercises within Himself as Triune God, He likewise reveals to His people. In the beginning, God revealed His love to Adam and Eve and entered into a bond of friendship with them in the sphere of the perfect creation. Since the first Adam fell into sin, God now reveals His love to His people within the sphere of Jesus Christ, the Last Adam. It should be apparent to all, that outside of the sphere of Christ there is no love; there is the antithesis of love, hatred and wrath. In the Old Testament the promise of Christ and the typical covering of sin effected through sacrifices comprised the sphere within which God exercised His love unto His people. What clearer picture is there for us than Noah and his family riding safely in the ark, in contrast to the world that was ripe for judgment. Noah was the recipient of the love of God, but the world received wrath. The only basis for this distinction was that, "Noah was saved by water", a picture of the cross of Calvary.

The love which we are exhorted to show to one another is this same kind of love. First, we seek friendship. We are not content to sit by ourselves; we desire in the love of God to have many friends. We need the friendship of God in Jesus Christ, we need each other as brethren and sisters in Christ. Secondly, we recognize that the sphere within which this love and friendship can be exercised is Jesus Christ. Our friendship cannot be prostituted with the unbeliever in an unequal yoke; we seek those whom God loves, our fellow believers who with us stand under the covering of the blood of Calvary. Thirdly, we recognize that as we are covered with the blood of Christ we must love each other in the way of perfect obedience. Our sins are obstacles to the full expression of our mutual love. We can love each other freely, only when we together believe in the only true God revealed in the Scriptures and when we live according to His Word. The more we hold to the perfect will of God, the more fervently we cling to each other in the bond of love. Finally, we persist in seeking that bond of perfection, even when the one whom we love spurns it. Look what we do to God when we sin; yet in His love He seeks us and calls us efficaciously by His grace into the proper sphere. So in love we must seek a wayward brother.

The contrast between the love of the world and the love of the child of God is clearly seen in what we do with each other when we sin. The church imbued with the false conception of love says, oh, we need freedom, to each his own! The man of God who is filled with the love of God in Christ goes to the erring and calls him to repentance.

Peter speaks of a mountain of sin. He's very

realistic. We don't have to look first of all at the next man; we look first of all at ourselves. Recognizing that we dwell in the last days, we know that temptation is even greater. We are not called to flee from the world; we must live in the midst of the world and testify against it. Knowing our calling, however, does not mean we consistently walk in it. Our flesh is so weak that we are prone to halt and stumble, sin and evil dwells within. We do the things God forbids, we fail to do the things He commands. Shame covers our faces.

Our sins are terrible. Sin is the power of death, that terrible separation from God. They cause us to tremble. When we continue in sin we cannot love God and we may not expect God to love us. The same thing is true in our relationship with each other. If we continue to wander in sin we cannot love each other; we only hate.

There is only one way that these terrible sins can be removed. They must be confessed, we must repent of our sins and turn to God and seek His will. Only as we forsake ourselves and tearfully stand before the cross of Jesus Christ can we lay hold of the covering of the blood and rest assured that our sins are forgiven.

If the bond of love is to flow freely, our sins must be confessed! Confessed to God and confessed to one another. Love plans an important role in bringing about this confession.

When we love each other we do not ignore each other's sins. We grieve when we sin, we grieve no less when our brother sins. We cannot possibly say in love, leave him alone! He may say what he wants, he may write as he pleases, he may act as he feels moved, but I'll just pay attention to myself. That's not love. We seek in the love of Christ to remove sin, not only from our life, but also from the life of our brethren. Sin is so terrible it must be covered!

Still more, we do not take pleasure in our brother's weaknesses. If you know that a certain brother or sister has walked in a way unbecoming to the child of God, or heard that he has, you don't laugh about it do you? You don't spend your idle hours gossiping all about the bad things someone has done and forthwith tear that person apart and ignore the person involved?

That's not removing sin, that is only spreading sin and partaking in it!

Love recognizes the terror of sin and knows that it must be confessed. We spend therefore much time together searching the Word of God. Only in the Word can we find the perfect directive for our life. It alone is the Lamp upon our feet and Light upon our pathway. In love we seek to walk according to the will of God ourselves. We seek to have our friends walk in harmony with that same revealed will. These friends may be one's husband, wife, children, school pupils, brethren in the church, neighbor, or anyone who crosses our pathway. If we sin, we welcome the brother who shows his love to us by coming to us and discussing our walk of life with us. If we behold sin in our brother we will visit him and shine the light of the Word upon him.

God uses such means. No *man* can convert a sinner from his way, but God can and does use men as means to perform His work. When God beholds the sinner confessing his sin, he looks at the sinner through the covering of the blood of the cross and forgives. When we look at the brother who has sinned and behold him confessing his sin and turning from his evil way, we forgive and forget.

Have fervent love among yourselves, for love covereth a multitude of sins!

Above all things, have this love.

We need it today. We need it in our homes as parents and children. We need it in our schools as pupils and teachers. We need it in our churches as office bearers and congregation. We need it as churches in our dealing with each other and in our relations with believers round about us.

We need fervent love! That kind of love is so profound that it welcomes criticism and receives correction. That love seeks perfection as the only medium in which it can truly express itself.

That love is the precious fruit of the work of Christ Jesus in us. Have that love in your dealing with one another. Should one of us falter upon life's pathway, there will be one who loves us enough to care.

May God give us His grace that our love may be fervent.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies' Society "Ruth" of Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to two of its members, Mrs. Peter Knott and Mrs. Peter Koole, in the loss of their mother

MRS. LAMMERT LANTING

May the bereaved be comforted in the Word of God found in Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Rev. H. Veldman, President
Mrs. David Meulenberg, Secretary

EDITORIAL—

Dr. Stob, Synod, the Committee, and Professor Dekker

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

This editorial might also be entitled "Sequel to Tensions in 'The Teaching.'" For Dr. Stob himself confirms what I wrote in the last issue concerning his desire for freedom of doctrine.

As might be expected, the *Reformed Journal* is not at all satisfied with the Report of the Committee to Study the Doctrinal Expressions of Professor Harold Dekker. In the May-June issue this dissatisfaction is expressed in no less than three articles, by Dr. Henry Stob, Dr. James Daane, and Dr. Harry Boer, staunch defenders of Professor Dekker, who for some unexplained reason has not of late spoken for himself. Dr. Stob writes a brief editorial which does not deal with the contents of the Committee Report under the title "Synod, the Committee, and Professor Dekker." The burden of this article is a plea that the Christian Reformed Synod should not proclaim the Committee's propositions as dogma, that is, as binding doctrinal propositions in the Christian Reformed Church. He wants the doctrinal issues in the Dekker Case to remain open issues, in other words. This plea he states as follows:

What I am chiefly concerned to say, however, is that, whether one considers the Committee's propositions true or not, he should not counsel the Synod to proclaim them as 'dogmas' to be honored by all who are charged to think Christianly about the biblical givens. This burden the theologian who is concerned to be faithful to Christ, and to live in the freedom that Christ has conferred—this burden he cannot bear. Instead of this he must ask for the yoke of Christ, which is easy, and for the burden of Christ, which is light.

This plea Dr. Stob attempts to motivate and to justify as follows:

What is at stake in the case of Professor Dekker is, among other things, the freedom of theological inquiry. Professor Dekker, let it be noted, calls nothing sacred into question. He believes wholeheartedly in the creeds. He accepts the infallibility

of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice. He believes that God is completely sovereign, and that none are saved except by His good pleasure. He believes that Christians are what they are by nothing save the sovereign grace of God. He believes, on the basis of the Scriptures, that not all men will be saved: he emphatically rejects universal salvation. In all points that affect the faith he is at one with the most simple and the most earnest member of the church.

What divides him and some members of the Church is not the faith, but the theological expression of it. The faith is one thing; theology is another. The faith is what draws all members of Christ's Church into one confessing communion; theology is a scientific endeavor into which not all people can be drawn.

The call has sometimes come for committed creativeness in theology. The answer to that call is at hand. Men have been appointed to Calvin charged with giving new form to the age-old Gospel. They are responding; not the least Professor Dekker. Let him and all of us pursue our course. Should Professor Dekker or any other of us depart from the faith that is confessed in the living community of the Church, let us be called to account. But let us not be subjected to theological criteria by an ecclesiastical court, for then the theological enterprise is tragically arrested and we are robbed of our vocations.

Dr. Stob, therefore, advises that the Christian Reformed Synod should declare that "since no article of faith has been put in jeopardy, the theological inquiry must proceed unimpeded, but with all caution and responsibility," and that the recommendation of the Committee should not be accepted, but instead postponed indefinitely, with the Report being referred to the Churches for study.

All of the above is rather revealing, and it confirms my suggestion in last month's editorial that the *Reformed Journal* favors freedom of doctrine on issues on which the Reformed churches have long ago expressed themselves confessionally. I realize full well that Stob's position is that "no article of faith has been put in jeopardy." In fact, he attempts to picture Prof. Dekker as being soundly Reformed and

as being wholeheartedly devoted to the Reformed faith. With all his pleading, however, Stob really ignores the fundamental issue. For while he claims that Dekker believes the creeds wholeheartedly, that he holds to God's sovereignty and to salvation by sovereign grace, and that he rejects universal salvation, he ignores the fact that Prof. Dekker has denied the doctrine of particular atonement. Instead, he holds that all that Prof. Dekker taught was in full harmony with the creeds: for "no article of faith has been put in jeopardy."

Here, of course, is the crux of the issue. If no article of the confession has been contradicted by Prof. Dekker, then, of course, all that he has written must be considered as legitimate theological inquiry and expression within the boundaries of the confessions. And then all the controversy that has raged about Dekker's position must be placed in the category of a difference of theological opinion within the confines of the confessions. If, however, the opposite is true, as the Report of the Committee seems to imply, and if Dekker's position cannot stand the test of Scripture and the confessions, then it is in order for the Christian Reformed Church to censure Dekker's statements, to demand retraction, and to discipline.

What the Synod will do about this situation I do not know, and I will not venture to predict. It would seem, however, that if the suggestion of Dr. Stob is not followed, conflict is bound to result. For the *Journal* seems rather adamant, if not downright militant, in its support of Professor Dekker's orthodoxy and his right to express himself.

Nevertheless, it should be noted:

1. That the Christian Reformed Church is confronted by a clear case of heresy. Professor Dekker has taught a universal and redemptive love of God; thereby, by implication he has denied sovereign election and reprobation, no matter how vociferously some may assert the contrary. Moreover, he has taught universal atonement and has denied the Reformed and confessional doctrine of particular (or definite or limited) atonement, no matter how vociferously some may emphasize that he does not teach universal salvation (and what Arminian ever taught universal salvation?).

2. That liberty of theological *inquiry* is not at stake here, as Dr. Stob claims. After all, theological inquiry is a private matter. It is limited to one's study and research. Any theologian has unlimited rights to *inquire* into the truth and to *inquire* even into the validity of the Reformed confessions. Professor Dekker, — and everyone, including Dr. Stob, knows this, — did far more than *inquire*. He *expressed* himself; and he did so *publicly*; and he did so contrary to the Reformed confessions, and contrary to Scripture. He himself stated that the Christian Reformed Church was in error in its commonly understood doctrine of limited atonement. It is precisely at the point that an office-bearer begins to express himself, either publicly or privately, in a manner contrary to the confessions that he becomes subject to the provisions of the Formula of Subscription.

3. That if in this obvious case of heresy the Chris-

tian Reformed Church does not have the firmness and resolution to take a condemnatory stand, and if, on the contrary, they follow the suggestion of Dr. Stob, then the door is flung wide open, and complete liberty of doctrine will be the order of the day. Then indeed the Christian Reformed Church may expect from the *Reformed Journal* open criticism of the confessional position on the doctrine of the eternal decrees and open promulgation of theistic evolution, and who knows what more. Particularly with respect to Arminianism all restraint will be removed.

4. That all this has nothing to do with liberty of theological development, nor with true liberty of theological expression. There has always been ample room in Reformed churches for such development and expression. It should be remembered that such development ("creativity," if you will), if it is to be true and constructive development, must be in the line of the truth and in the line, therefore, of the confessions. If it is not the latter, it is not constructive, but destructive; it is not development, but departure; it is not progress, but retrogression. This is the only limitation of the Formula of Subscription. That theologian who is not willing to exercise this kind of freedom and who chafes at the restraint of any binding subscription is not to be trusted. And that theologian who complains when others wish to subject his opinions to the agreed upon test of the confessions renders himself suspect. The cry of heresy-hunting and the plea for liberty of doctrine has only too often been a "red herring" in the history of the church.

5. That, however, the opponents of Professor Dekker have not been without fault from a procedural (and ethical) point of view. It should not be forgotten that Dekker's views have been made the object of investigation through the back door, so to speak. The present committee report is the result of an *overture*, not of a protest. Charges under the Formula of Subscription are not pending against Dekker and were not the occasion of the Study Committee's report and recommendations. For the same reason, of course, the Study Committee lacked the power to recommend any disciplinary action against the professor, even though such disciplinary action should logically follow their recommendations. Also from this point of view, as well as from the point of view of the fact that Dekker's position is the logical outgrowth of 1924, and that as a faithful son of his church he developed his views, my sympathies lie with Dekker. This only points up the fact that the only way out for the Christian Reformed Church is to repudiate the heresy officially promulgated in 1924, to return to the confessions, and resolutely to oppose (not merely in the press, nor by sidewise overtures, but by forthright protest) all doctrines repugnant thereto. If any other course is followed, I can foresee only continuing decay and ultimately chaos, and with it the complete loss of the Reformed heritage. That may take time; but in view of recent trends, it may not take much time! And there may be those who are satisfied to say, "There will be peace in my time." But let them be mindful of their children and their children's children, as well as of their own peace!

EDITORIAL—

Added Reason For Alarm

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Our readers will recall that I recently reported on and criticized the April 22, 1966 issue of *Chimes*, a Calvin College Student Council publication. In the interest of complete reporting I now want to give the sequel to this incident, as I gleaned it from *Church and Nation* of May 31 and June 21, 1966 (Dr. Marten H. Woudstra, Editor). From an article entitled "The Great Gap" I quote the following:

... Our editor has expressed his sincere concern about the article *The Great Gap*. He is not the only one apparently. A statement of the Student Publications Committee of the Faculty and the Executive Committee of the Student Council approved by Dr. W. Spoelhof, the President of Calvin College, has come to the attention of the editor of this paper. In consultation with Dr. Praamsma I (This is written by R. Kooistra, Managing Editor, H.C.H.) inform our readers about this statement, that you may have the whole story. It states that "the article 'The Great Gap' constitutes a serious breach of trust and a violation of clearly defined 'responsibility-freedom' policy, though the committee has been assured by the editor and the author that the violation was not deliberate." It then informs us that the committee "condemns the spirit of the editorial as well as significant elements of its substance." The Committee "finds the editorial irresponsibly written, giving occasion for questioning the integrity of Calvin College, her student body and Faculty, and the theological orthodoxy of the Christian Reformed Church, the supporting and sponsoring denomination."

The following decisions were taken:

1. The April 22, 1966 issue of *Chimes*, suspended from circulation earlier, shall be withheld from further circulation.

2. Because this has been an otherwise commendable *Chimes* year, the committee is unwilling to impose any general censorship. However, because of the aggravated situation created by the editorial, the committee imposes a limitation prohibiting the further discussion of this matter or the issues raised, in editorials, stories, letters, or by inference in the remaining issues of *Chimes*.

3. The editor shall print this document and an appropriate apology which shall reaffirm his acceptance of the Faculty-Board Statement on Student Publications in the next issue of *Chimes*.

4. The writer of the editorial shall be dropped as news editor and from the editorial staff, shall not be permitted to write editorials, but may write news stories and feature articles, provided the latter are first approved by the Faculty mentor.

COMMENT

It will be evident from the above report that the *Chimes* editorial did not meet with the favor of the college administration. However:

1. The action reported above is extremely mild in comparison with the offensive character of the editorial.

2. It is a locking of the barn after the horse is out.

3. It leaves unanswered the question whether the student publication gave expression at all to what is being taught in the school. It should not be forgotten that not only the individual writer is responsible for this editorial; those who allowed it to be placed in *Chimes* are equally responsible. And I simply cannot believe that this violation was not deliberate, as the statement quoted above would have us believe. If it was not deliberate, what was it then? Was it something that slipped through? I realize that a teacher cannot be held responsible for what a student says. But I also recognize that as a rule students give expression to what they have been taught by their teachers,—sometimes, to the dismay of the teacher, in a much more radical and forthright manner than his teacher would expect and desire. It is on this basis, as well as on the basis of the fact that I sometimes hear disturbing reports of the instruction given at Calvin College, that I suggest again that an impartial and thorough investigation be conducted. How much denial of the infallibility and sole authority of Scripture is there at the college, for example? How much denial of the truth of creation and how much affirmation of evolutionism is there? How much of the same sneering attitude toward systematic theology, "theological fence-tending," and "remote abstractions," etc., which was evinced in the condemned editorial is also found among faculty members?

4. No concern whatsoever is expressed about the corruptions of the Fine Arts Festival, with which the same issue of *Chimes* was filled. These things may be euphemistically called "the theater arts," but they are more correctly called the corruptions of the world and the imitation thereof.

But there is added reason for alarm. For in a "Postscript" to the above-quoted article, the Editor of *Church and Nation* writes as follows:

Postscript.

In loyalty to Calvin College, Dr. L. Praamsma and I decided to make no mention of the Student's article *The Great Gap*, nor of the decisions of the Students Publications Committee, even though we had serious objections to the former and serious misgivings about

the latter. However, since another edition of the *Chimes* ("Chides") has come to our attention in which *The Great Gag* is followed by an article entitled *The Great Gag* and we have found quite a few irresponsible statements in this article and in the further part of the issue as well — which may make it necessary for C and N to make further comments on the situation — I have decided to proceed with publication of the above materials anyway.

To illustrate what I am saying, here are two quotations.

In *The Great Gag* the author says:

Second, learn to read the *Stone Lectures* like any other book. Expired they are. But might it not be only false pity that has led us to think that they are also interesting and relevant? If Kuyper says that Calvinism is reverently awaiting its future mandate on the beach at San Francisco when he means Orange City, Iowa, we ought to allow him that margin of error. We need not be North Beach Bohemians in order to be good Dutch Calvinists.

An other article is entitled: *Gagantuan Scripture flown from Infallibility*. It informs us about "what is thought to be the world's most unmanagable copy of the Bible," which would have been acquired by Calvin Library. It states:

Mr. J. P. Pragma, College Vice President of Promotion, commented that the new acquisition "is a

gold-mine of promotional possibilities." For example, airplane passengers flying over Grand Rapids could read selected passages from their windows. A schedule of opening the volume to selected proof-texts is currently being worked out in a series of open forums held by the Religion Department and the Library Staff.

I always thought that jokes about the Bible betrayed bad taste. I am not fussy, nor a sissy, I think but here is something which requires not only discipline, but much rather some sound teaching.

Editor.

The Editor of *C and N* may call this sort of thing "bad taste," and Dr. L. Praamsma may speak of "not being dry behind the ears" in connection with the editorial that gave rise to this criticism. But this is more serious than a little student tom-foolery and immaturity. It is mocking of the Reformed faith; and it is also a sneering and satirical flouting of authority.

I repeat, therefore, and I do so both for our own parents and young people and for the Christian Reformed constituency: be warned! There is an evil spirit manifest in this material which has emanated from Calvin College. Even as all is not gold that glitters, so also all is not Calvinism which has the name of Calvin.

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

Billy Graham's Ministry of Error

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

Recently many of us read an editorial in a "Reformed" publication concerning the preaching of Billy Graham. The article surprised, even shocked many of us, since it slighted a man thoroughly Reformed and came to the defense of one whose true colors are anything but of a Reformed hue. The item referred to did what is so commonly done with this modern prophet in religious circles today, namely, it sugar-coated him as a Fundamentalist next to whom any good Reformed man could be proud to stand. But it is at least extremely inaccurate, if not, false, to portray Billy Graham as a Fundamentalist. He no longer needs nor wants such a camouflage. He does not consider himself in the Fundamentalist camp, but in the Liberal camp. In St. Louis he said, "I am not a fundamentalist, I consider myself to be a Conservative-Liberal." In Europe he had said, "I am not a fundamentalist. I am not a modernist. I am a constructionist." Now that is interesting! It makes us think of Nimrod. He, too, was a constructionist. So was Noah. But Nimrod and Noah cannot be put in the

same boat. Their construction was by no means on the same project. For Noah was an ark-builder. Nimrod was a Babel-builder. Graham disavows any connection with the Noah construction company. He is of the Nimrod Foundation.

The more we read of Graham the more apparent it becomes that he is not a Fundamentalist, but a liberal ecumenist. In the *La Prensa*, Lima, Peru newspaper, Feb. 8, 1963, he "eulogized the attitude of Pope John XXIII in his efforts to obtain greater tolerance and the final union between all the Christians" (ital. added). "According to him (Graham), there is now greater understanding and comprehension between the religions." This reveals a desire not only to unite "all the Christians" but all "the religions" in one universal ecclesiastical body. What is really true of this "greater understanding" is not that Romanists are becoming more understanding of Protestants in general, nor more tolerant toward their theological position, and to Protestant missionary ministries, but that nominal and renegade "Protestants" are more tolerant

and soft toward the femininities and flatteries of hierarchy and priestcraft. The *Kalamazoo Gazette*, Nov. 14, 1963, reported that "Graham will preach at a Roman Catholic college next week, thanks to a Jew... The sermon will be Graham's first before a Roman Catholic body... 'I think,' said Graham, 'that it is evidence of the ecumenical spirit in the world today.'" What does Graham mean by this statement? Evidently he means that the present great dialogue between Jews, Romanists and Modernists is succeeding, that the three groups are learning that we have so much in common that labor toward organic union into one world church must be our aim.

Very hard does Graham push the cause of modern ecumenicism. His crusade after the Nashville meetings donated about \$65,000 toward a stadium at Vanderbilt University, "an extremely liberal Methodist institution on whose faculty the blasphemous Nels Ferre was then serving." As a result of the New York crusade the Graham organization presented a gratuity of \$67,000 to the N. Y. Protestant Council of Churches. The *New York Times*, Oct. 25, 1963, reported, "Dr. Graham... recalled that during a recent Graham crusade in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the Roman Catholic bishop stood beside him and blessed the converts (sic) as they came forward. Protestant leaders protested that such a display should not be permitted. Dr. Graham said he told them: 'He's the bishop here. You go ahead and stop it.'" This is interesting, too. It reminds us of the answer the Jewish hierarchy gave the belated remonstrance of Judas, "What is that to us? See to it yourself!"

Did you ever know a Fundamentalist to associate with the modernist-liberalist National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches? Yet this does Billy Graham! The San Francisco *Examiner* of Dec. 5, 1960, reported that "Evangelist Billy Graham preaching to an overflow audience in Grace Cathedral (the Episcopal citadel of Bp. Jas. A. Pike, who denies the virgin birth and the trinity), warned yesterday that America's race problem will get worse... Graham spoke in a program sponsored by the Christian Men's Assembly, held in conjunction with the opening of the meeting of the National Council of Churches." Two years before this, in Grace Episcopal Cathedral, Graham was an honored guest at Bp. Pike's "consecration" on May 15, 1958. When Graham was at the Cow Palace, May 24, 1958, he had Pike on the platform to read the evening prayer after warm words of praise. On Dec. 4, 1960, Pike had Graham in the Grace Cathedral pulpit for the National Council address. Graham therefore gives public recognition to and has fellowship with a heretic who denies not only the virgin birth and the trinity, but the ascension, the sitting at God's right hand, and all the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Graham insists he is a minister in the Southern Baptist Convention, which is not a part of the World Council, yet he constantly pulls for the National and World Councils.

When will men stop disguising Graham as a Fundamentalist? The December 1965 issue of the *Old Faith Contender* informs us that Graham spoke at a Motion

Picture Relief Fund banquet in Hollywood with 900 in attendance. Here he highly praised a recent book by Romanist Bishop Fulton Sheen. The program concluded with a "benediction" by Rabbi Edgar Magnin, in which he thanked God for Graham, who has now come to realize that the battle today is not one of faith against faith, but of faith against no faith. There is no record that Graham testified to this rabbi that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, the divine, co-equal Son of God. It seems that the religion of Judaism which rejects the Son of God is acceptable to Graham. For the same article quotes Graham at the Graham Pavilion in the World's Fair as saying, "The Pavilion will also be a call to renew our faith in God, whether we be of the Jewish, Roman Catholic or Protestant faith, or some other religious affiliation." Since when do unregenerate Jews, Romanists and Protestants have any faith to renew? How can a unitarian religion (Judaism) be thought to express "faith in God"? Which God? But this is Graham's conception of faith, that all men naturally and natively have it, whether they are of the true church or the false church. Man need only put his faith in the right object. What is that right object? Graham speaks of faith in "God," he does not speak of faith in Jesus Christ. That would offend the Jews! While he was at it, why didn't he include those of the Mohammedan faith, the Hindu, and the Buddhist faith? They, too, were well represented at the World's Fair and are becoming widely accepted in our country.

In the same issue of the periodical mentioned above we read: "Can you imagine Billy Graham, Oral Roberts (the charlatan healer) and H. M. S. Richards, Seventh Day Adventist, being featured speakers on the same program and on the same platform? Well, it happened! — according to the Full Gospel Business Men's *Voice*, at their 10th Annual Convention held in Seattle. This Pentecostal paper states, 'The Holy Spirit is breaking down the denominational barriers, as Oral Roberts is used of God to bring healing to the nation. The F.G.B. M.F.I. is bringing the Holy Spirit to the nation; while the Seventh Day Adventist brings us prophecy.'" What is it that Billy Graham is bringing to the nation? He tells us himself in his publication of a "World Congress on Evangelism" prayer-news bulletin dated January 1966. This congress is to be held in Berlin in Oct.-Nov. 1966. It is to be the "largest evangelical trans-denominational" gathering, and the "most representative" of evangelicals. The theme will be, "One Race — One Gospel — One Task." Comments on what Graham might mean by "one Gospel" we hold in reserve. At the moment we are concerned with that "one race" idea. From what you have just read of Graham, you certainly would not suppose that he refers to Peter's "elect race" (1 Peter 2:9, ASV). That, however, is indubitably and exclusively the "one race" holding the only "one Gospel." It is to be feared, and the fear is well-founded, that Graham envisions an ultimate race produced by a blend of all racial stock. The ecumenical, post-millennial dreamers of the day see such a race as the only hope of attaining "world peace."

This champion of ecumenicism is also lauded as

a Bible-believing evangelist. Such white-washing is done with the utmost confidence in Graham as holding the five great fundamentals of the faith, namely the infallible, verbal inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, the bodily resurrection and His second coming. But if we test Billy on these fundamentals, we find that he does not think very much of them as a standard for determining the sphere of Christian fellowship. The *Washington Post* of April 28, 1962, states, "The ground of Christian fellowship, he (Graham) says is 'not the inspiration of Scriptures, but the deity of Christ.'" Graham does not believe that holy Scripture makes any claim for its own verbal inspiration. Such a contention is, as he sees it, pure speculation. For Graham says, in the same article as above, that "verbal inspiration of Scripture is only a theory and not a matter of great importance for the Christian faith." This belittling of Scripture and its verbal inspiration makes the supernatural revelation of the Word of God hardly more than a human expression. The danger of Graham's view of Scripture is that it leads to bringing down of Holy Writ to the level of the words of saints.

Graham for years has operated not on the basis of

the five points of Fundamentalism, but on the basis of merely *one* point, the deity of Christ. Relative to his N. Y. City campaign he said, "I am urging you, however, to accept into our fellowship any man who accepts the deity of Christ and will rally to my preaching." It is not at all certain whether Graham believes Christ's deity to be such that He is consubstantial with the Father. Still, Bishop Pike, who denies the virgin birth, is acceptable to Graham's fellowship.

Another point needs clarification. The "old unresolved problem of human responsibility and divine sovereignty" that we find involved in Reformed theology is not at all involved in Graham's "theology." He never allows such a problem to touch him. He invariably *drops* the sovereignty of God! He does indeed speak of man being dead in sins, yet that dead sinner is not so dead that he cannot believe. Devoid he is of spiritual life, but he can still accept Christ. (cf. *World Aflame*, Billy Graham, Doubleday, 1965, p. 109). The problem here with Graham is the age-old problem of Arminianism versus Calvinism. He stands with the former against the latter.

(to be continued, D.V.)

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

The Rejection of Saul

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

I Samuel 15:22, 23

Never was King Saul quite able to understand either Samuel or Samuel's God. He knew that in a very special sense his position as king in Israel was due to them. He knew that it was quite necessary for him to observe all of the religious conventionalities of the nation; and, although prior to his coronation he had had little to do with such things, he was now quite willing to do so to the best of his abilities. He knew that it was important to retain the favor of both Samuel and Samuel's God if he was to get along as king in Israel; but how to do this was actually quite beyond his comprehension. To him the external observance of ceremonies was all that religion could possibly demand, and such things as respect for God, obedience and love never came into consideration. He was a man of personal ambition,

and the very idea that Jehovah should come first even before this was to him unthinkable. Samuel and Samuel's God were important to him only as long as and insofar as they served his own purposes. Perhaps he would have never said this in so many words; but it was there, taken for granted, nonetheless.

It was this that had determined Saul's actions in regard to the Amalekites. He understood full well that Jehovah wanted the Amalekites completely wiped out; and, for the main part, he was in agreement with this. It was just that he thought that he knew a better way of going about it than Samuel had suggested. Instead of slaying everything and everybody immediately, it seemed to him that more could be done for his own image and to arouse the enthusiasm of the people by

saving the best of the cattle for a great sacrificial feast and to keep Agag as a living memento of this great victory. He suspected, of course, that Samuel might not be exactly pleased by this type of thinking; but, after all, he was king and what could be more important than that the people's adulation of him should continually be encouraged.

When finally the meeting between Saul and Samuel did take place at Gilgal, it was necessarily tense from the start. Saul would have liked to avoid this meeting completely and had in fact approached Gilgal by a round-about route in the hope of doing so. But when Saul looked up and saw Samuel approaching with determined step from a distance, he knew that the most he could hope to do was to hasten to intercept him and try to break the news to him gradually while trying to explain that in the main he had kept the Lord's commands concerning Amalek and that what few changes he had made on his own were really for the better. Thus, with the appearance of warm hospitality, he came to meet Samuel with the comment, "I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

The answer of Samuel came fast, and like an icy blast, "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear." It was apparent that Samuel knew what he had done. They were not within sight of where the captured cattle were; and, if they could be heard, it was barely so; yet, Samuel knew perfectly well that they were there.

For Saul nothing remained but to try to explain himself as quickly as possible. Surely Samuel would be able to see that it was better this way. Quickly Saul retorted, "They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." It wasn't exactly true, at least it had been as much his doing as anyone's that the cattle had been spared. Still, it had been the people who had first suggested that they spare the cattle; and besides, the people could much better stand to lose reputation with Samuel than he could. It was apparent that this thing was not going over well with Samuel, and the least that Saul could do was to try to put some of the blame on someone else. And as far as the reference to "thy God" was concerned, that was really a slip. It would have sounded better if Saul had called Jehovah "our God", but somehow he found it hard to think of Him in any other terms than being the God of Samuel.

But that didn't matter now. It could be seen that Saul had not gotten through to Samuel, or at least, that he had not convinced him. His eyes flashed with anger as Samuel answered, "Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath said to me this night."

There was the explanation of how Samuel knew about those cattle, God had told him about them. And what He had said was not good. That could be seen from Samuel's attitude. Paralyzed with fear, all that Saul could mutter back was, "Say on." He might as well know the worst.

And it was the worst too. With slow, measured

pace Samuel spoke, driving each word deep into Saul's soul, "When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? and the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD?"

To Saul it just did not seem fair. He wanted so badly to be a good king, and he tried so hard to be one. Why couldn't everyone recognize that? Why couldn't Jehovah? Why couldn't Samuel? He was only trying to please them all. He had destroyed the Amalekites for all practical purposes. The only reason he had spared anything was so that he could please the people and show them what he had done. How could just sparing Agag and a few cattle be counted as such a major infringement. Anguished, almost weeping, Saul cried back at Samuel in self-defense, "Yes, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal."

But Samuel was not to be swayed either by emotion or futile reasoning. God had spoken to him, and he was a prophet. All he could do was to bring to Saul the message of the Lord. And this he did by continuing to say, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou has rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

These were harsh words, and Saul knew it. They touched at the heart of his most precious ambition—the matter of being king. For the glory of that office he lived, and without it he might as well die. But then, what could he do? After all, Samuel had spoken almost as strongly years before already, and things hadn't gone so badly since then. And as for the rest, he really didn't quite know what Samuel was talking about, all that talk about obedience and rebellion. Why should he have to obey anyone? Wasn't he king? And as far as sacrifices were concerned, what more could Samuel's God want? What more did any god ever want? Sometimes he just could not figure Samuel out. Sometimes he just seemed to get started talking and would go in circles where Saul could not follow. But that wasn't so serious. The point was that the people were waiting to get started with their sacrificial feast. Undoubtedly some of them had seen Samuel coming; and, if they should begin to suspect that Samuel was not pleased with the whole situation, that would be worse yet. The immediate problem was to get Samuel to take part in their sacrifice without the people knowing what had been going on between them,

and for that he knew only one thing that might affect the prophet, a humble apology. So, at last, he turned to Samuel and said, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord."

But Samuel had come to know Saul's shallow fluctuations, and the word of God had not allowed for any changing. With finality Samuel answered, "I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel," and with that he turned to leave.

The situation was even worse than Saul had suspected. Not only had he lost the favor of Samuel; but the people would see Samuel leaving and they would know it too. It was more than Saul could take. Impulsively he reached out and grasped Samuel's coat to make him stay, tearing the coat and leaving part hanging in Saul's hand. It did stop Samuel, but only to bring from him the observation, "The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."

By this time, however, Saul was no longer thinking of anything but sparing his own reputation before the people. All he could think about was preventing Samuel from leaving before the sacrifice. Accordingly he

answered once again, "I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD thy God."

Saul should have known better. Samuel was not one to be used for any selfish purpose even if it were the purpose of a king.

This time Samuel yielded to Saul's request. He went with Saul, and he did nothing to interfere with the worship of Israel before its God. But once the worship was finished and the time for the festivities was come, he stepped forward to ask for the attention of the people. Then he spoke his command, "Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites."

While the people watched in silence, Agag was brought forward to Samuel. His step was quicker than it had been, his head held higher, for he was now confident that the danger of death was passed. Neither did the white-haired old man to whom he was brought seem to hold any cause for alarm. But he was mistaken. The words of the old man themselves were sharp like a sword, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women," and accordingly he acted. Taking a sword he hewed the proud king to pieces. And with that Samuel turned and left. His actions spoke for themselves. He, the prophet of the Lord, had had to do what Saul had failed in his commission. There was no reason for Israel to rejoice in its king any more that day.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

The Providence of God

by Rev. H. Veldman

The doctrine of the providence of God is generally treated from the aspect of three elements which constitute the Lord's providential control of all things: preservation, cooperation and government. Before we call attention to these three elements in particular, we wish to present a brief historical review of this doctrine as set forth by the late Prof. L. Berkhof in his "Reformed Dogmatics," pages 165-166:

With its doctrine of providence the Church took position against both the Epicurean notion that the world is governed by chance, and the Stoic view that it is ruled by fate. From the very start theologians took the position that God preserves and governs the world. However, they did not always have an equally absolute conception of the divine control of all things. Due to close connection between the two, the history of the doctrine of providence follows in the main that of the

doctrine of predestination. The earliest Church Fathers present no definite views on the subject. In opposition to the Stoic doctrine of fate and in their desire to guard the holiness of God, they sometimes over-emphasized the free will of man, and to that extent manifested a tendency to deny the absolute providential rule of God with respect to sinful actions. (here the undersigned wishes to make a remark. The late Prof. Berkhof speaks here of an over-emphasis upon the free will of man. This should have been borne in mind in 1924 when the Christian Reformed Church formulated its Three Points. In Point One they speak of a general love of God to all men, revealing itself particularly in the preaching of the gospel. This means that the gospel is an offer of grace and salvation, and such an offer must imply, of course, that the man to whom the offer is extended is able to accept that offer. And this, we understand, surely places an "over-emphasis" upon the free will of man.) Augustine

led the way in the development of this doctrine (this surely must mean that he led the way in the development, not of the doctrine of the denial of the absolute providential rule of God with respect to sinful actions, but of the Scriptural doctrine of the providence of God—H.V.). Over against the doctrines of fate and chance, he stressed the fact that all things are preserved and governed by the sovereign, wise, and beneficent will of God. He made no reservations in connection with the providence of God, but maintained the control of God over the good and the evil that is in the world alike. By defending the reality of second causes, he safeguarded the holiness of God and upheld the responsibility of man.

During the Middle Ages there was very little controversy on the subject of divine providence. Not a single council expressed itself on this doctrine. The prevailing view was that of Augustine, which subjected everything to the will of God. This does not mean, however, that there were no dissenting views. Pelagianism limited providence to the natural life, and excluded the ethical life. And Semi-Pelagians moved in the same direction, though they did not all go equally far. Some of the Scholastics considered the conservation of God as a continuation of His creative activity, while others made a real distinction between the two. Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of divine providence follows in the main that of Augustine, and holds that the will of God, as determined by His perfections, preserves and governs all things; while Duns Scotus and such Nominalists as Biel and Occam made everything dependent on the arbitrary will of God. This was a virtual introduction of the rule of chance.

The Reformers on the whole subscribed to the Augustinian doctrine of divine providence, though they differed somewhat in details. While Luther believed in general providence, he does not stress God's preservation and government of the world in general as much as Calvin does. He considers the doctrine primarily in its soteriological bearings. Socinians and Arminians, though not both to the same degree, limited the providence of God by stressing the independent power of man to initiate action and thus to control his life. The control of the world was really taken out of the hands of God, and given into the hands of man. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries providence was virtually ruled out by a Deism which represented God as withdrawing Himself from the world after the work of creation; and by a Pantheism which identified God and the world, obliterated the distinction between creation and providence, and denied the reality of second causes. And while Deism may now be considered as a thing of the past, its view of the control of the world is continued in the position of natural science that the world is controlled by an iron-clad system of laws. And modern liberal theology, with its pantheistic conception of the immanence of God, also tends to rule out the doctrine of divine providence.

The late Prof. L. Berkhof, in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, very often presents that which is contained in the *Reformed Dogmatics* of Dr. H. Bavinck, an acknowledged authority on the history of doctrine. Of interest, of course, is what we read in the above quotation of the teachings of Pelagius and Arminius. We will have opportunity to return to this in due time. In the meantime, this may suffice as far as an historical

review is concerned of the doctrine of the providence of God.

The doctrine of the providence of God repudiates two heresies in connection with the existence and development of all things in the midst of the world; Deism and Pantheism. To be sure, the word "providence" itself is hardly adequate to define what the Scriptures mean when they speak of the Lord's providential rule over all things. The word itself simply means: foresight, a seeing beforehand. At best, the word "providence" could simply mean that the Lord, taking heed of the need of all His creatures, provides for them in all their needs. In former days, when it was customary to heat our homes with coal, it was foresight to purchase a winter's supply of coal in advance. We understand, of course, that the Lord did not merely "see things beforehand," but that He sovereignly controls and determines all things. And the doctrine of the providence of God certainly refers to His almighty and omnipresent power whereby He sustains all things and also governs them unto the realization of His eternal and sovereign purpose in connection with all things.

Deism is the conception which separates God from the world. According to Deism God's concern with the world is not universal and constant, special and perpetual, but only of a general nature. The world is like an alarm clock; it is wound up and then proceeds to run of itself. When the Lord created the world He gave to all His creatures certain inalienable properties, placed them under invariable laws, and then left them to work out their destiny by their own inherent powers. The world really runs of itself. The Lord may retain a certain general oversight of the world, not of any specific details, but of the general laws which He has established. The world is simply a machine which God has placed in motion, but it is not a ship which is constantly controlled and directed to a certain goal or harbor. This deistic conception of the providence of God is characteristic of Pelagianism, was adopted by several Roman Catholic theologians, and is also one of the fundamental errors of Arminianism.

The heresy of Deism certainly applies to Pelagianism and Arminianism. To be sure, the Pelagian and Arminian may agree to the providence of God as far as our natural life is concerned, but they are certainly deistic as far as their conception is concerned of the Lord's rule over the spiritual conduct and activities of all His moral creatures. It is characteristic of the Pelagian and Arminian that they drive a wedge between God and the sinner, and that wedge is the will of man. The Lord, then, is dependent upon the will of the sinner. And this is also true as far as the Three Points of 1924 are concerned. These Points speak of the gospel as an offer of salvation, and that the natural man is able to please God without the regeneration of his heart. Man is in control of his own destiny. He determines whether he shall be saved or not. Actually, the Lord stands helplessly by, offering to all men His salvation, and utterly dependent upon the sinner and his will as far as the actual bestowal of that salvation is concerned. And this applies not only to the initial be-

stowal of faith and grace, but the sinner must continue to will that salvation of the Lord even until the end. It is the position of the Arminian that, once saved, the sinner can still be lost and perish. He must persevere until the end, and his ultimate salvation is surely dependent upon that sinner's perseverance.

Deism is, of course, denied by Holy Writ. We will not at this time discuss the relation between God's providence and sin. The Lord willing, we will return to that in due time. But Scripture certainly denies the conception of Deism. Many Scriptures could be quoted. But we will limit ourselves to what we read in Matthew 6:25-29: "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take you thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arranged like one of these." This passage needs no elucidation. Besides, do not the Scriptures also teach us that not one sparrow can fall off the housetop without the will of our heavenly Father, and that all the hairs of our heads are numbered? The deistic separation between God and the world is certainly repudiated throughout Holy Writ.

The doctrine of the providence of God, however, also repudiates the error of Pantheism. Pantheism identifies God with the world. Whereas Deism separates God from the world, Pantheism identifies the Lord with His creature. It does not recognize the distinction between God and the world. It either absorbs the world in God or God in the world. God is the world. Of

course, then there is neither creation nor providence. Then the Lord certainly did not create anything outside of Himself. Then there is simply no world apart from God. And the result is that there is no God, and that for the simple reason that all that is left is the world. Pantheism, that all is God or that God is the world, and, therefore, there is no God, is, of course, the end of all religion. It is also the end of all morality. If there be no God, then there is no life of prayer possible, and this for the simple reason that there is nobody to whom prayer can be made. Then there is also no morality and no sense or guilt of sin. In fact, then there is simply no sin because there is no God against whom anyone can sin. Pantheism is the end of all responsibility of man, the end of all prayer life, the end of all morality and consciousness of sin. Then man can live as he pleases, except possibly for the exception that mankind must lead respectable lives with a view to their preservation. And imagine what would become of this world if there were no God! Fact is, all men are conceived and born dead in sins and in trespasses. Then there would be nobody able to transform that hopelessly and helplessly dead sinner. Then there would be nobody able to call one sinner out of death into life, out of darkness into the light. Then sin would have an absolutely free reign. But pantheism is certainly denied by Scripture. Everywhere in Holy Writ the truth is proclaimed that the Lord is God alone, that He is infinitely exalted above the creature. We read in I Kings 8:27: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" And we are all acquainted with the word of Isaiah, in Isaiah 40:15, 17: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity."

IN MEMORIAM

On May 13, 1966 it pleased our heavenly Father to take from us our beloved husband, father and grandfather

MARTIN CASEMIER

at the age of 79 years.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom". Psalm 90:12.

Mrs. Ella Casemier

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Taylor

Mr. and Mrs. Al Casemier

Mr. and Mrs. John Casemier

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Casemier

Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Doezeman

Mr. and Mrs. Lavern Casemier

17 grandchildren

5 great grandchildren

Holland, Michigan

As is customary, the *Standard Bearer* will appear only once during the months of June, July, and August.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Congregation of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland herewith expresses their sincere sympathy to their Pastor, Rev. G. Lanting and family in the passing of his Mother

MRS. LAMBERT LANTING

That the Lord may comfort the hearts of the bereaved is our prayer. Psalm 90:12 "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Per Consistory

Mr. Lam Elzinga, Vice Pres.

Mr. B. Windemuller, Clerk

ALL AROUND US—

Report of the Synod of 1966

by Prof. H. Hanko

Tucked away in the far northwest corner of Iowa is the small hamlet of Doon. Here too, for many years, the heritage of the Reformed faith has been maintained by one of our Protestant Reformed Churches. Here, west of the Mississippi, after an absence of sixteen years, the Synod of our Churches met. It was in 1950 that the Synod met in Hull; this was the year the Declaration of Principles was first proposed for adoption. The contrast between that Synod and this one is indeed striking. At that Synod our Churches faced a major crisis—a crisis which later came to a climax in the schism of 1953. This year our Synod, confident of the blessing of God upon our Churches in years gone by, took a hard look into the future and made extensive plans for the days and years ahead.

For myself, a return to Doon was similar to a homecoming. The rolling hills of well-farmed land, the growing corn, the blue sky, the warmth of hospitality, the crash of thunderstorms, the peace and quiet of rural life—all these brought back fond memories. Yet also to Rev. Decker, pastor of the calling Church, the Consistory of Doon, and the ladies of Doon Church belongs the credit for an enjoyable stay among our brethren in the Mid-west.

The Synod began Tuesday evening, May 31, in Doon Church with the presynodical prayer service. Rev. M. Schipper caught the spirit of our Churches and set the tone of the Synod when he preached in his own able way on Neh. 4:17: "They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, everyone with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon."

The work of Synod was performed with efficiency; this was due to the very excellent work done by the committees of pre-advice and by the effective work of the president, Rev. G. Van Baren. Wednesday was spent in committee work after the assignments had been given; Thursday, Friday, and Monday were spent on the work. By Monday evening, the work was finished.

Two of the appointed delegates were unable to attend: Mr. H. Meulenberg was recuperating from a recent heart attack; Rev. C. Hanko was facing the prospect of surgery. Synod was mindful of the absence of these two brethren and often brought their needs before the throne of grace.

To turn now to a brief survey of the work of Synod, I must remind our readers that this is in no way either an official report or a complete one. I write from the perspective of my own impressions of Synod; our people are urged to obtain a copy of the printed Acts when they become available later this summer.

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL MATTERS

Several important and rather far-reaching decisions were taken concerning the work of our Theological school.

First of all, the Synod decided that our Theological School must serve also as a means to witness to the Reformed faith in the Church world of today. In order to accomplish this, Synod decided to open the doors of the School to students from outside our Churches who, while studying in our school, will nevertheless, not necessarily preach within our own denomination. There are, Synod was convinced, students who are eager to obtain a seminary education which is emphatically Reformed and Calvinistic. Such an education is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. Our Synod is making the instruction of our Seminary available to them.

As a footnote to this, our people will be interested in knowing that I have talked with one who, while not a member of our Churches, is deeply interested in attending our Seminary. He is, at present, a minister elsewhere.

Secondly, Synod, taking cognizance of the excellent work done by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema in our Seminary, appointed him for life-time tenure. This appointment he also accepted. For myself, this is abundant reason for gratitude, for Prof. Hoeksema has been of indispensable help to me in my labors in the Seminary the past year, and our Seminary has prospered under his instruction.

Thirdly, Synod faced the problem of inadequate facilities for our Seminary. As most of our people know, our Seminary has met in the basement of First Church in a room provided for it. Synod saw the possibility of these facilities being inadequate in the future. Our Seminary library is rapidly growing and is crowding the room; if we have students in different grade levels, there will be a need of other classrooms;

our present facilities are adequate for four or, at the most, five students. Should our enrollment increase beyond that point, our present room would not be large enough. The result was that the Theological School Committee was instructed to make plans for the expansion of our facilities to be presented at next year's Synod.

Fourthly, the Synod faced the question of establishing our own pre-seminary course. This was, understandably, a major consideration. There are many problems which have to be faced; yet the Theological School Committee felt the urgent need of such a pre-seminary course; and the final decision reads as follows:

1. That Synod go on record as favoring the establishment of a pre-seminary course.
2. That Synod instruct the Theological School Committee to begin preparation for such a course; specifically:
 - a. To draw up a proposed constitution to be submitted to Synod next year.
 - b. To begin making initial plans for curriculum, facilities, etc.
 - c. To discuss this matter within our Churches.
 - d. To investigate the matter of accreditation.
3. The committee (i.e., the Committee of Pre-advice) makes this advise in distinction from the advise of the Theological School Committee in the light of the following:
 - a. The Theological School Committee seems to take the position that this should be done very soon.
 - b. While your committee agrees that this should be done as quickly as possible, we urge Synod to take cognizance of the following:
 - 1) The shortage of teaching personnel.
 - 2) The phenomenal teaching load that would be placed upon our present faculty.
 - 3) The difficulty of selling this to our young men—i.e., an education not culminating in a degree.
 - c. The committee nevertheless believes:
 - 1) That the establishment of such a school is our solemn obligation.
 - 2) That all our efforts should be put forth to attain this goal as quickly as the Lord makes this possible.

Thus our Synod made preparations for the expansion of our Theological School. It remains Synod's prayer (and the prayer of our Churches) that God will send us young men to study for the ministry of the Word.

MISSION MATTERS

Proportionately, greater time was spent on missions than on any other matter before Synod. Also in this area some important and far-reaching decisions were taken.

That Synod did nothing hastily and rashly is evident from the fact that there were long discussions on Synod concerning most fundamental questions of missionary work. These questions centered about the preaching

of the Word as the basic means by which God gathers His Church; and the relationship between the individual congregations and the Synodical Mission Committee in the work of Church extension.

To turn to specifics: the whole matter of the work in Jamaica weighed heavily with Synod. The general consensus was that much more ought to be done there than is being done; specifically that there is a great need to put a man on the island for an extended stay who can work among these brethren in Christ.

Rev. J. Heys submitted a follow-up report of his visit with Elder H. Zwak to Jamaica and especially of his work in supplying the ministers there with material of a correspondence course. It ought to be of special interest to our people that Rev. Heys is drawing up excellent material for these lessons and that they are being received favorably. To quote briefly from the report:

On my part I am satisfied to know that these brethren do not reject but embrace the Reformed faith, as they begin to learn it, in a childlike faith that does not argue but very refreshingly accepts it as the proper interpretation of the Word of God. I am also satisfied with the progress shown thus far. And I am confident that with patient work and God's blessing, we will hear these brethren and sisters speak the same language of faith which our covenant God has so graciously given to us to speak and believe. For me personally it has been a blessing to be able to prepare and conduct this course of instruction and I request the prayers of our Mission Board and our congregations for me and for the brethren in Jamaica and for God's blessing upon this work.

But Synod knew that more had to be done. The result was that, while the correspondence course will be continued, the Mission Committee was also instructed to draw up a program to be submitted to Synod next year—a program for putting a man in the field in full time labor.

The other aspect of the work of missions concerned itself with the expansion of the lectures which have been held in the Grand Rapids area. Of over-riding concern was the fact that God has called us to live in a time of great apostasy when the Reformed faith is despised and many denominations are rapidly discarding their heritage. In addition to this was the fact that increasingly the Lord has given to us audiences who express a concern for the rapid departure of these denominations from the principles of the Reformed faith. Bearing these two factors in mind, Synod decided to expand the lecture series so that this same lecture program can be carried out in other parts of the country where we have established congregations. With the approval and cooperation of our various Consistories, this will be done in the years ahead.

Thirdly, an interesting and important report was submitted to Synod by a committee of the Mission Committee which recently made a trip to the Eastern part of the country and reported on its work. The report is too lengthy to quote, but gives evidence again of the fact that increasingly we have received an open door to witness to the truth of Scripture.

Finally, a Foreign Mission Committee was estab-

lished which shall make work of following the developments in the field of foreign missions so that Synod will be able, in the future, to know of possible openings in that area of the Church's calling. Whether this committee will have more work to do only the future will reveal.

There was, of course, routine business before Synod which we shall not enter into in this report. One item of unfinished business was finally taken care of; this was the matter of our Synodical and Classical archives. The Litigation Committee reported that they had finally been returned, although some are still missing. The Stated Clerk was instructed to investigate whether they can be located.

All in all it was a fruitful Synod. Many decisions were taken which will drastically affect our future calling. Synod was deeply aware of the many indications of God's favor upon us; and Synod, consciously dependent upon God's indispensable blessing, looked into the future with the firm conviction that our Churches have an urgent calling to fulfill in the days ahead. May the prayers of all our people arise daily before the face of our covenant God that peace may reign within our Churches and that we may, by God's grace, fulfill our calling in faithfulness.

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SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIANS AND COCU

There is one news item of considerable importance which we must include in this issue. We have not the room to report on this at length, but a more detailed report can be reserved for a future issue.

In a surprise move, on the last day of the Assembly Meeting, the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church US (Southern) decided to join COCU. COCU stands for "Conversation On Church Union", i.e., the discussions now being held by representatives of eight denominations to form a giant protestant denomination numbering some 25,000,000 people. These are so-called "Blake-Pike Talks" which we have discussed in previous issues of the *Standard Bearer*. The two main churches involved in these discussions are the United Presbyterian Church and the Episcopal Church. The former recently accepted the resignation of Eugene Carson Blake, who will take the place of Visser 't Hooft in the World Council of Churches; and they recently accepted the "New Confession of 1967". The latter has become famous for its bishop in San Francisco, James Pike, who has denied the fundamental doctrines of the truth—the trinity, the virgin birth, the resurrection of Christ, etc., and who recently resigned his bishopric.

The importance of this decision for the southern Presbyterians is evident from the following:

1) The COCU delegates (and many of the churches involved in these discussions) are liberal and modern. The leaders in this movement stand in the forefront of modern day (and apostate) ecumenism and are determined to press for unity at all costs. This is evident especially from a recent decision of COCU to merge soon and settle the differences still dividing the churches at leisure and after the merger has taken

place. Some speculate such settlement of differences will take twenty-five years; others say, perhaps it will take forever. In other words, no one really cares whether they are ever settled. By committing the Southern Presbyterians to this movement, the liberals scored a great victory within the Southern Presbyterian denomination and pushed the conservatives into a corner. The conservatives are alarmed.

2) The Southern Presbyterians were engaged in merger talks of their own with the Reformed Church of America. The recent decision to join COCU makes a profound impact on these merger talks. This is true, first of all, because the liberals had wanted badly to scuttle talks with the Reformed Church in order to open talks with the United Presbyterians. An overture to that effect was even defeated at this Assembly Meeting. But, without any one apparently noticing the inconsistency, the liberals got their way by way of COCU; and the Southern Presbyterians are committed after all to talks with the United Presbyterians—only now within the framework of COCU. Further, the conservatives are afraid that indeed merger talks with the Reformed Church will now cease. The Reformed Church has, all along, been somewhat hesitant about this marriage, fearing that it was but a first step with the United Presbyterians. This merger the Reformed Church did not want. Their fears have been justified. The editor of *The Presbyterian Journal*, with some measure of despair, wrote:

It will be a long while before the shock wears off most observers of the 1966 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church US—even observers friendly to the actions taken. No one, but no one really thought the Assembly would throw all caution to the winds and adopt so long a list of radical proposals, capping the whole performance by taking the Church into the "Blake-Pike" plan for a monster Church in America. As we write these words the first dramatic effects of the Assembly's actions are being felt: plans for exchanges between this Church and the Reformed Church in America, with speakers scheduled to appear before respective synod meetings, are being cancelled. What a pity that one of the brightest potential unions in Protestantism apparently has gone down the drain!

At this writing, it is not yet known what the Reformed Church has done about the whole matter.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan herewith expresses its sympathy to Mr. Lavern Casemier in the passing of his Father

MARTIN CASEMIER

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain". Phil. 1:21.
Rev. G. Lanting, Pres.
E. Cammenga, Sec'y.

EXAMINING ECUMENICALISM—

The Second Vatican Council - Fourth Session

by Rev. G. Van Baren

The fourth and final session of the Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church came to its conclusion last December 8, 1965. Much happened during the four years this Council was in session. That is true in the world about us, but particularly in the realm of that which is called "church". It is difficult now yet to believe that so much could have happened in the "church world" during this time. One cannot but be reminded that the end of time must be at hand.

THE COUNCIL'S CONCLUSION

It is difficult for an outsider, and one who has only read accounts of others, to come to specific conclusions concerning the Vatican Council now ended. Even Roman Catholic scholars maintain that they themselves can not properly evaluate the work and effect of this Council except in the light of subsequent history. There is much truth to that. It remains to be seen if some of the decisions taken will in fact be carried out by the Roman Catholic church in general, and also whether each segment of that church will abide by and execute the declarations of the Council.

One thing is very evident at the close of this Council: it was doubtlessly the source of more publicity than any other event of "church" history. There was hardly a magazine or newspaper which did not regularly report on developments. The eyes of the world were directed towards the actions of the Roman Catholic church — as they also intended.

A second fact that has emerged from the Council sessions is this: The Roman Catholic church has gained much of the favor of men — both protestants and even the non-religious. This also was, doubtlessly, one of the aims of this Council.

A third fact: this Council will greatly affect the life of the Roman Catholic church. I believe no basic doctrines have been changed. Nevertheless, the Council has opened the doors to debate and discussion in the Roman Catholic church. I suspect that what will happen will be that which is taking place in many protestant denominations today. While officially holding to the old doctrines, there will be rapid development toward out-and-out modernism. Even the present doctrines of the Romish church must lead to modernism. It is not even surprising to read statements today as this: "The vanguard of Catholic thought today does not expect the *parousia* to take the form of

an apocalyptic event, even in the most distant future...."¹ The streams of thought in both protestant and Roman Catholic circles will more and more begin to flow in the same channels. There is an opening through this Council into that period of the ecumenical "church" of the last days.

STATISTICS ON THE COUNCIL

I have in the past presented some of the statistics of the Vatican Council. For your information, it might be advantageous to consider the Council statistics after it has come to its close.

During the first three sessions, only five documents were approved (two during the second session, and three during the third session). The fourth and last session approved a total of eleven documents. Of course, that gives a large mass of material. Probably most of this will not interest us at all either. Therefore, D.V., I intend only to consider a few of the (to us) significant actions taken.

It was on January 25, 1959 that Pope John XXIII first announced his intention to summon the Vatican Council. On Oct. 11, 1962 the first session began its meeting. The sessions usually met from some time in September into the month of December. The final session was closed on December 8, 1965.

Some other statistics (as given in the *Council Daybook*, Vol. 3) are: there were 168 general meetings at which 147 reports were read and 2,212 speeches were given. There were also 4,361 written interventions. The daily average attendance of bishops was 2,200. In addition to these, there were 460 officially designated experts present.

Statistics mean little by themselves. More interesting, it seems to me, are the reactions of the Roman Catholic experts themselves to this Council.

EVALUATION OF THE COUNCIL

First, the brief closing address of Pope Paul is revealing. Especially two significant things can be detected in it. He wants to make sure that all men know the desire of the Roman Catholic church to greet them and welcome them as brothers. Secondly, the speech reflects what is true of most of the decisions of the Council: Christ is forgotten.

The Pope speaks thus:

This greeting is, before all, universal. It is addressed to all of you assisting and participating here in this sacred rite: to you, venerable brothers of the episcopate; to you, representatives of nations; to you, people of God. And it is extended and broadened to the entire world. How could it be otherwise if this council was said to be and is ecumenical, that is to say, universal? Just as the sound of the bell goes out through the skies, reaching each one within the radius of its sound waves, so at this moment does our greeting go out to each and everyone of you. To those who receive it and to those who do not, it resounds pleadingly in the ear of every man.²

But it is also true that this closing speech, reflecting what I would consider the tenor of the whole Council, shows that there is no room for the Christ. There is a brief reference to Christ and His word of "peace," but that is all. The Pope would rather place his hope and expectations upon the Virgin Mary.

But note what is taking place here this morning. While we close the ecumenical council, we are honoring Mary Most Holy, the mother of Christ, and consequently, as we declared on another occasion, the mother of God and our spiritual mother. We are honoring Mary Most Holy, the Immaculate One, therefore innocent, stupendous, perfect. She is the woman, the true woman who is both ideal and real, the creature in whom the image of God is reflected with absolute clarity, without any disturbance, as happens in every other human creature.

Is it now perhaps in directing our gaze on this woman who is our humble sister and at the same time our heavenly mother and queen, the spotless and sacred mirror of infinite beauty, that we can terminate the spiritual ascent of the council and our final greeting? Is it not here that our post-conciliar work can begin? Does not the beauty of Mary Immaculate become for us an inspiring model, a comforting hope?²

Of interest too are the comments of Father Hans Kung, a well-known, liberal Roman Catholic theologian. Though he is not wildly enthusiastic about the actions of the Council, he nevertheless appears impressed and pleased by most of the decisions. He has complaints though.

... That which the Council did not accomplish need not and cannot be overlooked. There are certain decrees (e.g. the decree on the communications media, the Declaration on Christian Education) which are hardly significant for the future. There are others which lack proportion, which are in many places ambiguous or which simply are not forward-looking. There is probably not a single decree which proved completely satisfactory to the bishops.

In practically all of the doctrinal decrees, a solid exegetical, and often enough, historical foundation is wanting — a price exacted by the almost total absence of Catholic exegesis at the Council. Often enough, diplomatic compromises made a patchwork of precisely the most critical matters — for example scripture and tradition, papal primacy and collegiality. These were compromises between a majority, which generally had the most serious and vital theology on their side and the relatively small curial party which controlled the Council machinery and made thorough use of this control right to the end. None of this should be glossed over.³

There are five areas in which Kung believes accomplishments were made by the Romish church. First, progress, he believes, was made in the area of ecumenism. He claims that the Council expresses that Roman Catholics share the blame for the disunity of the church. He points out that now other Christian communities are recognized as *churches*. An ecumenical attitude is expected in the Romish church and cooperation with other Christians is encouraged. He concludes: "the ecumenical age has finally and irrevocably begun for the Catholic church with Vatican II."³

Secondly, Kung sees achievement in those areas in which the Reformers originally sought change. The Council, he maintains, has placed far greater emphasis upon Scripture than was ever present since the Reformation. He sees in the action taken the development of a liturgy based upon the Word. The Council has given greater esteem to the laity and that popular piety is now more in harmony with that which the Reformers sought. Says Kung, "When we look at this whole area, it is clear that much of what the Council did is of a preliminary, imperfect, even questionable character, and that a number of important things are missing. But it is nevertheless permissible to ask this question: what would Martin Luther do if he were born in the Catholic Church of today?"³

The third area of change deals with those of the non-Christian religions (Jewish, Islam, Buddhism, etc.). Kung sees closer unity between the Romish Church and these of other religions. He also believes that the Romish church has assumed a new attitude toward the world itself. This was especially evident, says he, in the adoption of a document treating religious freedom.

Finally, Kung believes that changes are and will be made internally within his church. There will be a new relationship between Pope and bishops; the Roman Curia will hopefully be reformed; the priesthood will be trained according to the needs of local areas; in mission endeavor, the Romish church will work "toward overcoming the scandal of a divided Christendom, so deeply felt in mission lands."³

The conclusion of Kung is:

This all-embracing program of reform within the Church adopted by Vatican II will mean a great deal of work in the years to come. But it must not be forgotten that a great deal was not formulated in the decrees and that precisely this may be of greater significance for the next few decades:

1. a new vitality is apparent in the Catholic Church, which transcends any formulations.
2. a new freedom in thought and discussion has shown itself to be extremely fruitful.
3. a new relationship to truth, both more historical and more existential, has become a reality.
4. the fragmentary and contingent character of all documents of the Magisterium was experienced in the concrete.
5. Vatican II quite consciously avoided claiming the infallibility defined by Vatican I.
6. the theology of the neo-scholastic schools showed itself incapable of dealing with new problems.
7. the authority of a vital theology and of the theologians has been decisively strengthened.
8. a new idea of church lead-

ership has become visible on all levels (instead of one-man-rule, common responsibility). 9. the Church has given up characteristically medieval positions in regard to civil society, the state, political life and scholasticism. 10. the justifiable concerns of the eastern churches and of the reformation have now found acceptance within the Church.³

Such is the estimate of a liberal Roman Catholic.

He believes that the Council will work toward greater unity between the Roman Catholic church and all men of this world -- and I think he is right.

1. *Commonweal*, April 22, 1966, pg. 149
2. *Council Daybook*, Vol. 3, pgs. 362-363
3. *Commonweal*, January 21, 1966, pgs. 461-468

ANNOUNCEMENT

Changes made by the Synod of 1966 in the "Synodical Rules of Order" and in the "Constitutions of Standing Committees" are the following. These changes ought to be noted by those who have the book, "The Church Order of the Protestant Reformed Churches", revised and reprinted in 1961.

Article 2 of the Constitution of the Theological School Committee, page 41, must now read as follows:

"The Theological School Committee shall consist of no less than ten members. There shall be an equal representation of elders (or ex-elders) and ministers on this committee at all times. They shall be elected by synod for a term of three years, and are eligible for re-election."

Article 2 of the Constitution of the Mission Committee, pg. 43, must now read:

"The Mission Committee shall consist of not less than ten members, six of which shall be ministers, and four elders (or ex-elders), to be chosen from the Eastern branch of our churches. They shall be elected by synod for a term of three years, and are eligible for re-election."

Article 7 of the Rules of Order of Synod, pgs. 66 and 67, Sections 1 and 2 must be changed to read as follows:

"1. Theological School Committee: Constituency, 5 ministers and 5 elders (or ex-elders). (Acts 1966, Art. 47)

"2. Mission Board: Constituency, 10 members -- 6 ministers and 4 elders (or ex-elders) to be chosen from the Eastern branch of our churches). (Acts 1966, Art. 98)"

To Article 7 of the Rules of Order of Synod, pg. 67, the following must be added:

"7. Foreign Mission Committee: Constituency, 6

members chosen from the Western branch of our churches. As much as possible a balance of three ministers and three elders shall be maintained."

In Article 7 of the Rules of Order of Synod, Section 4, c, must be changed as follows:

"c. Function: (a) Advise treasurer, (b) Determine, in conjunction with treasurer and Mission Board temporary subsidy for a new congregation in the interim between Synods, (c) act in adjustment of assessments or of subsidy in cases of proven need of an unforeseen or emergency nature."

G. VandenBerg, Stated Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's and Ladies Societies of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland takes notice that the Lord in His wisdom has bereaved several of their members in the recent past through the departure of loved ones. Herewith we express our sympathy to the following:

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Kortering in the loss of his sister
Mrs. John Boers

Mrs. Ella Casemier and Mr. and Mrs. L. Casemier
in the loss of their husband and father

Mr. Martin Casemier

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Bosman in the loss of his father
Mr. John W. Bosman

Rev. and Mrs. G. Lanting in the loss of his mother
Mrs. Lambert Lanting

May the Lord comfort your hearts as He did His disciples in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth; give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid".

Mr. E. Cammenga, Sec'y.

Mrs. B. Windemuller, Sec'y.

Refuse to accept the doctrine of sovereign election, and you must ultimately deny the truth of vicarious atonement. For if Christ's death is substitutional, those for whom he died are certainly justified and reconciled to God. But it is evident that all men are not saved. Hence, you must choose between two alternatives: Christ represented the elect, or in His death He did not really pay for the sins of those for whom He died. Election and vicarious atonement are inseparably connected.

-- H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," p. 23

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP—

Ecclesiastical Censure

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

In our liturgical study the next matter for consideration is the Form of Excommunication as it appears in the back of our Psalter. The material or content of this form is inseparably connected with the broader subject of ecclesiastical censure or discipline, since excommunication is but one step, the final step, in this process. When the ecclesiastical machinery of discipline is activated by gross sin in the church and there remains no evidence of repentance in the sinner, the end result is excommunication, and where this is necessary the form which we purpose to discuss is to be used.

Although therefore our present study must be limited to the matter of excommunication proper, it will not be out of place to make some general observations on the subject of ecclesiastical censure as such. In doing so we must keep in mind that detailed questions that arise belong properly to the field of Church Polity rather than to that of Liturgics and consequently lie outside of the scope of this rubric. We do not intend to discuss Articles 71 to 81 of our Church Order now, but it is also impossible to avoid the fact that some matters treated there come into focus in connection with our subject of *Excommunication*.

Even more than in the days of Calvin there are many today who would prefer to elide from our Church Order and Confession the matters dealing with christian discipline or, if they must be retained in the confessions, to then ignore them altogether or, at best, to bring these things into practice only in cases of extreme necessity. The factors contributing to this sorry state are, first, a general ignorance concerning the purpose and nature of christian discipline; secondly, a pseudo emphasis upon the so-called christian liberty of the members of the church; and, finally, a general contempt for spiritual practices concomitant with licentious and worldly living. The result is that practices which our fathers condemned are condoned by the church today and there seems to be no reversing of this trend for the power of ecclesiastical censure is broken. The church has fallen into a state of disorder and now welcomes into her confused fellowship all who will contribute to her material support, regardless of walk of life. Unless there is a resurgence of disciplinary action by the church, the continuance of her deterioration as a spiritual institution is inevitable.

Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, succinctly touched upon the urgent necessity of ecclesiastical censure when he wrote in Chapter 12 of Book IV as follows:

“But as some have such a hatred of discipline, as to abhor the very name, they should attend to the following consideration: That if no society, and even no house, though containing only a small family, can be preserved in a proper state without discipline, this is far more necessary in the Church, the state of which ought to be the most orderly of all. As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the Church, so discipline forms the ligaments which connect the members together, and keep each in its proper place. Whoever, therefore, either desire the abolition of all discipline, or obstruct its restoration, whether they act from design or inadvertency, they certainly promote the entire dissolution of the Church. For what will be the consequence, if every man be at liberty to follow his own inclinations? But such would be the case, unless the preaching of the doctrine were accompanied with private admonitions, reproofs, and other means to enforce the doctrine, and prevent it from being altogether ineffectual. Discipline, therefore, serves as a bridle to curb and restrain the refractory, who resist the doctrine of Christ; or as a spur to stimulate the inactive; and sometimes as a father’s rod, with which those who have grievously fallen may be chastised in mercy, and with the gentleness of the Spirit of Christ. Now, when we see the approach of certain beginnings of a dreadful desolation in the Church, since there is no solicitude or means to keep the people in obedience to our Lord, necessity itself proclaims the want of a remedy; and this is the only remedy which has been commanded by Christ, or which has ever been adopted among believers.”

That ecclesiastical censure culminating in excommunication is both a necessary and legitimate function of the church is evident from the Scriptures themselves. The *International Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol. II, pg. 1050, finds a form of excommunication practiced in both the Old and New Testaments. We quote the following:

“Excommunication is exclusion from church fellowship as a means of personal discipline, or church purification, or both. Its germs have been found in (1) the Mosaic ‘ban’ or ‘curse’ (*herem*, devoted), given over entirely to God’s use or to destruction (Lev. 27:29); (2) the ‘cutting off’, usually by death, stoning of certain offenders, breakers of the Sabbath (Ex. 31:14) and others (Lev. 17:4; Ex. 20:22-38); (3) the exclusion of the leprous from the camp (Lev. 13:46, Nu. 12:14). At the restoration (Ezr. 10:7, 8) the penalty of disobedience to Ezra’s reforming movements was that ‘all his substance should be forfeited (*herem*),

and himself separated from the assembly of the captivity.' Nehemiah's similar dealing with the husbands of heathen women helped to fix the principle. The New Testament finds a well developed synagoga system of excommunication in two, possibly three, varieties or stages. *Nidday*, for the first offense, forbade the bath, the razor, and the frequenting of the temple. It lasted thirty, sixty, or ninety days. If the offender still remained obstinate, the 'curse', (*herem*) was formally pronounced upon him by a council of ten, and he was shut out from the intellectual, religious and social life of the community, completely severed from the congregation. *Shammatha*, supposed by some to be a third and final stage, is probably a general term applied to both *nidday* and *herem*. We meet the system in John 9:22, 'put you out of the synagogue'. In Luke 6:22 Christ may refer to the three stages: 'separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil.'"

And again on page 1051, "Clear, specific instances of excommunication or directions regarding it, however, are found in the Pauline and Johannine writings. In the case of the incestuous man (I Cor. 5:1-12), at the instance of the apostle ('I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit'), the church, in a formal meeting ('In the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together'), carrying out the apostle's desire and will ('and my spirit'), and using the power and authority conferred by Christ ('and with the power of our Lord Jesus'), formally cut off the offender from its fellowship, consigning (relinquishing?) him to the power of the prince of this world ('to deliver such a one unto Satan'). Further, such action is enjoined in other cases: 'Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.' II Cor. 2:5-11 probably refers to the same case, terminated by the repentance and restoration of the offender. 'Delivering over to Satan' must also include some physical ill, perhaps culminating in death; as with Simon Magus (Acts 8:20), Elymas (Acts 13:11), Ananias (Acts 5:5). I Timothy 1:20: 'Hymenaeus and Alexander...that they might be taught not to blaspheme,' is a similar case of excommunication accompanied by judicial and disciplinary physical ill. In III John 9, 10 we have a case of excommunication by a faction in control: 'Diotrephes...neither doth he himself receive...and them that would he...casteth out of the church.'"

From *The New Schaaf-Herzog Encyclopedia* it is also evident that christian discipline was commonly practiced in the early church. In Vol. III, page 86 we find the following:

"Church discipline is a means of securing and maintaining the spiritual purity of the Christian Church. This exercise arises from the fact that the Church is a human institution, the members of which are subject to the limitations and weaknesses of humanity. The Christian congregation, therefore, like every other community, needs a means of self protection in order to suppress or eliminate whatever might impair or destroy its life. But, from the constitution of the Church, the character of its discipline is purely spiritual. Therefore the only means which can properly be employed is exclusion,

partial or total, of those whose acts jeopardize it.

"The center of the Scriptural doctrine of ecclesiastical discipline is Matthew 18:15-18; and its practical application in the apostolical church is learned from I Cor. 5 and II Cor. 2:4-8. A member of the Corinthian congregation had married his stepmother, and the congregation had suffered the deed. Paul then wrote to the Corinthians that the offender should be excommunicated, and 'delivered unto Satan'. His words produced such an impression, not only on the congregation, but also on the offender, that, when he wrote again to the Corinthians, Paul could recommend mercy. It is, however, not only for such flagrant offenses as the above that Paul demands punishment, but also for minor failings by which a man is made a burden to his fellow men (II Thess. 3:6); and he warns the congregations against heresy, for it eats like a canker (II Tim. 2:17). A heretic, after admonishing him once or twice in vain, avoid (Tit. 3:10); do not even bid him Godspeed (II John 10, 11). The punishment, however, must never be administered in a spirit of retaliation. Church discipline, though necessary for the self-protection of the church, has as its aim the reclamation and reconciliation of the offender; hence, in the spirit of love it must dictate its punishments (II Cor. 2:6-8). That the discipline is exercised by the Church is indicated in all the passages cited except that from Titus, where the direction is given for personal guidance alone (cf. verse 9). The apostolical institutions of Excommunication and reconciliation lived on in the postapostolic church, and during the period of persecution became even more peremptory. Under Decius, whose goal seems to have been the total destruction of Christianity, there occurred, by the side of the most admirable examples of faithfulness, so frequent instances of defection that a special regulation for the reconciliation of the lapsed became a necessity. This regulation, which continued valid down to the fifth century, established a course of penance which ran through various stages, and comprised a period of several years; but its severity naturally called forth devices of evasion and subterfuge, such as the libelli of the confessors, and church discipline became somewhat lax. A reaction toward greater severity followed, and the Montanists declared that the excommunicated ought to remain for their whole life in a state of penance, while the Novatians affirmed that the church had no right at all to forgive the lapsed, though the Lord might be willing to do so. Meanwhile the developing organization of the Church had reached the department of discipline, and the penitents, who had been excommunicated and desired to be received back into fellowship, were divided into four classes and compelled to pass through as many stages of penance."

To all of this must yet be added the word of Christ to Peter and through him to all of the apostles and to His Church: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19).

The exercise of ecclesiastical censure is not an

optional matter but a vital function of the church which is given to her by Divine command. Its importance may never be minimized and its neglect cannot avoid

harmful consequences. In this awareness we approach our subject to consider the serious implications of the form for excommunication.

BOOK REVIEWS—

Miracles: Yesterday and Today, True and False

Listening to God on Calvary

MIRACLES: YESTERDAY AND TODAY, TRUE AND FALSE, by Benjamin S. Warfield; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; 1965; 327 pp.; \$2.25; paper.

This volume contains the Thomas Smyth Lectures delivered by the author at Columbia Theological Seminary in 1917. It was originally published in 1918 under the title "Counterfeit Miracles" by Scribner's. With this paperback volume, Eerdmans has made the book, long out of print, available.

The author was professor at Princeton Theological Seminary when that seminary was still a stronghold of Presbyterian Calvinism in this country. He takes the position that miracles ended with the apostolic age because miracles "were the credentials of the Apostles" and did not belong to the Church apart from them.

Upon the basis of this position, the author carefully examines all the claims made for miracles in the early Church; by the Roman Catholic Church not only during the Middle Ages but also in more recent times, as for example, at the famous shrine of Lourdes; by the many faith-healing sects which arose in the latter part of the last century and in the early part of this one. The final chapter of the book deals with an examination of the claims of Christian Science and Mary Baker Eddy.

This extended investigation certainly proves the author's contention that miracles belonged to the apostolic Church only and that all other claims are spurious. This makes the book a valuable one. It is of value to anyone to whom the various claims of miracles

made here and there have been a problem. But it is of value also to others interested in this question.

The one weakness of the book, it seems to me, is the lack of a definition of miracles and discussion of the true nature of miracles as they formed a part of the revelation of God.

There are 230 pages in the main part of the book, while more than 100 pages are needed for the extensive footnotes. Some of these footnotes are extremely important. When this is the case, I prefer the footnotes at the bottom of the pages of the text, rather than grouped together in the back of the book. It makes the reading of a book of this nature difficult.

Prof. H. Hanko

LISTENING TO GOD ON CALVARY, by George Gritter; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1965; 143 pp., \$2.50.

This book presents meditations on the seven cross words of Christ. It appears that they were originally preached in the author's congregation.

The book has many commendable features about it and is worthy of being read by those to whom the cross of Christ is their blessedness. Nevertheless there are weaknesses to the book, some rather important. For one thing, the author, in speaking of the first crossword, rejects the interpretation that this prayer of Christ is for His elect for whom He died and interprets it as meaning being a prayer that judgment may be postponed. This interpretation (while it is certainly not new) detracts from the beauty of this intercessory prayer of the Lord and does violence to sound exegesis. For

another thing, the book neglects to lay emphasis on the truth that Christ died only for His elect people. One hopes that when this fundamental truth is called into question (also in the author's own denomination) that it would be strongly emphasized. The various crosswords give abundant occasion. But, alas, the book does not do this. Further, and in close connection with the foregoing, the efficacious and sovereign power of the cross of Christ is seriously minimized by speaking of the cross as a serious invitation to all men to come and drink of the waters of life. This was especially apparent in the treatment of the fifth crossword, "I thirst."

There are several places where the interpretations offered by the author are questionable. He writes, for example, in connection with the fourth crossword: "'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' Why did Matthew first of all introduce these words in their untranslated form? Turn to Mark and you find them untranslated too, but there they appear not in the Hebrew, but in the Aramaic. You wonder which is most accurate. Very likely, since the words of Jesus were misunderstood and confused with a call for Elijah, they were uttered in Hebrew. And at a later time when Mark wrote his Gospel, he leaves us with the impression that this word is translated so that we may understand; and left untranslated that we may know that this confession of forsakenness is beyond understanding."

However, the book is recommended for general reading and for help in meditating upon the sublime mystery of the cross.

Prof. H. Hanko

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

June 15, 1966

Rev. M. Schipper, of Southeast Church, has declined the call from Hudsonville, Mich.

Rev. G. Vanden Berg, of Oak Lawn, has declined the call which he had received from our church at Edgerton, Minn. The trio also included the Revs. R.C. Harbach and M. Schipper.

* * *

Rev. C. Hanko, of Redlands, Calif., was the Commencement Speaker at the Redlands Christian School. Four of his church were numbered with the graduates this year. Rev. Hanko was unable to attend Synod this summer as delegated, that he might rest for his impending surgery, scheduled for June 21. His son, Prof. H. Hanko plans to take his pulpit and congregational work for four weeks beginning at that time. Reports from the manse reveal that Mrs. Hanko's reading and speech are steadily improving.

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Due to the heavy concentration of clergy in Iowa for Synod on Sunday, June 5, Seminarians Kuiper and Moore were pretty busy in the churches in Classis East. They both preached three times, and in three different churches.

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Are you a regular listener to the Reformed Witness Hour radio program? Then we need not tell you of the series of sermons by Rev. G. Van Baren delivered in June. This series is an answer to the question, "How can I get into Christ?" Have you a neighbor or friend who is not a confessing Christian but who is concerned with that question? Then the printed copies of these sermons would be an ideal means for instruction in the Doctrine of Regeneration, and how one can recognize the evidences of the New Life in one's heart and soul. The usual invitation given to the listeners is extended to our readers: send for the printed copies for your use, *or for a friend*. Mail your request to: The Reformed Witness Hour, Box 1230, Grand Rapids 1, Mich.

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A short paragraph in Doon's June 12th bulletin thanking those who catered for and housed the delegates to Synod, signaled the fact that our 1966 Synod meeting belongs to history. A few of the decisions reached (you may read about all of them in the printed Acts) are: the emiratation of Rev. G. Vos, of Hudsonville; the life-term appointment of Prof. H. C. Hoeksema; an instruction to the Theological School Comm. to plan a pre-seminary course; an instruction to the Mission Board to continue their efforts in the lecture field; and one to the Mission Board to furnish the calling church with a new "gross list" that a trio may be named from which to call a missionary.

* * *

Prof. H. Hanko was scheduled to lecture, June 2, in our church at Hull, Iowa. This lecture was sponsored by the Reformed Action Society, and was on, "Our Calling Towards Modern Day Ecumenism".

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Kalamazoo's consistory has prepared and printed a 64 page booklet entitled, "Project Three Forms". It contains the Three Forms of Unity as well as the Athanasian Creed and the Nicene Creed. The bulletin notice concerning this printing read, "Soon, then, we hope this best-of-all expressions of the faith of our fathers will be ready for sale and distribution through the consistory".

* * *

Hull's pastor, Rev. J. Kortering, complimented the catechumens and their parents, in the May 15 bulletin, for their co-operation in the ministry of catechism in their church. He was happy to announce that 40 catechumens had a perfect attendance record in the past season. We lifted a related item from Redlands bulletin which obtains for all our readers: "Although the season for catechism and societies has drawn to a close, let us not neglect reading and studying the Scriptures personally and in our family circles; as Jesus instructs us, 'Search the Scriptures. . . they are they which testify of me'".

* * *

From Fort Sill, Oklahoma a letter has come to our desk from one of our servicemen who would like to correspond with other P.R. young men in the Armed Forces. He is Pvt. Roger Kamphuis, U.S. 55 829 461; Battr'y A. 4th Bn. 28th Arty. Fort Sill, Okla. 73503. Roger writes that he is in the 175 MM Gun Section, which is self-propelled, and can travel 45-55 MPH, and has a range of 25 miles. Roger is a member of Hope Church in Grand Rapids and is interested in news about members of other P.R. churches, whether they be in the Army, Navy or Marines. How about it, men? Where are you, and what are you doing? Roger and we are waiting to hear from you.

* * *

South Holland's consistory has announced a new form of worship which will be inaugurated when they occupy their new church edifice. Significant in this change is silent prayer by the entire congregation after which they rise to sing the doxology. The congregation is also asked to join in the singing of stanzas 1,3 and 5 of Psalter No. 360 after each infant baptism ceremony; and that of Psalter No. 239 after a public confession of faith is made in the service.

* * *

Bulletin Quote: "If thou art not born again, all thy outward reformation is naught. Thou hast shut the door, but the thief is still in the house." Boston.

. see you in church

J.M.F.