

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Meditation: The Majority Report

Editorial: Dr. Jerome De Jong's Defense of Billy Graham

Christadelphianism

All Around Us:

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The doctrine of redemption is one of the most important doctrines of the system of faith. A mistake on this point will inevitably lead to a mistake through the entire system of our belief.

— C. H. Spurgeon

MEDITATION—

The Majority Report

by Rev. M. Schipper

"And they went and came to Moses and, Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel...and brought back word unto them...And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great; and moreover we saw the children of Anak there...And they brought up an evil report of the land...saying, The land...is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof;...And there we saw night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron...and said unto them: Would to God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or...in this wilderness!...Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel."

Numbers 13:26 - 14:5

The majority report!

A report of the spies sent out into the land of Canaan, while the children of Israel waited at the door of Canaan in the wilderness of Paran, at Kadesh!

But what does faith want with spies anyway?

Had not the Lord already spied out the land for them? Had He not long before promised to give them this good land, when the cup of iniquity of the people of the land had become full?

Why then did the people request that a search be made? (Deut. 1:22). And why did the Lord allow Moses to send out the spies at all? (Num. 13:1,2).

The answer: the Lord acceded to their evil desire, to fulfill thereby His own purposes with Israel. He was fully aware of their unbelief. And He had in mind presently to reveal His glory in them even as He did in His wrath! Much like He did later when He also gave them a king in His wrath!

Instructed were the spies to conduct their expedition in the land, and to bring their report! So unobserved they went from the south to the extreme north, from Beersheba to Dan, and they returned! They passed the places where their ancestors once lived and were buried. But they were in no mood to remember such old stories while they knew the Anakims were about! And three things were they especially instructed to observe: the people who dwelt there, whether they were strong or weak, few or many; the cities, whether they were walled, or open; the land, whether it was good or bad, fat or lean! Also samples of the fruit they were ordered to bring!

And after forty days, they return, and bring their report!

A divided report!

Here we have the report of the majority! Consisting of two main parts: the first, dealing with the fertility of the land; the second, dealing with the inhabitants of the land and the cities in which they dwelt!

* * * * *

A factual report!

They say: "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it." It was like the Lord had said it would be! It was a rich and fertile land which produced in abundance. The huge bunch of grapes on a pole between two men, and the pomegranates and figs in the hands of others, demonstrated clearly that the land could produce the best in abundance!

And they report further that they had observed the inhabitants of the land and the cities in which they dwelt! Yes, the cities were walled and great in size. They were not little oases here and there, as one might see in the desert; no, the cities were substantially built, and the people of the land were safely protected behind fortified walls. The inhabitants of the land were mixed nationalities. In the southern part dwelt the Amalekites. In the mountains, the backbone of the land of Canaan, were the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites. While along the Jordan valley as well as along the seacoast, dwelt the Canaanites. And to top it all, near Hebron they reported to have seen the children of Anak, men of great stature!

For forty days they had traversed the entire land, taking notes and mental pictures of everything they saw. Their notebooks were full with all the information that was needed at headquarters. They had acquired all the data they were ordered to get. And now that their mission was accomplished, they hand in the facts as they saw them!

Here was a case of good reporting, as far as reporting goes! They had not failed in their mission. The facts in the report are no doubt accurate, for none of the twelve sent out denied them or attempted to alter the report!

Indeed, it was a factual report!

* * *

Nevertheless, an evil report!

This became evident, first of all, in the manner in which they stated the facts. It makes a great deal of difference, you know, how you tell the truth. A very

accurate report may be very one-sided! This was the case here. The spies were not the last, who, being sent out to bring home facts, managed to convey very decided opinions without expressly stating any. A grudging and short admission to begin with, the force of which is immediately lost by the sombre and minute painting of difficulty and danger is more powerful as a deterrent than any dissuasion! Sometimes not even a direct word of warning is necessary to convey your intention. Just a smile or a grimace will do the trick! That is what happened here! O, they told the facts, all right! There was no question about that! Even Joshua and Caleb would not deny them. But when you read their account, you notice especially how they said it.

Notice especially two words in the report, which changed a truthful and factual report into an evil thing: the words: "NEVERTHELESS" and "MOREOVER." (Verse 28). You must read verse 28 with the preceding verse to get the effect. "Surely the land floweth with milk and honey, and this is the fruit of it. NEVERTHELESS the people be strong that dwell in the land." It is like saying: "We tell you the facts, all right, but you must draw your own conclusions. It is not all cake and pie there in the land of Canaan. There are very serious obstacles to be encountered. The cities are not just open so that you can run through them. They are fortified, all of them." "MOREOVER the worst has not been told you! If what we have said thus far frightens you, then hear what we have yet to say! There saw we the children of Anak!" These words, and the way they were spoken, were designed to send shivers down the spine of all who heard them. They were a deliberate attempt to cast hopelessness and fear into the hearts and minds of the children of Israel! The evil of this report becomes still more evident when you consider that their report was amended! For when the people heard the report, we read that they trembled with fear. And when Caleb tried to still the people, by exhorting them to go up at once to possess the land, because they were able; then the majority of the spies gave this amendment to their report: "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." And we are told that they brought up an evil report, saying, "The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight."

It means that when the majority of the spies had searched the land they had looked at the things they saw only with their natural and physical eyes. They had not searched the land in faith! When they say that it was a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof, they flatly contradict their first observation, that it was a land that floweth with milk and honey. When they declare that "all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature," they give evidence of a carnal fear that is prevalent in the ungodly when they are faced with powers which they in their own strength cannot overcome. When they call attention to the giants, the

sons of Anak, they reveal clearly that they had lost sight of God Who created the giants, and Who had so wonderfully delivered them so far from all their enemies!

* * *

An evil report!
With an evil effect!

Open rebellion not only against Moses and Aaron, their leaders, but much worse, against the Lord, Whom they accuse of leading them to the sword of the inhabitants of Canaan!

How strange that the majority of the people can so soon forget God, the God of their salvation! And yet not so strange when you consider this rebellion in the light of all the history of Israel! Did not the majority always rebel, all the way from Egypt?

And consider that not all these rebels were reprobate children! This will become plain when we consider next The Minority Report in the Meditation to follow. No, there were children of God that were carried along in this rebellion! And that makes the situation much more serious! It proves, doesn't it, that the weak in faith, the carnally minded, also of God's people, not only can, but often do, fall away for a time! The majority makes an impression on them! They dare not stand on their own two feet! Not that they ever stand alone, for their God is always with His people! But they have not the spiritual stamina to oppose with weapons of faith the carnal multitude! They are easily carried away with the doctrines of materialism and carnality! And generally this is under the influence and persuasion of ungodly and evil men, who, when they become the majority in the church, do much to create schism and promote dissatisfaction with the ways of God!

They hear the Word of God which always declares to all whom God in His good pleasure sends it, that Canaan, or if you please, heaven, is a land that must be taken by conquest! Moreover, the Lord promises His people that the victory over all their foes will not be by human power and material weapons, but the Lord Himself will give the victory!

But these poor people who follow the majority see only the giants and the sword! And quite naturally when the majority, under evil leadership that is persuasive enough sees only giants and not the God Who made them, they turn to rebellion against the Lord and against the faithful few who would encourage them, as Caleb did, by saying: "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." Or, to put it in the words of another Scripture: "He that is with us is more than they that are with them." If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, how shall He not also with Him give us all things?" This is the language of faith! But unbelief cannot speak this language, and the carnally minded will not speak it!

One man with God is a majority, no matter how many there be who would deny this!

Though it may give temporal satisfaction to the flesh to be in the camp of the majority, it is not always safe!

How morbid is the conclusion of those who followed the majority report! "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt, or would God we had died in this wilderness!"

The speech of hopeless despair!

How wicked is the rebellion expressed in the questions they asked! "And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?"

In the eyes of such rebels there is no leader strong and brave enough to lead them to the promised land!

Unless by the grace of God they repent, they shall go into a bondage that is more humiliating and destructive than the lash cords of Egypt!

How foolish is the foolishness of such rebellion that would desire to return to bondage and death!

How wise is the true wisdom that envisions the possession of the land of the promise through a conquest in which the God of our salvation overcomes all our foes, and nestles His people safely in the covert of eternal rest!

EDITORIAL—

Dr. Jerome De Jong's Defense of Billy Graham

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In the *Missionary Monthly* (January, 1966) there appears an article under Dr. Jerome De Jong's department, *Men and Missions*, in which he expresses violent disagreement with my editorial in the November 1, 1965 *Standard Bearer* concerning Dr. Billy

Graham's essay on "The New Birth." Because Dr. De Jong's article is an example of the very thing against which I warned in my editorial, and because, moreover, he very deliberately passes over the meat of my editorial and refers to all kinds of matters which

were not so much as mentioned in it, and because he makes some serious and false charges and suggestions in his article, I will take the time and space to quote his article and reply to it. One gets the impression that somehow or other the doctor was rather irked or pricked by my editorial. What the reason was I do not know, unless I happened to touch a very sore spot. I suggest hereafter that, even though the doctor finds it necessary to disagree with me, he might be at least as kindly toward me as he apparently wants to be toward Billy Graham. After all, I am Reformed as well as "Fundamentalist," while Dr. Graham can only be classified as "Arminian" and "Fundamentalist." It always strikes me as strange that self-professed Calvinists and Reformed men can be very tolerant toward men like Billy Graham, but so very intolerant toward those who want to be strictly Reformed. And it is a bad sign! I, for one, could not imagine that our Reformed fathers of Dordt, — even the very mildest of them, let alone a Bogerman or a Gomarus, — or that John Calvin himself could live today and write an article such as Dr. De Jong has written. If such had been the spirit of Dordrecht, there would have been no Arminian controversy and no Canons; and if such had been the spirit of Geneva, there would have been no Calvinism and no Reformation.

* * *

Dr. De Jong introduces his article as follows:

Ordinarily I try not to refer too often to articles written by others in this column by reflecting on what they say. However I ran across an article the other day in the *Standard Bearer* that I must say something about. In the November 1 issue of this magazine, the Reverend H. C. Hoeksema, the editor, writes an article entitled: "An Attack upon the Very Foundation." He refers to an essay in the magazine, *Christianity Today*, entitled, "The New Birth" by Billy Graham. He asks the question, "Does Billy Graham proclaim the truth of the Gospel, according to the Scriptures and according to our Reformed confessions? If he does, he is worthy of support. If he does not, then Reformed people ought not only to withdraw their support, but they should oppose him and his 'preaching' militantly." (p.54).

I think all my readers will agree that these are rather intriguing questions. I read the article with a great deal of interest. I find that the professor has come to the following conclusion: "Graham's gospel is not the Gospel of the Scriptures . . . on the contrary his message is that of an Arminian 'do-it-yourself' religion . . . When you support Billy Graham, you are supporting one who by our Reformed confessions and by Scripture stands condemned as a false teacher! . . . When you support Billy Graham you violate the Formula of Subscription, the vow of your office . . . For Reformed Churches to lend their support to the teaching and preaching of Billy Graham is nothing short of ecclesiastical suicide." (p. 56).

COMMENT

This is all that is quoted from my editorial: a partial quotation of my introductory remarks and a partial quotation of my conclusion. What my critic totally neglects to tell his readers in *Missionary Monthly* is: (1) That I concerned myself solely with

Graham's doctrine of the new birth. (2) That I proved conclusively by quoting Graham's own writings and by careful reference to Scripture and the confessions that his doctrine of the new birth is a denial of the Biblical truth of regeneration and of the absolute necessity of regeneration.

(3) That my conclusion was based on the above argumentation, and that it is the only conclusion that any honest theologian and exegete could ever reach.

(4) That he substitutes his ". . . ." for some very important references to the Formula of Subscription, references which make it plain beyond a shadow of a doubt that any officebearer who supports Graham is acting contrary to the Formula of Subscription.

I would like to suggest that when Dr. De Jong criticizes, he should first fairly present the position which he criticizes, and then stick to the point. Incidentally, I did not write about the "Reformed Churches" (capital "C", as though I meant the RCA) but about "Reformed churches" (referring to any churches belonging to the Reformed community).

* * *

Dr. De Jong next attempts sarcastically to put me to bed where he knows very well that I do not fit. I quote:

My readers must be aware that we are not now speaking of Henry Emerson Fosdick or Eugene Carson Blake or Karl Barth or Rudolf Bultman, we are speaking of that heretical, fundamental, Bible-believing-evangelist Billy Graham! It is strange, in a way, what strange bed-fellows theology makes because there are a great number of fundamentalist, dispensational preachers, such as Bob Jones, who quite agree with the professor.

COMMENT

1. Why the sarcasm, brother? I am sure that all my readers were aware and that all your readers were aware that Billy Graham, not Fosdick, Blake, Barth, or Bultman, was under discussion.

2. Another question. You write, — either contradictorily or sarcastically, — of "that heretical, fundamental, Bible-believing evangelist Billy Graham." Would you rather substitute the term "non-heretical" or "orthodox" for "heretical"? Or, would you rather substitute "Bible-contradicting" for "Bible-believing"?

3. You know, of course, very well that I do not belong in the same theological bed as "a great number of fundamentalist, dispensationalist preachers, such as Bob Jones. . . ." You also must know that these fundamentalist, dispensationalist preachers do not criticize Graham for the same reasons I do. And if you nevertheless try to put me to bed with them, I will be a naughty boy and refuse to go. Bob Jones' bed is shorter than that a Reformed man can stretch himself in it.

4. Let me remind you that throughout your article you are putting yourself to bed with Fundamentalists, rather than with Reformed bed-fellows.

* * * * *

Dr. De Jong continues as follows:

Now I would have to agree that Billy Graham probably does not subscribe to the Canons of Dort, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession. In fact I have a suspicion that he may never have heard of them before. I suppose I stand on shaky ground indeed when I suggest that there are hundreds and hundreds of fellow believers all over the world who do not know of these standards and are genuine believers anyway! I always had the idea that the standards were man-written and therefore not infallibly inspired and therefore *not* our only rule of faith and practice. I would agree that Graham could probably not hold a pastorate in our Reformed Churches. However I would like to test him on the fundamentals namely the inspiration of the Bible, the Deity of Jesus, the vicarious atonement, the bodily resurrection and the visible return. On all these counts the brother seems to stand strong!

COMMENT

1. Apart from the fact that the opening remarks (about the confessions) are not to the point in the context of my article, no Reformed man should speak so deprecatingly of our Confessions. They are the embodiment in systematic form of our Reformed heritage.

2. Everyone knows that confessions are not infallibly inspired, and are themselves subject to Scripture, our only rule of faith and practice. This is not the point. I believe (does Dr. De Jong?) that the church (this is somewhat different than merely saying "men") wrote and adopted the confessions under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth. I also believe that our confessions are the systematic and pure expression of the truth of Holy Scripture, and I shall continue to believe this unless and until it is shown that they are not. In other words, I believe that our Reformed standards set forth the truth of the Word of God. For this reason, I have vowed diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine. For the same reason I have vowed not to contradict the same either directly or indirectly by public preaching or writing. And for the same reason I have declared that I not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, and particularly those which were condemned by the Synod of Dordrecht, but that I am disposed to refute and contradict these, and to exert myself in keeping the church free from such errors. All this is from the Formula of Subscription. Now I do not know whether the Reformed Church in America (to which Dr. De Jong belongs) still maintains the old Formula of Subscription. If it does, then Dr. De Jong evidently does not honor it. If it does not, then I can understand how Dr. De Jong can be satisfied with the test of Fundamentalism, which is nothing but a sort of "lowest common denominator."

4. I would not agree "that Graham could probably not hold a pastorate in(our)Reformed Churches" if Dr. De Jong here means the RCA. The RCA shelters men more heterodox than Graham; and I dare say it shelters men as Arminian as Graham.

5. Do not the so-called Five Points of Calvinism belong to *the* fundamentals of the faith? Where does Scripture make distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental truths? Besides, I dare say that even

if the test of Fundamentalism is really applied, Billy Graham would fail. Do not misunderstand. I can believe, for example, that Billy Graham would subscribe to the truth of infallible inspiration as such. But what is the truth of infallible inspiration if one does not submit to the absolute authority of Scripture with respect to his doctrines? What good is inspiration as a doctrine if one denies the plain teaching of the infallible Scriptures? I can believe that Billy Graham would subscribe to the vicarious atonement as such; but I also maintain that he essentially denies it by his doctrine of universal atonement. I can believe that Graham holds to the deity of Jesus as such. But what kind of deity is it that is made impotent to save any man unless the sinner first wills it? And so I could go on.

* * * * *

The doctor then sarcastically inserts this little paragraph:

Ah yes, I forgot, he is an Arminian! He holds an improper view of election which of course condemns him all together. Does it indeed?

COMMENT

1. You did not forget. But no Reformed man should so minimize Arminianism. For apart from the fact that Arminianism is itself a very evil doctrine, history has shown that Arminianism ends in modernism.

2. No Reformed man should in such sarcastic fashion minimize (not: "an improper view") but the denial of the Scriptural truth of election. To our fathers it was the *cor ecclesiae*, the heart of the church.

3. You should have informed your readers that not I, but you, introduced the subject of election into the discussion. You might, by the way, examine yourself as to the question why you brought up this matter of election.

4. Yes, Graham stands condemned (not by me, but by Scripture and the confessions) as heretical, also on the heart-doctrine of election.

* * * * *

Dr. De Jong next seems to express some agreement:

I would agree with the professor that man is dead in trespasses and in sins. See Ephesians 2:1. I would also agree that faith is solely the gift of God. See Ephesians 2:8. Now, says Graham, Man is to show a willingness to yield to God. He calls man to yield, yet, man cannot, because he is dead in sins. Hence the impasse.

COMMENT

1. In the light of the doctor's defense of Graham, as well as in the light of the rest of his article, I have serious doubts whether Dr. De Jong agrees with me that man is dead in trespasses and sins.

2. We were not discussing "faith" at all, but the *new birth*.

3. No impasse whatsoever. Graham's doctrine, as I showed from his own writings, is that the dead sinner

must yield to God *before he can be regenerated and in order to be reborn*. This is both impossible and untrue. For this reason Graham must also deny the Scriptural doctrine that man is actually dead in trespasses and sins. The latter Graham does too, as I showed in my editorial. Scripture and the Reformed confessions teach that regeneration is the altogether unconditional, unaided work of God through the Holy Spirit, wrought in the heart of the in-himself-dead sinner, which precedes every other work of grace in the sinner and which precedes all conscious response, believing, yielding, repenting. If the gospel requires a dead sinner to yield to God before he can be regenerated, then the gospel is hopeless!

4. I ask Dr. De Jong: do you agree with Graham that the dead sinner can nevertheless have the willingness to yield to God and can decide to be reborn?

* * * *

Next comes the old saw of human responsibility:

The problem here is with the old, old unresolved problem of human responsibility and divine sovereignty. The Canons of Dort (II,3) state, "The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin and is of infinite worth and value, abundantly *sufficient* to expiate the sins of the *whole world*," and (II,5) "The promise of the Gospel is that *whosoever* believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction . . ."

COMMENT

1. This has nothing whatsoever to do with regeneration and the absolute necessity of regeneration for the totally depraved and dead sinner. The gospel never makes a man responsible to accomplish his own regeneration or even the first step toward that regeneration (yielding, decision).

2. If Dr. De Jong is suggesting that Christ died for all men and that the Canons teach this, he is utterly mistaken.

3. I fully subscribe to Canons II, 5, which teaches: a) A particular promise: *whosoever* believeth shall be saved. b) The general or promiscuous proclamation of this particular promise (not to be equated with a general, well-meant offer of salvation). c) The preaching of the command to repent and believe (not to be equated with a mere invitation to accept Christ or to yield to God). I also believe that those who reject this preaching are responsible for this sin, as well as for all other sin, and that the blame for this unbelief is to be ascribed wholly to themselves. (Canons II, 6). I also believe that this in no sense conflicts with the doctrine of sovereign election and reprobation. I also believe that all this in no sense contradicts my criticism of Graham's doctrine.

4. Where is the problem?

* * * * *

My critic next presents an old, worn-out caricature of Protestant Reformed preaching, essentially the same one that James Daane likes to present:

Now what is Graham doing? He is following the Canons of Dort in calling men to repent and to believe! What must Professor Hoeksema do? He must say, Hope, brother, pray! Maybe you are one of God's elect and maybe not—but if you are dead in sin you can't do anything about it anyway."

COMMENT

1. I deny that Graham calls men to repent and believe in the sense that the Canons of Dordrecht speak of faith and repentance. Graham proclaims a radically different, Arminian, faith and repentance. Or, in your opinion, Dr. De Jong, does that make no difference?

2. In the light of my article, Graham must preach that a *dead man* must make the first move in the work of regeneration. This is sheer nonsense! Worse still, it is a hopeless gospel! Worst of all, it is the lie!

3. Professor Hoeksema presents no such caricature of the gospel as Dr. De Jong suggests. On the contrary, he proclaims what Canons II, 5 requires. He proclaims this on the basis, too, that God in His good pleasure causes the gospel to be preached where His elect are. He proclaims it, too, on the basis that God prepares the good soil to receive the seed of the Word. Moreover, he proclaims it in the confidence that God will use that preaching, through irresistible grace, to quicken conscious faith and repentance in the elect, regenerated sinner who hears it. And, finally, he proclaims it in the trust that God will take care of the fruits upon that preaching.

* * * * *

The next section of Dr. De Jong's article is as follows:

I do not mean to be crass or sarcastic but I would like to suggest two tests for truth. I John 4:1-2. "... try the spirits whether they are of God . . . every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." Although I might disagree with many of Graham's methods I would say that on this test he rates A-1. The second test is Matthew 7:20, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Now someone will say that everyone who comes forward at a Billy Graham meeting is not necessarily saved -- This is probably true but if we take just 10% we still have thousands! I would say that where the Word is being preached, there souls are being saved. I have not personally noted any great revival in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

I think I would also have to say that, unfortunate as it may be, many of the great soul winners of history had a leaning toward Arminianism such as Moody, Sankey, Finney, Torrey, Sunday etc. Are all these men to be condemned too?

COMMENT

1. I fully agree with the test of I John 4:1-2, which, by the way, is given "because many false prophets are gone out into the world." I disagree with De Jong's A-1 rating of Billy Graham on this test. I maintain that Graham's doctrine is not consistent with the truth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Or is Dr. De Jong intending to say that anyone who does not literally deny the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ passes this test? Principally, this is the

same test that I applied; the test of Scripture and our confessions.

2. I also agree with the second test, that of Matthew 7:20, which, by the way, also occurs in a context which speaks of false prophets. But I disagree with De Jong's application of this test. Graham's fruits are the words, the doctrines, the preaching that proceed out of his mouth, not the souls which he may or may not "win."

3. Let us apply De Jong's test of "numbers" to our Lord Jesus at Nazareth, Luke 4, or at Capernaum, John 6, or to Isaiah (Chapter 53, vs. 1). According to De Jong, Jesus and Isaiah were certainly failures, then, while Graham passes the test.

4. "Unfortunate" it is, indeed, that there are Arminian "soul winners". But if souls were saved through Moody, Sankey, etc., it was not through, but in spite of, their Arminianism. God saves His people through the truth of the gospel, not through the lie of Arminianism. Of that you may be certain.

5. As far as I know the Protestant Reformed Churches are not in need of any great revival. I think, however, that the Reformed Church in America could stand some *reformation*.

* * * * *

This next paragraph contains at least the suggestion of a very serious accusation, no matter how kindly it is given:

I would like to issue a warning as kindly as I can to our Protestant Reformed brethren. The unpardonable sin, in part, is to ascribe to the devil that which is from God. I would never want to run the risk of ascribing to the devil that which is from God!

COMMENT

1. A question: Doctor, are you indeed suggesting that I in my article, together with my Protestant Reformed brethren, either commit or run the risk of committing the unpardonable sin? If so, why? On what ground? Is it because I oppose and warn against Billy Graham's false doctrine? If you are not suggesting this, why then do you bring this matter up in your article? Certainly there must be a reason for your warning us against this sin, a sin which, because it is unpardonable, certainly puts those who commit it in the class of the reprobate, who perish forever. I would caution you, doctor, to mind what you say.

2. A bit of advice: consider the fact that it is very wrong to attribute false doctrine, the lie, to God and His holy Word. Either our Reformed faith is the truth of God or the lie of the devil. Either Graham's Arminianism is the truth of God or the lie of the devil. And our fathers (cf. Canons of Dordrecht, II, B, 3, 6) accused the Arminians of "bringing again out of hell the Pelagian error" and characterized the Arminian and Pelagian errors as a "destructive poison."

3. Again I ask: why are you so sharp toward me, a Reformed man, and so soft on Billy Graham, who wants nothing of the Reformed truth?

* * * * *

Dr. De Jong concludes with a declaration and a question:

Yes, I am a Calvinist. I believe the Reformed standards. But by the same token I am also a Fundamentalist in the best sense of the word. I believe with all my heart that the Bible is true when it says, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, . . . (Ezekiel 33:11) and, "He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9). Billy Graham believes this: — I wonder if Professor Hoeksema does?

Jerome DeJong

COMMENT

1. In the light of your article, I have earnest doubts about your Calvinism, as well as about your adhering to the Reformed standards.

2. That you want to be a Fundamentalist I can believe. But that it is "by the same token" as your being a Calvinist and believing the Reformed standards is impossible. That a Calvinist can be a fundamentalist (small "f") is possible; in fact, there is none more fundamentalist than a real Calvinist. But in "Fundamentalism" (capital "F") I have never discovered room for Calvinism, but plenty of room for Arminianism.

3. If you merely want to state that you believe the Bible, then let me assure you: I also believe every word of that Bible. And that includes Ezekiel 33:11 and II Peter 3:9. I have preached on both texts.

4. But judging from the context in which you mention these passages, as well as from your wondering whether I believe them, I am inclined to think that you, like Graham and like Prof. Dekker and like the Three Points of 1924, would give an Arminian twist to these words. And that is indeed a twist!

In conclusion, Dr. De Jong, I wish to offer you a brotherly warning. If I am not mistaken, you are one of those in the Reformed Church in America who are opposed to the proposed merger with the Presbyterians. I also can see no real good in that merger, and much possible harm. But I also can see no real good in refusing to go along with that merger UNLESS you want to be one hundred per cent Reformed, and militantly so, that is, with rejection of all errors repugnant to the Reformed faith. Arminianism is both historically and doctrinally repugnant to the Reformed faith. You either oppose it as the lie, or you recognize it and embrace it as the truth. There is no middle ground. And therefore I repeat: for Reformed churches, of whatever denomination, to lend their support to the Arminian teaching and preaching of Billy Graham is nothing short of ecclesiastical suicide! And this form of suicide is no better than the suicide of merger!

When you hear anyone laughing or jeering at a limited atonement, you may tell him this: General atonement is like a great wide bridge with only half an arch; it does not go across the stream, it only professes to go half-way; it does not secure the salvation of anybody.

— C. H. Spurgeon

IN HIS FEAR—

A Case of Heart Failure

-3-

by Rev. J.A. Heys

Election is the heart of the Church.

In the measure that we do damage to that "heart", we destroy the idea of the Church.

You cannot destroy the Church, for she is God's "workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Ephesians 2:10. The Almighty God will keep His Church so wonderfully that no man can pluck one of her members out of His hand. John 10:28. "And this is the will of the Father which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." John 6:39. There is nothing more sure than the complete salvation of the entire Church of God. We can hold fast the profession of our hope without wavering, for He is faithful that promised. Hebrews 10:23.

But you can destroy your own congregation and denomination!

The Church of God is bigger than any congregation or denomination. The Son of God gathers from the beginning to the end of the world by His Spirit, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life. This Church He defends and preserves so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against her. You can, then, destroy a congregation, and you can destroy a denomination without destroying that Church. That which is called church but actually is part of the world, can be lost from that position of being called church without the Church suffering to any degree whatsoever. Many unbelievers in Israel in the Old Testament dispensation died in their unbelief. But the will of God, spoken of above as quoted from John 6:39, was not frustrated. The Church of God did not lose a soul when Cain was cursed into banishment before God's face, when the earth opened up and swallowed Korah, Dathan and Abiram and when Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead at Peter's feet and their souls were at once cast into hell. They simply were not given to Christ in sovereign election from before the foundation of the world. The Son of God simply did not come to seek and to save these lost ones. Surely the text that the Son of God came to seek and to save that which was lost cannot and does not apply to every lost man or woman. Then Jesus was a tragic misfit and suffered a staggering failure in His work. By far the largest part of the human race still goes lost. Did He not seek them? Was He not faithful to the Father's will that sent Him? Was man able to resist Him Who is almighty? Is John given to hallucinations and fancy dreams when he declares that Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings? He, who resists the Christ successfully, remains hidden when Christ comes to seek

Him, perishes when Christ tried to save him, is Lord and ruler over Christ. Perish the very thought! But surely he, who in the end is able to cause another to fail to reach the goal which this one had set, is the conqueror and victorious one. Nay, but read again John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Here is exclusive giving. All are not given; and therefore all are not sought, found and saved. Those whose names were eternally written in the Lamb's book of life shall to the last one be sought, found and saved. And the rest who are simply enrolled on the books which men keep were not given to Christ and do not come to Him. We do not say that they did not give themselves to Christ. They do not, and they can not. And the reason is that God did not give them eternally to Christ.

We must avoid at all cost denying God His eternal virtues. Under the power of Satan's lie we still want to be like Him; and we strive to become such by dragging Him down to our level. We can never reach up to Him. Death is such a humiliating thing! It always shows us that we are not like Him and cannot decide for ourselves what is good and what is evil. We shall never overcome death, and no unbeliever today dares even to boast of that ability. Men strive to extend the span of life, but none are so foolish and proud as to claim that man shall ever attain to everlasting life here on this earth. All flesh is as grass and shall pass away. But it gives that creature of a moment satisfaction to drag God down to his level in his thoughts and to ground his philosophies on such nonsense. However, our ideas and attempts to change God are futile. God remains what He eternally is. And His name without any interruption remains Jehovah. He is and remains the I Am. There is no change in Him. And we do not change Him. He does not change His mind about who is and who is not a member of His Church. There are no new names written down in glory, as the Negro spiritual has it. They are all old names, written from before the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8. Man does not determine *in time* whether or not his name shall be written. God is not changeable, nor does He allow men to change His mind and will. Before the children were born or could do good or evil, that the purpose of God *according to election* might stand, it was stated, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated." Romans 9:11-13.

However, a denomination that departs from the truth can and will disappear. An individual in a congregation, and the whole congregation that rejects the faith will disappear and perish in the just wrath of God.

The true Church, the elect from all nations, tongues and tribes, in every age and generation shall be saved. The body of Christ shall be perfect without a single member missing. Satan and all his hosts cannot stop the heart of the Church from beating. He cannot bring death to that Church. God is for us and nothing can be against us. Nothing is able to separate us from His love in Christ. And that means that we cannot separate ourselves from that love either. A falling away of the saints is impossible. What falls away, whether it be individual, congregation or denomination, never belonged to God's Church and was numbered only among the members of man's church.

It might seem different, however. Churches and denominations that not only deny election but fight vigorously against this doctrine seem to thrive. Many "decisions" are made for Christ in such circles. They grow often very rapidly in numbers. Sometimes their leaders die with a beautiful testimony on their lips. They are then, true, elect children of God, and the faith and success in their group is not due to this denial of the heart of the Church but in spite of their denial. They are not consistent, and therein lies also their salvation and is there hope of faith and salvation in their midst. As the one opponent of the doctrine of election once is reported to have answered the question, "When you pray, are you an arminian or a Calvinist?" in this amazing way, "It all depends. When I pray publicly I am an Arminian, but when I pray privately in my closet, I am a Calvinist." The same attitude and inconsistency is found among those who deny sovereign and eternal election, when they will reject all the consequences of this error upon being shown where it leads. No, they do not want to make God a changeable God. Then He can still change His mind in the future about those whom He, according to their way of speaking, chose in time. No, they do not want to deny Him His sovereignty and elevate man's will above God's so that the Almighty God can be frustrated by the creature of dust that depends upon Him for every breath of life. No, they do not want to say that Christ will be disappointed and that some of His blood was shed for naught. No, they do not want a creature that is greater than the Creator.

In all this there is hope; and on their death beds they reject all their denial of sovereign election and rejoice in belonging to a faithful Saviour by the unchangeable decree of the unchangeable God.

But make no mistake about it, the heart of the Church is as important to the life and existence of that Church as your heart and my heart is to our earthly life and continued existence. When there is failure of the heart to any degree whatsoever, there are visible, noticeable symptoms. The lips turn blue. There is pain in the chest. The breath comes in gasps that are painful. If severe enough, unconsciousness overtakes the person suffering from heart failure. Even after a "recovery" the work is curtailed. One must be careful of exertion and excitement. No strain must be placed upon that weakened heart. For though it is called "recovery" that heart is not what it used to be and ought to be.

No different is it in the Church. Those congregations and denominations that suffer from heart failure in that they have destroyed the truth of election, which is the heart of the Church, or done damage to that truth, and thus to that heart, will give symptoms of heart failure. The whole body of doctrine is affected. That is exactly why our forefathers called election the heart of the Church. Your doctrine concerning God Himself, concerning man, concerning Christ, salvation, the Church and the last things will all be affected by your stand in regard to election. This is true because it affects the doctrine which we maintain concerning God. And when you have corrupted the truth concerning Him, you cannot maintain the truth in regard to man, Christ, salvation, the Church and the last things. It makes no difference where you begin: when you attack any point of doctrine, you deny God as the God that He actually is. And the denial of sovereign, eternal election with its accompanying reprobation prevents us from believing in God as the Scriptures present Him. By that error we rob God — or try to rob Him, for we can never take anything away from Him — of His glory.

All of salvation is God's work, and man is the creature that God created. Christ is the One Whom He sent and will send at the last day. Therefore we are always dealing with God, for we are always dealing with His works. A denial of sovereign and eternal election, therefore, will be a denial of God in one way or another. You simply get a creature with more power than the Creator. You get a creature that can frustrate the Creator and make Him turn away weeping and disappointed. But a disappointed God is a God with weakness; and a creature that can bring sorrow to the Creator is a powerful creature. A creator who lets the creature decide and will not impose His wishes upon that creature is a creator who abdicates his position to let the creature rule — and that, mind you, to a sinful creature! You touch the holiness and righteousness of God as well. For, how can a righteous and holy God let the unrighteous and unholy creature have his way? On what basis can He justly and in righteousness offer salvation to all sinners, and then choose in time those who will accept? You say, on the basis of the blood of the cross? But, if Christ merited that right for all men to be given an offer, did He not die in vain for those who do not accept? And will God's Church be as big as He wants it to be, or is it limited by the creature?

The "blue lips" of the patient with heart failure are evident in the doubt and fear that Arminianism produces. The shortness of breath and pain in the chest is to be seen in the wavering hope and lack of confidence that Arminianism fosters. Of what can we be sure, if it all depends upon us? Why does the Arminian speak of an incomplete and a non-decisive election, and maintain that not every election unto salvation is unchangeable? Such a doctrine instills fear and not peace and comfort.

The Scriptures speak otherwise and in different vein. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Romans 8:38,39. "Nevertheless the founda-

tion of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." II Timothy 2:19. "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48. "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy." Ephesians 1:4. Note: not because we were holy or became such by believing, but "that we should be holy." "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." John 10:26. Note again: the Arminian says that we are His sheep because we believe; and then God

then chooses us because of our faith. God Himself declares in the Person of His Son that election determines who will believe and that faith does not determine election. "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you." John 15:16. These truths give comfort and peace, for they show us that we are safe amidst all the enemies, because salvation is of the Lord, He keeps our hearts beating, even while we sleep. And He keeps His Church alive, because He chose her eternally in Christ, loves her and is faithful to all His promises.

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

CHRISTADELPHIANISM

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

The strange name Christadelphians means The Brethren of Christ. It was coined from the Greek language in 1864 by the founder of the sect, a John Thomas. He could not stand the name Christian because it represented to him everything degenerated and anti-Christian. Therefore he meant to displace it with an invention of his own which he supposed represented the revival of original apostolic religion. Thomas was born in England in 1805, the son of an Independent minister. He entered the medical field, and as a young doctor left Britain for America in 1832 because he intensely disliked the "priest-ridden state of society" there. In Cincinnati he was converted to the Campbellite (Disciples of Christ) view of immersion. He then began to neglect his medical work. He is said to have dabbled in farming, unsuccessfully. But his chief interest was centered in becoming a self-styled preacher, teacher and writer, boasting of his ignorance of books other than the Bible, and of the fact that he had never been "cursed with the poison of a theological education." His viewpoint was that a man of average intelligence could not understand the teaching of the theologians. He obtained his religious knowledge much as the Buchmanites or Moral Re-Armament people do, by letting the mind run blank, like a *tabula rasa*, and allowing the mere reading of the Word to make whatever impression it would upon him. As a result of his intuitive method of accumulating the knowledge of God, he not only changed his views of baptism, but also dropped his Campbellite views of heaven, hell, eternal punishment, the devil and salvation. His main position was that the hope of Israel, viz., the coming of Christ to set up a heavenly kingdom on earth at Jerusalem, was the essence of the gospel. With his thinking again radically changed, he had himself immersed once more, which

was not performed in the name of the essentially triune God, but in "the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit," words which conform not to the baptismal formula of the Gospel, but to the Sabellian heresy.

Thomas and his biographer, Robert Roberts, made Christadelphianism teach a pre-millennial kingdom with Christ ruler in Jerusalem, the metropolis of the whole earth. The world is to have one kingdom, vested in approved Christadelphians for one thousand years. There will be a resurrection of the righteous before the millennium, but no resurrection of the wicked. Holding quite the reverse of the avid and avowed practice of Baha'ists, Christadelphians do not engage in social or political enterprises. Further, they are pacifistic, refusing to bear arms. The form of government they adopt is that of independency. There is no denominational headquarters, but the group seems to propagate its literature from Waterloo, Iowa. It keeps archives and statistics only in its local bodies. Expenses are met not by taking collections, but by the making of voluntary contributions. Meetings are held on the first day of the week, "to eat bread and drink wine." The songs of Zion are sung as found in David's writings. Prayer is offered and Scripture read. Because of the belief that Christ may re-appear at any time, the places of worship are usually nothing more than a rented building or an "upper room."

Christadelphianism's lengthy "rejection of errors" includes the doctrine that "God is One in Three," that the devil is a wicked fallen angel, being simply sin personified; that there is a "hell-fire in which all unregenerate souls will be tortured forever;" that for salvation it is necessary to believe in the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. Many of the same denials of Scripture truth and doctrine of the

faith made by Christian Science, Russellism, Modernism and Unitarianism are also made by this system. Being unitarian in character, it denies the deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Sounding like so-called Jehovah's Witnesses, they make the Son of God a manifestation of God, but not himself God, not the second person of an eternal trinity. They think the name Son proves his existence derived and not eternal. Along with Sabellians, Arians and Socinians they find further "proof" in John 1:1, in the words, "the Word was God," pointing out that there is no definite article before *God*, so allowing the translation, "the Word was a god." But there is no indefinite article in the Greek language, nor is it warranted in this clause. For there, for emphasis, the predicate (God) stands first, "*God* was the Word!" It would be Sabellian to write at this point *Ho Theos*, the God, for that, besides failing to show that *God* is the predicate, and not the subject, would also make the Word the same person as the Father. What is meant by saying that "the Word was God," without any article, definite or (as undeveloped in Greek) indefinite, is that "the Word was *absolutely* God," or "the Word was *essentially* God," the "Word was fully and completely God." He is God without any subtraction or limitation!

John Thomas and Robert Roberts, together with the other heretics mentioned above, appeal to Deut. 6:4 in support of their contention that there is not a shred of trinitarianism in the Bible. "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord." But this great Shema' passage, as it is called, does not exclude the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead. Quite the contrary, it rather supports the trinitarian teaching. For the text literally reads, "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah (singular) our (plural) Elohim (plural); Jehovah (singular) is one. And thou shalt love Jehovah (singular) thy (singular) Elohim (plural)." The Hebrew language has three numerals, the singular, meaning but one; the dual, meaning two and the only two; and the plural which denotes at the least three. If then this passage is supposed to teach that God is only one in person as well as one in being, why, where the oneness and simplicity of God is so firmly taught, should the name *God* be in the plural? Why is it that Elohim, the plural, is found in Old Testament Scriptures 2,579 times, while the singular form of the word is found in about 57 places and only six times applied to other than the true God? Regardless of the question whether the meaning of the plural Elohim is numerical, the idea of the trinity is latently enshrined in the word. In proof of this we appeal to another passage. It is true that *elohim* is used of angels (Ps. 97:7), and that all the angels of God are to worship the Son who is not less than God. A comparison of Heb. 1:6, 8 and Rev. 22:9 reveal that fact. It is also in a few instances used of men, e.g., in Ps. 82:1, of the magistrates in Israel. "God (Elohim: plural) standeth in the congregation of the mighty (El: singular); He (singular) judgeth among the gods (Elohim: plural)" That He judges *among* the gods, and not *between* elohim, reveals that elohim cannot be understood as dual, but as plural, signifying that judges (Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9, 28) convening in Israel must be not one or two, but three

in number. Thus Christadelphianism is off the main fundamental of the Christian Faith, namely, the doctrine of God as expressed in the doctrine of the essential trinity.

Another fundamental of the faith cut from its moorings in the Word of God is the doctrine of the atonement. It is denied that the death of Christ was a bearing of the wrath of God against sinners. "We displace the sacrifice of Christ from its scriptural position. We destroy its character as a means of securing life, and are compelled to transform it into that anomalous doctrine of pulpitory which regards it as substitutionary suffering of divine wrath, in order to save..." (Christendom Astray From the Bible, Robert Roberts, p. 298). The cross was merely "an expression of God's love toward fallen humanity." There is no question that the death of Christ was an expression of God's love. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (I Jn. 4:9). But in His death Christ bore the wrath of God, for "being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Ro. 5:9). It was the death of Christ which "delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Th. 1:10). Further, although such a term as "substitute" is not found in the Bible, yet as referring to Christ's redemptive work on the cross, the doctrine is plainly there. In these words, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *the Just for the unjust*" (I Pe. 3:18), the truth of substitutionary suffering is taught in the most unmistakable language.

The cult attacks what is called "the immortality of the soul." It states, "Man...only holds this life on the short average tenure of three-score years and ten, at the end of which he gives it up to Him from whom he received it, and returns to the ground whence he originally came, and meanwhile ceases to exist" (ibid., 16). What is denied here is the immortality of the *body*. Death is "the extinction of being" (ibid., p. 49); that is, the body and soul together, of the righteous and of the wicked, are annihilated. Because of this allegation, it is maintained of the latter that "therefore resurrection does not take place in their case" (ibid., p. 68). But when Judas died, he did not cease to exist; he went to perdition, i.e., "to his own place" (Jn. 17:12 with Acts 1:25). To the penitent thief dying, Jesus did not say, "Today you will be annihilated," but "Today thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." "The rich man also died." Then although the language detailed here is parabolic, we do not read that he ceased to exist — no, but that "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments" (Lk. 16:22ff). In that place and state he underwent such human experiences as physical sensation (v. 24), sight (v. 23), speech (v. 24), emotion (have mercy), memory (son, remember, v. 25a) and reason (v. 27). Also he was there conscious of being in a *place* (v. 28), not in a mere state of mind, where there is no probation (v. 26), no restoration (v. 25b), no universal salvation (v. 31), no soul-sleep and no communication of the living with the spirits of the dead (v. 26c).

This pseudo-religion is a system of denials and "damnable (destructive) heresies" (II Pe. 2:1). The

deity and personality of the Spirit is denied, He being such inconceivable focus of energy as to fill universal space with incandescent substance (Heresies Exposed, 55). "The devil is not...a personal supernatural agent...there is no such being in existence." The devil is simply the personification of evil. But read Luke 10:18; Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; and Revelation 20:10. The existence of Heaven and Hell are denied, along with the reality of eternal punishment and the resurrection

of the body. But the errors of baptismal regeneration (ibid., p. 119), salvation by character development (ibid., 306) and the falling away of saints (ibid. p. 310) are taught. The misnomer "Christadelphians" ill befits these who are in reality antichristadelphian. In his *Holy War*, John Bunyan had a more apt name, better suited to them, *Diabolonians*! There he uniquely describes their denials, their doubtings and their destruction.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

Stephen's Apology Before the Sanhedrin

Acts 6:7—7:60

by Rev. Lubbers

Stephen Amongst the Faithful Prophets in his Death Acts 7:54—60

What is more they stone Stephen with a hypocritical display of being interested in the purity of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. Even though no formal verdict has been rendered, and no refutation of Stephen's "apology" is offered to show from the Scriptures that he is a heretic, a false prophet who will turn the heart of Israel from the Lord God who delivered Israel out of Egypt, he is summarily stoned outside of the city gate! He is stoned with a vengeance!

Here one is reminded of the words of the Savior uttered in the upper room to His disciples "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God. And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:2,3.) Literally this was the case with Saul of Tarsus, who stands here, no doubt, as one of the leaders of the Sanhedrin. Later he will write "For ye have heard of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it, and I advanced the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age, among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the tradition of my fathers." (Galatians 1:12,13) That here was a zeal of God but not according to knowledge is evident. (Romans 10:1,2) Wherefore Paul can write many years later to Timothy at Ephesus "... though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: however, I obtained mercy because I did it *ignorantly in unbelief*." (I Timothy 1:13) Saul thought that he was doing God a service, bringing Him a sacrifice upon the altar of consecration, keeping the holy place clean!

It is for this reason that Stephen is brought outside of the city. Stephen is treated and adjudged as one who had added to or taken away from the words of Moses and the prophets, and, therefore, as one whose part is taken by God from the book of life, and out of

the holy city! (Deuteronomy 4:2; 13:10 and Revelation 22:19) He must be removed from the very presence of God as one who loveth and maketh a lie!

But what a travesty and caricature of the just judgment of God!

It was an awful thing to stone a man with stones!

It meant that it was a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God and his judgments as they are to be executed in Israel against certain terrible sins. The principle sins for which men were stoned in Israel were those against the first and great commandment. Those who were false prophets and would cause Israel to depart from the Lord and from His word must be stoned. (Deuteronomy 13:10) Stoning was also the lot of those who blasphemed the "NAME" of God (Leviticus 24:14,16,23) and of those who caused their sons to pass through the fire in the service of Moloch. (Leviticus 20:27) Then the witnesses must cast the first stone and then all the congregation must also throw stones. It must become the "judgment" of God executed by the entire congregation of God. Perhaps stoning was chosen by God for this very purpose, namely, that the entire congregation would need to execute it. It is not to be brought about by one man, but by all the people! All the people must say "... Who shall not fear, O Lord God, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before thee, for thy righteous judgments have been made manifest" (Revelation 15:4)

How horrible does this all become when Israel would stone Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, because they in unbelief would not enter into the promised land! And, again, how wicked does such stoning become when the Jews would take up stones repeatedly to stone Jesus, who is far greater than Moses! And what horrible iniquity does this become in the church when a Paul is later stoned in Lystra by Jewish

zealots! (Exodus 8:26; 17:4; Numbers 14:10; John 10:31; Acts 14:19) For all such "stoning" is not the execution of the righteous judgment of God, but simply the act of a frenzied mob, who take the law into their own hands as would a modern lynching party in our day!

The majesty of God is out of all such casting of stones!

Thus it was here in the case of Stephen!

And, now, behold the true sacrifice brought to God in this very hour. Stephen, who is accused of causing Israel to depart from the ways of God, but who had shown this accusation to be entirely contrary to fact and to all the Scriptures, brings the real sacrifice to God.

Look at Stephen there outside of the city, made an outcast from the synagogue and from the holy place! He kneels down and prays. He kneels down before the throne of God in heaven, where Jesus is seen by him to stand on the right hand of God. He sees him as the Son of Man! He sees him, who in the deep way of his suffering and humiliation, in the way of bringing the great Sacrifice for all the sins of all his people was exalted, and passed through the heavens. He sees him as the High Priest who became us: holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the heavens! Before him he bows the knees. Presently every knee shall bow before him and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. What an "Amen" this was to Stephen's apology. He seals his own faith in blood upon his knees. Here we see the blood of the saints upon the altar, for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. Only the true church has her martyrs! And the blood of the saints is the seed of the church!

But heaven is seen "opened". The way into the most holy place is approachable. Stephen boldly draws nigh upon his knees and is heard in the hour of need. And the Lord delivers him out of all his sorrows. His work is finished. He has kept the faith and there is laid away a crown of life for him!

He prays for those who stone him. He dwells on higher ground. His prayer to God is that Israel might be saved. Hear him pray "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Somehow he must have felt that here was a hardening "in part" of Israel. The Lord would not forsake his own people whom he foreknew. There is a Saul, a son of the Benjamites, before whom the clothing was put while Stephen is stoned. And the Lord heard this prayer of Stephen. Here is the longsuffering of God manifested in Israel against a hard and stiffnecked people. He has mercy on whom he has mercy. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth! (Romans 9:15) This Saul will be known as Paul, and what Stephen preached here before the ears of Paul will bear fruit in his heart. Many years later he will write "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles. . . ." (Galatians 1:15,16) Oh, what an autobiography, to write "but they only heard say, He that once perse-

cuted us now preaches (as glad tidings) the faith of which he once made havoc, and they glorified God in me" (Galatians 1:23)

Prophets receive a prophet's reward.

Jesus speaks explicitly of this reward for all those who suffer for righteousness' sake. It is blessed to be in the company of the prophets. Their very death is precious in the sight of the Lord. So it was with Stephen. "He fell asleep" we read. But what a rewarding sleep. Stephen did not lose his reward. A generation later the temple in Jerusalem is destroyed—never to be rebuilt. All the "Crusades" of the Middle Ages could not restore it. The house was left desolate. The reward of a prophet is that his word which he spake stands forever. Stephen's "apology" is not hay or stubble which shall be burned. It is taken up in the annals of the Scriptures not only, but God made the chief of the persecutors the greatest writer of the New Testament Scriptures!

Our reflections upon and analysis of this "Apology" of Stephen has become a bit longer than we anticipated. Perhaps it is not presumptuous to write a brief résumé here of the chief facets which we have attempted to set forth. More than one reader, who has followed this series of contributions and essays, suggested that these would be read with more profit if a bird's-eye view were given of the subject matter treated.

We will therefore try to meet that expressed need.

We have called attention to the following:

1. The General Situation of the Church at the time of Stephen.
2. The Cruel Fact of Stephen's Being Brought to Trial.
3. The Shining Face of Stephen.
4. The Question: Are These Things So?
5. The Chief Points of Stephen's Apology:
 - a. The Starting-Point in Stephen's Address: the God of Glory.
 - b. The Argument from the Abrahamic Promises.
 - c. The Argument from God's Word Concerning and to Moses.
 - d. The Argument from the Divine Purpose in the Tent of the Testimony.
 - e. The Argument that Idol-Worshippers Seek Temples made with Hands.
6. The Judges of Stephen Indicted by the Scriptures.
7. Stephen Amongst the Faithful Prophets in his Death.

Our prayer is that the King of his church Himself may bless the readers in reading these articles with a deep desire to more fully appreciate the meaning of the Old Testament Scriptures!

May the words of Paul be ours when he says: O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counselor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

EXAMINING ECUMENICALISM—

Vatican Council - Third Session

-4-

“The Constitution on the Church”

by Rev. G. Van Baren

In this final article on the “Constitution on the Church” I wish to direct attention to the remaining chapters of the statement. Four of these I mention only briefly; but the final one is of special significance since it treats of Mary and the relationship of the church to her.

There is a chapter on the “Laity”, pointing to the calling of the common members of the church to labor faithfully on this earth. The chapter is evidently included to show that the Romish church indeed values the “laity”—though its hierarchical system would seem to deny this. One statement in the chapter appears to reflect the common modernistic and post-millennial viewpoint:

May the goods of this world be more equitably distributed among all men, and may they in their own way be conducive to universal progress in human and Christian freedom. In this manner, through the members of the Church, will Christ progressively illumine the whole of human society with His saving light.¹

The next chapter speaks of the “Universal Call to Holiness in the Church.” It repeats that old error that the suffering of the saints serve also to redeem the world:

May all those who are weighed down with poverty, infirmity and sickness, as well as those who must bear various hardships or who suffer persecution for justice sake—may they all know they are united with the suffering Christ in a special way for the salvation of the world. . . .

. . . By martyrdom a disciple is transformed into an image of his Master by freely accepting death for the salvation of the world—as well as his conformity to Christ in the shedding of his blood. . . .¹

The next chapters treat respectively the religious orders within the church and the “eschatological nature of the pilgrim church and its union with the church in heaven.” This last chapter points to the relation of the faithful on the earth to the saints in heaven who, supposedly, make intercession for them.

THE PLACE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

This eighth and last chapter of the “Constitution” is of special interest to protestants. Long has the issue of the place of Mary been one of the principal dividing points between Rome and protestants. Therefore the present statement by the Council is worthy of careful consideration.

On reading the chapter, it soon becomes evident that the Romish church has not revoked nor altered its former stand regarding Mary. First, the chapter maintains the sinlessness of the Virgin:

Thus Mary, a daughter of Adam, consenting to the divine Word, became the mother of Jesus, the one and only Mediator. Embracing God’s salvific will with a full heart and impeded by no sin, she devoted herself totally as a handmaid of the Lord to the person and work of her Son, under Him and with Him, by the grace of almighty God, serving the mystery of redemption. . . .

Finally, the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all guilt of original sin, on completion of her earthly sojourn, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen of the universe, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son. . . .¹

The above paragraph also repeats the position of the Romish church that Mary was taken bodily into heaven without dying. The chapter reveals further the position of the Romish church regarding Mary’s intercession for the faithful:

This maternity of Mary in the order of grace began with the consent she gave in faith at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, and lasts until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this salvific duty, but by her constant intercession continued to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into the happiness of their true home. Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator.¹

THE CONCESSION TO ECUMENISM

The Vatican Council, though insistent in maintaining the old errors regarding the place of Mary, was careful about making any further statements, dogmatic statements, concerning her. Much pressure was brought to bear upon the Council to make definitive statements concerning Mary’s place in redeeming God’s people. The “conservative” Romish theologians wanted Mary raised yet higher in the dogma of the church. But the Council resisted that pressure—evi-

dently also with the intent to promote good relationships with protestants.

The material concerning Mary was originally a separate schema. The adoption of such a separate schema would have emphasized Rome's esteem of Mary, thus offending many protestants. One Roman Catholic commentator wrote:

Then too there was the majority vote by the Fathers to consider the place of the Blessed Virgin Mary within the schema on the Church rather than separately. . . . This move should have salutary effect of curbing excessive and distorted Marian devotions which must be as displeasing to her as they clearly were to the majority of the Catholic Fathers.²

And another wrote:

The present chapter on the Blessed Virgin Mary is still, basically, the original document proposed to the Fathers in the first session. . . . The original document was reworked, references to the universal mediation and the co-redemption of Mary were carefully deleted, and some new paragraphs on our Lady as type of the Church were added.³

The chapter itself both extols Mary and warns against exaggerations:

This most holy synod deliberately teaches this Catholic doctrine and at the same time admonishes all the sons of the Church that the cult, especially the liturgical cult, of the Blessed Virgin, be generously fostered, and the practices and exercises of piety, recommended by the magisterium of the Church toward her in the course of centuries be made of great moment, and those decrees, which have been given in the early days regarding the cult of images of Christ, the Blessed Virgin and the saints, be religiously observed. But it exhorts theologians and preachers of the divine word to abstain zealously both from all gross exaggerations as well as from petty narrowmindedness in considering the singular dignity of the Mother of God. Following the study of Sacred Scripture, the Holy Fathers, the doctors and liturgy of the Church, and under the guidance of the Church's magisterium, let them rightly illustrate the duties and privileges of the Blessed Virgin which always look to Christ, the source of all truth, sanctity and piety. Let them assiduously keep away from whatever, either by word or deed, could lead separated brethren or any other into error regarding the true doctrine of the Church. Let the faithful remember moreover that true devotion consists neither in sterile or transitory affection, nor in a certain vain credulity, but proceeds from true

faith by which we are led to know the excellence of the Mother of God, and we are moved to a filial love toward our mother and to the imitation of her virtues.¹

But the chapter allows for further development of dogma concerning Mary:

(This holy synod) does no, however, have in mind to give a complete doctrine on Mary, nor does it wish to decide those questions which the work of theologians has not yet fully clarified. Those opinions therefore may be lawfully retained which are propounded in Catholic schools concerning her, who occupies a place in the Church which is the highest after Christ and yet very close to us.¹

MARY — MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

At the close of the third session Pope Paul gave to Mary this title: Mother of the Church. The title is not so strange in view of Roman doctrine, but that the Pope should state this, after the Council had considered and rejected it, did appear strange. There is a question as to what the title really means. But it does appear, in the eyes of many, to increase the emphasis upon Mariology by Rome — something the Council was deliberately seeking to avoid. One liberal protestant magazine had the following comment:

The Roman pontiff proclaimed Mary "Mother of the Church, i.e., of the whole people of God, of the faithful as of the pastors." Again, for three years the conciliar fathers had considered and rejected the ascribing of this title to Mary. . . . The pope's arbitrary action was interpreted by some reporters as a "calculated assertion of papal supremacy to counteract emphasis placed on collective rule."⁴

Again, one must conclude that at heart Rome is unchanged. If there has been no further development in their "Mariolatry", neither has there been any regression. Strange that any should regard this as a concession on the part of Rome, for obviously Rome has not conceded a thing. Rome merely believes that it has centuries to accomplish what some wanted done at this Council.

1. These quotations were taken from the *Council Day-book*, Session 3, published by the National Catholic Welfare Conference, pages 322-336.
2. James O'Gara, *The Commonweal*, Feb. 7, 1964, p. 569
3. Gregory Baum, *The Commonweal*, p. 130
4. *The Christian Century*, pg. 1483, Dec. 2, 1964

We cannot so belie our reason as to think that the intention of Almighty God could be frustrated, or that the design of so great a thing as the atonement can by any way whatever be missed. We hold — we are not afraid to say what we believe — that Christ came into this world with the intention of saving 'a multitude which no man can number,' and we believe that as the result of this, every person for whom He died must, beyond the shadow of a doubt, be cleansed from sin, and stand washed in blood before the Father's throne.

— C. H. Spurgeon

THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP—

In Remembrance of Him!

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

“Afterwards He suffered innumerable reproaches, that we might never be confounded...”

“Afterwards He was innocently condemned to death, that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God...”

“Afterwards, yea, He suffered His blessed body to be nailed on the cross—that He might fix thereon the handwriting of our sins; and hath taken upon Himself the curse due to us, that He might fill us with His blessings...”

In considering further these points mentioned in our Communion Form, we are to remember Christ and be brought to a deep spiritual consciousness of the horrible suffering He endured in performing in our behalf the work of our salvation. All of this is absolutely essential for Him Who came “not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him.” (John 6:38) The mission which Christ came to fulfill consisted of the perfect realization of the counsel of redemption, and in the performance of this task He left no detail unfinished. Neither did He do anything in this work that was not necessary. He did not endure shame and reproach and suffer the excruciating pains of death to make a display of martyrdom or to demonstrate heroism before men, for if such were the case we could not speak of or consider the benefits of this work for us. He suffered according to the will of God, and thereby did all that was required to satisfy Divine justice and make atonement for sin. His passion is not a thing to be dramatized for our entertainment. It is not a mere example of nobility that is designed to elicit commendation and praise, for then His entire effort must be considered a sad failure. Consider that this is the work of God, for “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” (II Cor. 5:19) The reading of the Communion Form in which these things are set forth is the proclamation of the glorious Gospel of reconciliation, directing our faith to the sufferings and death of our Savior. In that light consider these things.

The word, “afterward”, which we repeated three times above, directs our attention specifically to those things which Christ suffered after the terrible ordeal in the garden of Gethsemane where the bloody sweat was pressed out of Him, and He was bound that we might be freed from our sins. After all of this He went on to suffer innumerable reproaches, to be innocently condemned to death, and to suffer His blessed body to be nailed to the cross. Such is the concise but vivid description of events transpired in the early morning hours of Good Friday. We will not take time

or space here to relate all the details, but it may be well that in our private preparation to come to the table of the Lord, we seriously give devoted and diligent attention to the Scriptural record and retrace step by step His paths from the garden to the cross.

Innumerable reproaches He suffered! That means that you cannot count the number of times He was reproached by men, wicked men. The physical eye that witnessed all that transpired is not quick enough nor discerning enough to catch it all. All of it is not even recorded for us. We know only in part. But “reproach” is “to upbraid, to bring into discredit, to chide, to blame, to disgrace.” Indeed, this is a true characterization of His experience before the Jewish Sanhedrin, Pilate and Herod, the soldiers and all the people. They literally *heaped* upon Him shame which He innocently and voluntarily bore.

He was *condemned* to death! We intentionally left out one word here in order that we might give to it special emphasis. In all the legalistic proceedings He is the INNOCENT One. There is no sin in Him. Forever it must be established and maintained that there is no cause or reason that He should be put to death. No one can convict Him. False witnesses are raised up against Him in an attempt to gain a conviction, but their testimony does not agree. The lie, then as now, as may be demonstrated in many ways, is a contradiction unto itself. No fault can be found in Him, and therefore when He is condemned, the sentence is given because of what He IS rather than on account of what He has done. Innocently condemned is He because He is the Son of God. Thus does all the world answer the fundamental question: “What do you think of God?”

And so Jesus, our Savior, “suffered His blessed body to be nailed to the cross.” Oh, to be sure, no one took His life from Him. He was not overcome by powers which He could not resist. His enemies did not surprise Him in their attack, so that He succumbed in an unguarded moment. On the contrary, He is Lord alone, and everyone that has a part in this drama of passion is but a tool in His almighty hand which serves His purpose. He lays down His life as a voluntary sacrifice, which is offered unto God in profound and perfect love. And, therefore, they are also unable to dispose of Him in the way of their own choice, but He must suffer the death appointed to Him by the Father, which is that of the cross. Let it suffice to point out the significance of this death in the words of the Heidelberg Catechism in answer to the question: “Is there anything more in His being crucified, than if He had died some other death?” (Q. 39) To which

answer is given: "Yes, for thereby I am assured, that He took on Him the curse which lay upon me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God."

Now in the light of all this we are to "consider to what end the Lord has instituted His Supper". And that end (purpose) is that we may remember Him in all His suffering and death by means of this Supper. Here then is room for endless meditation, study and prayer. "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Rom. 11:33)

There is more yet in this section of our Communion Form, but before we consider that, our attention must be directed to the benefits which are ours as the result or fruit of Christ's suffering innumerable reproaches, being innocently condemned and suffering His body to be nailed to the cross. These fruits must also be seriously considered, for only in this way can we experientially enjoy the blessings of our salvation in Christ. That consideration therefore consists of much more than an intellectual contemplation of undeniable facts recorded in Scripture. Our doctrinal orthodoxy is not in question here, and neither is the objective merit of Christ's redemptive work the subject of our consideration here. To consider the suffering of Christ in the true sense of the word means that this is an activity of conscious, living faith which brings us to a real awareness of the *personal* benefits gained by that suffering. Thus the believer does not simply acknowledge the veracity of the confession, but he expresses as a matter of personal experience and conviction that Christ suffered and died "that I may never be confounded, that I may be acquitted at the judgment seat of God, and that the handwriting of my sin was affixed to the cross." Knowing this, we need not state further why it is important that the celebration of the Lord's Supper brings us "in remembrance of Him!"

"Never confounded!"

What a glorious comfort there is in that thought! What a peace-affording assurance this knowledge gives to the soul in the midst of the present world! To be "confounded" the dictionary tells us is: "to bring ruin or naught, to destroy". It means: "to put to shame, abash, discomfit, to throw into confusion, perplexity, dismay". A few synonyms are: "bewilder, baffle, astonish, dumbfound". This term in the positive sense certainly is descriptive of the world in which we live today. All about us we see confusion, turmoil and discomfort. Men are perplexed, dismayed and troubled. And it cannot be any different, because man is in the darkness of sin and is unable to comprehend the light of life. He will continue to grope in the darkness until he ultimately brings himself to utter ruin. Without the suffering Christ Who atones for sin there is nothing in this whole world but hopelessness and despair. This is the simple truth that all the vain promises and idle boasts of sinful man cannot change. The world hovers on the brink of self-destruction and is so deeply entrenched in the mire of confusion that there remains for it no hope. Upon it rests the wrath of God from which there is no escape except in Jesus. In Him there is no confusion or disorder. Being

brought to the light through His cross we do not dismay and are not perplexed. We shall never be confounded, but we shall be led through the darkness of this world into the light of His everlasting glory. Wonderful contemplation!

This rests upon our second consideration, namely, "that we may be acquitted at the judgment seat of God". Here is not the place to treat extensively the interesting and important subject of the judgment of God, but it may suffice to point out that the living God will judge all men and nations in the day He has appointed. This judgment shall be perfectly just and all sin shall receive its due reward. In that judgment all of humanity, as it is represented in Adam, is worthy of condemnation. That condemnation it shall also receive except for those whom the Father has given to Christ out of the world, and concerning them the sentence is: ACQUITTED! We are justified in Christ, and then justice is not laid aside but it is exactly realized, because He was condemned to death for us. He bore the sentence of our condemnation for us. He suffered the just payment of our sins in His own body. The debt is paid and consequently God justifies us freely for Christ's sake. The value of this treasure is inestimable! "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15)

Our acquittal at the judgment seat of God stems from the fact that the handwriting of our sins was affixed to the cross of Christ. The curse that was due to us, He bore. That curse is the embodiment of the terrible wrath of God against sin. This Jesus voluntarily bore in order that "He might fill us with His blessings". We notice here that "blessings" is plural and not singular. In a sense the blessing of Christ upon His people can be viewed in the singular, and then this blessing consists in Christ imparting Himself to us, giving us His own heavenly and eternal life. The singular blessing of the redemptive work of Christ is that the child of God is incorporated into Him and made one with Him, so that with Him he will live in covenant fellowship forever. This same blessing, however, may also properly be viewed in the plural, because of the countless aspects from which it may be viewed, as well as from the fact that in depth and richness it is multifarious. Then, too, we may distinguish many singular blessings within this one unspeakable blessing of Christ. The steps which we commonly speak of in connection with the order of our salvation — regeneration, calling, faith, conversion, justification, sanctification, and glorification — are individual parts of the one blessing which He bestows upon us. Salvation is indeed of God alone. We are the empty vessels which He fills with His own fulness. Consider this, lest we be minded to boast or pride ourselves in our own goodness when we come to His table. Remember that we have no place there of personal merit, but every blessing received is on our part unmerited and undeserved. Christ did it all for us, and in His grace He imparts His own saving benefits upon His children, for whom He shed His life-blood on the accursed tree.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

The Doctrine of Creation

by Rev. H. Veldman

The Doctrine of Creation and the Theory of Evolution
We continue the quotation from Berkhof:

And Morgan feels constrained to admit that he cannot explain his emergents without falling back upon some creative power that might be called God. Morton says: "The fact is that, besides creation, there is not even a theory of origins to hold the field today."

The hypothesis of evolution fails at several points. It cannot explain the origin of life. Evolutionists sought its explanation in spontaneous generation, an unproved assumption, which is now discredited. It is a well established fact in science that life can only come from antecedent life. Further, it has failed utterly to adduce a single example of one species producing another distinct (organic as distinguished from varietal) species. Bateson said in 1921: "We cannot see how the differentiation in species came about. Variations of many kinds, often considerable, we daily witness, but no origin of species. . . . Meanwhile, though our faith in evolution stands unshaken, we have no acceptable account of the origin of species." (the undersigned wishes to observe that here we have a striking phenomenon. The evolutionist frankly declares that he cannot explain life, that the attempt has utterly failed to adduce a single example of one species producing another distinct species. The evolutionist frankly concedes that he does not know, for example, how a monkey could develop into a man, how an irrational creature could develop into a rational creature. Nevertheless, although he knows nothing of the mystery of life, he rejects the Scriptural account of the creation of the animal world and of man, and he wickedly declares that his faith in evolution, which explains nothing, remains unshaken.) Neither has evolution been able successfully to cope with the problems presented by the origin of man. It has not even succeeded in proving the physical descent of man from the brute. J. A. Thomson, author of *The Outline of Science* and a leading evolutionist, holds that man really never was an animal, a fierce beastly looking creature, but that the first man sprang suddenly, by a big leap, from the primate stock into a human being. (and this the evolutionist prefers, believe it or not, to the beautiful Scriptural account of the creation of man!—H.V.) Much less has it been able to explain the psychical side of man's life. The human soul, endowed with intelligence, self-consciousness, freedom, conscience, and religious aspirations, remains an unsolved enigma.

D. Theistic evolution is not tenable in the light of Scripture. Some Christian scientists and theologians seek to harmonize the doctrine of creation, as taught by Scripture, and the theory of evolution by accepting what they call theistic evolution. It is a protest against the attempt to eliminate God, and postulates Him as

the almighty worker back of the whole process of development. Evolution is regarded simply as God's method of working in the development of nature. Theistic evolution really amounts to this, that God created the world (the cosmos) by a process of evolution, a process of natural development, in which He does not miraculously intervene, except in cases where this is absolutely necessary. It is willing to admit that the absolute beginning of the world could only result from a direct creative activity of God; and, if it can find no natural explanation, will also grant a direct intervention of God in the origination of life and of man. It has been hailed as Christian evolution, though there is not necessarily anything Christian about it. Many, otherwise opposed to the theory of evolution, have welcomed it, because it recognizes God in the process and is supposed to be compatible with the Scriptural doctrine of creation. Hence it is freely taught in churches and Sunday Schools. As a matter of fact, however, it is a very dangerous hybrid. The name is a contradiction in terms, for it is neither Theism nor naturalism, neither creation nor evolution in the accepted sense of the terms. And it does not require a great deal of penetration to see that Dr. Fairhurst is right in his conviction "that theistic evolution destroys the Bible as the inspired book of authority as effectively as does atheistic evolution." Like naturalistic evolution it teaches that it required millions of years to produce the present habitable world; and that God did not create the various species of plants and animals, and that, so that they produced their own kind; that man, at least on his physical side, is a descendant of the brute and therefore began his career on a low level; that there has been no fall in the Biblical sense of the word, but only repeated lapses of men in their upward course; that sin is only a weakness, resulting from man's animal instincts and desires, and does not constitute guilt; that redemption is brought about by the ever-increasing control of the higher element in man over his lower propensities; that miracles do not occur, either in the natural or in the spiritual world; that regeneration, conversion, and sanctification are simply natural psychological changes, and so on. In a word, it is a theory that is absolutely subversive of Scripture truth.

Some Christian scholars of the present day feel that Bergson's theory of *Creative Evolution* commends itself to those who do not want to leave God out of consideration. This French philosopher assumes an *elan-vital*, a vital impulse in the world, as the ground and animating principle of life. This vital principle does not spring from matter, but is rather the originating cause of matter. It pervades matter, overcomes its inertia and resistance by acting as a living force on that which is essentially dying, and ever creates, not new mater-

ial, but new movements adapted to ends of its own, and thus creates very much as the artist creates. It is directive and purposive and yet, although conscious, does not work according to a preconceived plan, however that may be possible. It determines evolution itself as well as the direction in which evolution moves. This ever creating life, "of which every individual and every species is an experiment," is Bergson's God, a God who is finite, who is limited in power, and who is seemingly impersonal, though Hermann says that "we shall, perhaps, not go far wrong in believing that he will be 'the ideal tendency of things' made personal." Haas speaks of Bergson as a vitalistic pantheist rather than a theist. At any rate, his God is a God that is wholly within the world. This view may have a special appeal for the modern liberal theologian, but is even less in harmony with the narrative of creation than theistic evolution.

In the light of the above quotation, which is also a true setting forth of what the late Dr. H. Bavinck writes in his "*Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Reformed Dogmatics)", we may safely conclude that the theory of evolution stands condemned because of its utter failure to prove anything. And it is surely unnecessary for us to go into details as far as the various conceptions of this theory are concerned.

DAYS OR PERIODS

One can hardly deny the importance of this subject. If it be true, and it is, that the theory of evolution, however miserably impotent and unsuccessful it may be, is universally taught in the schools and colleges throughout the world, the fact remains that it is generally taught in the Christian schools of today that the days of Genesis 1 are not to be understood as days in the limited sense of the word, as consisting of twenty-four hours, but as long periods of time.

The theory that the days of Gen. 1 are not days but periods of thousands of years is known as the concordistic theory. Writing in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, pages 153-154, on the consideration of the view that they were literal days, Berkhof writes as follows:

The prevailing view has always been that the days of Genesis 1 are to be understood as literal days. Some of the early Church Fathers did not regard them as real indications of the time in which the work of creation was completed, but rather as literary forms in which the writer of Genesis cast the narrative of creation, in order to picture the work of creation—which was really completed in a moment of time—in an orderly fashion for human intelligence. It was only after the comparatively new sciences of geology and palaeontology came forward with their theories of the enormous age of the earth, that theologians began to show an inclination to identify the days of creation with the long geological ages. Today some of them

regard it as an established fact that the days of Genesis 1 were long geological periods; others are somewhat inclined to assume this position, but show considerable hesitation. Hodge, Sheldon, Van Oosterzee, and Dabney, some of whom are not entirely averse to this view, are all agreed that this interpretation of the days is *exegetically* doubtful, if not impossible (one may well ask how anyone can possibly not be averse to this view if it be exegetically impossible. Any view, exegetically impossible, is certainly to be rejected.—H.V.) Kuyper and Bavinck hold that, while the first three days may have been of somewhat different length, the last three were certainly ordinary days. They naturally do not regard even the first three days as geological periods. Vos in his *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* defends the position that the days of creation were ordinary days. Hepp takes the same position in his *Calvinism and the Philosophy of Nature*. Noortzij in *Gods Woord en der Eeuwen Getuigenis*, asserts that the Hebrew word Yom (day) in Gen. 1 cannot possibly designate anything else than an ordinary day, but holds that the writer of Genesis did not attach any importance to the concept "day," but introduces it simply as part of a frame-work for the narrative of creation, not to indicate historical sequence, but to picture the glory of the creatures in the light of the great redemptive purpose of God. Hence the sabbath is the great culminating point, in which man reaches his real destiny. This view reminds us rather strongly of the position of some of the early Church Fathers. The arguments adduced for it are very convincing, as Aalders has shown in his *De Eerste Drie Hoofdstukken van Genesis*. This Old Testament scholar holds, on the basis of Gen. 1:5, that the term yom in Gen. 1 denotes simply the period of light, as distinguished from that of darkness; but this view would seem to involve a rather unnatural interpretation of the repeated expression "and there was evening and there was morning." It must then be interpreted to mean, and there was evening preceded by a morning. According to Dr. Aalders, too, Scripture certainly favors the idea that the days of creation were ordinary days, though it may not be possible to determine their exact length, and the first three days may have differed somewhat from the last three.

Although the author of the above quotation declares that Dr. H. Bavinck wrote that the latter three days were ordinary days, it is nevertheless true that Dr. H. Bavinck wrote the following, Vol. 11, page 463: "For upon that day must fall the creation of the animals, the planting of the garden, the proclamation of the trial command, the leading of the animals to Adam, etc. It may not be impossible, that all this took place in a period of time of some hours, but this is not probable." So, according to Bavinck it is hardly probable that these "days" of creation week were ordinary days. The Lord willing, we will continue with this in our following article.

We hold that Christ, when He died, had an object in view, and that object will, most assuredly and beyond a doubt, be accomplished. We measure the design of Christ's death by the effect of it. If anyone asks us: What did Christ design to do by His death? We answer that question by asking him another: What has Christ done? or: What will Christ do by His death? For we declare that the measure of the effect of Christ's love is the measure of the design of it.

— C. H. Spurgeon

ALL AROUND US—

What Happened in 1924?

Opposition to the 'Confession of 1967'

by Prof. H. Hanko

WHAT HAPPENED IN 1924?

"Church and Nation", a periodical of the Canadian Reformed Churches, recently quoted a decision which committed the Church to contact with the Christian Reformed Church. The decision reads:

Regarding contact with the Christian Reformed Church the Regional Synod decides upon the following: The Regional Synod, considering

- a. that in accordance with Scripture, unity must be sought with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,
- b. the fact that the churches sent an appeal to the Christian Reformed Church in 1962,
- c. the decision of the Synod of 1964 of the Christian Reformed Church, to appoint "a special contact committee to enter into communication with the Canadian Reformed Churches with a view to establishing a relationship with these churches",

decides to send an overture to the General Synod 1965 that deputies be appointed to seek contact with the "Special contact committee", appointed by the Synod 1964 of the Christian Reformed Church, that deputies be instructed to discuss those things which previously have hindered the unity according to the Word of God and those things which presently hinder this unity, that in this way all obstruction may be removed.

Evidently the main obstruction which hinders this unity is the decisions of the Christian Reformed Church on common grace. For there is an article appended to this decision written by Rev. H. De Bolster which deals with the matter of common grace. We are not as concerned, at present, with the article itself as much as we are concerned about the description by Rev. De Bolster of the history of our Protestant Reformed Churches. The pertinent part of the article we quote.

Why, you may ask, did the Synod of 1924 make these decisions? What is the history behind it all? In the years around 1924, two ministers in the Christian Reformed Church began to write about the subject of common grace and denied that there was such a thing as common grace. They accused particularly the Kuyperian thought of common grace, "gemene gratie" and pointed out that grace is that which we have in Jesus Christ, and that kind of grace is not common, not for every man, but for the elect only. The consequence of the writings of these two ministers was that they stated unhesitatingly, that God loves only the elect and He hates the reprobate and the very unfortunate part in it all was that without more they concluded that God only spoke in His Word to the elect and for the reprobate there was only a proclamation of damnation. You can guess that these writings of the

Revs. H. Danhof and H. Hoekema (should be "Hoeksema" — H.H.) caused some stir in the Church. For who is to say who are the elect, and the reprobate? In this way there was no room for the promise of the gospel as it is expressed in Canons of Dort II, 5: "Moreover the promise of the gospel is. . ."

As I said many questions were raised, and since these ministers continued their writings stressing that anyone who did not believe as they did was not reformed, the matter was brought to Synod, via protests from several consistories and classes. Some of these protests required strong expressions on the matter, some went too far in the opposite direction and defended common grace to such an extent, that one would almost believe that common grace is the same thing as special grace. And that is of course just as unreformed, if not more so. (Yet this is precisely what is being taught by some today in the Christian Reformed Church. H.H.) It was in that atmosphere that the Synod of 1924 expressed itself as carefully as possible and limited itself to the three points. To say it in a few words: the first point deals with a find (should be "kind" — H.H.) of grace which God shows to all men, the second point deals with the restraints of sin and the third speaks of civil righteousness.

Around the issue of common grace a split occurred in the Christian Reformed Church and the brethren, which could not go along with these three points, organized themselves as the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Now, I am well aware that much more could be said, but we want to give you at least an impression about 1924 and the existence of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Much could be said about the existence of these Churches, but I will limit myself by telling you that due to the consequences of the thoughts of Rev. Hoeksema many in these churches could no longer agree and when it was tried to make Hoeksema's thoughts binding in the Churches through the adoption of a "Declaration of Principles", a split occurred in that Church in 1953, when about two-thirds of the Protestant Reformed Churches broke away from Hoeksema and continued their existence. These Churches were known as "De Wolf group". This latter group opened discussion with our Church in 1957. Of course, 1924 was discussed in all details, and in 1959 our Church gave further explanation of the three points.

After quoting the decision of the Christian Reformed Church, De Bolster goes on:

Our Synod did all it could do to take away the impression as if the word grace was meant in the special sense in which we know it in Jesus Christ. The Synod grants that false impressions might have been created, but it was ready to admit this and changed it. The final

result of this expression has been that in 1962 the two Churches, the Christian Reformed Church and the Protestant Reformed Churches (De Wolf group), reunited and have been one again. It was a miracle. How often does that happen? Let us hope that in due time we may rejoice again when two Churches unite, because that (should be "they" — H.H.) agree as to the truth.

This is a very shoddy description of the whole history. It is inaccurate in its presentation of the history itself; it is equally inaccurate in its presentation of the doctrinal issues involved and of the doctrinal position of the Protestant Reformed Churches. But, since we cannot go into all this now, what is of special importance is the fact that those who left the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1953 did so because they wanted to maintain a general and conditional promise to all those who are baptized. By adopting this position they themselves made union with the Christian Reformed Church possible for they adopted a position essentially the same as the common grace of the Christian Reformed Church — especially the common grace of the first point which speaks of a general offer of the gospel. All this De Bolster omits in his article; but all this is (or ought to be) of special interest to the Canadian Reformed Churches.

We would advise the Canadian Reformed Churches to pay a little closer attention to the history and the doctrinal issues than the article of De Bolster allows. If this history is pertinent to union (and there is no doubt but that it is) they ought to have some clearer idea of that history than can be gained from De Bolster's distortions.

OPPOSITION TO THE "CONFESSION OF 1967"

The United Presbyterian Church, when it was still the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., departed several decades ago from the historic faith of the Westminster Confessions and began the long, weary march down the road to modernism. The troubles of this denomination have steadily increased since that time. At present the troubles have centered about a group of ministers and professors who, while promising at their ordination to uphold the confessions, have lied, for they disagreed with the confessions on fundamental points while they were promising to uphold them. This has created an intolerable situation. One might reasonably expect that the solution to this problem would be found in dismissing these lying officebearers and insisting on adherence to the creeds which form the doctrinal basis of the denomination. But this solution has not yet seen the light of day in this denomination. Rather the solution proposed (and exactly by the officebearers who cannot maintain the Westminster creeds) is to adopt a new confession called the "Confession of 1967" in which all the basic truths of the Westminster Confessions are denied or ignored. This proposed confession was brought to last year's General Assembly and will come again to this year's assembly with possible revisions and amendments. After the decision of this year's General Assembly, should the revision pass, the confession will be submitted to a

vote of presbyteries. Then, if two-thirds of the presbyteries approve, formal adoption will take place at the assembly meeting of 1967.

The new confession differs radically from the Westminster Confessions on all points of doctrine. But the controversy has swirled about several points. The new confession omits references of any kind to Christ's deity; it not only omits, but, by implication denies, the infallibility of Scripture; it emphasizes rather reconciliation — but a reconciliation of *society*, which, in turn, becomes the basis for a social program of the Church.

Evidently the confession, if and when adopted, will not be adopted without a fight. Opposition to the new confession is growing. Most recent opposition is to be found in a two-day meeting which was held in Chicago. This meeting was organized by "Presbyterians United for Biblical Confession", a conservative group who are concerned about the loss of the doctrinal heritage of the Church.

According to *Christianity Today*, the main question at Chicago was whether the new confession is so hopelessly heretical that conservatives ought to fight to destroy the whole thing, or whether the confession can be salvaged by amendments. The issue is not yet, evidently resolved. And, regardless of the outcome of this problem, the conservatives will still have to face the problem of what to do with officebearers and professors who have promised to uphold the doctrines of the Westminster Confessions but who deny all these doctrines consistently.

Anyone who has read the new "Confession of 1967" ought to know that there is absolutely no point in trying to salvage the thing through amendments. It is indeed too hopelessly heretical. If any semblance to the heritage of the truth is to be maintained, it will have to be thrown out.

But the whole point is that the new confession is being proposed by liberals who are intent on getting rid of the Westminster Confessions. The adoption of this new confession is merely a ploy to soften the blow of destroying the binding force of the great Westminster creeds. What needs to be done therefore is to return to the Westminster Confession, firmly reaffirm its truth, and insist that all officebearers and professors adhere strictly to it upon pain of dismissal from office. Short of this there is no hope for the conservatives who are trying to retain the heritage of the faith.

Is there still strength enough in the United Presbyterian Church to do this? Only time will tell.

* * * *

A brief note as to how far the Presbyterian Church has gone in some instances: The 157-year-old Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church recently featured a concert of sacred music starring Duke Ellington, jazz pianist and his orchestra and Bunny Briggs, a dancer. The latter sang a Christmas carol especially written by Ellington. A sample of the lyrics of Ellington's "Genesis, In the Beginning God." was: "In the beginning. . . / No mountains, no valleys, / No bottom, no topless, / No symphony, no jive, / No Gemini 5 . . ."

Can there be hope of reform under these circumstances?

BOOK REVIEWS—

The Anatomy of Anti-Semitism

Christian Counseling and Occultism

"The Anatomy of Anti-Semitism, And Other Essays On Religion And Race". James Daane. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 84 pages. \$1.45 paperback.

Although somewhat revised, these essays originally appeared in either *Christianity Today* or *The Reformed Journal*. The one exception is the last essay in the book on the *New Morality*. Although the title of the book is "The Anatomy of Anti-semitism," only the first article deals with this subject. The second essay deals also with the broader question of race relations including the Negro. The third essay, entitled "At The Cross," touches only incidentally upon the place of the Jews in God's work and speaks of the cross from the viewpoint of God's election—particularly of Christ. The fourth essay "The Glory of God" speaks in general of the Christian's calling to emulate Christ in His perfect self-sacrifice on the cross. The last essay deals, as we said, with "The New Morality".

Dr. Daane is a lucid and interesting writer; and this is evident also from this short book. His insights into various vexing problems are also interesting and stimulating. Whether one always agrees with Dr. Daane or not, he is worth reading.

As far as the content of these essays are concerned, particularly the essays on anti-semitism and "The Glory of God" were good and struck this reviewer favorably. On the question of race-relations, one could wish that the author would sound a warning against the strong tendencies of our times to bring the Church into the arena of social problems to solve these problems in a social context.

In discussing the place of the Jews in the purpose of God, Dr. Daane makes the following interesting observation: "And the future may disclose that the stirrings in the Israeli-Arab world are far more decisive for the future history of the world than the movement of World Communism."

Dr. Daane has written extensively on his view of the doctrine of election. He speaks of it also more than once

in this brief book. With his view of election I cannot agree; and there is no question about it but that it is not historically Reformed, nor is it Scriptural. One quote especially puts him seemingly in the camp of those who maintain conditional election: "The critical question is not to ask in the abstract, apart from the Cross, whether I *am* one of God's elect, but whether in terms of the Cross I *am willing* to be one of his elect."

Prof. H. Hanko

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING AND OCCULTISM, by Dr. Kurt E. Koch; Kregel Publications, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1965; 299 pages; \$4.95. (Translated from the German by A. Petter.)

Dr. Koch, a minister in the State Church in Germany, has, according to the jacket, "given a lifetime to a special study and ministry with those suffering from demon possession and occult entanglement." This book is, as the title suggests, a handbook to guide the minister in counseling those who are involved in every form of occult entanglement. The author discusses the whole field of occultism including extra-sensory perception, spiritism, necromancy, table lifting, clairvoyance, astrology, magic, spooks and demon possession. He discusses all these aspects of occultism not only from the medical and psychological point of view, but mainly from the theological and pastoral viewpoint.

To whatever extent one may agree with the author's conclusions (this reviewer is not prepared to accept all of the conclusions by any means) this book is a thorough treatment of the entire field. The author includes many case studies and shows a thorough knowledge of his subject and of the problems involved. His evaluation of many of these problems is, on the whole, quite balanced.

There are several interesting and important points which the author makes again and again throughout the book. One is that all occult practice in every form is a violation of the first commandment (by which the author evidently means both the first and

second commandment, following the division of the law made by Roman Catholicism) and is therefore a most serious sin punished in the line of generations—"I will visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me...." Another point is that every single aspect of occult activity is completely under the control of Satan and the forces of hell which bring the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of Christ into open and perpetual and fierce warfare. Hence there is in any kind of occult practice a most terrible threat to the spiritual life of the Christian. He warns again and again that the Christian must flee from all these things, must detest them with his whole being and must remember that they constitute a constant peril to his soul. This includes what are sometimes considered innocuous participation in mind reading, table lifting, automatic writing, etc.

Another point which is worth the attention of ministers is that he warns ministers to mind their own business and deal only with the spiritual needs of their sheep without trying to play the part of psychiatrist, psychologist and medical doctor.

In treating these occult practices the author posits an unacceptable dualism forgetting that also hell's powers are under the sovereign control and direction of God. But his clear and sharp description of the battle waged between the powers of the kingdom of the devil and the kingdom of Christ with the victory of Christ assured is important.

While the book may be of some help to those who must work with problems in this field, its use for laymen is limited by the technical language. This reviewer finds himself unable to understand some of the technical problems and to weigh the evidence in support of the author's contentions.

Further the book is marred by many typographical errors and by occasional clumsy and involved sentence structure in the translation.

Prof. H. Hanko

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

January 15, 1966

The call to Edgerton has been declined by the Rev. G. Lanting, pastor of Holland. At this writing, Hudsonville had not received a decision on its call to the Rev. J. Kortering, who had requested a week's extension. The Rev. R. C. Harbach's decision on the call to Randolph, Wisconsin was negative.

* * *

The Radio Committee has scheduled Rev. H. Veldman, of Grand Rapids, to be at the Reformed Witness Hour microphone in the month of February. The topic for February is, "Preservation and Perseverance", and will be treated in a series of four sermons specially prepared for radio broadcasting. This month's broadcasts will inaugurate a new system of radio preaching and is expected to be a pattern of radio work specifically designed to fit in with our Mission Program adopted by the '65 Synod. The Mission Board's recommendations adopted then are in part, "We should have a certain goal in mind.... to emphasize in unmistakable terms the message we.... have and proclaim in distinction from and over against all other churches and their messages.... Have the radio committee adopt various general and pertinent subjects to be treated in the broadcasts, and assign preachers to deal systematically and pertinently with such subjects." This newly adopted plan of action also includes a change in advertising our radio work and its specific message amidst the present-day Babel of radio voices.

* * *

Rev. C. Hanko, of Redlands, Calif., has been scheduled to lecture in our church in Hull, Iowa, Jan. 10. The program was sponsored by the Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed School Society. The subject of the lecture was, "The Need for Our Own School." This assignment was possible because Rev. Hanko's attendance at a committee meeting in the area.

* * *

Oak Lawn's Tuesday evening catechism class is beginning a comparative study of the Belgic Confessions and the Westminster Confession.

* * *

Rev. and Mrs. Vos vacated Hudsonville's parsonage Jan. 12, moving across the street to their retirement home. This will give the Building Committee opportunity to give the parsonage the usual between-tenants redecorating. The Jan. 16th bulletin carried a "hearty thanks" from Rev. and Mrs. Vos for "the wonderful assistance" given by their people in that move.

* * *

Did you attend the Mission Board's sponsored lecture at First Church in Grand Rapids Jan. 27? This

was the first of a planned series; the subject: "The Divine Foundation: The Infallible Scriptures". The series of lectures is being sponsored by a committee appointed by the Mission Board and is adapted to serve as a follow-up of the Reformation Day Rally held in the city's Civic Auditorium. The Board's object is to reach a broad audience from our Reformed community not yet acquainted with the distinctive Reformed character of our Protestant Reformed theology. Plan to attend the entire series and invite your friends from other churches to share these truths with you.

* * *

Two families, including six children, were received into the fellowship of our denomination by Redlands accepting them into their membership as announced in the Dec. 26 bulletin. And, in addition to those listed last time, Redlands' congregation witnessed the installation of their newly elected office bearers on Sunday morning, Jan. 2. Rev. Hanko's sermon was based on I Peter. 5:1-4, under the theme, "The Calling to Feed the Flock".

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Almost all of our bulletins now carry denominational news, especially that of trios, calls, etc., and those results—much sooner than you can find them on this page!

* * *

The Protestant Reformed High School Circle scheduled a Jan. 24 meeting at Southwest Church. Miss Agatha Lubbers was to speak on, "Toward a Protestant Reformed Philosophy of Education."

* * *

Did you enjoy the picture and story of Forbes's new church edifice in our Nov. 15 issue? We come to you—*pastors and/or clerks* of all our churches: Will you please send the editor of this page a good black-and-white snapshot of your church, and a short history thereof? We would especially appreciate this pictorial information from you who have recently built or bought new property. Your pictures will be published in the order that they arrive at this desk. Our denomination is so small that it is more like a family, so let your brethren and sisters learn more about you so that we may share your joys and thereby experience in a small measure the communion of saints. Can we count on you?

* * *

A coincidence noted in Doon's Jan. 2 bulletin: Rev. Decker, like Rev. Hanko in Redlands, also chose I Peter 5:2-4 for his Installation of Office Bearer's sermon on Sunday morning.

... see you in church.

J.M.F.