

The
Standard
Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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"All Diligence In Observing...."

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Surrounded by those who constantly exhibit defects of characters and conduct, if we yield to a complaining and impatient spirit, we shall mar our own peace without having the satisfaction of benefiting others.

-- Selected

MEDITATION—

Jehovah-Nissi, Our Banner

by Rev. M. Schipper

"And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi: For he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Exodus 17:15, 16

A great world war!

The battle of the ages!

Not the battle that is waged among the nations, and fought with guns and tanks, with ships and planes, with bombs and death-dealing explosives! Though such warfare has marked the history of the world. Though war and rumors of warfare are always present with us; and, according to God's prophetic Word, will continue to be

with us to the end of the world. Such is not the warfare of which the text speaks!

Rather is it a spiritual battle!

The antithetical battle of darkness versus the light, of evil versus the good, of sin against righteousness, of the world against the church, of Belial against Christ, of Satan against God! A battle which began at the very dawn of history when man came under the

spell of Satan, and fell from his high estate, rebelling against God. A battle which has continued ever since, and is perhaps its hottest today. A battle in which the children of God, the Church of Christ, are deeply involved. A battle which must be fought throughout this calendar year, and all other years the Lord ordains shall follow. A battle which Jehovah Himself wages from generation to generation against Amalek! In which He privileges us to have a part!

In this battle, as in every other battle, there is a rallying banner!

There is a cause around which men rally, be it good or evil, righteous or wicked, a principle, an objective, that moves men to fight together to gain a common victory. So in this battle of the ages there is such a banner under which we fight!

Jehovah-nissi!

That is, Jehovah is my banner!

My standard is Jehovah!

* * *

A continual warfare!

From generation to generation!

The Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek!

The Lord against Amalek!

But who is Amalek? Was he of the generations of Esau? Esau, we read in Genesis 36, had two sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah his wife, and Reuel the son of Bashemath, another wife of Esau. And Eliphaz, Esau's son, had a concubine Timna by name, who bore unto him Amalek. Thus Amalek was a grandson of Esau, Jacob's brother. Or, was Amalek one who lived much earlier, at the time when Chedorlaomer and his armies came to fight against the cities of the plain, chiefly Sodom and Gormorrah, in the days of Abraham and Lot? Amalek, who is described by Balaam (Numbers 24:20) as the first of the nations? Or, are we to conceive of a combination of these two, as the adversary spoken of in the text? It is not impossible that the latter possibility is the correct one. And if this is so, you have a typical figure of the very nature of the Antichristian world-power of which Scripture often speaks, and which shall be revealed in the days of the personal Antichrist. His kingdom, too, shall be a combination of the carnal seed of the church (Esau) and the world!

At any rate, Amalek, according to the context, initiates an attack upon Israel at Rephidim. No doubt the Lord had put a fear in the heart of Amalek for the children of Israel. Israel's deliverance under the mighty hand of Jehovah through the Red Sea had been quickly publicized throughout the land of Canaan, whither the children of Israel were to be brought. But before Israel had opportunity to invade Canaan, Amalek is moved to go out to meet Israel at Rephidim, near Horeb.

And you know the battle that ensued! Joshua was appointed to captain the Lord's host and to fight Amalek. When Moses' hands were raised, Israel prevailed; but when his hands were down, Amalek prevailed. And so Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands to the going down of the sun. And the Lord gave to

Israel the victory over their opponent. Amalek was discomfited and put to flight!

And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. The Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation!

Typical warfare!

Type it is of the warfare that rages through out the ages!

The war between the world and the church!

The antithesis!

Not to be conceived of as a tug-of-war! The outcome of which is in the balance! One moment the victory goes one way, and at another moment it swings to the other side! Nor is it so that the church is a mighty power that stands over against the world, another mighty power, in which combat the outcome is uncertain! Nor is it so that though the church will ultimately be victorious, she is to be conceived of as suffering tremendous losses in her battle against the mighty forces of the world! Such cannot be the meaning of the antithesis!

Rather, the church is of the thesis!

And God is the thesis!

He is light, and there is no darkness in Him whatever! He is the truth, and cannot lie! He is righteous, and there is no unrighteousness in Him! He is holy, and there is no corruption in Him! He is the sum total of infinite perfections, and there is nothing in Him to mar that perfection! He is fixed, established, set in the meridian of His own light Being! He is the thesis!

And the church is of the thesis! She is made to be light in the world! Unto her is given all the graces of Christ Jesus! And she is set by God in the very midst of the world to let her light shine! A glorious church which radiates the virtues of her Redeemer!

The antithesis is what opposes the thesis! While God is the thesis, and His people are of the thesis, He also wills the antithesis, in order that He may hate it, and use it as a background upon which to reveal His own glory! He is the God also of the antithesis! He creates light, but also the darkness! He makes peace, and creates evil! He raises up Pharaoh in order to reveal His power in him. He anoints Cyrus to be His servant to bring His ransomed people back to their own land! He makes Amalek, in order that He may carry on a warfare that goes on from generation to generation! The antithesis must serve the Thesis!

Yet the antithesis must offer opposition! It opposes the light, because it is darkness! It opposes the truth, because it is of the lie!

And so, because the church is of the Thesis, she is in continual warfare so long as she is in the world! Never can light and darkness agree! Always the church speaks the truth in the midst of the lie!

And nowhere does this battle become so intense as within the church itself! In the visible church comes to manifestation a carnal seed! That carnal element comes under the same influences as the spiritual seed. Intellectually they understand the truth. They have the

same catechetical instruction, sit under the same preaching, witness and even participate in the same sacraments. But they love not the truth with all their hearts! They do not love God and His Christ. They hate His people, and persecute them! They love the world, the things of the world, the philosophy of the world; and very easily they join forces with the world.

Indeed, the church's main controversy is not with the evils of the world, though she opposes all that is evil in the world! But her main controversy is within, against heretical doctrines and practices as evidenced in the carnal element. Sometimes this controversy is over apparently trivial matters! In the Arian controversy it was over a little letter (i) which spelled the difference between accepting or rejecting the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. And so it was with all the controversies since! Always it is the question respecting the truth: Is God God, or isn't He? Is He sovereign, or isn't He? Is the Bible His infallible Word of revelation, or isn't it? Against these and many more of Satan's lies the church is called to battle! And the battle is never finished! It goes on from generation to generation!

Continual battle!

From generation to generation! Not only of the generations of the people of God, but also of the generations of the wicked! As the one develops, so does the other! Side by side they take their place throughout history, and in the end we shall see the highest possible development of both! The powers of evil that shall finally assail the church, shall be the highest possible development of man without God, the man of sin, whose number is 666. And with him the Lord shall do battle through His church, the great battle of Armageddon!

* * *

A rallying banner!

For this continual battle, the Lord has given a rallying banner!

Symbol that unites the forces of light in a common cause!

Visible symbol representing an invisible reality. Such is the significance of a banner! Many banners there are in the world that serve the same purpose. The American flag, with its thirteen stripes and fifty stars, in red, white, and blue, is the symbol that unites the peoples of our country in a common cause. Each organization in the military has its own banner or ensignia. The Roman soldier followed his standard bearer into battle. In the battle the soldier keeps his eye on the banner lest he stray from his command. So, all who belong together have a rallying point. And standing together under their banner, they realize their purpose!

Jehovah-nissi!

Our banner!

Literally, Jehovah is my banner! Or, my banner is Jehovah! The altar of Moses was a visible symbol of the truth that Jehovah is He round Whom Israel rallied. A memorial to remind Israel that He was Israel's God Who fought Israel's battles. It was Jehovah, their Covenant God Who carried on the warfare with Amalek from generation to generation!

Our rallying banner is the Truth!

The truth that God is God! Absolute Sovereign is He! There is no God beside Him! The truth that Jehovah is the God of our salvation! Our Covenant God Who saves us from beginning to end! Unconditionally, without our aid, He saves us through Christ Jesus! Though He privileges us to stand in the battle, and to share in the victory, the battle is His and the victory is His! Of God Who showeth mercy!

Scripture and the Confessions!

Scripture as interpreted in our Confessions!

That is our banner!

The visible attestation of the truth! That is it with which God fights against Amalek! With it He arms us to fight against all the forces of evil! For us who are Protestant Reformed people that banner is the Word of God as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity and interpreted in the Declaration of Principles! This is the banner of Jehovah round which we rally today!

And rally we must!

Many today rally round a different banner! Not the truth, but the lie! Not the banner of Jehovah, but of Amalek!

Many today do not rally round any banner, and do not fight, or so they imagine! To them peace is sweeter, the peace of the cemetery! Controversy to them is a bad word! But in reality, they are under the banner of Amalek! There are really only two banners, that of Amalek, or that of Jehovah! In the spiritual battle you can only be under one banner or the other. If you are not under that of Jehovah, you are under that of Amalek!

By the grace of God we are under the banner of Jehovah!

Not to gain, you understand, the victory! We do not fight for victory, we have it!

But to taste the victory which we have through our Lord Jesus Christ! In Him we are more than conquerors, because in the battle we lose nothing, and our very opponents are our servants that must assist us to the crown! When Amalek shall have been completely vanquished, the Church Triumphant shall be glorified!

Round that Banner let us rally throughout this year of our Lord 1966!

Martin Luther once said: "I am much afraid the universities will prove to be the great gates to hell, unless they diligently labor to explain the Holy Scriptures and engrave them upon the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not unceasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt."

EDITORIAL—

“All Diligence In Observing...”

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Every time that New Year's Day falls on Saturday there is a comparatively widespread tendency in our churches, — sometimes proceeding no farther than an expression of dissatisfaction, but sometimes translated into action, — a tendency, namely, to disregard Article 67 of our Church Order and to cancel either the New Year's Eve service or the New Year's Morning service.

That tendency occasions this editorial.

First of all, let me remove the impression that I am unaware of the usual arguments that are brought up to support this tendency. My readers themselves have probably already marshalled them. I am also quite aware of them. They run somewhat as follows. When New Year's Day falls at the end of the week, if we follow the usual custom, we will have worship services on Friday night (New Year's Eve), on Saturday morning (New Year's Morning), and then again twice on Sunday. That means “church” four times in less than three full days. Consistories can probably add to that the fact that for one reason or another, — legitimate or illegitimate, — these services are not as well attended as they might be. And perhaps ministers can add to that the argument that this is a killing pace: to prepare and deliver four good sermons in the space of less than three days, and that too, at a very busy time of the year. Besides, it is probably argued, these church holidays are rather artificial in character and non-Biblical, so that there is no direct and positive Biblical ground for having divine worship on these days. Moreover, as a practical matter, we can just as well eliminate at least the Saturday morning service and celebrate the beginning of the New Year on Sunday morning, January 2. Furthermore, those churches which have no pastor of their own can probably add to this the fact that it is difficult to get supply for their pulpits and that it is difficult, if not impossible, to find reading sermons for special occasions of this nature, let alone the fact that it is not very pleasant, to say the least, to have reading at a special service.

Thus the arguments run.

And I make the point of this editorial in spite of these arguments and in spite of the fact that I am well aware of them.

Why?

First of all, negatively, because these arguments have no weight whatsoever. Personally, I have a goodly measure of sympathy for these arguments. I have always felt that the occasions of New Year's Eve and New

Year's Morning are, perhaps more than any other holidays mentioned in Article 67, rather artificial occasions. And the artificiality of New Year's Morning worship is rather complicated by the common custom of installing new elders and deacons on that occasion. For that reason I also favor waiting with that installation until the first Sunday of the New Year, when a sermon befitting the occasion can be preached.

Nevertheless, the arguments as such have no weight when the question of holding services on these occasions is under consideration. Why? Because under Article 67 the consistories simply have no choice in the matter. The article does not read: “The churches shall observe, *if they see fit....*” It does not even read: “The churches shall observe.....Old and New Year's Day *ordinarily.*” It reads: “The churches shall observe, in addition to the Sunday,.....Old and New Year's Day.” Period! Consistories, therefore, have no option in the matter.

In the second place, this is very definitely sealed by Article 86 of our Church Order, which reads: “These articles, relating to the lawful order of the church, have been so drafted and adopted by common consent, that they (if the profit of the churches demand otherwise) may and ought to be altered, augmented or diminished. However, no particular congregation, classis (or synod), shall be at liberty to do so, but they shall show all diligence in observing them, until it otherwise ordained by the general synod.”

That settles the matter: “...they shall show all diligence in observing them, until it be otherwise ordained by the general synod.”

That is, that settles the matter from a negative point of view, and technically. Under our Church Order, no consistory has the right to cancel these services. There can be no question about that.

One may argue that this is unreasonable, that it is legalistic, that precedent has been set in this regard, that no consistory has ever been “called on the carpet” for disregarding this rule. One may also argue that there are several other articles in our present Church Order that are not observed, that, in fact, cannot be observed, that are dead letters. All of these arguments do not change Articles 67 and 86; and one violation does not justify another. These articles have been drafted by common consent, and all our churches are bound by them voluntarily.

I can imagine someone saying: “Well, if that's the

way you feel about it, why don't you make a 'case' of it?"

That is not my point, especially not in the light of the fact that our churches have "winked at" this matter for some years.

Neither is my point that our Church Order should undergo a general revision. Personally, I do not feel that the time is ripe for such a general revision; and I do not care to copy the example of other Reformed churches in that regard.

My point is that there is a certain danger in this tendency.

That danger is, in the first place, that this kind of action tends to breed contempt for our Church Order. For, after all, if one article can be disregarded, why cannot another, more important, article also be disregarded at the whim of the local consistory?

That danger is, in the second place, that we depart from good order. Good order would be that if any consistory feels that there should be more latitude in Article 67, that consistory brings the matter to the Synod by way of overture. This is very simple. The insertion of the word "ordinarily" in Article 67 would solve the problem. Or, if it is undesirable to change the article itself, let an overture ask for a decision of Synod to be attached to Article 67 as a footnote, such as we have under many of our articles.

But by all means, let us observe good order in the churches. And that means: maintain the Church Order, and observe it, as long as it is not otherwise ordained by the general synod.

To do less than that is independentism.

And independentism ends in anarchy; it is destructive of true denominational unity.

EDITORIAL—

The Nature of the Atonement: Limited or General?

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

SCRIPTURE AND SATISFACTION

We are busy discussing and describing the nature of the atonement in connection with the question whether or not the atonement is in its very nature limited. Dr. Daane, in treating the issues of the Dekker Case, denies that the atonement is limited in its very nature and, on the contrary, claims that the atonement is in its very nature unlimited.

However, although Dr. Daane wrote several articles on this subject, he failed to do what he most certainly should have done, that is, describe the nature of the atonement. Surely, if a theologian wishes to maintain the proposition that the atonement is in its very nature unlimited, then his very first duty is to describe that *nature* of the atonement. How otherwise can one determine whether or not that atonement is unlimited? But this, as I said, Daane failed utterly to do.

According to our Reformed confessions and according to Scripture, the atonement is in its very nature limited. This is the proposition I am busy maintaining and proving in this series of editorials. And in order to do so I am trying to demonstrate step by step what the nature of the atonement is, so that I may finally demonstrate that the atonement cannot be, because of its very nature, anything but limited, that is, for the elect alone.

The most fundamental element in the atonement, — such is the burden of our present discussion, — is sat-

isfaction. This is according to all our Reformed confessions, and I have shown this to be true by abundant reference to those confessions.

We now must face the question whether the Scriptures also teach this and whether, therefore, the teaching of our confessions is also the plain teaching of Holy Writ.

A very striking fact is that this term *satisfaction* which occurs so frequently in our confessions is not a Scriptural term as such. It does not occur in Scripture. It is a dogmatic term which is employed by our confessions and by Reformed theologians in order to explain and to give contents to the various Scriptural terms used for the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, one looks in vain for the term *satisfaction* in the Bible.

This does not mean, however, that this term is not a good one, nor that as far as its meaning is concerned *satisfaction* is not a Scriptural concept. The contrary is true. Every term which Scripture employs with respect to Christ's atonement contains this idea of satisfaction.

Before we investigate the various Scriptural terms for the atonement, let us face the question: what is satisfaction?

In answer to this question I wish to quote at length from an exposition of this concept by my late father in his "The Triple Knowledge," Volume II, pp. 13, ff.

Satisfaction is a term that expresses one of the main themes of Holy Scripture. The word denotes the same idea as the Dutch "voldoening," or, better still, "genoegdoening." It means "to do enough," "to make sufficient," to comply with a certain demand, particularly with respect to a debt accumulated or an offense committed. And the truth that God will have His justice satisfied is a theme that runs all through the Word of God from beginning to end. All through history God instructed His people in the truth of the necessity of satisfaction.

What is this satisfaction of God's justice? In general, satisfaction implies that a person has certain obligations with respect to another, that he has failed to fulfill these obligations, that he is in arrears, that he owes a debt, and that now he makes a full payment of that debt, and so restores the proper relationship between himself and him to whom he was obligated. Applied to our relation to God, this means that we have an unchangeable obligation to love Him. The obligation is a moral, ethical one. It never changes, for God does not change. Always He says to us: "Love Me with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." Never may we do anything that is not motivated by the love of God. If we love Him we are the objects of His favor. The moment we fail in the payment of this love-debt, we are no longer in His favor, but become the objects of His just wrath. This cannot be emphasized too strongly and repeated too often. Nothing can take the place of this love of God to make us the objects of His favor. Nothing else than this love of God with all our being is righteousness. All our imaginary piety, our Phariseism, our work-righteousness, our willingness "to do something for God," our humanitarianism, is of no avail to take the place of this one obligation to love God. To love God with our whole heart, to love Him in all that we do, in the very thought of our mind, in every deed we perform, with every step we take on life's pathway, in every relationship of life, — that is our sacred and unchangeable obligation before God. And nothing else can possibly take its place.

In that obligation we have failed and do fail continuously. Hence, we are in arrears, we are in debt with God! And let us not be deceived by this word *debt* so that, perhaps, we think of our relation to God in terms of a financial obligation. A man may owe a debt of money and think little of it. He is going to pay it sometime, at his convenience! And as long as his creditor does not trouble him too much, there is little for him to worry about. But with our relation to God this is quite different. We owe a love-debt. And our creditor is not someone who lives far away from us, and occasionally knocks at our door to demand payment, but he is the living God, the Lord of heaven and earth, in Whom we live and move and have our being! He is the Lord of life and of death. In His favor there is light and life and joy; in His displeasure there is darkness and death and everlasting desolation. And He is not far from us. He surrounds us. He encompasses our whole being. And the moment we fail to love Him, that moment He is terribly displeased, filled with holy and just wrath against us. He makes us feel His just wrath. He punishes us with death. He makes us unspeakably miserable. He does this, not in some future state only, but now, at once, the moment we are in debt and fail to love Him. His hand is heavy upon us, and by His wrath we pine and die. But let us not forget, that even so, even while He pursues us and encompasses us

in His wrath, and inflicts the punishment of death upon us, He still demands: "love Me!" It is quite essential to understand this clearly, in order that we may comprehend somewhat the terrible reality of satisfaction. Our obligation is to love God Who is GOD! We must love Him as He is, because He is good! He is good when we love Him and He causes us to taste His blessed favor. But He is good, too, when we fail to love Him and He causes us to taste His goodness by inflicting upon us the punishment of death, by making us unspeakably miserable! Hence, we must still love Him, even while He lays His heavy hand upon us! To love God was our obligation in Paradise, where man was surrounded by the favor of God. To love God remained his obligation when God executed the death sentence upon him, and he was driven out of paradise and from the fellowship of God. To love God is man's obligation even in the eternal desolation of hell. Even there God says to man: "Love Me as I reveal Myself to thee here in My righteousness and justice through the agonies which I cause thee to suffer in outer darkness!" The love-demand never ceases, never changes. The love-debt remains forever!

To understand the implication of satisfaction for sin we must bear in mind this unchangeableness of our love-debt to God. Not the mere bearing of the punishment for sin, even in hell, is satisfaction. Surely, the damned in hell fully suffer the punishment for sin in eternal death and desolation. Yet they never atone, they never make satisfaction for sin; their suffering never becomes a sacrifice that blots out sin and restores them to the favor of God. When capital punishment is inflicted upon a murderer, we may often read in our daily papers that the murderer atoned for his crime. But this is not correct. Justice satisfied itself by inflicting the punishment of death on the murderer, but the murderer did not atone for his crime. He did not offer his life. He did not willingly seek the punishment that he might atone. He probably sought the help of an attorney in order to escape the electric chair. But his life was taken away from him by force, against his will. His death is no satisfaction. So God will surely punish sin even with eternal desolation, and glorify Himself in the damnation of the wicked. But the suffering of hell is no satisfaction, for even there God's demand remains unchanged: "Love Me!" And this demand they cannot fulfill. Hence, the act of satisfaction is the payment of the love-debt to God as He reveals Himself to the sinner in the depth and darkness and unspeakable misery of hell! If there were a sinner that could perform this act of love, that could pass through the woes of eternal desolation, through the darkness of the depth of hell, and be motivated by the love of God, that sinner would satisfy the justice of God with respect to sin. Or, to express this truth more vividly still, if there were a man that would be so motivated by the love of God that he would seek that punishment, that for God's name's sake and to fulfill His righteousness would desire to descend into deepest hell, and realize that desire, — that man would make full satisfaction for sin. Such is the sinner's love-debt to God. He is obligated to say to God: "For thy righteousness' sake let all the billows of Thy wrath pass over me, and even then I shall love Thee!" If he performs this act of love He makes full satisfaction. And in the way of this full satisfaction he will be the object of the favor of God! And this satisfaction is absolutely necessary. The Arminian, who, because of his denial of limited atonement, cannot and does not maintain the truth of satisfaction, may claim

that God can accept something else instead of this perfect sacrifice of atonement, a tear, a prayer, a temporal affliction, an example, — but he misleads the sinner. The modernist may make light of this truth and speak of it mockingly as “blood-theology,” he only mocks at most dreadful realities. For God cannot deny Himself. He will have His justice satisfied. Satisfaction for sin is the indispensable condition to be restored to the favor of God.

Summing up, therefore, we may distinguish the following elements in the concept *satisfaction*:

- 1) Satisfaction implies an unchangeable obligation on the part of man to love God.
- 2) Satisfaction implies the rule of God’s justice, that He blesses and gives life to the righteous, that is,

to those who love Him, who fulfill the unchangeable demand to love Him perfectly, while He for His own name’s sake curses and punishes with everlasting desolation those who fail to meet that demand.

3) Satisfaction implies *debt*, that is, that man has failed to live up to God’s unchangeable demand of love, has fallen in arrears with respect to that demand.

4) Satisfaction implies the payment of that debt according to the demand of God’s justice, that is, the free, voluntary bearing of the full punishment of sin in loving obedience and for the sake of the righteousness of God.

And it is this satisfaction that is basic to every term which Scripture employs to describe the atonement.

ALL AROUND US—

God Is Dead?

Once Again—Christ’s Resurrection

Vatican II (Continued)

A Needed Reprimand

by Prof. H. Hanko

GOD IS DEAD?

There have always been men who with an ultimate arrogance pronounced the death sentence upon the living God. Nietzsche tried it; so did Voltaire. But these men were generally outside the Church. Again today men are doing the same. The difference is that these “death sentences” are not coming from atheistic Russia, but from theologians within the church.

The most outspoken advocate of this new movement is Thomas J. J. Altizer, professor of religion in Emory University, a Methodist school. He has been so outspoken with his view that he has shaken the church world badly.

A few quotations from a recent speech of his will demonstrate how open he is. (The quotations are taken from *Christianity Today*.)

We are now living in a time when the whole inherited body of our theological language is disappearing into the past and a new history is dawning in our midst before which theology is increasingly becoming speechless.

(The Christian can no longer) find security in an absolute sovereign God who exercises a beneficent and providential government over the world.

Theology must resolutely confine the Christian name of God to the past, and wholly refrain from proclaiming his redemptive presence in our historical present.

Only the death of God can make possible the advent of a new humanity.

Just as apocalyptic imagery centers upon the defeat of Satan or Antichrist, whose death alone ushers in the victory of the Kingdom of God, so contemporary thought and sensibility is rooted in an absolute negation of God, a negation which already promises to dissolve even the memory of God.

All America is called to freely accept and will the death of God.

To refuse the death of God and cling to his primordial image (is to have bad faith).

All this amounts to a very haughty and blasphemous assertion that there is no God. Altizer means to say that true religion must, in order to survive in our times, deny God’s existence and build a religion which is based upon man. To speak of God is pointless in our day; to believe in God is impossible when science has destroyed everything supernatural; to be saved does not require faith in God but only faith in man. We must dispose of all the truth of Scripture and found religion only upon man and this world.

All this hardly requires comment. Yet it is, I think, important to note that such blasphemy is the end of a rejection of God’s revelation — an inevitable end. When Scripture is abandoned as the written record of God’s revelation through Jesus Christ (either in whole or in part) the end has got to be the arrogant heresy of Altizer. And those who persist in tampering in any respect with Scripture do well to take warning.

One wonders sometimes how it is possible that the Lord withholds yet for a time His almighty hand of judgment. Here is a man, less than a speck of dust, standing before the face of the God of heaven and earth, living in God’s world, sustained by God’s hand, breathing God’s air, surrounded by countless displays of God’s majesty and glory, shaking his puny fist in the face of the Most High and boastfully pronouncing Jehovah dead. It makes one shudder.

But it is the *fool* who says in his heart, "There is no God."

ONCE AGAIN — CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

Paul spoke in his glorious chapter on the resurrection of the fact that Christ's resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. . . . And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." I Corinthians 15:14, 17.

Those who deny the Christian faith must of necessity deny the resurrection. And those who deny the resurrection must find some plausible explanation for the death of Christ on the cross and for the empty tomb in Joseph's garden. The empty tomb is the one historical fact which cannot be denied except by the foolishness of unbelief. It cannot be properly explained in any other way than by the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Yet all this does not mean that many have not tried it. Since the leaders of the Jews ordered the soldiers who had guarded Christ's grave to spread the lie that the disciples had stolen the body to today there have been many attempts made to give some satisfactory explanation for that empty grave. But all such explanations are fantastic inventions of unbelief more impossible to maintain than the resurrection itself. And they have been buried in history.

Now another such attempt has been made to explain the empty tomb while yet denying the resurrection. Hugh J. Schonfield, born of Orthodox Jewish parents, has recently written a book published in England in which he propounds what he calls a new theory. The book has been widely hailed.

In brief, he insists that Christ believed Himself to be the expected Messiah of history; and that He, with a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament prophecies, deliberately set out to fulfill these prophecies and carefully plotted His own suffering and death. He chose Jerusalem as the scene of His death, arranged for Judas to act as betrayer, plotted with Lazarus and Joseph of Arimathea the whole drama of Calvary. Cunningly, He chose the day of His death just prior to the Sabbath so that He would not have to be on the cross too long; arranged for the vinegar to be given Him because the vinegar was a narcotic which, when taken, induced a state of apparent death; arranged beforehand the binding with linen graveclothes and spices not as preparations for burial, but as medicine for His wounds, and planned to have His disciples aid Him in His reappearances to claim a resurrection. However, His plans went awry. For He did not anticipate the sword-thrust of the Roman soldier. The result was that, while He was still alive when taken from the cross, and while He even gained consciousness briefly after being carried away from Calvary, He died nonetheless. His disciples took His body from the tomb in Joseph's garden and buried it elsewhere in utmost secrecy.

This attempt to explain the empty tomb is really nothing new and not even as clever as other attempts which have been made in the past. Yet it shows that

Satan never wearies of trying to undermine the glorious truth of the resurrection upon which the faith of the Church rests. Over against all these silly attempts of unbelief, the Church still shouts victoriously with Paul: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

VATICAN II (Continued)

Much has already been written on the Second Vatican Council; and we may, no doubt, expect much more now that the Council has finished its work. For our own readers, Rev. Van Baren will continue his excellent series on the activities of the council in future issues of the *Standard Bearer*. We will not enter into any detail therefore on a discussion of these decisions. We offer here only a brief summary of some of the more important decisions which were made towards the end of the sessions — especially those which speak of the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and other religions.

Perhaps the most debated issue before the council was the issue of Christian liberty. This decision was to define the relation between the Roman Catholic Church and other religions in the light of the claim of the Church of Rome to be the only true Church. Rome has always insisted that no one had a right to believe any other faith but that which Rome herself taught; and that it was the Church's obligation to enforce this religion at the point of the sword if necessary. The result is that the Church of Rome possesses a long history of intolerance and overt persecution.

This issue was faced by the Council since it has become ecclesiastically fashionable to promote freedom of religion. The new decision softened the old stand somewhat, although not as much as some wanted. It declared that all men have the right to freedom of conscience in matters of worship (Which was quite a concession); but at the same time it also insisted that all men have the duty to embrace Catholicism once they recognize its truthful claims. In this same decision, the Council boldly ignored centuries of persecution and piously stated that the Church has always professed the principle of liberty of conscience. The graves of a thousand martyrs mock this assertion.

Another declaration entitled "On Non-Christian Religions" condemned anti-Semitism and asserted that the Jewish people as a whole cannot be accounted guilty for the crucifixion of Christ. Although many were disappointed that the decision did not include a statement acknowledging the Church's role in the past in anti-Semitism, this was enough to satisfy the Jews — and arouse the anger of the Arabs.

While the council made some decisions concerning internal reform (particularly the introduction of vernacular languages into the liturgy, and the increased role of the bishops in the rule of the Church) no essential changes were made in Romish doctrine. The Church remained fixed in its heretical dogmas which inspired and necessitated the Protestant Reformation.

This omission, while expected, will no doubt be overlooked by today's protestant theologians who are so eager to nestle closer to Rome. One went so far as

to say that were Martin Luther living today he would have been sufficiently satisfied with these decisions to remain within the Romish Church. Others speak of the favorable change in the "climate" of the Church; of the obvious fact that the Church "has become a people on the march—or at least a people which is packing its bags for a pilgrimage" and that we can assuredly look for more changes in the future.

But Rome remains Rome; and the need for maintaining the principles of the Reformation is as urgent today as it was 450 years ago.

A NEEDED REPRIMAND

As has been reported previously in the *Standard Bearer*, the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands are considering the advisability of joining the World Council of Churches. There is considerable sentiment within that Church favoring this venture.

At the 32nd General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church a communication was adopted to send to the Gereformeerde Kerken in which the General Assembly sharply criticizes this action.

The letter, unanimously adopted by the assembly, is a thorough piece of work. It discusses and analyzes

the structure of the World Council of Churches, examines the whole question of ecumenicity, develops the calling of the Church to seek the unity of the body of Christ as this calling is found in Scripture, and presents cogent reasons why fellowship with the World Council of Churches is impossible for those who wish to preserve the truth of God's Word.

The reason why the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church addresses itself to this problem of the Gereformeerde Kerken is that the two denominations are sister Churches. The implication is therefore very strongly made that should the Gereformeerde Kerken nevertheless join the WCC, it will be impossible to continue these sisterly relationships since the witness of the two Churches will no longer be identical. Thus the letter concludes with the words:

The Reformed Churches are respectfully urged to reject membership in the World Council of Churches and to maintain common witness with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to the unity of the body of Christ."

We cannot quote the letter here; but those pursuing their ecumenical dreams could profitably read it and the Gereformeerde Kerken would do well to pay attention to it.

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

BUCHMANISM

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

Hailed as a modern liberal Pentecostal movement, Buchmanism is strictly not an organization with an official membership. It is rather a "do-gooder" movement calculated to so change individuals, societies and nations as to convert mankind into one universal peace corps before the third world war annihilates humanity. In England it is known as the Oxford Group movement. In Switzerland it is known as Moral Re-Armament. It gets its nickname from Frank Nathan Daniel Buchman, of nominal Lutheran background. He was born in 1878 at Pennsburg, Pa. He died in Switzerland, August 1961, at eighty-three. His father was a brewer. He was educated at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa. and at the Lutheran Seminary in Mt. Airy, Philadelphia. He pastored the Church of the Good Shepherd in Overbrook, Philadelphia. At the Keswick (Victorious Life) conference in England he felt himself "religiously reborn." For a time, he worked at a YMCA post at Penn State College. He had also worked with Sherwood Eddy. He was lecturer in Personal Evangelism at Hartford Seminary. Through the years the Buchman fad developed a strong anti-Communist trend. The man himself preferred Fascism (Socialism)

to Communism. According to publicity reports, one of the converts to this cult was Mae West.

Buchmanism, along with Christian Science, Christadelphianism, Mormonism, Modernism, Seventh Day Adventism, Spiritism, Russellism and Theosophy, is another cult which denies the substitutionary atonement. It does not do this openly and directly, but rather employs the tactic of evasion. For its aim is to influence those who believe this doctrine rather than to offend them. Hence no doctrine is mentioned in the Buchmanite meetings in order not to upset anyone. But there could be no debate with this movement unless it would agree to face up to and express itself on the doctrine of the atonement.

Actually it has no vicarious atonement, but it does have vicarious sin-tasting. For one outstanding characteristic practice of the cult is that of "sharing," which consists in exchanging "religious experiences" (whoppers — RCH) with one another. This is simply the enjoying of each other's sins, an "if you tell me what you did, I'll tell you what I did" sort of thing. It is not surprising that this "experience-sharing" was called "sin-sharing." The change of name did not change the

nature of the practice. Buchmanites therefore do not have any remission of sins, but a reveling in sins. Modern psychologists would say that they are sub-conscious exhibitionists led by the libidinous drive. In this way, auricular confession is sneaked into the protestant church, as well as a morbid delight in sexual sins. Against all this we have the Scripture, "neither be partaker of other men's sins" (I Tim. 5:22), which means, "Be not *sin-sharers*!"

Another characteristic is its sickly mysticism evident in its so called "guidance." This consists in putting the brain out of gear, resting it in neutral every morning in complete silence, sitting thus with the mind blank and the intellect and will put off as much as possible in a state of suspended animation. Then with pencil and paper in hand, whatever "guidance" pops into the head may be written down to be preserved and followed for the day. One simply waits for the "inner voice" or the "inner light". One may readily imagine how that on certain days the only "guidance" the scratch-pad may record is, "Eat your oatmeal!" Who can place any confidence in this ouija-board method of guidance? He who reduces himself to a robot with a mental vacuum opens himself to the delusions of the devil. If an angel appeared before us while waiting (empty-headed?) for "guidance," and informed us that he had seen our name written down in the Lamb's Book of Life, we could never believe it, for the devil himself is "transformed into an angel of light" (I Cor. 11:14) to deceive us and to deter us from the practice of prayer and reading the Word of God. For there alone God has already spoken to His people. Guidance comes through the Scriptures by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit. But the experience of the mentally ill and the method of the Spiritists who seek impressions from the spirit world are here closely approached. Not the "mind of the Lord," but the "depths of Satan" are liable to be uncovered.

It is admittedly not prayer, this reducing oneself to a *tabula rasa*, a blank pad, in order to "tune in" on God. Buchmanites do not pray; they wait on God for "guidance." God gives this guidance in the form of a strong impression which makes one "feel led" what to do. People who can subject themselves to this insidious brain-washing or mind-voiding process will also be satisfied with such pet platitudes, the closest they come to biblical exposition, as, P, R, A, Y, which means Powerful Radiograms Always Yours. Or there is, J, E, S, U, S, which means Just Exactly Suits Us Sinners. Or F, A, I, T, H, means Forsaking All I Take Him. In keeping with this, Buchman summed up Christian experience in his Five C's: Conviction, Contrition, Confession, Conversion, Continuance. These superficial designations may just as well represent the system of humanism, or may serve to indicate the conviction of Saul, "I have sinned" (I S. 15:24; 26:21), or of Pharaoh, "I have sinned" (Ex. 9:27), or of Judas, "I have sinned" (Mt. 27:4). Contrition may remind us of Esau who carefully sought the blessing with tears, but found no place of repentance (Heb. 12:17). Confession is also forthcoming from Pharaoh who admitted, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are

wicked." Saul's confession was, "I have played the fool; I have erred exceedingly." Judas' confession was, "I have betrayed the innocent blood." All these wicked, reprobate men did as Judas, "when he saw that he was condemned repented himself" (Mt. 27:3). Note that "when." What a time for repentance! As to conversion, there was that of Simon the sorcerer, who, although he "believed", after a fashion, was nevertheless "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (Acts 8:13, 23). Then there is also Demas (II Tim. 4:10). As to continuance, think of the tares (Mt. 13:30) and the many false prophets which continue to the day of judgment (7:22).

Buchmanism denies all Christian doctrine, especially, as we have seen, the atonement, prayer, the guidance of the Holy Spirit according to Scripture, and so it also denies the church. The movement pretends to be a "First Century Christian Fellowship." But first century Christians did not form unorganized groups; they organized churches. They did not meet to hold "testimony meetings," or "sharing sessions," or to exchange "spiritual experiences." They "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). They "ordained them elders in every church" (14:23), "in every city" (Titus 1:5). They had ruling elders who administered the affairs of the churches according to Christian order. They had teaching elders who labored in the Word and Doctrine (I Tim. 5:17). Nor did the first century churches have hilarious house parties, stage plays proffering peace propaganda, and movie-films "to change the world." Nor did the apostolic church pretend to have a panacea for all nations, as Baha'ism does in world-socialism, and as Buchmanism does in world-democracy. None of the cults present even a cheap resemblance of the church. Buchmanism denies the New Testament ideal of the church, and the church which has come down through the ages. For this reason it inescapably denies history. That is why it is so anti-intellectual and anti-doctrinal. It ignores all great creeds and confessions of the church. It by-passes the development of Christian doctrine. It has no Christian experience based on doctrine. It has personal experience untrammelled with doctrine. It is humanism concocted by an admixture of ancient Pelagianism and modern pragmatism. That is, it believes it in the power of man to fight his way out of the paper bag of "misfortune," and that the only truth is the best way at the moment to accomplish that.

But in all fairness, are we not to admit that Buchmanism has its good points? It has, for example, emphasized the need for "individual changed lives." Members of the movement claim to be "life-changers." Do we not have a recognized good here? But the question is not one of change. We may readily grant that. The question is, What is the nature and significance of this change? Is it regeneration, or mere reformation? Is it a new creation, or merely a new form of will-worship? Is it by the operation of God, or the traditions of men? King Saul was a Buchmanite; he became a changed man. He received another heart, but not a new heart. He became another man, but not a

new man. He was not rid of his sins; he only changed his sins. Despite so much talk of life-changing, it is Buchmanite to deny the new birth. As one Gospel song has it, there is talk of "Ye must be born again, *again*," i.e., "a man ought to be born again every day." But such expressions usually are never brought out, except under point blank questioning. Then, as above, the new birth is admitted with one hand only to be immediately cast away with the other. Many people are at heart Buchmanite. They hate to accept the division of mankind into two classes—the saved and the lost. These people may be indeed changed, but not saved. They may be "revitalized" as they like to put it, but not born from above. There is no regeneration by the power of the Holy Spirit, according to which He raises us up from our spiritual death into eternal life, and translates us out of our natural darkness into His marvelous light, so that we believe the atoning work of Christ on the cross, shedding His blood in our place, and receive Him by a true faith. Then sin (although some sins may be exchanged for other, more respectable, sins) remains, the guilt of sin remains, and the soul still goes lost.

Isn't Buchmanism praiseworthy in its aversion to intellectually accepted doctrine to the neglect of exemplary life? Not at all, since it sees no need for "dogmatic theology." The Reformed Confessions to them are non-essentials. The "love of God and love of man are still the only essentials." Whether God may rightly be said to repent, whether Christ came to reconcile man to God, whether His death satisfied divine justice, whether God will receive us through faith and repentance, is all non-essential. These things may be true or not true. What is most essential is "the great and wonderful experience of conversion." Here is conversion without Christ, without atonement, without remission and without repentance! Conversion is not to Christ, but to man.

Are there not elements of truth in Buchmanism? Undoubtedly; the devil does not spread before the world an out-and-out black lie. He sprinkles the lie with glints of the truth. The Scripture itself recognizes any elements of truth in the heathen religions. There are remnants of the natural knowledge of natural things, and the natural knowledge of God in unregenerate men. (Job 32:8). They still have glimmerings of natural light (Jn. 1:9; Rom. 2:14). Yet Scripture also makes it clear that these false religions are the devil's caricatures of the living original in Christianity (Gn. 3:4; Jn. 8:44); and that any vestiges of the truth in men they are incapable of using aright and hold them down in unrighteousness.

Then do not the Buchmanites labor to reach the rich with "changed lives," to win not only the "down and outs," but also the "up and outs"? It is true that this does seem to be the cult of the rich. It seems to appeal to the theatre and ball-room crowd. Its meetings are often attended in evening attire, the women with ample exposure of bosom, back and arms, and the men in formal garb. It is likely that the meetings may also begin without prayer, and without Scripture reading. Why not? The movement does not pretend to be a church. It is nothing more than an ethical society. The various speakers may make not one reference to Scripture. Usually, mention is made of what the movement has done for them, or of the excitement and adventure afforded in the group or the fellowship enjoyed with kindred souls. Jesus Christ may be mentioned, but is not referred to as Lord, or as the Son of God, much less as "God over all blessed for ever."

There is nothing genuinely Christian about Buchmanism, for there is nothing distinctively Christian in it. Found to be thoroughly anti-theological, modernistic, religiously and politically liberal, it is the ancient Pelagianism out of the pit of hell coated with sociological veneer.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

The Election of Saul

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

And when Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

. . . the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken: and when they sought him, he could not be found.

I Samuel 10:20, 21

At last the time had come for Samuel to gather Israel together at Mizpeh and present to them their king. It had not been long after Samuel had called Saul aside and anointed him with oil; but for Saul it had seemed to be a long time, an almost interminable age

which dragged on from one thought-filled moment to another. And yet, as the time had drawn near, it had seemed short, altogether too short. Saul was afraid, he was virtually terrified.

At first the prospects of being king had been wonder-

ful to imagine, very really a fulfillment of his fondest dream. Before a non-religious man, he suddenly came to the excited conviction that Jehovah was real and the most wonderful being imaginable. In very fact, through a special bestowal of the Spirit of God, he had come himself to sing and dance and prophesy along with the sons of the prophets. Suddenly his whole attitude toward God and religion was changed, transformed; it had to be, God had appointed him king. In one sense though, Saul's discretion did not leave him; he knew better than to broadcast the real reason for his conversion, he kept it to himself that he was going to be king.

It was the uncle of Saul, seemingly a man of some insight into people, who saw immediately that there was something very much out of character in the way that Saul was acting. He felt that there was sure to be something more behind Saul's conversion than just a religious experience; Saul just was not acting as a man should who had come to meet foursquare with the reality of Jehovah — with the existence of sin and guilt and forgiveness. Carefully he tried to dig it out. The next time he met Saul, he dropped the simple question, "Whither went ye?"

Unsuspecting but carefully Saul answered him, "To seek the asses: and when we saw that they were no where, we came to Samuel."

The name Samuel immediately struck him as the key for which he was looking and quickly he queried, "Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you."

But Saul was not about to divulge his secret. He only replied, "He told us plainly that the asses were found." Smugly he kept the matter of the kingship to himself.

But time went on and it dealt harshly with Saul. At first the prospects of being king had seemed all wonderful. Gradually, however, as he continued to reflect, Saul began to realize that there was going to be much more to the office of king than just the glory. There would be responsibilities and duties to perform of every imaginable kind, and what did he know about these things that would be required of him as king? What did he know about judging the troubles of people? What did he know about leading an army? What did he know about governing a great nation? Hardly a day went by but there dawned upon him some different responsibility for which he was terribly unprepared. Day after day he felt the cold chill of fear settling more heavily upon his soul, and in the terror of it he stood alone. Saul indeed had undergone a certain conversion; but he had never come to understand and believe in Jehovah as the Savior and covenant God of his people. He had none of that faith which his successor of a later generation showed in a similar situation by going to the tabernacle and praying, "And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge the people, that I may discern between good and bad:

for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" Had Saul had such faith as that, matters might have gone quite differently. But that was not the kind of king Israel as yet wanted, and therefore the man to be given to Israel was not of that kind either. In his fear, Saul stood all alone with nothing to support him but his pride and ambition — poor comforters in a time of need.

When at last Samuel called the meeting at Mizpeh, it was like a doomsday closing in upon Saul — a doomsday which he knew that really he did not have the capital to meet. As all the people gathered together provisions to make the trip to Mizpeh, he had no choice but to go with them. To fail to go would have been too much of an indication that he knew more than others; and besides, he was far from ready to give up that which awaited him there. But he couldn't join in the jovial anticipation of the rest of the people. His stomach was tied up in too many knots for that. He had all he could do to maintain a fairly calm expression on his face. Already he felt himself put apart, separated from everyone else. There were thousands of people there at Mizpeh laying aside their provisions and hurrying over to where Samuel was calling the meeting. But Saul was terribly alone among them. He just couldn't get himself to go along with them but sat, huddled miserably amid the baggage. Saul was afraid — afraid for the responsibility which he knew was soon to be pressed upon him — but afraid at the same time that something might go wrong and he would not receive the royal office after all. No, Saul's ambition, his dream of many years was not by any means dead; for all his fear, he still wanted to be king more than anything else. It was just that there was within him still a certain naive honesty which would not allow him to forget that he was really incapable of the office. It made him miserable indeed.

The people of course knew nothing of the pathetic figure they were leaving behind them with the baggage as they hurried over to where Samuel stood. All was eagerness and anticipation. They were going to have a king. They were going to be like the other nations. There was excitement. There was laughter. There was good natured banter as each tribe affirmed as though with conviction what they faintly hoped within them — that the king would be from their number and so they would receive the ascendancy over the others. But in the end it didn't really matter as long as their nation could stand with the others having a man they could count as king and to whom they could give their allegiance.

It was a good natured crowd that slowly settled to silence as Samuel beckoned his intention to speak. It didn't even bother them too greatly when he began with a reprimand saying, "Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you: and ye have this day rejected your God, who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations; and ye have said unto him, Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by

your tribes, and by your thousands." It was really too bad that he had to be that way. How much nicer it would be if he could get into the spirit of the crowd and go along with them cheerfully. But Samuel was getting to be an old man, and he didn't understand the younger generation. They were impatient and wanted a change, and they weren't about to wait for it. There was no use fighting it. But Samuel was that way. He had really said all of this before, and they could expect that he would be sure to repeat it. But today they could take it. What did it matter as long as they were getting their king.

The casting of the lots began slowly and with ceremony. For most this was where the greatest excitement lay. The first lot was for the tribe and it was the closest most of them could expect to come to the royal family. One by one they were eliminated until finally, to just about everyone's surprise, it fell to Benjamin, the smallest of all the tribes. To many the selection was almost exciting just because it had been so unlikely; but to the few who were still familiar with the prophecies of Moses and of Jacob, it must surely have been disturbing. No where in the promises was there any indication that a royal blessing was to fall to Benjamin. And these same persons knew also best that, "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD." (Prov. 16:33) It could only mean that the man selected this day was not the one whom God finally had ordained to rule and from whom the promised Messiah, Shiloh was to come. This was indeed a foreboding of trouble. But to most of the people it made no difference. They didn't know; and had they known, it wouldn't have seemed important.

From there on for a time interest waned as the tribe of Benjamin was narrowed down according to families. Here again was one of the advantages they had in Benjamin; it was small and this process of narrowing it down did not take as long as it would have with another tribe. There was just a nice lull in excitement long enough to give the people time to visit for a while. But before long the lot began to come close to individual households and people, and the attention of the people revived. And the final conclusion was as dramatic as anyone could hope for. The family

of Kish was chosen and when the members of the family stepped forward to take their place before Samuel, one of them was missing. But the casting of the lot went on regardless, and sure enough it fell to Saul, the one who was missing. It was a stunning blow to the people and their eager anticipation. What were they to do now? Where was their king? But Samuel was there and in complete charge of the situation. Here was yet another reminder that it was Jehovah who ruled the day and knew exactly its outcome. He prayed to God and was told that they should look for Saul among the baggage. There it was that they found him.

When at last the eyes of the people fell upon the one who was chosen, he was all and more than they could have desired. Strong and healthy, he was a handsome man who stood head and shoulders above the crowd that gathered about them. To a crowd used to judging by superficial externals, this was all that really mattered. He had the stature and bearing of a king. From them went up a great shout, "God save the king!"

For a time yet that day Samuel sought to instruct the new king and the people in the responsibilities that now stood before them. But the people were not in a mood to listen, and his words were soon forgotten. As evening drew nigh, Samuel dismissed them and they returned toward their homes. Some there were, of course, who were not happy. They were no doubt those who had had their hearts set upon some other leader, and they had no regard for the directions of God. But there were others too, men who took it upon themselves to guard their new king and escort him home. With joy they brought him to Gibeah.

But Saul was not a natural leader. For all of his much dreaming, when the time came, he did not know what he should do to set up his throne and rule in Israel. There were enemies to be fought; but he didn't know how to gather and arm an army. There were taxes which would have to be collected; but how was he to collect them. There was a palace to be built, a court to be established, a government to be organized; but these were all beyond him. All that Saul could think to do was to return to the home of his father and continue with the activities he knew best. And so he did until at last the Spirit of God came upon him.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

Stephen's Apology Before the Sanhedrin

by Rev. G. Lubbers

THE JUDGES INDICTED BY STEPHEN ACTS 7:51-53

Stephen was evidently led by the Holy Ghost. It was the Lord Jesus Himself who was speaking here through Stephen, as the former was standing on the right hand of God as the Son of Man. He who "stands" here at

the right hand of God is "standing" here before the Sanhedrin. He stood here some months before in His humiliation when he had said "from henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God and coming with the clouds of heaven." They

would see the fulfilment and unfolding of the counsel of God as revealed already to Daniel in the visions upon his bed. (Daniel 7:13, Matthew 26:64) Such is the drama here in this court-room; it is the confrontation of this "court" with the fundamental constitution of Israel, which they had ever knowingly set aside for their own. In the place of judgment there was iniquity!

First of all, the members of this Sanhedrin and all unbelievers in Israel are judged by Stephen as to the deepest condition of their depraved hearts. Stephen does not here simply wax angry so that he precipitated the wrath and fury of these Jews. He has come to the end of presenting the evidence of the Word of God concerning the meaning of "Moses" and "this place" according to the Scriptures and the testimony of the Holy Ghost. He opened the Scriptures to them, which were to them a closed book. He showed them the "key of knowledge"! And this key they willingly rejected.

The reason?

They are, first of all, a "stiff-necked" people! This term is only used in the New Testament here by Stephen. The reason is that the term is the term which the Lord uses throughout in the Old Testament to pinpoint the terrible unbelief of Israel over against all of His mighty deeds in the salvation of Israel out of Egypt, leading them like a flock through the great and terrible desert, feeding them with manna and giving them water from the rock, Christ. And always Israel, and the mixed multitude in their midst, murmured and rebelled. Why? Because the Lord was not caring for His people and protecting them according to His sure promise? No, they are a stiff-necked people. They are exceedingly stubborn! That is not simply the hasty conclusion of a Moses, but it is the verdict of God, who looked down from heaven. Basically this stubbornness, witch-craft, unbelief revealed itself in its full meaning and potentiality under the old covenant of Sinai at the foot of the mountain at the very time when Moses is receiving the oracles of God by the dispensation of angels. (Exodus 32:9; Galatians 3:19) Repeatedly it is stated that Israel is such that they must "understand that the LORD thy God giveth thee not the good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people." (Deuteronomy 9:6, 13)

That all Israel was not destroyed is because God has mercy on whom he has mercy, and whom he wills he hardens!

Surely this was language which the members of the Sanhedrin had often read! It was the verdict of *God!* Here Stephen applies this very word also to these "stiff-necked" who are the culmination of all this unbelief in having crucified the "Just One", the Lord of glory!

Secondly, they are "uncircumcised of heart". The wonder of grace which saves is not their portion. They do not belong to Christ, the Messiah, and, therefore, they are not Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. They are indeed circumcised in the flesh, but not in their heart; they are not born again, and, therefore, are no different than Sodom and Egypt. (Revelation 11:8) Hence, they too will be destroyed as was Sodom and Egypt. They are not under the Blood of

the Covenant! Here, too, Stephen is led by the Spirit to utter the terrible indictment against Israel according to the flesh which was uttered by Moses already, as recorded in Leviticus 26:41, and by Jeremiah the prophet upon unbelieving Judah in his day, when he writes "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; behold, the word of the Lord is to them a reproach; they have no delight in it." (Jeremiah 6:10) And again we read in this same prophecy, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them that are circumcised with them that are uncircumcised, Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the children of Ammon, and Moab, and all that are in the utmost corners, that dwell in the wilderness: all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart." (Jeremiah 9:25,26) And this word the Spirit of God was binding upon the hearts of this Sanhedrin, convicting them of sin, righteousness and judgment at the very moment that Stephen speaks to them! They are, as were their unbelieving fathers who were destroyed in Babylon, spiritually Sodom and Egypt.

Such is the indictment of God here by the mouth of Stephen.

We have just stated that the Sanhedrin was "convicted" here of sin, righteousness and judgment through the Holy Ghost. Unbelief is resisting the Holy Ghost. It is saying "no" to the Holy Ghost. The Remonstrants of 1610 erroneously conclude from this that "grace" is resistible, and that God is powerless where man resists. It ought to be evident on the very surface that Stephen does not teach resistible "grace"; grace is the work of almighty God; but rather teaches that *unbelief* ever resists the clear testimony of the Holy Ghost as this comes to them from the dealings of the God of glory as testified of in all the law and the prophets, the shadows and types, as they have their end, their telos, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It may be well to say just a word about the term in the Greek here employed by Stephen. The verb "resist" in the King James Version is the translation of the Greek "antipitete" which is a component verb form from the preposition "anti" (against) and "piptoo" (to fall). Hence, it means to fall against, to cast one's self against. It is quite likely an indirect quotation from the Septuagint rendering of not simply one passage from the Old Testament Scriptures, but rather from various passages. If this be true then we may conclude that it is a rather free rendering of such Hebrews verbs as are used in Numbers 27:14 and Isaiah 63:11, 14. In the former passage we read "For ye *rebelled* against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in *the strife* of the congregation," The term here in the Hebrew and rendered "strife" in the KJV is really the word "Meribah". This was the first, fundamental and basic contention of Israel with God; it set the pattern of all further rebellion and therefore is cited both in Psalm 95 and Hebrews 3:8-10 as the classic example and prototype of all Israel's unbelief. This term "bemeribah" is translated in the Septuagint by the

infinitive used as a noun "en tooi antipiptein", that is, "in the resistance". Evidently, that is the notion here retained by the term here employed in Acts 7:51b. It is the contention of Meribah and Massah, so often referred to in the Scriptures. Confer such passages as Exodus 17:7, Numbers 20:13,24; 27:14; Deuteronomy 32:51; 33:8; Psalm 81:7.

This was a basic resistance of unbelief. The prophet Isaiah speaks of this sin as the sin of Israel and of Judah when he writes "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them". (Isaiah 63:10) Always unbelieving Israel vexed, put to grief the Holy Spirit by going contrary to the Word of God, and they ever contumaciously worked contrary to the testimony of the Spirit in God's dispensation in Israel as all things pointed toward Christ as the fulfilment of the law for every one who believes, the Jew first and also the Greek!

Ever unbelief walked the hard way of kicking against the pricks.

They ever stumbled at the Stone of stumbling and the Rock of offense.

Such was the indictment of the prophets against Israel, and such is the indictment here in the presence of the Sanhedrin by the Lord through Stephen!

And this indictment is pinpointed here against this Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin is guilty of the transgression. Possibly this is the purpose of the law, as given by Moses and relating to this place, the temple, namely, that "it was added because of the transgressions, till the Seed should come." (Galatians 3:19) For the transgression than which there is none more heinous is that of being betrayers and murders of the "Just One".

Stephen indicts all the fathers of the Sanhedrin as being those who had killed all the prophets and persecuted them without exception. Such was the history of the prophets. And particularly those who before announced the "coming of the Just One". But now something far more horrible has taken place. This very

Sanhedrin has become guilty of the sin of "betrayal" and of "murdering" the Just One. They hated Him without a cause. In them and their deed is culminated all the unbelief of Israel. Their house will be left desolate forever.

STEPHEN AMONG THE FAITHFUL PROPHETS IN HIS DEATH ACTS 7:54-60

There is an enmity between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the Serpent which has been there since God's first revelation of the Mediator in the Protevangel. Always there has been the dragon ready to devour the child of the woman as soon as it was born. (Revelation 12:1-4) However, never was that enmity so strong as when the Son of God actually came on earth, and that, too, most emphatically between the Israel of the flesh and the Israel of God according to election of grace. This we see here enacted in the court of the Sanhedrin, where our Lord Himself once was crucified.

We read the following particulars as to the manifestation of the hellish hatred of these unbelievers in Israel of old. The words of God by Stephen stung them to the quick. Like a sharp sword they went into their very bones, so to speak. They were "cut in their hearts". In these hearts no love of God had been shed abroad by God's Spirit. Only hatred is in these hearts; and the flood-gates of hatred are opened and all their resistance against the Holy Ghost who spoke through Stephen manifests itself against the speaker. It was really against God that they fumed. They grind their teeth against him. They cry out with a loud voice their hatred, and they stop their ears. There is the sound of blood. It is the blood of the Son of God which indicts them. And they will stop the mouth of this one more prophet who speaks of Him. The gates of hell would prevail. With one accord they rush upon him, cast him out of the city and destroy him. They cease to be a court. They are a mad mob! They defy the God of heaven and crucify anew the Son of God against themselves. They stone Stephen as being worthy of death—only because He spoke the Word of God.

IN HIS FEAR—

A Case of Heart Failure

-2-

by Rev. J. A. Heys

Many are the figures used in Scripture to present to us the full and rich truth concerning the Church of God. That Church is likened to a flock of sheep beloved and protected by the Shepherd. She is presented as a beautiful temple in which the living God dwells by His Spirit. We see her as the royal bride of Christ who

enters into an intimate and endless life of fellowship with Christ. The figure of a vine with its branches and its fruit also appears upon the pages of Holy Writ to represent the inseparable and intimate connection between Christ and His Church. But the most beautiful and richest of all these figures is that of the human

body. "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular." I Corinthians 12:27. "So we being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another." Romans 12:5. "And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Ephesians 1:22,23.

In order to appreciate the fact that there is in the world a definite attempt to give that Church heart failure, we ought to consider what is implied in this truth that the Church is the *body* of which Christ is the glorified Head. First of all is implied that there is in that Church a *definite* number of members and that to add one or to take one away would deface and mar the Church. It would no longer be perfect. This same truth is implied in the figure of a temple. It has a definite number of stones and cannot receive one more without marring its beauty, even as it will mar its beauty to remove one from out of the wall. A flock of sheep may be indefinite as far as number is concerned, and a vine may have an indefinite number of branches. But the body which God gave us — and which is a figure of the Church of Christ — was designed with a definite number of members. A perfect body will have just exactly so many, no more, and no less. For that reason it is that election is the very heart of that Church. Take election away, substitute man's philosophy of Arminianism according to which our will determines the number of members in the Church in the day of Christ, and you have killed that Church as a body. You have given it heart failure! The membership of that Church does not depend upon our choice in time but God's predestinating grace in eternity. Take away election, and you will not even have a Church, to say nothing about a body. What is a body without lungs? What is a body without part of the brain? And will God receive (from man??) a body, perfect in all detail, complete with all its members, if the whole constituency and membership of that Church depends upon a corrupt sinner, who must accept or reject Christ, the Head?

Then too, a body is an organism consisting of many members and yet of a definite number of each variety. All is not eye. There are members besides the heart. There is a diversity of kind and a definite number of each kind. Here again the figure of the temple parallels that of the Church as a body. Different types of material go into a building according to the work they must perform and where they are located. The foundation is concrete, but the roof would not be made of such a heavy material. And in the body there is such a wonderful variety of definite members, each placed where it will serve the head best. The ear is where it will catch the sound. The eye is in its elevated place to see where the feet will go. The hands are placed on the ends of arms of a certain length — from fingertip to fingertip with the arms stretched straight out from the sides of the body will almost to the inch be equal to your height — so that they can serve every external part of the body. And did this all happen as a process of evolution? Nay, the living God designed it all for us. His wisdom is to be seen in the eye which no motion picture camera can fully duplicate, the ear which all of

our electronics cannot match, the brain that makes the computer and cannot be made by the electronic computer. It did not just happen. It was designed. And God's Church likewise does not just happen. It was from all eternity designed by God to be such a perfect body. Men are not going to determine its size and whether it will actually have ten "fingers" and not eight or thirteen, two "lungs", two "kidneys", one "heart" and the like. Therefore, again, cut out the heart of election, deny that God chose each and every member and predetermined its place and the certainty of its being gathered into that body, and you have killed the Church and made a ridiculous conglomeration — at best — of members, that might result in feet and legs connected to shoulders without the essential elements and organs between. We say at best, because, if we hold to the truth of total depravity in God's Word there would be no body at all. *No one* would step forward to assemble himself in that body. Jesus meant it when He said that "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven." John 3:3. Not being able to see he would not travel to that kingdom to include himself in its citizenry. He would have no interest in being a member in a body which he does not believe exists. And until God works and regenerates him, he has no interest at all in that Church and Kingdom. Since it is God Who acts first and regenerates, it is also God Who determines who is going to be regenerated. "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." John 6:44. Take away that truth, tear out of the Church that heart of sovereign election, and you have a dead mass, dead in sins and trespasses without any interest in coming to Christ, being utterly incapable of seeing with its mind's eye that there actually is a Kingdom of Heaven and an exalted King thereof.

Then also, all the members of a body have their place and work, and, enjoying one life, work together harmoniously to serve the head. Your heart and lungs serve every cell of your body. Your hands take care of the eye and gently remove the cinder that has gotten under the eyelid. Your digestive system likewise serves every cell and muscle, but the hand and mouth serve that digestive system. And so we could go on and on. Did all this come about by chance? No believer is foolish enough to say that through a process of trial and error the members gradually adapted themselves to such work and for a time performed contrary actions. Let one organ get out of order for just a short while, and the whole structure is threatened with death. Listen to the Word of God, "For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou has covered me in my mother's womb Thine eyes did see my substance yet being unperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Psalm 139:13,16. God took great care in making *our* bodies and designed them in inscrutable wisdom. Does He do less for the Body of Christ, the Church which He loved even unto death?" Take away that heart of the Church, election, and you have no living organism with all the parts adapted to each other, designed with specific work to function

with the other parts and complete in every detail.

As the Son of God gathers that Church — and He goes to seek and to save that which was lost, rather than as Arminianism has it that the sheep seek Him and find Him — out of every nation tongue and tribe, do the various nations and tribes determine how many of this kind and how many of that kind of member will form this perfect Church? Or do we take the position that the Church will not be perfect, that is, will not be exactly as God wanted it? Having planned with the grandiose idea of a great and glorious Church, must He in the day of days be satisfied with a mediocre building that must be adapted to the kind of material that was willing to place itself at His disposal? Will He weep in the day of Christ — as the Jews did — when He sees that this temple is not nearly as beautiful and big as He had wanted it? Well, cut out the heart of the Church, election, and you will have a dead mass of charred and crumbled material. You will have the temple that fell in ruins in Adam and a rubble heap out of which there is nothing to salvage. You have — in your own mind, for in reality you can never do that — killed the Church! It lives because of that truth of sovereign, eternal and personal election from before the foundation of the world. It is one thing to be afraid of heart failure. It is another thing to cause it and to desire it.

We have not said anything new. We have not coined the phrase that “Election is the heart of the Church.” Men have known for years that the Church Fathers spoke that way in ages past. And students of theology can know and do come in contact with this statement in their study of both the history and the doctrine of the Church. But there is someone else who not only knows that men have spoken that way of the doctrine of election and that in ages past men cherished that truth, considered it to be a cardinal truth of Scripture and were guided by it in all their theology, but one who also knows that it is absolute truth. There is that arch-adversary of the Church, Satan himself, who has always wanted to kill the Church from the very beginning. No sooner did the Church appear through the regenerating grace of God in Adam after the fall, and God Himself predicted a battle proceeding forth from enmity between the devil and the Church. Therefore Cain killed Abel; they sought to kill Enoch, and God took him away from them and beyond their grasp; Herod sought to kill the Christ-child and the Anti-christ will seek to wipe that Church off the face of this earth.

Many and varied are the ways in which Satan has through the ages sought to put an end to the Church of God. Many and subtle will be his ways in the few remaining years of this present world. But one of the chief and most logical methods of killing that Church is to cause her to have heart failure. Such a fierce and relentless attack upon the doctrine of election through-

out the ages and gaining momentum again in this present day and age is simply mute testimony to the fact that Satan realizes the extreme importance of this doctrine. This, surely, is one truth of God that Satan cannot allow you and me to believe. And if he can only wipe out belief in it, he can destroy that Church in your mind and heart and life. He is not afraid of a church designed by man, whose size, membership, material, appearance, or failure to appear, depends upon men. Such a temple will never be “to the praise of the glory of God’s grace”. Ephesians 1:6. A church that is the product of the depraved mind of man and that comes into being because of the will and desire of an unregenerated man (who cannot see the kingdom of heaven) is just exactly what he wants. As long as there is none of God in it and it is according to the wishes and likes of the man, whom he has deceived with the lie, Satan is pleased to have such a church in existence. That church exists for his satisfaction. It does not have in it the fear of the Lord. It does not live from the principle and confess that “. . . of Him and through Him and to Him are all things.” It postulates that this church is of Him, if we let Him; is through Him if we will help Him by taking the all-important initial step, which God cannot or for some strange reason will not force us to do (because He will not trample upon our sovereignty??) and stepping down from His own sovereignty lets us decide what His Church will be like, and whether indeed there shall be such a Church at all; and that is unto Him if we will put the finishing touches on the work of Calvary. It will be then a Church of Him, *if it is of us*; a Church through Him, *if it is also through us*; and a Church unto Him, *if it is also unto our glory*. That is where heart failure brings the Church. Take away that heart of sovereign, eternal, personal election and you have a church that at best is the joint product of God’s will and man’s, of God’s power and man’s, and for God’s glory provided man wills to let it rob him of his glory. And then you have no church at all. Fallen, unregenerated man will answer God as Adam did and blame the whole mess in which we are on God for having created the woman. We will want nothing to do with any of His works. The cross will be foolishness to us. We have no will for a Church which that God designs, no strength to help Him build and gather it and object strenuously to a kingdom wherein He is all in all.

Satan has his reason for attacking the heart of the Church. He knows that heart failure means the death of the Church. As in paradise he still seeks to turn man away from God, and deceive man further in the lie that he can be like God to decide such important matters as the membership, size and constituency of the Church, the body of Christ. In His fear we are on our guard against his craftiness and deception. Listen to God, not to Satan.

O Lord, if only my will may remain right and firm towards Thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please Thee. For it cannot be anything but good, whatsoever Thou shalt do with me. If it be Thy will I should be in darkness, be Thou blessed; and, if it be Thy will I should be in light, be Thou again blessed. If Thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be Thou blessed; and, if Thou wilt have me afflicted, be Thou equally blessed. O Lord! for Thy sake I will cheerfully suffer whatever shall come on me with Thy permission. — Selected

HEEDING THE DOCTRINE—

Barth's Doctrine of Scripture

-4-

by Rev. D. J. Engelsma

Although there is a sense, carefully circumscribed by Barth, in which Barth maintains that the Bible neither claims nor possesses authority — it is “merely” the witness to Christ, who possesses all authority — he would vehemently deny the validity of the criticism we raised against his view of Scripture in the preceding article. That the Bible is the words of men, even to the extent of being their fallible words, does not mean, according to Barth, that the Bible cannot be the Word of God. In fact, this error-prone book is the Word of God. And being the Word of God, it has authority in and over the Church of Jesus Christ. Its errors do not destroy its authority.

We must now attempt an understanding of Barth's conception of the Bible as the Word of God.

As we have noted already, we may not, according to Barth, simply identify Scripture and the Word of God. We may identify the Word of God only with Jesus Christ. Only Jesus Christ *is* the Word of God. Although Barth does not hesitate to say, “The Bible is the Word of God,” he qualifies the statement in such a way as virtually to negate the force of the word *is*. Since, by the assertion “The Bible is the Word of God,” Barth only means that the Bible is the Word of God “so far as God lets it be His Word, so far as God speaks through it” (CD, I, 1, p. 123) and “where and when it pleases God” (*ibid.*, p. 131), the statement is misleading.

We have also briefly noticed the popular presentation of Barth's doctrine of Scripture. According to this popular presentation, Barth denies that the Bible *is* the Word of God but teaches that the Word is *in* the Bible. This presentation is not wholly inaccurate. In fact, Barth says, again and again, that the Word of God is in the Bible. Appealing to Luther's statement about the Bible, “It holdeth God's Word,” Barth declares: “It (the Bible — DE) only ‘holds,’ encloses, limits and surrounds it (the Word of God — DE)” (CD, I, 2, p. 492). Yet, to say that Barth teaches that the Word of God is *in* the Bible is unsatisfactory. It fails to do justice to Barth's view. For this explanation implies that the Bible is composed of two (basically different) kinds of texts and passages, texts and passages that are divine and infallible and texts and passages that are human and erroneous. Then, the reader has the duty of culling out the divine and infallible passages. To say, “The Word of God is *in* the Bible,” leaves the impression that the Word is in the Bible as gold is in the ground. Thus, someone might suppose that Barth believes that the reader of the Bible has the same task as does the miner of gold — he must dig through and discard much worthless dirt in order to discover, here and there, the precious gold buried in that dirt.

Many do regard the Bible precisely in this way.

Essentially, this is the position of all who hold that Scripture is made up of two parts, a “central-infallible” part which bears on our salvation and a “peripheral-fallible” part which is extraneous to the matter of our salvation. But this position is hopeless. Its futility is exposed by the question, “Who or what is to determine the passages which are central, important, and infallible and who or what is to determine the passages which are peripheral, insignificant, and false?” The only possible criterion is the mind of man, the mind of each reader. One can scarcely conceive a more hopeless, chaotic way in the Church than that one in which each man distinguishes for himself the Word of God in the Bible from the words of men, the gold from the dirt. This theory, in effect, makes the mind of man the measure of the Word of God.

Barth knows the folly of this conception quite well and repudiates it outright. He is not about to set supercilious or even conscientious men to work chopping the Scripture into fragments. When he says, “The Word is *in* the Bible,” he does not mean that Scripture has two kinds of contents, “gold” and “dirt,” which we must now distinguish. Says Barth, “we are completely absolved from differentiating in the Bible between the divine and the human, the content and form, the spirit and the letter, and then cautiously choosing the former and scornfully rejecting the latter... We are absolved from differentiating the Word of God in the Bible from other contents, infallible portions and expressions from the erroneous ones, the infallible from the fallible, and from imagining that by means of such discoveries we can create for ourselves encounters with the genuine Word of God in the Bible...” (CD, I, 2, p. 531). Of course, Barth warns against this picking and choosing because, for him, all the words of the Bible are fallible. Nevertheless, he sees the notion that we can and must distinguish in the Bible the Word of God from the word of man, the true from the false, and the fallible from the infallible to be an impossible notion, a wrong way.* Since Barth means by the phrase, “The Word is in the Bible,” something different than do most who employ it, I would rather not characterize Barth's doctrine of Scripture with this statement.

Barth teaches that the Word of God sounds *through* the Bible. The Bible is like a telephone through which God speaks to men or like an electric wire through which the current of His divine Word flows. When God actually speaks through that telephone, we may say that the telephone *is* the Word of God. Then, the Bible “*becomes*” the Word of God. We recall Barth's statement: “The Bible is the Word of God... so far as God speaks through it” (CD, I, 1, p. 123). Of course, when

God does *not* speak through this "telephone," it is nothing but a piece of human workmanship. Barth himself uses the example of the pool of Bethesda. The Bible, the 66 books of canonical Scripture, is like the pool of Bethesda. As the pool became troubled from time to time so that it became a healing bath, so the Bible from time to time is spoken through by God so that it becomes God's Word (cf. John 5 and CD,I,1, p.125). God can and does from time to time use all the fallible books, chapters, verses, and words of the Bible as the vehicle to carry His own divine, infallible Word to men. "It then comes about that the Bible...is taken and used as an instrument in the hand of God, i.e., it ...is therefore present as the Word of God" (CD,I,2, p.530). We are not to be ashamed of Scripture's errors because God is not ashamed of them; we are not to turn away from the fallible Bible because God still uses that fallible word to transmit His divine Word; we are not to attempt a picking out of the infallible parts in order to acknowledge their authority because, first, all the parts of Scripture are fallible, and, secondly, God, by using all the parts to transmit His Word, renders all the fallible parts authoritative.

In this light, we must, says Barth, understand verbal inspiration. "Verbal inspiration does not mean the infallibility of the biblical word in its linguistic, historical and theological character as a human word" (*ibid.*, p.533). Verbal inspiration rather means that God, when it pleases Him, gives us His divine Word through the fallible words of this or that text, with its definite, particular words. He does not give us His divine Word alongside the human, fallible words of the texts but really through them and in connection with them. This implies that we may not dispense with the written Word, expecting direct, mystical revelations from heaven. We are tied to the Bible for the Word of God. But, going to the texts of Scripture, "we must dare to face the humanity of the biblical texts and therefore their fallibility..." (*ibid.*). There, at the door of the Biblical texts, we must patiently wait for the moments when God will open the door to send through His divine Word. To change the figure, we are to sit expectantly about the lifeless pool, waiting for the angel to stir the water.

Is this doctrine of Scripture not obviously in perfect harmony with the basic principle of the Reformation, asks Barth. The Reformation was the defense and the extolling of the sovereign grace of God. The Reformation insisted that the whole of salvation is God's gift, His free grace, so that we, at every point, are dependent upon the Giver. But the doctrine of Scripture that posits an infallible, inerrant book that *is* the Word of God represents a falling away from the Reformation teaching of God's free grace. It is false doctrine. It is the refusal of proud man to be dependent upon God, to wait humbly for God's gift. It embodies the desire of man's desperately arrogant heart to have God and salvation under his control. "The mechanical doctrine of verbal inspiration" is a means "by which man at the Renaissance claimed to control the Bible and so set up barriers against its control over him, which is its perquisite" (CD,I,1, p.125). It put the Bible, as the saving Word, at man's disposal to do with what man

pleases. The Word of God which saves no longer can be a free, wholly gracious decision and miracle of God. The Bible, thus conceived, becomes an instrument of human power" (CD,I,2,p.525). Those who regard the Bible as an infallible book, as the Word of God in itself, no longer need God, in His grace and Spirit. They have the Bible and *they* control the Word of God. Once that book is given them, they can seize their salvation from it at will, as a little child seizes cookies from a cookie jar set too low. Formally, they may still contend that their salvation is of grace, since God gave the Bible in the first place but, actually, their daily reception of the necessary words of eternal life is a matter of their own work. On the contrary, Barth's view of Scripture makes us totally dependent upon God at every moment, also when we have the Bible in our hands. God must flash His saving Word through that book. Roughly, this is Barth's argument. No wonder, then, that he takes his polemic against the historic Reformed doctrine of Scripture into the open.

We would let this fierce accusation fall on that segment of Protestantism which both defends the Bible and its infallibility and also maintains the free will of man, the ability of the natural man to read, understand, and save himself from the Bible. They, and Billy Graham fits here, merely praise man's power and ability when they seemingly exalt Scripture. But Barth's attack does not devastate the historic Reformed doctrine of an infallible Bible. It does not because the Reformed position includes the confession that no one, whether in his first reading of the Bible or throughout his life of the study of Scripture, can ever receive or believe what this infallible Word teaches without the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart, a work of God's sovereign grace that precedes and bears the fruit of our belief of the Word.

But before we go further in rebuttal, we must let Karl Barth advance the pillars on which his doctrine stands.

FOOTNOTES:

*In the April, 1962 issue of *The Reformed Journal*, one of the most significant magazines published in the Reformed community, a notable Christian Reformed theologian asked the question, "Can We Learn from Karl Barth?" evidently, in all seriousness. I would reply, with the same seriousness, that the Christian Reformed Church could have taken a lesson from Barth on this matter of dividing the Bible into two parts, a fallible and an infallible, which we can and may distinguish. I intend to examine the recent debate and Synodical decision concerning Scripture, within the Christian Reformed Church, later. Now, I merely note that in the discussion prior to Synod's decision, Dr. Harry Boer, a member of the "party" contending for a fallible Bible, not only insisted that he *could* pick out fallible portions but actually listed some errors he had found. In *The Reformed Journal* of May, 1961, he suggests that the accounts of the "David-Saul relationship" in I Samuel 16,17 cannot both be "infallibly true." And he asserts that the "two accounts of the death of Judas...as facts cannot be squared..."

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD Ps. 68:11

Particular Atonement and Mission Preaching

by Rev. C. Hanko

It is commonly asserted that those who insist on a particular atonement are, nevertheless, compelled to ignore this doctrine in their preaching, particularly in the mission field. Even if one is convinced that Christ died only for the elect, he cannot say so when he is preaching to unbelievers or even to a mixed audience. Actually in the mission field the preacher is compelled to declare to all men promiscuously: "Christ died for you."

This is what Dr. Daane literally writes in the *Reformed Journal* of December, 1964.

He who preaches the gospel to the unconverted man either makes this statement ("Christ died for you") or *appears to be making it*. For if the Cross is the heart of the gospel, what is the minister of the gospel asking the unconverted to believe? And in the event the gospel of the Cross is rejected, what is the unbeliever really rejecting? What is he refusing to accept? What indeed is that "good news" that must be preached to "every creature?"

Let us begin with the last question, "What indeed is the "good news" that must be preached to "every creature?"

Rather than to suggest my own answer to this question, let us ask THE Preacher, the only Preacher and Missionary, our Lord Himself, how He would answer this. And we have the answer in Jesus' own gospel message addressed to a mixed audience of believers and unbelievers, in which He declares,

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. . . . I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:11, 14, 15).

My Sheep.

No one can deny that this is true mission preaching. Nor can anyone escape the fact that Jesus speaks emphatically of "my sheep." It was no unusual experience in Jesus' time to see a shepherd with crook in hand watching his flock on some hillside or slowly leading it to the sheepfold. Especially in those days the sheep were the peculiar property of the shepherd. His flock was practically all that he owned, his choice possession. He devoted his life to the constant care of his sheep, even spending the night out in the open field to protect them from the wild beasts. Luke writes, "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night." This same figure was used by the prophet Isaiah when he spoke of the coming Savior with the promise, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with

his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Jesus is only confirming this gospel message of Isaiah when He declares that He is the Good Shepherd.

Christ's peculiar distinction is, first, that He knows His sheep. Because He is the Son of God He knows His sheep sovereignly, eternally. He knows them as those given to Him by the Father. Their names are written in the book of life from before the foundation of the world. The sheep do not choose Him, but He chooses His sheep. He wants them to know that.

Second, Christ loves His sheep. That is the earmark of the good shepherd, that he loves his sheep. A hireling works for wages, is interested only in the personal gain he can acquire from them, but is not concerned about the sheep. Therefore, when danger threatens, the hireling flees. But Jesus as the Good Shepherd meets the ravenous wolves that attack Him from every side, and even deliberately gives Himself into their hands, that He may lay down His life for His sheep. Greater love hath no man than that, that he lays down his life for his sheep. This gospel message is confirmed by the apostle Paul in Romans 5:8-10.

Third, the Lord cares for His sheep. A sheep has to be fed. Many animals can forage for themselves, but not a sheep. If left to itself it dies. It has to be led to green pastures and to the quiet stream. Moreover, a sheep must be watched. Of all the animals a sheep is most prone to wander. Therefore Scripture reminds us that we can see ourselves in the foolishness of a sheep, for we all like sheep have gone astray. We have wandered off, each one in his own willful way. A sheep readily gets itself lost so that it cannot possibly find the way back. The shepherd is often compelled to go after his sheep into the desert or out on some dangerous precipice. Lastly, a sheep is utterly defenceless against the prowling beast that craves its blood. A bee has its sting, a lion its claw, a dog its teeth, but a sheep is completely helpless when attacked. The Good Shepherd assures us that He feeds His flock in green pastures, watches over them in tender care, and protects them from every evil.

What more wonderful gospel message would anyone want but this: Christ is the Good Shepherd Who came to seek and to save His lost sheep? He did this even to the extent that He laid down His life on the cross for His own.

Daane asks: "If the Cross is the heart of the gospel, what is the minister of the gospel asking the unconverted to believe? The answer is: Just that! Christ is the Good Shepherd Who lays down His life for His sheep.

Again Daane asks: "In the event the gospel of the Cross is rejected, what is the unbeliever rejecting? The answer is: The Christ of the Scriptures. Him they crucified. And they did that, not because there was anything wrong or lacking in His preaching, but because as the Lord Himself declares to them: "But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." John 10:26. We should notice that it is not the other way: Ye are not of my sheep because ye believe not. But, ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.

Those Other Sheep.

The objection may be raised that Jesus was speaking only to those who already believed, so that they already confessed Him as their Lord, and therefore He refers to them as "My sheep." Even if we should grant that, we cannot overlook the fact that Jesus also speaks of "other sheep."

He taught:

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." v. 16.

When Jesus speaks of "this fold," He refers to the entire church of the old dispensation which has already been gathered in. As a shepherd brings his sheep within the enclosure of the sheepfold to give them shelter and protection, so the Lord had already gathered His church throughout the entire old dispensation. Through the prophets and by His Spirit He had gathered His elect in the line of continued generations of believers. We can readily trace that covenant line from Adam to Noah through Seth, and from Noah to Abraham through Shem. God made Abraham the father of believers, and therefore the covenant line continued in the spiritual seed of Isaac and Jacob, and was carried particularly through Judah to David and Mary, the virgin of whom the Christ was born. In spite of all the attempts of the devil to prevent Him, and in spite of all the efforts of the evil generation of Jesus' own day to interfere with His work, Christ did gather His children unto Himself as a "hen gathers her chicks." The church was gathered; the carnal seed stood condemned in their unbelief, so that Jerusalem would be left desolate.

But now in distinction from those sheep of the old dispensation, Jesus speaks of "other sheep." He saw the entire church of the new dispensation that must still be gathered in. There is a ring of confidence in His voice as He makes claim to those other sheep also. He does not say: Other sheep I would like to have. Nor does He say: Other sheep I will have. But He declares: Other sheep I have. For He has already received them from the Father and will lay down His life for them.

The Lord adds: "Them also I must bring." Here He plainly refers to the mission labors of the new dispensation. With this in mind He commissions His apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The Lord sees Pentecost with the three thousand that were added to the church. He sees the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth, gathering God's elect from every nation and people. He will send forth that gospel as the Lord of Glory, the living

Savior, drawing His own unto Himself. For He, and He alone, causes that gospel to be a power of God unto those who believe. He gathers, defends and preserves His church by His Word and Spirit. (Lord's Day 21, Question 54).

Jesus considers this His divine "must," the mandate that He has received from the Father. And that is what also gives Him confidence that this work will be carried out. If it were the work of men, or if the acceptance of the gospel depended in any way upon the will of man, then the Lord could never be sure that His sheep would be gathered and saved. But He confidently adds, "They shall hear My voice." Again we are impressed with the fact that He does not say: I want them to hear My voice. Nor does He say: I declare My love to all men and assure them that I died for them in the hope that they will hear My voice. He does not consider the power of the gospel to lie in the mere statement: I died for you. But He affirms: They shall hear My voice. There is no doubt about it, because His is the powerful voice of the Son of God, Who lays down His life for His sheep and lives to give them eternal life. The fact that they hear His voice is the result of the work of His Spirit in their hearts. He calls the dead into life, even as He calls the things that were not as though they were. It is the new life of the Spirit that causes the sheep to hear His call. They flee from a hireling and from all false teachers, for their voices fill them with apprehension. But they are drawn by the voice of Jesus. They know they are sinners and find in Him the only possible Savior. They respond to His love because the love of God is spread abroad in their hearts.

Therefore Jesus is absolutely certain of the outcome. "There will be one flock and one shepherd." Elsewhere the Lord had said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37). There Jesus assures His sheep of their certain coming, but also of their certain acceptance. What a glorious gospel for those who are actually weary and heavy laden. "You will certainly come." Our Lord tells us that in His own Word. "You need not fear, for I will receive you, even as certainly as I drew you." And not one will be lacking. The "all" in the text refers to the sum total of those given to Christ by the Father. He loses none.

Already Christ visualizes that multitude that no man can number as it is ultimately gathered before the throne. It is one complete flock, consisting of the church of all ages. The entire family of God is brought into Father's House with its many mansions, where each has his own appointed place, and no place is found empty.

It is this gospel which we are mandated to preach to every nation and to all creatures. It is the gospel of particular atonement and certain salvation.

There are a number of passages of Scripture that seem to teach the very opposite of particular atonement. On the surface they would appear to contradict this emphatic word of Jesus. Those we will consider, the Lord willing, next time.

BOOK REVIEWS—

Luther Is Grote Catechismus**By What Authority****Philippenzen en Philemon****The Quest For Serenity**

"Luther Is Grote Catechismus" by Prof. Dr. P. Boendermaker (Luther's Werken II). Published by J. H. Kok, N.V. Kampen, Netherlands. 138 pages. F 1, 75.

This little booklet (paperback) is a translation into the Holland language of the Large Catechism of Martin Luther, to be distinguished from Luther's small catechism. In this booklet we have a brief explanation of the 10 commandments, the 12 Articles of Faith, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Confession. The booklet begins with an introduction by Dr. Boendermaker, in which the reader is informed why Luther introduced his larger as well as his smaller catechism. We recommend this booklet to our readers who are able to read the Holland language, although it must be borne in mind that this is Luther's Catechism, and that it therefore at times strongly bears the mark and character of Luther's times and viewpoint. But the fact that Luther composed it should be reason enough for us to read it.

H. Veldman

"By What Authority" by Bruce Shelley (The Standards of Truth in the Early Church). Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 166 pages. \$1.95.

Also in the area of theology, the Christian theologian asks, Why should I accept this doctrine or that moral precept? By what authority do I embrace this or that? The Protestant Churches recognize only the Bible as authoritative. The Romish Church recognizes also Tradition as authoritative, and this means ultimately the pope. In this booklet of 166 pages (paperback), Dr. Shelley, head of the Department of Church History at the

Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary in Denver, Colorado, shows how the early church encountered and answered the questions surrounding doctrinal authority. In the light of the recent Roman Catholic Vatican councils and the opinions of some that Roman Catholicism and Protestantism are drawing closer together, this book can be read with interest also by the laymen. Without endorsing all its content, we may recommend this booklet to our readers.

H. Veldman

"Philippenzen en Philemon," by Dr. H. M. Matter. 120 pages. Published by: Uitgeversmaatschappij J. H. Kok, Kampen, Netherlands.

This book of 120 pages is a commentary on Philippians and Philemon in the Holland language. It is not a book for laymen. The author makes use of several sources and is exegetical throughout, basing his interpretation upon the original text. At the end of each verse he gives what he considers to be the proper translation of the text.

We believe that this book, as far as its content is concerned, is composed mainly of textual criticism, and we are of the opinion that he could have given more attention to the actual thought structure of the apostle. However, we would recommend this book to those among us who can read the Holland language and are able to follow the author as he works from the original text. We were disappointed with the author's failure, in his exposition of Phil. 1:6, to stress the Divine character of our salvation from the beginning even unto the end. Interesting, however, is his explanation of such a key passage in Philippians as Phil. 2:5-11. And the same applies also to his treatment of the third chapter of this epistle.

As far as the author's commentary on Philemon is concerned, he asks the question in his introductory remarks: "What is the purpose of this little epistle?" And he asks: "to abolish slavery?" He replies that the gospel came into the world for this purpose. Is this true? Does not Philemon teach that Onesimus, a slave who had deserted his master and, having fled to Paul, was converted during the apostle's imprisonment, was returned by Paul to his master? Does not the epistle emphasize that, although in Christ we are spiritually free, the gospel nevertheless does not abolish social relationships and institutions, such as masters and slaves? We feel that the author does not make this clear in his interpretation of the book. But, we do recommend this book to such readers as are able to read it.

H. Veldman

"The Quest For Serenity," by G. H. Morling. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 91 pages. \$1.25 paperback.

This book is a sort of spiritual autobiography; the author himself defines it as "a personal testimony of faith and experience." He describes his own personal search for peace of heart.

It is a brief book which can be read in one sitting and is almost completely subjective in character. This can be shown by quoting a few chapter titles: "Faith's Deepening Rest"; "Leaving It All Quietly To God"; "Living Restfully With God"; etc.

There are many nice thoughts and helpful suggestions in the book, and one can enjoy a few hours reading in it. Whether it will really help in the search for peace and serenity of heart is left for the reader to judge. The danger of the book is its thoroughly Arminian perspective.

Prof. H. Hanko

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

January 1, 1966

Rev. R. C. Harbach, of Kalamazoo, has declined the call to be Home Missionary of our churches.

Rev. J. Kortering, of Hull, has declined the call which came to him from Edgerton, Minn.

Rev. Harbach has received a call from Randolph, Wis.; and Rev. Lanting is considering a call which he received from Edgerton. Rev. Kortering is also considering the call he received from Hudsonville.

Isabel, S. Dak. has announced the following trio: Revs. D. Engelsma, J. Kortering, and M. Schipper.

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The congregation of Hull planned a Mission Program Dec. 13 to see the colored slides made in connection with the work in Jamaica by Rev. Heys and Mr. Zwak. An offering was received for the Jamaican Mission work.

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Seminarian Dale Kuiper underwent surgery for kidney stones Dec. 15, and his absence from the area pulpits was felt immediately, causing many changes in preaching schedules.

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Holland's Ladies' Society invited all the adult members of the congregation to their annual Christmas social. Bible discussion was followed by a short program and refreshments.

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Hope's consistory has decided to hold separate Elders' meetings, in harmony with the 37th Article of the Church Order, having judged their consistory to be sufficiently large for this move.

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First Church and Hope church (and probably others) have again decided to have Installation of Office Bearers on Sunday, Jan. 2, instead of New Year's Day. The purpose of this delay was to give opportunity to have special sermons for each occasion. Rev. Van Baren's sermon was on Hebr. 13:17, under the theme "Submission to Soul-Watchers" with these three points of division: The Soul-Watchers, Their Obligation to Watch, and, Proper Submission to Them.

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South Holland's Dec. 12th bulletin issued a call for help from their young people to sort and pack used clothing, donated to them, for our people in Jamaica.

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The remodeling of the parsonage in Redlands has been completed and Mrs. Hanko, a year after her debilitating stroke, is again able to walk through the rooms without aid. She begins to enjoy doing little things about the house. The head of the manse writes: "How won-

drous are the ways of God — unfathomed and unweighed".

* * *

Rev. R. Decker, Doon's new pastor, has embarked on another phase of his ministry — that of Family Visitation. May he and his flock continue "to regard the practice of holding periodic supervisory visits with all their members in their homes gathered in family groups as one of our denominational strongholds".

* * *

The Mission Board has decided to conduct a series of public lectures in Grand Rapids as a follow-up of the Reformation Day Rally. A committee of nine, with Rev. Schipper as chairman, has been asked to promote this project. Watch your bulletins for further information regarding this Mission effort.

* * *

Oak Lawn's Ladies' Society invited all the adults, plus the young people, to their annual Christmas Banquet held Dec. 22. One who has always been a member of a large church somewhat envies those in smaller churches who can have such congregational social gatherings where they may enjoy one another's friendship and fellowship in an informal setting.

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Quiet Thought found in Southeast's bulletin: "Lost — many hours of meditative reading. Owner should do all in his power to get them back."

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The Winter Office Bearers Conference was scheduled for Tuesday evening, Jan. 3, in Southeast Church. Rev. M. Schipper was the speaker, and his burden was to answer the questions: "May a consistory discipline and erase a baptized member?", and, "Must the consistory have the approval of Classis or Synod?" Those quarterly conferences are scheduled for the evening before Classis in order that the delegates may also attend. Conferences such as these have proven to be very beneficial to Elders and Deacons alike, for problems that must be faced in both offices are discussed for the edification of the officers and for their congregations.

* * *

Did you make any New Year's Resolutions? Did they include a resolution to be more faithful: in society attendance, in preparation for Divine Worship Services, or in the instruction of our children in the way of the Lord, perhaps? But let us always keep in remembrance the three-fold Resolution we vowed when we made public confession of our faith; then these annual resolutions will be but re-affirmations of that triple one which governs our whole life.

... see you in church.

J.M.F.