

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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MEDITATION—

Mercy Without Measure

by Rev. J. Kortering

"For as the heaven is high above the earth so great is his mercy toward them that fear him."

Psalm 103:11

It's exciting to live in our scientific age.

The advantages are many.

Our text means more to us because of the science of astronomy.

"As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him."

The point that the Holy Spirit through the psalmist David makes is simply this: God's mercy is so great that it staggers our imagination. We cannot begin to fathom the depth or height of God's mercy, for His mercy is without measure. To make this clear, he draws an analogy between the vast reaches of space that encircle the earth and the abundant measure of God's mercy that encircles the sinner.

This analogy we can appreciate more fully today.

From a natural point of view, man is surely heavenly minded today. The space-age craze has swept over the entire earth. Almost daily we are confronted with the lofty ascent of one satellite after another. Circling above the earth is a literal maze of beeping wonders. Man has already made outer space his temporary home.

That which stands out most astonishingly is the distance involved. The heavens are mighty high! Man-made satellites form the lowest rung on the ladder of space. Even these range from 100 to 1000 miles above the earth. This seems insignificant when one climbs higher on the ladder. The moon is the closest

natural satellite to the earth, and it towers at the distance of between 225,000 to 250,000 miles above the earth. We have observed the distance of the third rung first hand. Not so long ago we followed the Venus probe which took the space ship four months to accomplish and that travelling at 17,000 miles an hour. Venus you understand is the *closest* of the nine main planets of the solar system. The distance of the heavenly bodies is so great that the limited measurement of *miles* that is appropriate to the earth cannot apply to the distances of space. Scientists speak in terms of *light-years*. One light year is the distance that light travels in one year's time. Light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per *second*; multiply this by 60 and we have a light minute, by another 60 and we have a light hour, by another 24 and we have a light day, and by another 365 and we have a light year. Through means of audio and optical devices scientists today claim they have discovered heavenly Quasars as far away as 50 million or even up to 4 billion light years away. The distance becomes astounding.

As high as the heaven is above the earth! So great is Jehovah's mercy.

Much has been made of the so-called conflict between science and the Bible. We surely must be on our guard when we study science, especially when that science is in the hands of the unregenerate. Apart from God, man refuses to recognize that the heavens and the earth declare the glory of God. In proud contempt, the natural man devises his own theories of the origin of the universe and eagerly envisions his successful conquest of every horizon in order that he may shake his fist toward the heavens and declare, "There is no God". Most of today's science is in the hands of such rebels.

Nevertheless, we must not lose our balance and drift into the slough of despondency and forthwith consign all science to hell! It is wrong for us to reason, "science is in the hands of evil men, therefore we must have nothing to do with science." In the Reformed tradition, we have treasured the Scriptural truth that even as the husk serves the development of the ear of corn, so the reprobate world serves the elect kernel. We must likewise apply this principle to the realm of science. Using the Bible as the rock of authority for all truth, including scientific, we have the privilege to use in the service of our God, the findings of all men. We reject that which conflicts with the Bible, we appropriate that which supports the Bible.

Our text is a case in point. As children of God we stand under God's canopy and gaze in rapt wonder. We reflect upon the massive heavenly bodies, each one in its own precise orbit. We contemplate the vast span of space; we cannot help crying out with the Psalmist, "What is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man that thou hast visited him?" We grapple with the profound metaphysical query, why are there such distances in space? Why did God create so many heavenly bodies that cannot even be seen with the naked eye? If from God's point of view, the earth is the center of the universe, more particularly His people

that dwell upon the earth, why did God see fit to make such vast heavens?

Our text provides the answer. We as children of God have a concrete demonstration before our eyes of the amazing wonder of God's mercy. Whenever we study the vast distances of space, whenever we visit the Planetarium or gaze through a telescope we have an object lesson in the greatness of God's mercy. "As high as the heaven is above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him". The more we see this, the more we shout forth, "My God, how great thou art!"

Science has an important place in the life of the saint.

Mercy without measure!

Mercy is God's compassion for His suffering children. To express it in the words of the author of the Hebrews, God in mercy is touched with the feelings of our infirmities. While we dwell here in the midst of our earthly pilgrimage, we suffer much. Yes, we groan under the collapse of this earthly house. How anxious we become when the forces of evil converge upon us to eat up our flesh. Lonely tears of sleepless nights press heavenward time and time again. In penitence we cry out, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Jehovah hears, for He is merciful. He is attentive to hear and to deliver us from evil.

God is merciful. He is in Himself the only Blessed One, the Highest Good. As such, He is all sufficient, nothing can add to nor detract from His own goodness. Yet, He freely willed that He would draw into the sphere of His goodness His people. This will of God is the eternal decree of election. God's mercy to us is rooted in this decree. It is His good pleasure that there should be gathered around His throne a people that would forever acknowledge that He is the Most Blessed One. In mercy He lifts us from hell to heaven.

Our text speaks of the *greatness* of mercy, "As high as the heaven is above the earth so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him." We must see this greatness in especially three ways.

In the first place, God's mercy is great when we consider upon whom that mercy is shown.

In our text they are described as "them that fear him". We must be very careful that we do not imagine that God waits patiently in heaven for mankind to express reverence and worshipful adoration toward Him, and as soon as they do this, He condescends upon them in mercy. This would make God's mercy conditional upon our fear of Him and forever close the door of heaven to us. Neither can we claim any right to God's mercy at all; God's mercy is free! It is that unmerited compassion which God expresses toward us whereby He freely desires to lift us out of our deepest woes and elevate us into the glory of His presence.

The greatness of this mercy is that we do not deserve it. Not only are we earthly and He is heavenly, a reason alone which would make God's mercy beyond comprehension, but especially we are sinners and He is the Holy God! As the Holy One He delights only in that which is good, and hates all that which is evil.

God is a consuming fire against all the workers of iniquity.

It is this God that looks upon us and has *compassion* upon us. We who wallow in the filth of sin, for our sins rise up against us prevailing day by day, are the objects of God's mercy. We cry out to Him for forgiveness; in mercy He forgives. We experience that the wages of sin is death and in the midst of death cry out to Him and ask that He will not forsake us; in mercy He condescends to us to sooth us with His promises, assuring us that He will not deal with us as we deserve, but He will deliver us.

That's great! Unfathomably great.

In the second place we see the greatness of His mercy when we consider the way in which He establishes this bond of compassion. We know that God cannot deny Himself and have compassion upon us *as* sinners. In ourselves we deserve His judgment. For this reason God has no mercy for the wicked reprobate who remain in their iniquities. His mercy to them that fear Him is rooted in our Lord Jesus Christ.

While we stand before the Cross of Calvary we begin to grasp a little of the greatness of Father's mercy. Desiring to lift us out of the pains of death, He freely willed that the burden of our sins would be laid upon His only begotten Son. Our sins bore a terrible price. The scales of divine justice demanded that the punishment of sins had to be borne. That judgment spelled out the terrible wrath of almighty God against all our sins. God knew that we could not bear the wrath. If He should visit us with wrath we would be consumed in a moment. In mercy He sent His only begotten Son into the world in order that He might lay upon Him the iniquities of us all. God's mercy to us was so great, that rather than visit His adopted children with the judgment they deserved, He poured out His judgment upon His own natural Son, a judgment He did not even deserve.

No wonder He cried out of the darkness, "My God,

My God, why hast thou forsaken me". Hell is a terrible lonely place. In mercy God sent His own Son there in order that He might bear eternal judgment compressed into moments of time. He loved us even unto death.

Finally, the greatness of this mercy is driven home to us when we consider the benefits for us. Already now, the mercy of God brings tears of thankfulness to our eyes. What a burden of guilt is rolled from our hearts when God in mercy comes to us through our Lord Jesus Christ in the preaching of the gospel. How we relish the comfort of the Word when Father assures us that in all His dealings with us, He is not visiting us with wrath, not even when we are sorely afflicted; He is rather drawing us nearer unto Himself. When we weep—in mercy He dries our tears and comforts our hearts. When we are lonely—in mercy He comes to be our Friend. When we are tossed upon the turbulent sea of life—in mercy He provides an anchor for our soul. In mercy He forgives all our transgressions and assures us of life everlasting.

No wonder heaven will be so beautiful! Our merciful Father assures us even now that presently, we shall be delivered from all sufferings, from sorrows, from all heartache, and we shall be taken unto Himself, where joy and peace shall abide forever. So compassionate is our Father, He delivers us from *all* evil and blesses us with *every* good.

Do you fear Him? This is for you. As we bow before His majesty and acknowledge that He is God and God alone, we have the proof that in mercy Father has drawn us within the fellowship of His friendship. In deepest humility we acknowledge that man is nothing, God is all and in all. Then we fear Him and Him alone.

His mercy is great, so great that it is as high as the heaven is above the earth.

Look at the stars sometime and you will begin to understand.

Mercy, without measure.

EDITORIAL—

Quo Vadis, Reformed Journal?

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The March, 1966 issue of the above named magazine marked its fifteenth anniversary. Said anniversary is particularly observed (appropriately for the *Journal*, I think) by a lead article entitled, "As We See It After 15 Years."

Any regular reader of our *Standard Bearer* will know that I am a regular and interested reader of the

Reformed Journal. But he may also guess that I am not about to congratulate the *Journal* on its anniversary or on its anniversary issue, except, perhaps, that I might congratulate the editors for usually stating their views rather frankly and, on the whole, rather articulately. The trouble is that in my opinion the *Reformed Journal*, for all its frankness and articulateness, rep-

resents what I would call the "liberal wing" of the Christian Reformed Church. With its liberalism I am in radical disagreement. And therefore when I face the question, "Shall I praise you in this?" my answer must be, "I praise you not."

So much for amenities. I was rather certain that the *Journal* and the *Standard Bearer* understood one another apart from the above.

My interest, however, is in the prognostications of Dr. Henry Stob's anniversary article. Among other introductory remarks there is the following paragraph:

None of us knows for sure what particular challenges the future will bring, nor what form our obedience to Christ shall have to take when the challenges come, but standing in the present and scanning the future in the perspective of the past it appears likely that the Christian Church--and as one of its servants, this *Journal*--will have to face the following issues in the coming years. These issues are here set forth in the ecclesiastical and theological context in which the Editors and the *Journal* itself moves--that of the Christian Reformed Church and of Reformed theology in America--but we believe the issues in substance confront the Christian Church in America generally.

Dr. Stob then proceeds to mention a total of thirteen of such issues and to make a few comments about each.

My editorial space for this issue is already more than used up; but I must make a few preliminary comments, with the promise of more detailed treatment in the next issue, D.V.

In the first place, when I look at the list of issues, I would venture to predict that the *Journal* looks forward to a rather stormy course in the future, but also that we may expect some interesting and provocative writings from the *Journal's* editors. For example, we may expect more on Biblical inspiration, on "theistic evolution," on the doctrine of the eternal decrees, particularly that of reprobation, and on the issues of the Dekker Case and 1924.

In the second place, it strikes me that many, if not all, of the issues mentioned are issues very much on the foreground at present in the Netherlands in the

Gereformeerde Kerken. It becomes more and more evident in the "old country" that there are serious issues under discussion and that there is a very serious difference of opinion which may perhaps be classified as a conservative-versus-liberal difference. In this connection I ask the question, "Quo vadis, whither goest thou?" Does the *Journal* want to go in the same direction as many "liberal" theologians in the Netherlands?

In the third place, it appears to me that there is a plea for open and free discussion of these issues which is also characteristic of many in the Netherlands. Frankly, I fear that it is the kind of discussion that will "discuss you to death." That is, it seems to be unlimited discussion, discussion not limited by the confessions or by ecclesiastically binding decisions. This would be tantamount to complete doctrinal liberty.

In the fourth place, the *Standard Bearer* will not be a mere observer of these discussions, but will critically join them. Dr. Stob does not limit the "ecclesiastical and theological context" of these issues to his Christian Reformed Church, but includes "Reformed theology in America" and even the "Christian Church in America generally." We of the Protestant Reformed Churches (not "Church", Dr. Stob) are very definitely part of that "ecclesiastical and theological context" of "Reformed theology in America." We shall, therefore, join in the discussion, but always strictly on the basis of Scripture and the Reformed confessions.

Judging from past performances, moreover, it may be expected that the *Journal*, which is now past its fifteen anniversary, and the *Standard Bearer*, which is well past its fortieth, will not very likely be on the same side of the fence.

Nevertheless, we hope that the *Journal* will pay attention. It has not always done so in the past. In fact, it has some unfinished business which reaches back as far as the very beginnings of the Dekker Case.

But if the *Journal* listens not, we expect that others will. And we believe the *Standard Bearer* also with respect to the issues proposed by Dr. Stob will continue "to bear the standard."

I will go into more detail next time, D.V.

EDITORIAL—

Sterile Theology

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In *Torch and Trumpet* (April, 1966, p.13) there appears an article entitled "The Gospel Call And The Wrath Of God" from the pen of Mr. Isaac De Mey, "long an elder in the Grandville Ave. Christian Re-

formed Church of Grand Rapids. I do not intend to comment at length about said article. Neither, however, can I pass it without comment, for it comes highly recommended by *Torch and Trumpet*. Let me

remark, however, that my comments are not directed against Mr. De Mey personally. I know him only from his articles in *Torch and Trumpet*, articles which were obviously written with the Dekker Case in mind. Besides, Mr. De Mey has evidently "been to school" and "learned his lessons well." For what he presents in this and his previous articles he has obviously learned in the church in which he has long been an elder. To what different conclusion can one come?

However, I can hardly understand why the article is so highly recommended by "T and T." In my opinion, two things are true concerning the article in question: 1) If it is intended to be an answer and an antidote to the "rank Arminianism" which Prof. Dekker has taught and which especially Dr. Daane has supported (along with others), then it is an utter failure. The article is neither openly and frankly Reformed nor frankly Arminian. Or perhaps it attempts to be both. Even the language of the article reminds me of the proverbial "*Janus-kop*" mentioned in the past in connection with the First Point of 1924. For in the introductory paragraph we read this: "On two previous occasions it has been our privilege to write on 'The Love of God' as it is related to the well meant gospel offer. (Note that already the 'gospel call' has become the 'well meant gospel offer.' H.C.H.) We would now call attention to the other side of the coin. (The other face of the *Janus-kop*? H.C.H.) One of the main reasons that spurred us on to write on 'The Gospel Call and the Wrath of God' is that lately (as we see it), a one sided emphasis has been placed by some of our leaders on God's love without so much as mentioning God's wrath." (Shades of "the tendency to one-sidedness" of 1924; only now, I suppose, it is the other side? H.C.H.)

Notice, however, that from this introductory paragraph it appears that Mr. De Mey's differences with "some of our leaders" are not a matter of principle at all, but only one of emphasis. As long, however, as Arminianism is not recognized for what it is and is not acknowledged as being diametrically opposed to the Reformed faith, it can never be successfully fought and rooted out.

2) The entire article is written to combat the Dekker theology, but it is written with at least one eye on the First Point and its "well meant offer." The result is that while the article must not be too Arminian (because it intends to combat an over-emphasis on the love of God), it dares not be too Reformed (for fear of contradicting the First Point and its well meant offer). In this sense, the article represents the type of sterile theology which has come out of the Christian Reformed Church ever since 1924. It is sterile: it tries to be neither-nor in its presentation. At the same time, however, it is dangerous. For after all, in part its presentation is rankly Arminian. And it is this Arminian tendency that always gains the upper hand in time. The Dekker Case itself, with all of its Arminianism, is a pointed example. It was conceived in 1924 and born of the First Point. And the travail that it causes to any in the Christian Reformed Church who at heart love the Reformed truth must be great!

At this point I do not know what the Study Committee in the Dekker Case will produce. But I am convinced of one thing: whether the Dekker case is smoothed over for the time being, or whether Prof. Dekker's views are condemned, ultimately you cannot successfully oppose Dekker's position on the basis of the First Point. My question always is: when will *Torch and Trumpet* wake up to this realization?

Let me briefly point to the most fundamental flaws of this article.

1. Mr. De Mey first cuts the very heart out of the entire gospel, namely, sovereign election (and, of course, with it, sovereign reprobation), and then proceeds to try to speak of the wrath of God, the lifting of the wrath of God, and the abiding of the wrath of God, etc. No Reformed presentation would ever do this. Let Mr. De Mey, or anyone else, compare this article with the presentation of our Canons; there is an obvious and complete difference of approach. It is because of this basic flaw that the article can speak such utterly un-Reformed language as this, for example: "This is for the simple reason that the day of grace for them has passed. God's love has been withdrawn and his wrath has come upon them." This is said, note well, with respect to those who perish and who are hardened in impenitence. But if words have meaning, then this statement certainly means: 1) That God's love was once upon these reprobate. 2) That His wrath was not upon them. 3) That, however, there came a point in time that God's love was withdrawn, and that in its place His wrath came upon them. And what, pray, is the difference between this and Professor Dekker's teaching that God loves all men with a redemptive love?

2. Mr. De Mey avoids and obscures the whole issue of the atonement, to say the least. He never answers the question objectively, "For whom did Christ die?" Instead, while he never says so in plain words, he leaves the atonement so vague and undefined that any Arminian could agree with what he says. Here are examples: 1) "The second Adam through obedience bore the wrath of God against sin and established righteousness and justice (Rom. 5:15-21) (but: for whom? H.C.H.) so that God could (*could* or *did*? H.C.H.) remove his wrath and impart his love to hell-bound sinners. On this basis, we conclude that the wrath of God in its first stage is *liftable*" (liftable or objectively lifted? H.C.H.). 2) The wrath of God is said to be "lifted from all those who repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam." But is this the answer to the problem? No one denies that the promise of the gospel is for those who believe and repent. But who *are* they? Does De Mey mean to say that the gospel is that the wrath of God is liftable and that it will be lifted and is lifted only if man is willing to have it lifted? He does not say this in so many words. But all that he writes leaves this impression, and he certainly leaves the door open wide for this thoroughly Arminian presentation. 3) "God from his side has done everything necessary for man's salvation. (whose salvation? reprobate man? elect man? all men? H.C.H.) If it had pleased God to save all humanity, every individual sinner, he could have done so on the basis of the rec-

conciliation brought about by Christ. It is also on the basis of this reconciliation that the good news of the gospel can be preached to every sinner, namely, that Christ died for the ungodly and now calls sinners and not the righteous to repentance." Again, there is a total lack of definition and precision here. For whom was reconciliation made? This question is not explicitly answered; but these statements leave the impression that there is a *possible* reconciliation for any and all sinners. What is the difference, pray, between this and Prof. Dekker's view, except that Dekker is more precise?

3. There is in this article which purports to speak of the "gospel call" a total failure to work with the

fundamental Reformed and Scriptural concept of the efficacious calling. I am utterly at a loss to understand how a Reformed man can speak of the call of the gospel without emphasizing that this call of the gospel makes a distinction in its sound and that men are brought to faith and repentance by the effectual call of the Spirit, while others are hardened through the means of that same sound of the gospel.

There are many other serious errors in the entire presentation of this article. I mention the above to illustrate my point.

But I certainly cannot understand how "T and T" can recommend an article like this so highly. At best, it is confusing in its sterility.

EDITORIAL—

The Nature of the Atonement Limited or General?

Synopsis

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In this extended, and sometimes interrupted, series of articles we are confronting the question: is the atonement of Christ in its very nature limited, that is, for the elect alone; or is the atonement in its very nature general? This we have done in connection with the so-called Dekker Case, about which it is expected that the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church will declare itself at its coming session in June. We have done this, too, in connection with the position taken by Dr. James Daane in the *Reformed Journal*. Daane maintains that it is altogether unreasonable and incorrect to conclude from the fact that only the elect are actually saved to the tenet that the atonement itself is limited, or particular. He maintains, on the contrary, that the atonement is *in its very nature* general, unlimited.

I have repeatedly pointed out that Daane, who is very critical of the theological method of others and who particularly in connection with the Dekker Case has tried to emphasize that it is all a matter of method, is very shoddy in his own method. He furnishes no definition, and he makes virtually no attempt to prove his position from Scripture and the confessions. Instead, he follows essentially a rationalistic method of theologizing, which amounts to philosophizing. For my part, I simply cannot find myself in that brand of theologizing. This, incidentally, is one of my main objections to Dr. Daane's recent articles (*Reformed Journal*, March, 1966) about election and grace as events. This subject seems to be somewhat of a hobby-horse for Daane; and when he writes about these

subjects, he has some very sharp jabs for the theology of others, and even for the Reformed confessions. But I wish that he would come across with a few clear and Scripturally oriented definitions of his own once, and tell people what he wants. It seems to me that, next to being exegetically and confessionally sound, a good theological method (I mean *Reformed* method) is characterized by the virtue of clarity and explicitness. But Daane's writings, while being frequently very negatively critical, are, in my opinion, never characterized by the virtues I have just mentioned.

For my part, I have purposed in these articles to discuss the *nature* of the atonement. We are considering the various *elements* of that nature of the atonement, and we are doing so in the light of the confessions and in the light of Scripture. The very first element which we considered was that of *satisfaction*. We found it to be, according to our confessions, of the very essence of the atonement; and we found this strong emphasis of our confessions to be founded on Scripture. We are at present still busy with the discussion of the second element, namely, *substitution*, or, the element of the *vicariousness* of Christ's atonement. We have already consulted our confessions concerning this element, and at this point we must turn to Scripture to discover the harmony of the confessions with Scripture.

SCRIPTURE AND SUBSTITUTION

It must be kept in mind that the elements of *satisfaction* and of *substitution* in the atonement are in-

separable. Not only do they occur in conjunction with one another throughout Scripture; but the idea of substitution is always implied in the terms which Scripture employs to denote the atonement in its character of satisfaction of divine justice with respect to our sins. When satisfaction is not substitution, it assumes the character immediately of punishment, not of atonement. And in punishment, in the first place, the sinner does not *make* satisfaction, but God, the Judge, *takes* satisfaction: He satisfies His own justice upon the sinner. The voluntary element is missing. Besides, in the mere punishment of sin visited upon the sinner the process of the satisfaction of God's justice is never finished: the punishment of sin is everlasting. There never comes a moment when it can be said of God's justice with respect to the punished sinner: "It is enough." However, in all the terms of Scripture which we mentioned in connection with the element of satisfaction the element of substitution, the element of the one instead of the other, was also present. Substantially, therefore, this element has already been proved from Scripture. (cf. the *Standard Bearer*, Feb. 15 and March 1, 1966)

There are, however, two terms in Scripture which explicitly point to the idea of substitution. These two terms are both rendered in English by the word "for," which frequently, though not necessarily, conveys the notion of substitution. I refer to the New Testament terms *anti*, which very definitely means "instead of, in the place of," and *hyper*, which means generally "in behalf of, for the benefit of," but very often with the implication of substitution. Both of these terms are used in connection with the atonement, and they are both rendered in the English by "for." But almost any Greek lexicon will give the meanings which I have briefly mentioned above.

And now let us turn to Scripture.

The first passage to which I direct your attention is Matthew 20:28. There we read: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The beauty of this passage is that in it both ideas, that of satisfaction and that of substitution, occur in such close connection. We have previously noted the very definite meaning of "ransom" in connection with the element of satisfaction. Now we may note that the word "for" in the phrase "for many" is the term which means "instead of, in the place of." To be sure, even here the idea of "in behalf of, for the benefit of" is not missing. But the Son of Man gives His life a ransom for the benefit of and in behalf of many because He acts as their *substitute*, or *vicar*. This is the very definite meaning of this text. By voluntarily giving His life a ransom, the Lord Jesus makes perfect satisfaction of the justice of God with respect to sin in the place of "many." At this particular point in the discussion we are not interested in who those "many" are; we will discuss that aspect later. I only want to emphasize the very definite concept here. Whoever the many are, there has been satisfaction of God's justice made in their behalf, and that too, through the payment of the price demanded (ransom), and that too,

through the substitution of the Son of Man. What could be more definite? What could be more objective? From the moment that this substitutionary ransom is paid there is, in the most objective sense of the word conceivable, nothing more to be paid. There is no more debt, no more guilt. And because there is no more guilt of the "many", there can be no more condemnation and no more punishment. They are righteous. They are entitled to everlasting life. That everlasting life can never be denied them. They are surely saved. Mark you well, they were very really saved nineteen hundred years ago, when the Son of Man gave His life as a ransom for them. This is objective fact. Some of those "many" had died even many centuries before. Some of those "many" were living when the ransom was paid. Thousands of those "many" were yet to be born. But for all of them the ransom was paid; and it could never again be demanded or paid.

From the above a very plain conclusion is to be drawn. It is this: 1) If the "many" of Matthew 20:28 is all men, head for head, that is, if Christ died, gave His life, for all men, then all are surely saved: not only *possibly* saved, but *surely* and *actually* saved. To deny this is to deny the validity of the atonement. 2) If the "many" are only some men, -- whoever those may be, -- then those "some," and they only, are surely saved: again, not only *possibly* saved, but *surely* and *actually* saved.

Hence, it is as clear as the sun in the heavens, -- Dr. Daane to the contrary notwithstanding, -- that it is perfectly valid to draw a further conclusion. It is this, that we may very properly reason from the fact that only the elect are actually saved to the truth that the atonement is in its very nature limited, particular.

If these conclusions are not valid, then let the above exegesis be shown to be faulty. But I assure you that the latter cannot be done: it is the plain meaning of Scripture. In the light of a passage like Matthew 20:28, one must be either a full-blown universalist or a very stringent particularist. There is no half-way position exegetically possible. The strange thing is that there have been very few men in the history of the church who were willing to be full-blown universalists; and, at the same time, there have been relatively few who would hold consistently to a strict particularism. The First Point of 1924 was in a sense a compromise; and the Dekker-Daane views represent a further attempted compromise which has grown out of 1924, a compromise in the spirit of James Arminius.

This is nothing new, you understand. The battle for the Reformed faith has always been in this area of theology. But the fact that it is nothing new makes it neither less dangerous nor less sad!

The same language of Matthew 20:28 we find in Mark 10:45.

All the language of Scripture agrees with the above, also in those passages in which the word "for" is the rendering of the other Greek preposition, *hyper*. To other passages, however, I will call your attention in my next installment.

IN HIS FEAR—

Worshipping the Unknown God

by Rev. J. A. Heys

Do we worship the Unknown God?

On his second missionary journey the apostle Paul found the altar to The Unknown God in Athens, and he branded the Athenians as "too superstitious." But then Athens was an heathen nation and could stand a little missionary work and could profit from a sermon or two being preached on Mars' hill. But here in Christian(?) America is it not even insulting to ask the question as to whether we are worshipping an "Unknown God"? And by all means in the *Standard Bearer*, which comes not to the unchurched but to men and women particularly — although not exclusively — of the Reformed Faith, to brethren and sisters in the Lord who confess that Jehovah is God alone, do we need to ask whether we are that superstitious? Do we not in the Reformed circles subscribe to Article 1 of the Netherlands Confession which declares, "We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is only one simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good"? Do we not likewise agree wholeheartedly with the Heidelberg Catechism when it asks "What is idolatry?" and then answers, "Idolatry is, instead of, or besides that one true God, Who has manifested Himself in His Word, to contrive, or have any other object, in which men place their trust?" We know of no unknown god. We confess that Jehovah is God and that there is no god beside Him. We are not heathens, and we are not idolators, are we?

Our trust in this one true God is not strong. That we will readily concede. We live so often in fear rather than in His fear. We can sing so seldom with conviction and enthusiasm with David, "The Lord (Jehovah) is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" We are ready to agree that so very often we put our trust in the very coins of our land which state "In God we Trust." The moment sickness, calamity or serious trouble strikes, our thoughts are of doctors, insurance policies, welfare agencies, Social Security and what have you? God is an afterthought. "In His fear," and "In God we trust" are slogans that we revert to because we depart from them so often. But worship an unknown God? Surely in the church and in this day and age that is not a sin to be found with us!

But let us look again.

"Super Bingo!"

"50 gallons of gas given free every week."

"Door prizes and valuable gifts for all."

These are only a few of the evidences in this area at the moment of worshipping the unknown God. They will change with the times and will have variations in other areas; but they reveal that this sin is not so far away from us and outmoded in this day and age.

"Super Bingo" looks not to the living God. Looks not to Him and expects not all good from Him but from the unknown God of Luck. "50 gallons of gas free every week" from the god of Luck, if you will accept the "lucky" ticket and bow thus before the god of Luck. "Door prizes" are for those who worship the unknown God of Luck and will comply with his rules and regulations. A polished and refined gambling (but does not our Form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper warn those who are defiled with the sin of being gamblers to refrain from eating and drinking damnation to themselves?) is practiced as though the Word of God did not say, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." That does not mean that we will not try to serve God and worship this unknown god. It does not mean that we will not try to expect all good from Jehovah and yet also look to that box — which is the altar of this unknown god of Luck — for a good that we covet in dissatisfaction with our lot as appointed and arranged by Jehovah, the God Who has made Himself known in the Son of His love.

Our god is that object or person whom we worship and serve because we trust in that object or person for our good. The unbeliever worships the creature rather than the Creator because he sees only the creature through which the Creator sustains him and supplies him with the necessities of life. Men realize the value of the sun and the rain clouds for our food and life. They also fear the burning heat of that sun and the floods which result when a superabundance of rain falls from those clouds, and they return again after the rain. And so the unbeliever worships sun and rain clouds. The fool says in his heart that there is no God. The unbeliever ignores and denies the one true God and worships the creature, seeks to appease its wrath and looks to that creature for its life and good.

And we try to serve God and mammon. We look to Jehovah for all good when it becomes plain to us that our idol is not able to do so. We look up in prayer to Jehovah when our bowing before the altar of the unknown god of Luck — to write our name on the half of

the ticket in which we put our trust — fails to give us what we covet. We hold on to that ticket. We cherish it. This might be our key to happiness(?) and good. We will feel miserable, if we lose it. This is the thing that might make the difference in our life of having our desires filled or of remaining empty-handed of our heart's treasure. O, we dare not as we stand before this altar of Luck offer a prayer to Jehovah and say, "Lord guide the hands of the man who will make me lucky." We dare not after (shame on us for even having our pictures and names in the paper) having been "lucky" offer a prayer of thanksgiving to Jehovah, as though after all it was His providence and favour upon us rather than this unknown god of Luck. We did not seek this from Him; and therefore we had better not give Him the thanks for it. We did not seek it in the way of the work which He gave and gives to our hands. We ignored Him. We avoided Him. We did not pray for it, for we did not quite dare, being convinced in our hearts that as we would be offering such a prayer, He might answer us through His Spirit by recalling to our minds His commandment, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's." You know, the Spirit might just convict us that wanting in jealousy what the neighbour has, that is, the same kind of treasure, is as evil as wanting his possessions. The Spirit, you know, might just sanctify us and purify us through the truth, so that we reject that word of the unknown god, because we have heard the Word of God Who made Himself known to us in the Son of His love and through the blood of Calvary. No, we will have to try to serve God AND mammon. We will have to be disciples and children of Jeroboam — who made Israel to sin — by worshipping Jehovah through these golden calves of lucky number tickets, bingo, gambling and the like.

No different is it really. O, you may be sure that Jeroboam told Israel that this all was perfectly legitimate. No, NO, they were not worshipping an idol. These golden calves only represented Jehovah Who brought Israel out of Egypt. No, no you must not forget Him. This will help you — these golden calves — to remember Him. And so we soothe our consciences and say that after all we are not worshipping and serving mammon but God Himself. We do not bow before this altar of the unknown god of Luck as denying Jehovah. We look to Jehovah to guide the selection of the lucky number. We will acknowledge it all as His kind providence.

But where in Scripture do you ever come across that word *luck*? You can come pretty close to it, however, in the word *lust*! And lust will move us to seek another god than Jehovah. We know that we cannot come to Him to ask Him to satisfy our lusts. We know that He declares to us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father but of the world." I John 2:15,16. To the God Whom we *know* we cannot come for the satisfaction of our lust. We will have to seek that from this unknown

god of Luck.

Therein is also our folly. We said, *our* folly. The Athenians who were too superstitious and wanted to be sure that they did not invoke the wrath of a god whom they inadvertently overlooked, built also an altar to him(?). We do the same when besides our prayers to Jehovah, besides looking to Him for our all and receiving all from Him as our covenant Father we resort to acts of "luck", speak of being lucky or of having had bad luck. Webster tells us that luck is that which happens to us by chance. And we worship this unknown god when we take a chance and drop our ticket into the slotted altar to chance the satisfaction of our lust.

And he is an unknown god. Nothing can be known about him. For, as Paul states in I Corinthians 8:4, "we know that an idol is nothing". And what can be known about that which is nothing. If it does not exist, all you can know about it is that it does not exist. It is unknown and unknowable. And then it is no god. And since there is only one God, Jehovah, there can be no unknown god beside Him. Jehovah Himself may not be known by the heathen and is not known by them. They know from the testimony of His works that there is a God and therefore are without excuse. But they do not know this God to be Jehovah. But He can be known and is known by the regenerated children of God through His self-revelation in Holy Writ.

In His fear the child of God bows before Him and worships Him, putting *all* His trust in Him. In the measure that we trust in luck and seek to obtain anything in the way of a "lucky" ticket, whether that be a door prize or possession obtained in the way of lottery, bingo or the like, one does not know Jehovah. In that measure he does not serve Him, does not worship Him and does not put his trust in Him. Such must not be surprised if He tells them in the day of days, "I never knew you." Away then with all this superstition! For worshipping the unknown god of Luck is superstition. The word means literally to stand over or above. And because we cannot serve God and mammon, striving to obtain that after which we lust by means of luck is causing in our thinking (not in actual fact, of course) that unknown god of Luck to stand above God. Then in that act Jehovah is not God anymore in our life. If the unknown god stands above Him, then Jehovah is not God anymore but is subject to that one who stands over Him. Satan knows more than one way to get us to try to whittle God down to our level and below us so that we can think that we are like and above him. Recognize his evil tricks and walk not in his evil ways.

Unless we want to be idolators, we had better put away all this luck business and put all our trust in the living God, Who is known among His people and has never put them to shame and never will. Only one can go away from the altar of the unknown god of Luck and not be disappointed. All others are not favoured by him and may have squandered their good hard-earned money to seek his favour, and then find that he has turned against them to be the unknown god of Bad-Luck. Only one can "know" this unknown god at a

time. But Jehovah blesses countless thousands and never puts them to shame.

Let us therefore heed the word of His apostle, and not that of Satan's prophets, as He speaks through this apostle in Philippians 4:6,7, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

This is quite different from trusting to luck and seeking good from a "lucky" number.

In His fear stand in awe before Jehovah, the God of our salvation, and let it be the truth of your life: "In God we trust." The world will then speak of being lucky, but you will speak of being blessed. The possessions the world gains by "luck" it will soon lose in God's wrath. The blessings you receive from Jehovah will increase and be yours everlastingly.

HEEDING THE DOCTRINE—

Barth's Doctrine of Scripture -7-

(The Reformers on Scripture)

by Rev. D. J. Engelsma

Two matters remain to be treated in this investigation and critical analysis of the doctrine of Holy Scripture held by Karl Barth. These matters concern two main grounds advanced by Barth in support of his view of Scripture. Barth appeals, in defense of his position, to the teaching of the Reformers, especially, to the teaching of Luther and Calvin, and to the teaching of Scripture itself. In connection with the all-important latter "ground," Barth offers explanation of the crucial passages in Scripture which state what Scripture is and how Scripture came about, especially, II Timothy 3:15, 16 and II Peter 1:19-21. We intend to take note, briefly, of these two matters: the teaching of the Reformers and the teaching of Scripture itself. We will then take leave of Barth's doctrine of Scripture by considering the recent struggle within the Christian Reformed Church over the question of the infallibility of the Bible and the proposed "Confession of 1967" of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., which, in its statements on Scripture, is heavily influenced by Barth's thought.

We have already noted that, although he freely admits his doctrine of Scripture to be a radical departure from the teaching of the Reformed Church from the 17th century on, Barth claims to be in fundamental agreement with the great Reformers. Although he says that the strong statements by Luther and Calvin on the verbal inspiration of the Bible "were not free from ambiguity" (CD, I, 2, p. 525) and could "later lose (their) context" and thus be misunderstood, Barth makes no serious criticism of Luther and Calvin's doctrine of Scripture. On the contrary, he praises highly their view of the Bible:

"If we take Luther and Calvin together, we can say that the way to that universal and moving view of inspiration which answers to the majesty of God, and

as we find it in Scripture itself, was again opened up by the Reformation. The Reformers' doctrine of inspiration is an honoring of God, and of the free grace of God" (CD, I, 2, p. 522).

But the development of the doctrine of Scripture in the post-Reformation period represents a falling away from the soundness of the Reformers, the result being the present day heresy of an infallible, inerrant book.

Put briefly, the question is: did Luther and Calvin hold a doctrine of inspiration which maintains the Bible to be an infallible book or a doctrine of inspiration which allows for errors of all kinds in the written record? Did the Reformers teach the doctrine of strict, verbal inspiration or was this doctrine the invention of later theologians, who, by this doctrine, came into sharp conflict with the Reformers?

It must be remembered, first, that the teaching of the Reformers is not the basic criterion for the Church today. Even though the Reformed Churches would be foolish to ignore Luther and Calvin, the final and only incontestable authority is Scripture itself. Secondly, in all our investigation of the writings of Luther and Calvin and, especially, when we observe that Luther and Calvin are comparatively silent on the subject of an infallible inspiration of the words of Scripture, we do well to keep in mind that the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture simply was not at issue, in their day. Dr. A. D. R. Polman emphasizes this, in connection with his explanation of Article III of the Belgic Confession (I translate):

"in the days of the Reformation, the doctrine of inspiration stood wholly outside the discussion" (*Onze Nederlandsche Geloofsbelijdenis*, Vol. I, p.183) "In the sixteenth century, the confession of the infallible inspiration of God's Word was catholic. In this, Rome and Protestants were one" (*ibid.*, p.186)

Polman's point is that, although Calvin was in full agreement with the confession of the Reformed Church that "The Holy Scripture is the infallibly inspired Word of God, which has absolute authority" (*ibid.*, p.195), Calvin was not faced with the specific conflict that faces us today and, therefore, cannot be expected to provide full and pointed explanation of Scripture's inspiration and infallibility. "Nearly four centuries have passed since the Reformation and in this time much has changed in the Christian Church with respect to the matter of the Scripture-question" (*ibid.*, p. 186). The change, of course, is that whereas at the time of Calvin all of Christendom, except for some sects, agreed that the Bible was infallibly inspired of God, today, much of the Church-world denies infallible inspiration. In this respect, defenders of an infallibly inspired Bible are confronted with a new challenge and a new task.

No one denies that Luther and Calvin held the Bible to be a God-inspired book. That which Barth and others deny is that Luther and Calvin viewed the doctrine of inspiration as implying the inerrancy of Scripture. It is the contention of some that the Reformers found the doctrine of inspiration and the presence of errors in the original manuscripts of Scripture to be compatible. To support their claim that the Reformers viewed the Bible as an error-prone book, some point to certain statements made by the Reformers that supposedly are acknowledgments of errors in the Bible. Lester De Koster, writing in the *Reformed Journal* of June, 1959, in an article entitled "Calvin's Use of Scripture," gives a list of quotations from Calvin, some of which are supposed to indicate Calvin's alliance with those who affirm Scripture's infallibility and some of which are supposed to indicate Calvin's agreement with those who assert the fallibility of Scripture. De Koster does not help us out by telling us which of the two positions, in reality, was Calvin's (obviously, Calvin did not maintain both positions, teaching that there were and that there were not errors in the Bible); but he does state that, on the basis of the quotations, men have the right to decide that Calvin taught a fallible Bible. The quotations in which Calvin supposedly allows for errors, therefore, may very well be decisive to prove Calvin a cohort of those who teach fallibility.

To make these statements of Calvin carry the load of proving Calvin to have been a proponent of fallibility or even to allow the possibility of their carrying this load is to burden them with weight they cannot bear. Calvin did not produce his voluminous writings in the midst of a controversy over Scripture's infallibility. In his day, as Polman has pointed out, the inspiration and authority of the entire Bible stood outside the sphere of theological discussion, as accepted truths. At least, the authority of the Bible was not attacked in the manner in which it is under attack in our day. Certainly, however, even in the days of Luther and Calvin, men assailed the authority of the Bible. One need think only of the implicit attack on Scripture's authority by Rome's elevation of tradition and the Church to an authoritative position alongside the Bible. There were also, in the days of the Reformers,

those who dispensed with the "ignoble letter of Scripture" and heralded the lofty guidance of the "Spirit," Storch, Stubner and Munzer in Luther's day and the "fanatics" Calvin speaks of in his *Institutes*, I,IX,1. In the Reformers' fierce, almost brutal, condemnation of those who jeopardized Scripture's authority, one can see how precious they esteemed the authority of Scripture, how they safeguarded it with holy jealousy and, to my mind, how strongly they would oppose those who undermine the authority of Scripture by the teaching of fallibility.

But in the second place, it is reprehensible for someone to bypass what Calvin wrote when he was dealing specifically with the doctrine of Scripture, as the *Institutes*, I,VI-IX, and his commentaries on II Timothy 3:15, 16, and II Peter 1:20, 21, for statements dropped here and there by Calvin, when the doctrine of Scripture is not even the matter with which he is concerned. In the *Institutes*, explaining the doctrine of Holy Scripture, Calvin writes: "the full authority which they (Scriptures) ought to possess with the faithful is not recognised, unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God had been heard giving utterance to them" (I,VII,1). In the next paragraph, he goes on to say, "A most pernicious error has very generally prevailed -- viz. that Scripture is of importance only in so far as conceded to it by the suffrage of the Church; as if the eternal and inviolable truth of God could depend on the will of men. With great insult to the Holy Spirit, it is asked, Who can assure us that the Scriptures proceeded from God; who guarantee that they have come down safe and unimpaired to our times. . .?" To be sure, he aims the latter remark at Rome. But it fits as well those who posit errors in the "periphery," that is, the "unimportant" portions of Scripture. For these men make the importance and truth of Scripture depend upon the decisions of individual theologians -- a "great insult to the Holy Spirit," perhaps, a greater insult than Rome's, who, at least, has the Church make the decisions.

In his commentary on II Peter 1:20, 21, again treating the doctrine of Scripture directly, Calvin says: "Peter says that Scripture came not from man, or through the suggestions of man. For thou wilt never come well prepared to read it, except thou bringest reverence, obedience, and docility; but a just reverence then only exists, when we are convinced that God speaks to us, and not mortal men." Now, although those who maintain a fallible Bible have great fun with anyone so naive as to argue that Scripture is *God's* Word and, therefore, is inerrant, since God neither lies nor makes mistakes, we ask whether it is conceivable that anyone can approach the Bible, "convinced that God speaks to us, and not mortal men" and, at the same time, allowing for errors. Calvin goes on to say, "they (the holy men) dared not to announce anything of their own, and obediently followed the Spirit as their guide, who ruled in their mouth as in his own sanctuary. Understand by *prophecy of Scripture* that which is contained in the holy Scriptures." The commentary on II Timothy 3:15, 16, con-

tains the same strong statements: "we...are fully convinced that the prophets...only uttered what they had been commissioned from heaven to declare. Whoever then wishes to profit in the Scriptures, let him, first of all, lay down this as a settled point, that the Law and the Prophets are not a doctrine delivered according to the will and pleasure of men, but dictated by the Holy Spirit." "...we owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God; because it has proceeded from him alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it." If Calvin taught the fallibility of the Bible, he also taught the fallibility of God and the errors of the Holy Spirit since Scripture "proceeded from him (God) alone, and has nothing belonging to man mixed with it."

Concerning the quotations from Calvin that supposedly acknowledge errors in Scripture, we may say also that each ought to be closely scrutinized, in its context. To take only one of the quotations, adduced by De Koster in his article referred to above, let us note what Calvin says concerning the apparent discrepancy between Genesis 46:27 and Acts 7:14 on the number of souls which came down to Egypt with Jacob. De Koster quotes only a very small part of Calvin's treatment of this apparent discrepancy in his commentary on Acts 7:14. One would gather from De Koster's quotation that Calvin merely "brushes...aside" the *admitted* discrepancy "as unimportant to the intent of the Spirit." In fact, however, Calvin neither admits the discrepancy nor brushes the problem aside. Rather, he busies himself at length with the apparent discrepancy, obviously convinced that, although the difference in number in itself is not important, whether there were 70 or 75, it is important that there is no actual discrepancy in Scripture. Calvin does *not* say: "There is an error here, students. Let us go on." Instead, he laboriously attempts an explanation which protects Scripture's infallibility.

His explanation is that copyists of the Greek version of the Old Testament made an error, changing the number 70 in Genesis 46:27 to 75. Then, copyists of the New Testament also changed the number in Acts 7:14 from 70 to 75 to agree with the number in Genesis 46:27. Calvin writes:

"...it may be that he himself (Luke, in Acts 7:14-DE) did put down the true number (i.e., 70-DE); and that some man did correct the same amiss (i.e., changed it to 75-DE) out of that place of Moses... Therefore, to the end that the words of Stephen might agree with the place of Moses, it is to be thought that that false number which was found in the Greek translation of Genesis was by them put in also in this place; concerning which, if any man contend more stubbornly, let us suffer him to be wise without measure."

What Calvin's explanation is, is not as significant as the fact that he insisted there must be one which safeguards Scripture from any charge of error, even on so "peripheral" a matter as that of a number.

Barth himself does not try to find statements in Calvin which express the view that the Bible has errors. Evidently, he realizes that such procedure would prove inconclusive, if not hopeless. The statements he does refer to are strong ones which Barth himself admits to be indicative of Calvin's agreement with defenders of infallibility (cf. CD,I,2,p.520). Barth rather appeals to Calvin and Luther as substantiating his doctrine of a fallible, human Bible, because of the fact that both Reformers emphasized that no one could benefit from Scripture, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit. That Luther and Calvin stressed the necessity of the Holy Spirit for all right reading and understanding of Scripture nullifies their strong statements which apparently teach verbal inspiration and proves that they too regarded the Bible in a "Barthian" way.

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

The Place of Regeneration in the Preaching of the Gospel

by Rev. C. Hanko

We have come to the very heart of the issue that always distinguishes the sound Scriptural preaching of the gospel to the unconverted from all sorts of human philosophies and corruptions of the truth. Here we come to the parting of the ways between those who maintain that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation and those who insist on a mere offer of salvation which man may accept or reject. Here we either consistently maintain that salvation is of the Lord, and

entirely so, or we try to introduce something of man into the work of salvation.

The question can be put very simply: Is there any receptivity in the sinner before the work of salvation wrought by God begins in the heart? Is the lost sinner in any way capable of accepting the gospel message, of showing some willingness to receive the glad tidings, and of accepting Christ? Must this receptivity or this willingness precede the work of grace, so that God and

man cooperate together in man's salvation?

The position of the predestinarians has always been that grace is always first. Salvation is the sovereign and complete work of God, without any human aid, so that he who glories in his salvation must always glory in the Lord. This is the pure doctrine of the Scriptures.

And this position has always been opposed and attacked by those who would undermine the truth of Scripture by giving some credit to man. Already in the days of Augustine, Pelagius arose, who taught that man is morally neutral, so that he is neither innately good nor innately bad. He can be influenced by bad examples that lead him in the wrong direction, but he can also reform himself so that he overcomes these bad influences in his life. We readily recognize these Pelagian errors, especially in the modern psychology that is so prevalent in our day. But even after Augustine, at the time of Gottschalk, there were the semi-pelagians, who taught that fallen man is corrupted, but not to the extent that he is absolutely dead in trespasses and sins. According to this modified form of Pelagianism, man's will is corrupted but not entirely evil; he walks in the darkness of sin, but he is not blind; he is sick, but not dead; he is perishing, but not perished. And still later Erasmus wrote on "The Freedom Of The Will", compelling Luther to arise in defense of the truth with his "The Bondage Of The Will."

Thus it was long before Calvin that the church struggled against the error of the free will, which error again was published far and wide by the Arminians of Calvin's day. The Arminians taught that man has a free will to choose the good or the evil, so that the will to believe must precede every work of grace. God does not do anything toward the salvation of the sinner until man is willing to be saved. (See our Canons, III & IV Head of Doctrine, Rejection of Errors, article 9.)

Now I fail to see any essential difference between all these errors of the past and the offer of salvation as it is presented in our day. Billy Graham speaks of regeneration or the new birth as something "that God does for man when man is willing to yield to God." Man who is dead in trespasses and sins "can come to Christ by faith and emerge a new man." (Quotations taken from an essay on "The New Birth" by Dr. Graham. See the *Standard Bearer* of November 1, 1965). The *Reformed Journal* has repeatedly assured its readers through various writers that God loves all men, makes salvation available to all, and desires to save all men. And this is written in defence of an offer of salvation extended to all men for the very purpose that all men may be saved, if they but will.

All this is plainly contrary to the Scriptures. Let me only refer you to the well-known words spoken by our Lord to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3).

This text along with many other passages of Scripture teaches that man by nature is dead in trespasses and sins. (See also Ephesians 2:1). He is not morally neutral, as the proud heresy of the Pelagians teaches. He is not sick or suffering from poor eyesight or poor

hearing, as the semi-pelagians sought to describe the natural man. He is not capable of willing either the good or the evil, as the Arminians taught. He is not in a stupor or asleep, so that he can still hear the gospel invitation, yield to it, come to Christ and emerge a new man, as Billy Graham confuses the issue. He is not capable of accepting a well-meant offer of salvation as is taught in the Three Points of 1924 and in the writings of Prof. Dekker and others. He is dead, spiritually dead!

DEAD IN TRESPASSES AND SINS

How can a dead man heed the gospel preaching? How can he ever yield himself to Christ and seek to be saved? One can as well expect a corpse in a casket to respond to the invitation to arise and eat food, as one can expect the dead sinner to heed the invitation of the gospel.

But I also must hasten to add that the figure of a corpse does not fully describe the spiritually dead sinner. He is capable of willing and thinking and speaking and acting as long as he lives. But he is capable only of willing the evil, thinking the evil, speaking and doing that which is evil. His heart is perverse, his nature is corrupt, so that he is prone only to that which is evil.

The very fact that man was once created as the highest of all God's earthly creatures makes him so very corrupt and evil in his fallen state. Adam was created in the image of God in true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, to know God his Creator, to love Him, and to serve Him in loving devotion as God's friend servant. When he fell he retained his knowledge, but that knowledge was turned into spiritual darkness. The friend of God became God's enemy, making an alliance with the devil in opposition to God. Man retained his will, but this will turned in hatred against God to the service of sin. Adam was dead in trespasses and sins, a slave to sin, and produced an offspring that is also prone to all evil.

That is what Jesus teaches us in the Sermon on the Mount, when He says, "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Our heart is rebellious, our nature is depraved, our ears are deaf, our eyes are blind, our mouth is silenced, our hands are paralyzed. And the result is that we will and think, speak and do only that which is evil continuously. As the apostle Paul expresses it, "There is none righteous no, not one; "There is none that understandeth, "There is none that seeketh after God. "They are all gone out of the way, "They are altogether become unprofitable; "There is none that doeth good, no not one. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; "With their tongues they have used deceit; "The poison of asps is under their lips: "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

"Destruction and misery are in their ways;
 "And the way of peace have they not known:
 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. 3:10-18).

Therefore Jesus tells Nicodemus during his nocturnal visit in no uncertain terms, "Except a man be born again he cannot *see* (no, not as much as see) the kingdom of heaven, much less enter in.

That is also the language of our Confessions. Our Book of Instruction that is preached in Reformed circles every Sunday teaches us to confess, "I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor." (Lord's Day 2). And again, it teaches us that we are wicked and perverse, our nature is depraved, even so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of any good, and inclined to all wickedness. And, as the fathers well understood from the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, nothing ever changes that, and nothing can change that except *regeneration*. (Lord's Day 3).

"Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of any good, and inclined to all wickedness?

"Indeed we are; except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God."

Our Canons only serve to confirm this truth. The fathers speak of the fact that since the fall there are "glimmerings of natural light" in man. As a result of these glimmerings (which in recent years have been played up to far more than mere glimmerings by the theory of common grace) our fathers said that man "retains some knowledge of God." He knows that God is God, and he can never escape that fact. No, he cannot even get rid of God by officially declaring Him dead. Even the devils know that God is God, and they shudder. Man also retains some knowledge "of natural things," so that he can scan the heavens, probe into the depths of the sea, search out the bowels of the earth, and produce amazing inventions. But it still remains true, that God is not in all his thoughts, so that with all his searching he turns against the living God in wicked rebellion. Natural man also retains some knowledge "of the differences between good and evil." He knows very well that sin is sin, that murder and adultery and stealing, and every other sort of sin is transgression of God's law, so that his own conscience condemns him. He even "discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external

deportment." This always remains external, since his heart is at enmity with God and the neighbor, but for his own advantage he does maintain an orderly external deportment, even in spite of growing race riots, total disregard for all authority, and indulgence in sins of every sort. But even this natural light with all its glimmerings does not make the dead sinner partially alive, give him some sort of eyesight to see and know God, and to confess that he is a sinner that needs salvation through the blood of the Lamb. As our Canons express it:

"But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God." (Canons III, IV, article 4.)

There you have it! Natural man cannot *see* the kingdom of heaven. He cannot see God, he cannot see himself as a sinner before God, he cannot yield to Christ, nor accept the gospel invitation. He renders his natural light wholly polluted and holds it in unrighteousness. He can only rebelliously say, "No", as often as that gospel is preached.

You can take a pig out of its natural surroundings, wash it, dress it up with a pink ribbon around its neck, but at the first opportunity it will return to wallow in the mud. You can take a lion cub as a house pet and train it to obey you, but you cannot change that lion nature. And the same thing applies to the sinner. Except he is born again, he remains a rebellious sinner.

Rebirth is a wonder of God, who calls the things that are not as though they were. Just as power went forth from Christ as He stood by the tomb of Lazarus before the dead Lazarus could hear Jesus' voice and respond to His call, so also power goes forth from God into the elect sinner in the work of regeneration. God raises the dead, also the spiritually dead, by the power of His Spirit in the heart.

This our fathers called a "new creation; a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid.

Indeed, we must be born again. And that must be preached.

For salvation is of the Lord.

CALL TO SYNOD

The Consistory of the Doon, Iowa, Protestant Reformed Church hereby notifies the churches that the 1966 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene, D.V., on Wednesday, June 1, 1966 at 9:00 A.M. in our Doon church.

The pre-synodical Prayer Service, conducted by the Rev. M. Schipper, will be held on Thursday

evening, May 31, 1966 at 8:00 P.M. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the Consistory before this service.

Delegates in need of lodging should contact Edward Van Egdorn, Route 1, Box 40, Doon, Iowa 51235.

Consistory of Doon Prot. Ref. Church
 Rev. R.D. Decker, Pres.
 Edw. Van Egdorn, Clerk

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

Rationalistic Biblical Criticism

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

The rationalistic school of biblical criticism claims that in and after the Protestant Reformation the development of biblical textual, literary and historical studies was not possible because of the doctrinal bias and intolerance of the Protestant theologians. Romanism also hampered advance in this direction with its canons of the Council of Trent (1546), which prohibited not only other shades of interpretation, but thought other than that already imposed by the church. So, both Romanism and Protestantism had contributed to intellectual stagnation. Protestants with their insistence on the doctrine of justification by faith, and their basic principle of an absolute predestinarian theology were really no better than the Romanists with their papistical condemnation of the Copernican theory of the universe (1616), and the Inquisition's denunciation of Galileo as "vehemently suspected of heresy," together with hierarchical suppression of his scientific findings. This unbearable condition promoted by these two almost antipodal circles kept the churches for centuries in a bibliolatrous strait-jacket.

This attitude is still reflected against the investigator who stands in the line of the Reformation, regarding him as a serious hindrance to free thought, and a naive, surreptitious and half-baked would-be student as compared to the intelligent, logical, comprehensive and scholarly critic. This contention is not altogether without foundation in fact, as often the orthodox champions of Scripture have either ignored or underestimated the rationalistic principles of interpretation. Doing this is to err, rendering it impossible to learn the enemy position of "higher criticism," and, consequently, to understand the more modified and subtler position of contemporary enemies. He is a poor soldier of Jesus Christ who neither knows nor cares where and how the enemies of Scripture truth are emplaced. While he withdraws to the snug (smug?) security of his "Maginot" (imagined invulnerability), the enemy out-flanks, by-passes and undermines his whole cause. He has made it easier for unbelief in its innumerable forms to infiltrate the ranks of the church, and experiences a defeat without a battle. Truth is fallen in the street! Faith in the Word of God is lost, the Christian world-and-life view blown away by the confusing winds of philosophical inanities. Many churches are like a citadel which may still stand, but with the sentries gone, the muni-

tions plundered, the warriors dead—a mere shell. The kernel of truth has been surrendered in the interest of conformity to the world. Taking the whole armor of God requires knowing your sword and your enemy!

At the outset we must distinguish between biblical criticism and biblical investigation. Critics of God's Word we are not; but rather investigators of it. Mere men cannot actually criticize the Word, but, instead, are criticized by it, since it is a "discerner (critic) of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). We are commanded to investigate the Word, "Search the Scriptures. . . for they are they which testify of Me." The purpose of such investigation is not to determine whether the Bible is trustworthy, but to apprehend the gift of eternal life (Jn. 5:39). Study of Scripture, then, is not criticism, but biblical research.¹ The Christian researcher confesses, "I believe, therefore I investigate." The critic says, "I investigate in order to determine whether I shall want to believe." Biblical criticism endeavors to determine whether the manuscripts of the Scriptures are historically objective and accurate, whether the various books were actually written by the alleged authors, whether the writings originated from the times they have been thought to have originated, and to completely rationalize (humanize) the supernatural Christian faith.

1. *Its Origins and Development.* The origin of this method of interpreting the Old Testament began with Astruc, a Paris physician to Louis XIV (1753), who assumed that Genesis was written by two different authors. He drew this conclusion from the interchangeable use in Genesis of the two divine names, Elohim and Jehovah. Later, Eichorn (1781), independently of Astruc, also thought there were two distinct manuscripts which composed Genesis, and supposed them to be distinguished not only by these names of God, but by two distinct, separate literary styles and vocabularies. We shall show how untenable this is. But this general idea was further advanced in De Wette, who added the contention that the Book of Deuteronomy was so different in style and vocabulary from the rest of the Pentateuch that it could not possibly have been written in the Pentateuchal period, in fact, no earlier than Josiah's reign, and so is a "pious fraud." Deuteronomy, to this evolutionary critical school, was too literarily advanced to be from the time of Moses.

In 1853, Hupfeld theorized that Genesis was composed in part by a priest-contributor, thus suggesting a third writer in addition to the aforementioned authors. Astruc designated his supposed writers as E and J, for an Elohist writer and a Jehovistic writer, the former presumed to be the earlier,² dating, as was theorized, not from Moses' day, but near to the period of the judges. Hupfeld designated what he felt was the priestly section of the book P, and dated it as coming from the exile.

Graf, in 1856, claimed that the middle sections of the Pentateuch were written in the period of the exile. Wellhausen, agreeing with Kuenen and Riehm, adopted the hypothesis that all the Elohist sections of the Books of Moses came from the post-exilic period. This became the basis of the Graf-Wellhausen theory of German "higher" criticism, i.e., literary criticism.

Vater came up with the idea that the five Books of Moses, particularly Genesis, were constructed from some major documents not only, but also from many smaller, disconnected fragments. Not only did he conceive of such compositions as E, J, P, etc., but also thought of E as not actually one sole contributor, but as representing at least four more of the same Elohist school, so that we have E¹, E², E³, and E⁴ documents. Later scholars, addicted to this same fancy, saw in the J sections not only the work of one single Jehovistic writer, but what they assumed to be evidence of multiple authorship, and so designated J¹, J², J³, J⁴. Other scholars also designated the P sections into different P categories as P, P_g, P_h and P_s. Besides these subdivisions there were also parts of Scripture thought to be of a combined JE structure.

All this hypothesis is ostensibly traceable through complicated fabrications running throughout the Pentateuch. This is the partitionist or fragmentary theory of Scripture. It was subsequently emphasized as the documentary theory. These fragments were pieced together, Chinese puzzle fashion, by a string of unknown editors called redactors, and designated R, which eventually came to represent a myriad of compilers of almost astronomical proportions. In this way, no part of the Bible has been left untouched by the rationalist critics, but has been so shredded that it is no longer in that condition recognizable, understandable or respectable.³

More recently, all these previous theories have given way to a certain extent to another, which divides the books of the Old Testament into two basic parts, the one identified by the singular pronouns (thou, etc.), and the other by the plural pronouns (ye, etc.).

But does the employ of such grammatical construction point to two different documents (or authors, writers) of Scripture? May not the discourse, when in the plural, be directed to the entire organism of the church, and when using singular terminology be directed to the individual? There is no necessity in assuming double (multiple) authorship of the books of the Bible.

We may trace this dismembering of Scripture to the English 17th century naturalistic Deism, to French revolutionary skepticism, to American 18th century

rationalism, 19th century "scientific" liberalism, and to 20th century pragmatic atheism. The destructive criticism, by whatever disguise it may wear, persists to this day, never having been entirely eradicated.

Still closer to our day, some scholars have used the designations J, E, D (Deuteronomy code) and P, but by them not the dusty Wellhausenianism is intended. What is intended is not early, middle and later periods of religious development, but rather various circles of tradition which existed simultaneously, contemporaneously, each having its own particular emphasis. Thus none of these four bodies of tradition, although all ancient, is more ancient than the other. But this trend of the theory is not generally accepted.⁴

2. Its Method and Result. The composition of Scripture was conceived of as a conglomeration of patched and repaired myths, confused traditions, strange fancies, actual mistakes, and continual (year by year, century by century) emendations appended to or inserted in the text. The implication was that the compilers and authors, J, E, P, D and R, and their various subordinates, though separated by time and place, and having nothing in common as to theme, thought, history or life development, yet had a basic commonality in forgery. It was the work of R (the redactor, the editor) to put all these fragments of fragments into some sort of order, making constant additions of his own, even transposing entire sections, in order to give a semblance of unity to the documents, thus attempting to weld together a harmonious whole.

There were said to be as many different authors of any one book as there were language differences and vocabulary distinctions.⁵ The expression "male and female" was said to have been penned by one writer, E, whereas a similar expression, "a male and his female," was regarded as the peculiarity of the other writer, J. Does this theory of a long dynasty of ghost writers have sufficient evidence to entrench it firmly against the possibility of valid challenge? Are there not many instances in the literary field where a given writer is most fertile and proficient in the use of synonyms? Is it not the purpose of synonyms to present principally the same meaning, but with a different shade of thought? It depends upon what the writer had in mind when he wrote, "a male and a female," or "a male and *his* female," or whether simply, "man and woman." Upon what authority, or for what earthly reason, are we bound to believe, as the critics claim, that no one man can be the author of two different styles of writing?

(To be continued, D.V.)

- 1 *The Bible the Word of God*, F. Bettex, p. 215f, Jennings & Graham, N.Y., 1904.
- 2 *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. I, pp. 127f, 134, Abingdon-Cokesbury, N.Y., 1952.
- 3 *The Pulpit Commentary*, Genesis, ii-vii.
- 4 *Revelation and the Bible*, Ed., C. F. H. Henry, p. 340, Baker, 1958.
- 5 *Hastings' Bible Dictionary*, II, aers. "Genesis" and "Hexateuch," Scribner's, N.Y., 1900.

BOOK REVIEWS—

THE MYSTERIOUS NUMBERS OF THE HEBREW KINGS, — Edwin R. Thiele; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 232 pages, \$6.00

Here is a book which not only belongs in the library of any serious student of Old Testament history, but also deserves to be studied carefully.

One of the intriguing problems of the history of the divided kingdom in Israel is that of the chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah, and that, too, in relation to the history and chronology of the other nations with which Israel and Judah came into contact. On the surface of it, there appear to be many discrepancies of an insoluble nature. This book is a careful study of that chronology, and it offers a very carefully worked out solution of the various problems.

Whether the solutions offered are in every case the correct ones would require a study as careful as that which the author has made; and I would not pass judgment on his conclusions after one reading of this book.

He who opens this book must not expect a few evenings' leisurely and relaxing reading; he must put on his thinking-cap and take his Bible in hand, and probably pencil and paper to follow the various calculations.

The book is abundantly furnished with charts and tables.

I heartily recommend it as a worthwhile addition to the libraries of ministers and students.

H.C.H.

PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT, — John Murray; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 272 pages, \$2.25 (paperback)

The author is Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary. The ten chapters of this book were expanded from a series of lectures delivered in 1955.

There are not many books devoted specifically to the study known as Ethics. That is the general subject of this book. It does not claim to be a complete treatment; it is rather a treatment of certain important aspects of Christian conduct.

Without stating my agreement with all that Professor Murray has written here, I can certainly recommend this book. There is thorough treatment of the subjects dealt with; there is a very serious attempt at careful exegesis; in general, this is scholarly work. As an example, I point to the author's treatment of I Corinthians 7, an always difficult passage, in his chapter on "The Marriage Ordinance." I am always disappointed, however, when a work of this caliber is published in paperback form. I realize this is a reprint; but I think that even as a reprint it deserves better than a paperback treatment.

"The Epistle to the Romans," Volume Two (Chapters IX-XVI), by John Murray, one of the series, "The New International Commentary on the New Testament;" Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ.

Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 286 pages, \$5.00.

Those who follow our book review department will recognize that we have reviewed volumes of this series previously; we will continue to do so as these volumes are sent to us. This, in my opinion, is one of the better commentaries of this series. It is rather thorough, makes a serious attempt at honest exegesis, and is fairly sound. The book is a worthwhile addition to the library of anyone who is looking for reasonably trustworthy commentaries. Moreover, the format of these commentaries is such that one need not know the original languages in order to make use of the comments; this surely makes the commentaries more popular.

This particular volume has a "bonus" of some rather interesting appendices on various related and pertinent subjects.

I was particularly curious as to Murray's interpretation of the crucial passages of Romans 9-11. Noteworthy is the fact that he wants to give full value to the term "hated" in Romans 9:13. Behind his explanation of Pharaoh's hardening, pp. 26-30, I would place a question-mark here and there. Nor would I be inclined to agree with his position on a mass conversion of Israel, pp. 96-98, although he is certainly correct in explaining "Israel" ethnically rather than spiritually.

Recommended for careful use.

H. C. Hoeksema

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Prot. Ref. Chr. School of South Holland is in need of a teacher for grades 4, 5, and 6. Send all correspondence to:

Mr. G. A. Van Baren
R. R. 1, Box 240 A
Chicago Heights, Illinois 60411

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Free Christian School of Edgerton will need a teacher for grades 1-4. For more information, contact the undersigned.

Allen Hendriks
Jasper, Minnesota 56144

STANDARD BEARER STAFF MEETING:

The Standard Bearer Staff will meet, D.V., the evening of June 6 at 8 o'clock P.M., in our Doon, Iowa church. Will all the staff members please take notice of this annual meeting?

J.A. Heys, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Southeast Prot. Ref. Church wish to express their sympathy to Mr. Herman Dykstra, in the passing of his Father

MR. BERT DYKSTRA

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain".
Philippians 1:21.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.
S. Vander Wal, V. Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

On March 30, 1966 our beloved Husband, Father and Grandfather,

BERT DYKSTRA

was mercifully delivered from this vale of tears and taken to eternal glory where there is no more pain and suffering.

Phil. 1:21 "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain".

Mrs. Anna Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Herman
Dykstra

Mr. and Mrs. James
Dykstra

Miss Agnes Dykstra
Miss Jessie Dykstra

Miss Jean Dykstra
Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius
Doezema

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard
Dykstra

Mr. Roger Dykstra
and 18 Grandchildren

IN MEMORIAM

On April 18, 1966 our gracious heavenly Father called home our sister

MISS THERESA DOUMA

at the age of 58 years.

Psalm 91:1 & 2: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust."

Mrs. Thomas (Helen) Newhof
George Douma
William Douma
Nieces and Nephews

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

The Providence of God

According to the Confessions

by Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article we quoted at length from the Reformed Dogmatics of the late H. Bavinck, in which a brief resume is set forth of the doctrine of the providence of God. We concluded that article by calling attention to the word providence, noting that the word itself is hardly Scriptural but that it has had a place in the history of the doctrine of the Church for ages. H. Bavinck notes that the word itself is of heathen origin, but that it can be used, provided that we understand the Scriptural significance of that which this truth is supposed to set forth. Before we proceed with the doctrine itself, let us first call attention to the confessions and see what they teach with respect to this truth.

LECTURES ON THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION —
First Series, page 734

It is also affirmed in the Article that God "preserves universal nature." This is over against the varying forms of Deism and Rationalism. The whole texture of the Article under review consists with the doctrine of a constant, active providence of God in the world he has made. As this came into being through an omnipotent act of God, its existence is that of created dependence upon its author. The universe considered as a whole, or in its several parts, is not a structure so perfect as to be able to continue apart from the upholding hand that gave it being. The power calling it into existence lives in and sustains it through

every succeeding moment. Even what are known as inherent laws and forces of nature are no more than living modes of the divine activity, continuing and conditioning all that exists. Deism is justly chargeable with prime inconsistency in allowing a miracle at the commencement of the world, and then affirming the divine indifference or inactivity in its subsequent existence. God could not, as he would not, create and leave alone. This would contradict both his being and work. In maintaining the fact and the necessity of the preservation of nature by God, these Reformers affirmed a truth in keeping with the highest philosophy, no less than with the uniform teachings of Holy Scripture.

This quotation appears in a chapter which treats the subject: "The Cause of Sin." We know that the Augsburg is Lutheran. We may return to this chapter when we call attention to God's Providence and Sin. In the paragraph quoted above, the truth of the providence of God is maintained, declaring that "God could not, as he would not, create and leave alone." It may be of interest to quote later from this chapter what is said of the cause of sin.

SECOND HELVETIC CONFESSION (A.D. 1566)
Pages 839-841.

We believe that all things, both in heaven and in earth, and in all creatures, are sustained and governed by the providence of this wise, eternal, and omnipotent

God. For David witnesses and says, "The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord, who dwelleth on high, and yet humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth?" (Ps. 113:4-6). Again, he says, "Thou hast foreseen all my ways; for there is not a word in my tongue which thou knowest not wholly, O Lord", etc. (Ps. 139:3-4). Paul also witnesses and says, "By him we live, move and have our being" (Acts 17:28); and "of him, and through him, and from him are all things" (Rom. 11:36).

Therefore Augustine both truly and according to the Scriptures said, in his book *De Agone Christi*, cap. 8, "The Lord said, 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without the will of your Father.' By speaking thus he would give us to understand whatsoever men count most vile, that also is governed by the almighty power of God. For the truth, which said that all the hairs of our head are numbered, says also that the birds of the air are fed by him, and the lilies of the field are clothed by him."

We therefore condemn the Epicureans, who deny the providence of God, and all those who blasphemously affirm that God is occupied about the poles of heaven, and that he neither sees nor regards us or our affairs. The princely prophet David also condemned these men when he said, "O Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? They say the Lord doth not see, neither doth the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye unwise among the people; and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? and he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Ps. 94:3, 7-9).

Notwithstanding, we do not condemn the means whereby the providence of God works as though they were unprofitable; but we teach that we must apply ourselves unto them, so far as they are commended unto us in the Word of God. Wherefore we dislike the rash speeches of such as say that if all things are governed by the providence of God, then all our studies and endeavors are unprofitable; it shall be sufficient if we leave or permit all things to be governed by the providence of God; and we shall not need hereafter to behave or act with carefulness in any matter. For though Paul did confess that he did sail by the providence of God, who had said to him, "Thou must testify of me also at Rome" (Acts 23:11); who, moreover, promised and said, "There shall not so much as one soul perish, neither shall a hair fall from their heads" (Acts 27:22, 24); yet, the mariners devising how they might find a way to escape, the same Paul says to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Unless these remain in the ship, ye can not be safe" (Acts 27:31). For God, who has appointed every thing his end, he also has ordained the beginning and the means by which we must attain unto the end. The heathens ascribe things to blind fortune and uncertain chance; but St. James would not have us say, "Today or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and there buy and sell;" but he adds, "For that which ye should say, If the Lord will, and if we live, we will do this or that" (James 4:13, 15). And Augustine says, "All those things which seem to vain men to be done advisedly in the world, they do but accomplish his word because they are not done by his commandment." And, in his exposition of the 148th Psalm, "It seemed to be done by chance that Saul, seeking his father's asses, should light on the prophet Samuel;" but the Lord had before said to the prophet, "To-morrow I will send unto thee

a man of the tribe of Benjamin," etc. (1 Samuel 9:16)

In this article it is beautifully stated that, although the Lord has willed and determined all things, namely that all the souls with Paul in the ship would be saved, this Divine will and decree does not negate the means which we must use, inasmuch as also these means have been included in God's Divine decree and will.

GALLICAN OR FRENCH CONFESSION (A.D. 1559) CHAPTER VIII.

We believe that he not only created all things, but that he governs and directs them, disposing and ordaining by his sovereign will all that happens in the world; not that he is the author of evil, or that the guilt of it can be imputed to him, as his will is the sovereign and infallible rule of all right and justice; but he hath wonderful means of so making use of devils and sinners that he can turn to good the evil which they do, and of which they are guilty. And thus, confessing that the providence of God orders all things, we humbly bow before the secrets which are hidden to us, without questioning what is above our understanding; but rather making use of what is revealed to us in Holy Scripture for our peace and safety, inasmuch as God, who has all things in subjection to him, watches over us with a Father's care, so that not a hair of our heads shall fall without his will. And yet he restrains the devils and all our enemies, so that they cannot harm us without his leave.

In this article of the French Confession of Faith, the all-comprehensive character of the providence of God is maintained. We certainly subscribe to the statement that the Lord is not the author of sin and that the guilt of evil cannot be imputed to Him. Nevertheless, the Lord makes wonderful use of all devils and sinners.

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH (1647) CHAPTER V.

God, the great Creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness and mercy.

II. Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

III. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so as the sinfulness therefore proceedeth only from the creature,

and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

V. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave for a season his own children to manifold temptations and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support unto himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings and wrought upon in their hearts, but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin; and withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.

VII. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures, so, after a most special manner, it

taketh care of his Church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.

We call attention to the fact that these articles of the Westminster Confession of Faith stressed the all-comprehensive character of the providence of God. And we should also note that the providence of the Lord is presented here as centering particularly in the salvation of His Church. This, incidentally, also applies to the other confessions from which we quoted thus far. The providence of God does not merely set forth the Lord's almighty and omnipresent control of all things, but all things are governed by Him for the salvation of His church which He has loved from before the foundations of the world. This is also and most certainly true of the Reformed Confessions, such as our Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession of Faith from which we will quote, the Lord willing, in our following article. In these confessions, too, all emphasis is laid upon the truth that the providence of God affords the people of the Lord a most wonderful comfort, the assurance that all things always work together for good for them, that also all the powers of sin and darkness serve no other purpose, as far as they are concerned, than their ultimate and everlasting salvation.

ALL AROUND US—

Trouble Among the Liberated

Tax Exemption For The Churches

Schism in the Church of South India

Criticism of Billy Graham

Ecumenical Meeting in Rome

The National Council of Churches Again

A Fixed Day For Easter

by Prof. H. Hanko

TROUBLE AMONG THE LIBERATED

It appears as if the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands are still having their troubles. Our readers will recall that these troubles revolve around whether or not the Liberated Churches should seek closer contact with the "Gereformeerde Kerken" from which they broke away in the early 1940s. We quote the following announcement from *Church and Nation*: (The translation is ours.)

Liberated Reformed Churches In the Netherlands
"The Canadian Reformed Magazine" reports the following:

Classis Groningen — Schismatic Group Van der Ziel.
On the ground of a number of facts, the Classis Groningen expresses that the Van der Ziel Group

committed a schismatic action and opposes the legal gathering of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ;

that therefore, ministers who exercise fellowship with this schismatic group by leading them in their services have supported the minister Van der Ziel, those who have joined him, in his sin, and have furthered the schismatic action;

that this practice of fellowship with this schismatic group in fact signifies that they have broken the ecclesiastical fellowship with the Church of Groningen-South and also with their sister churches in the Classis Groningen;

The Classis Groningen decides:

to advise the Consistory of the Church of Groningen-South to do everything which lies in her power to make clear to the sister churches in the land the true character of this schismatic action.

TAX EXEMPTION FOR THE CHURCHES

The courts have upheld tax exemption status for the churches. In 1963 Madalyn Murray brought a case to the courts involving devotions in the public schools. Eventually this atheist succeeded in getting devotions banned in the classrooms. Late in 1964 she brought another case to the courts seeking to outlaw tax exemption for churches and church property. This case was brought to a Maryland circuit court where it was dismissed. From there the case was appealed to the State Court of Appeals. Also this court rules that tax exemption for churches does not violate either the Maryland Constitution or the Constitution of the United States, but that this tax exempt status is recognition of the contributions of the Churches to the public welfare.

It is interesting that the issue has apparently not died, for here and there individual churches have, of themselves, contributed a certain amount of money to public coffers for payment of such public services as fire and police protection. Further, among the churches themselves there remains a question whether tax exemption is justifiable. We shall, no doubt, hear more about this issue.

SCHISM IN THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

The Church of South India has recently suffered a split. This denomination, numbering about a million people (of whom about one-third are full members) was formed originally in 1947 of churches founded by the Anglican Missionary Society and from Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist missionary efforts. The schism involves some 269 churches with about 80,000 members. These churches have severed their ties with the Church of South India in protest over theological liberalism, various ritual observances, membership in the World Council of Churches and caste discrimination. They have decided to seek affiliation with the International Council of Christian Churches of which Rev. Carl McIntire is the president. The formal convocation of these churches as a separate denomination is scheduled for May 5. But in the meantime leaders from the Church of South India and emissaries from Dr. Arthur Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury are hearing grievances and trying to effect a settlement.

These churches stand mainly in the Anglican tradition. They are in that part of India where famine has so viciously struck in recent months.

CRITICISM OF BILLY GRAHAM

Billy Graham received some real criticism recently from an unexpected source. The criticism came from Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina where this year's only American crusade by Billy Graham was held.

Bob Jones University is an evangelical and fundamentalist University which was founded by the well-known evangelist Bob Jones Sr. who is now 80 years old. The school is being directed by Bob Jones Jr. and, in his periodic absences, by Bob Jones III. Billy Graham attended this University in his college days,

but remained only about three months.

The University refused to help sponsor the crusade and, in fact, forbade its students from attending crusade meetings upon penalty of expulsion from the school. Already a year ago Bob Jones Jr. had criticized the Billy Graham type of evangelism charging him especially with associating with Roman Catholics and leaders of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches; hence also cooperating with churches which deny the fundamental truths of Scripture—especially the truth of the infallibility of God's Word, and referring converts to these liberal churches.

The criticism this time was much the same. It centered about the fact that there is nothing distinctive about Billy Graham's evangelism when he associates with any type of churchman including Bishop Pike from the Episcopal Church and Bishop Kennedy from the Methodist Church. Bob Jones Jr. charged Billy Graham, according to *Christianity Today* with "doing more harm to the cause of Jesus Christ than any living man."

While the objections against Billy Graham were indeed to the point and sufficient reason to disassociate one's self from the crusades, the spokesmen of the University did not mention the fact that Billy Graham is also thoroughly Arminian in his presentation of the gospel. This still remains the chief objection of all Reformed people although it is not the chief objection of Bob Jones University.

ECUMENICAL MEETING IN ROME

An historic meeting took place on March 23 of this year in Rome between Pope Paul VI and Bishop Arthur Ramsey, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The meeting was only the second between the leader of the Roman Catholic Church and the leader of the Church of England since the time of the Calvinistic Reformation in England. Both men, in their initial greetings to each other acknowledged many difficulties in, but expressed the firm hope for greater unity. In the joint statement which was issued after the meeting, they spoke of increased efforts that ought to be made to heal the wounds of division which had so long separated them.

They affirm their desire that all those Christians who belong to these two Communion may be animated by these same sentiments of respect, esteem and fraternal love, and in order to help these develop to the full, they intend to inaugurate between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed.

The dialogue should include not only theological matters such as scripture, tradition, and liturgy, but also matters of practical difficulty felt on either side.

His Holiness the Pope and His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury are, indeed, aware that serious obstacles stand in the way of a restoration of complete communion of faith and sacramental life; nevertheless, they are of one mind in their determination to promote responsible contacts between their communions in all those spheres of church life where collaboration is

likely to lead to a greater understanding and a deeper charity, and to strive in common to find solutions for all the great problems that face those who believe in Christ in the world today.

Thus a giant step has been taken in the direction of unity of Protestants and Roman Catholics. The Reformation (and all subsequent history) is conveniently set aside. The Calvinism of the Anglican Church has, for the most part, disappeared long ago. (Think of Bishop Robinson's denial of the trinity and the deity of Christ within the Anglican fold.) And so the possibility of ecclesiastical unity becomes stronger.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AGAIN

At a recent meeting of the General Board of the National Council of Churches decisions were made on the following matters:

1) The desire of the Board to see Red China seated in the United Nations.

2) The desire of the Council to see the government apply greater firmness towards South Africa corresponding to the pressures being applied to Rhodesia in the hopes of changing this government's apartheid policies.

3) The desire of the Council to see increases made in unemployment compensations so that the unemployed receive benefits "adequate in amount to sustain human dignity."

4) "The right of dissent" especially in times of military involvement; which presumably includes the right to burn draft cards.

It is difficult to imagine how any church which wishes to maintain a Calvinistic and Reformed emphasis (such as, e.g., the Reformed Church in America

and the Presbyterian Church US (Southern)) can possibly affiliate with such a group as the National Council. The decisions of this body are so far removed from the calling of the Church and from the truth of the Reformed faith that they stand flatly opposed to this confession.

Usually the excuse is made that these decisions are by the General Board and therefore do not speak for the member denominations. But this excuse will not do; for it cannot shelter member denominations from their responsibilities for these decisions. The fact of the matter is that the Council has got to speak for all its members when it speaks through its General Board.

A FIXED DAY FOR EASTER

There is increased agitation to fix a definite day for Easter. At present (and this has been the case in the Church since a controversy on this point was settled in the third century) the date is the first Sunday after the first full moon following the Spring Equinox (March 20 or 21). The date of Easter varies therefore, from year to year. The Church of England has recently gone on record as favoring the Sunday following the second Saturday in April as the definite date. This action followed upon a request of the World Council of Churches asking its member churches to express their position on the matter. Also the Second Vatican Council stated that it would endorse a fixed date provided other Christians concurred.

This would be a step in the right direction; although one often wonders whether the Church of Christ ought to commemorate Easter in conjunction with the apostate church which literally denies the resurrection of Christ anyway.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

April 15, 1966

Rev. J. A. Heys, South Holland's minister, has received a call from the congregation at Edgerton, Minn.

Rev. D. Engelsma of Loveland, declined the call which came to him from the church at Randolph, Wis.

Hudsonville's consistory has named a Duo from which one will be called at a congregational meeting to be held April 25. The duo: Revs. M. Schipper and H. Veldman.

* * *

Some of the Spring activities in the Grand Rapids area were: Eastern Ladies League, April 14 at Hope Church with Rev. G. Van Baren speaking on, "The Signs of the Times"; Mr. and Mrs. League held at Southeast Church, which featured a panel discussion; League of Mens' Societies meeting at First Church with Rev. Van Baren as speaker; Office Bearer's League at Southwest Church with a speech on a Deacon's work as Elder in a small congregation, also by Rev. Van Baren; and, Hope's Choral Society Easter Program in their church, giving an Easter Cantata, "Life Eternal."

* * *

Rev. M. Schipper, of Southeast Church, and Rev. R.C. Harbach, of Kalamazoo, plan to leave, D.V., for a two-week investigative trip through the East for the Mission Board. They intend to visit Cincinnati and Hamilton, Ohio; Boyertown and Swengle, Pa., and several places in New Jersey. Rev. Harbach has several contacts in New Jersey through his tract ministry and correspondence over a period of time. There are several people in Bound Brook, N.J. who avidly read our *Standard Bearer* and who proudly own back numbers of our magazine, which are read and re-read many times, which have been supplied them by Mr. Tom Elzinga of our Holland Church. This reminds one of the "you in your small corner, and I in mine" sort of witnessing.

* * *

The Radio Comm. has tapes of the lecture series by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema. For particulars, write to The Reformed Witness Hour, Box 1230, Grand Rapids, Mich.

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

April 6, 1966 At Southwest Church

Rev. G. J. Van Baren led in the opening devotions. And after he declared the classis properly constituted, he recorded minutes while Rev. R. C. Harbach presided. All the churches were fully represented.

This very brief session of classis treated mostly routine matters.

The Classical Committee was instructed to prepare a constitution governing its work, and present it to the next classical meeting for approval.

Requests for classical supply for Randolph and Hudsonville were received. The committee: Rev. G. Lanting, T. Miedema and D. Langeland prepared the schedule of appointments, later adopted as follows:

Hudsonville: Apr. 17 -- Van Baren May 8 -- Lanting May 15 -- Harbach May 22 -- Schipper June 5 -- Lubbers June 19 -- Lanting July 3 -- Van Baren.

Randolph: Apr. 17 -- Lubbers Apr. 24 -- Veldman May 15 -- Van Baren May 22 -- Veldman May 29 -- Lanting June 12 -- Veldman? June 19 -- Harbach June 26 -- Schipper July 10 -- Lubbers.

Peter Zandstra and Herman Ophoff served on the finance committee.

Revs. H. Veldman and G. Lubbers were chosen Church Visitors, with Rev. M. Schipper as alternate.

Mr. T. Elzinga was asked to thank the ladies of Southwest Church for their catering.

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

Classis decided to meet next time on July 6th at Hudsonville.

The chairman thanked the classis for its cooperation, and the meeting adjourned with Rev. G. Lanting leading in the closing prayer of thanksgiving.

M. Schipper, S.C.

REPORT OF CLASSIS WEST

(Continued session of March 15, 1966 and the regular, spring session of March 16 and 17, 1966)

The continued session of the September, 1965 meeting of Classis West was held on March 15, 1966 at South Holland, Illinois. Of the twelve churches residing in Classis West, eight churches were represented by two delegates, three churches were represented by one delegate and one church was not represented.

Rev. C. Hanko, having conducted the opening devotions, continued to serve as chairman of this session of Classis. Rev. D. Engelsma functioned as clerk.

A letter from the Stated Clerk revealed that all the appeals which had necessitated this continued session had been withdrawn temporarily so that the committee appointed by Classis might continue to work with the parties involved.

Classis then approved the action of the Classical Committee of rescheduling the continued Classis (originally scheduled for January 2, 1966) for March 15, 1966. Also, Classis decided to follow the advice of the Classical Committee to hold the regular, March, 1966 Classis in South Holland, Illinois, instead of Edgerton, Minnesota.

A letter from the committee appointed to study the eight appeals brought to the September, 1965 Classis and to work with the parties involved was read. In this letter, the committee informed Classis that they had worked as committee from January 11 through January 19, that reconciliation had been attained on one important point in the case, and that the committee

requested to be continued. Classis granted this request.

After adjournment, elder W. Griess closed with prayer.

* * *

At 9:00 A.M., March 16, 1966, Classis West convened at our church in South Holland, Illinois. All the churches were represented by two delegates, except for three churches which had only one delegate present.

Rev. J. A. Heys served as chairman of the Classis. Rev. C. Hanko functioned as clerk. Rev. Heys gave a special word of welcome to Rev. R. Decker, who was at Classis as a delegate for the first time.

The congregations of Randolph, Forbes, Isabel, Edgerton and Pella requested classical appointments. Classis decided to ask Classis East to supply Randolph and drew up the following schedule for the other four churches: EDGERTON: April 17, 24 -- J. Kortering; May 8, 15 -- D. Engelsma; June 5, 12 -- C. Hanko; July 3 -- R. Decker; July 24, 31 -- J. Kortering; Aug. 21, 28 -- G. Vanden Berg; Sept. 18, 25 -- B. Woudenberg. PELLA: April -- G. Vanden Berg; May -- G. Vanden Berg; June -- J. Kortering; July -- J. Heys; Aug. -- R. Decker; Sept. -- D. Engelsma. ISABEL-FORBES: April 17, 24, May 1 -- R. Decker; May 8, 15, 22 -- J. Heys; Sept. 18, 25 -- C. Hanko. Isabel and Forbes received few appointments since they expect Student D. Kuiper to "speak a word of edification" for them, this summer.

Classis granted the subsidy requests of Doon, Edgerton, Forbes, Isabel, Loveland, Lynden, Oak Lawn and Randolph and sent the requests to Synod for final approval.

The delegates discussed at some length an overture from the Oak Lawn consistory dealing with "Memorials to Man in our Churches." Oak Lawn urges the rejection of "the idea and practise of establishing memorials in the name of man, within the sphere of our churches." Classis sent the overture to Synod but voted down a motion to approve the overture.

Lynden's request for permission to ask collections in our churches was granted and sent on to Synod.

Classis closed its activities on Wednesday with the electing of various functionaries. Results of the voting were the following: 1) Stated Clerk -- Rev. D. Engelsma. 2) Assistant Stated Clerk -- Rev. J. Kortering. 3) Third member of the Classical Committee -- elder E. Van Egdom. 4) Church Visitors -- Rev. J. Heys and Rev. C. Hanko. 5) Delegates ad examina -- Rev. C. Hanko, primus for three years; Rev. R. Decker, secundus for three years; Rev. J. Kortering, secundus for two years (to fill out the term of Rev. G. Van Baren). 6) Delegates to Synod -- Ministers Primi: D. Engelsma, C. Hanko, J. Kortering and G. Vanden Berg. Ministers Secundi: R. Decker, J. Heys and B. Woudenberg. Elders Primi: T. Feenstra, W. Griess, T. Kooima and E. Van Egdom. Elders Secundi: J. Blankespoor, G. Hoekstra, H. Miersma and C. Vander Molen.

At 8:00 Thursday morning, Classis resumed its work. Classis heard an oral report from the committee appointed to work with the parties of the eight appeals directed to the September, 1965 Classis and continued this committee, mandating them to report at the September, 1966 Classis.

Classis adjourned before noon on Thursday, March 17, and Rev. D. Engelsma closed with prayer.

The September, 1966 session of Classis West is to be held in Edgerton, Minnesota.

D. J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk