

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

**Meditation: Expecting the New**

**Editorials: The Nature of the Atonement: Limited or General?**

**Vainglorious Man in the Space Age**

**The Formula of Subscription Under Attack**

**Barth's Doctrine of Scripture**

## CONTENTS

Meditation -	
Expecting the New! .....	146
Rev. M. Schipper	
Editorials -	
The Nature of the Atonement:	
Limited or General? .....	149
Prof. H. C. Hoeksema	
Vainglorious Man in the Space Age .....	151
Prof. H. C. Hoeksema	
Heeding the Doctrine -	
Barth's Doctrine of Scripture .....	151
Rev. D. J. Engelsma	
A Cloud of Witnesses -	
The Anointing of Saul .....	154
Rev. B. Woudenberg	
The Lord Gave the Word -	
Vicarious Atonement and Missions .....	156
Rev. C. Hanko	
Trying the Spirits -	
Baha'ism .....	158
Rev. R. C. Harbach	
The Church at Worship -	
The Purpose of the Lord's Supper .....	160
Rev. G. Vanden Berg	
Contending for the Faith -	
The Doctrine of Creation .....	162
Rev. H. Veldman	
All Around Us -	
The Formula of Subscription Under Attack	
A Letter From Moscow .....	164
Prof. H. Hanko	
Book Reviews -	
The Lord Protector	
Faith on Trial	
The Resurrection of Jesus .....	167
News From Our Churches -	
Mr. J. M. Faber .....	168

## THE STANDARD BEARER

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

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association

*Editor* -- Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

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

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

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

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

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

*Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan*

## NOTICE

The Classical Committee of Classis West has decided to delay the continued session of Classis West, previously scheduled to reconvene on January 12, 1966. The new date of meeting will be announced later.

Rev. D. J. Engelsma, Stated Clerk

## MEDITATION—

## Expecting The New!

*by Rev. M. Schipper*

*"Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."*

*II Peter 3:13*

Expecting the new!

Peculiar characteristic of our age!

Everyone looks for something new, new ideas, new things, a new era, something new and better for all! Yes, the world is looking for the sun rise of a new day! Even a new society!

To be sure, their hope is a utopia of earthly beauty and material prosperity! And there is nothing that says they won't have it! The possibilities and resources are unlimited!

The nations are looking for a new era of lasting peace! The business world is looking, always looking



for something new and different! This year has hardly begun and the auto industry is working already on next year's models! In the field of science and invention new gadgets are being developed which will change the housewife from kitchen slave to royal mistress, which will throw out the dirty furnace and harness the sun's rays to light and heat our domiciles, that will give quicker and more lasting relief by improving medicines and hospital technics! That will take us out of our earthly doldrums, and make us to soar through space! A new society must be established, wherein there is no more poverty, sickness, or material want! All the slums must be torn down, and replaced with new and modern facilities!

Even the nominal church of our day is looking for that which is new! In fact, her vision is so broad that it swallows up all the other spheres of development!

But pity them!

Of this they all are willingly ignorant that the heavens and the earth, which now are, are kept in store, reserved unto fire! As it was in the days of Noah, so it is in our day; they ignore the promise of Christ's coming. They live out of the principle that all things continue, even themselves!

Nevertheless we!

We, the children of God, also look for something new!

A new heavens and a new earth!  
Where righteousness shall dwell!  
According to His promise!

\* \* \*

New heaven!

New earth!

We expect!

The old will pass away! The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. (II Peter 3:10). All the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll. (Isaiah 34:4). The glory of the sun will be extinguished, and its present brilliancy shall have an end! The silvery moon shall cease to flood the night, and the twinkling splendor of the star-studded firmament shall be wiped out! They shall be all set afire and dissolved in a great crashing! All things shall be shaken, in heaven and on earth, in order that that which is immovable may remain!

The earth also and all its works shall be burned up! All the products of men, every invention of man, his art, his science, his commerce, his industry, the labor of the slave and the proud achievements of kings, the most insignificant to the greatest and most honorable! Nothing shall remain of them after they pass through the fire and melting heat! Even the very elements shall be burned up, the very material from which the present creation is made, out of which it was organically formed and composed, these shall be set on fire and melt away with fervent heat!

Tremendous transformation!

Not annihilation, but recreation and renovation!

Though they are burned in that universal conflagration, nothing of the earth shall be annihilated. All

shall be renewed! As the gold-smith casts various metals into the refining fire, so God will recreate, regenerate all things in heaven and earth. Nothing that is of the earth earthy shall pass through that fire so as to come out of it, in order that that which is heavenly may remain!

All this, however, cannot take place until God's purpose with them is fully realized! Then its organic development shall have been consummated! All things earthly have a definite design. That design is God's purpose that all things earthly shall serve the heavenly. Organically the world and all things must so develop that they ultimately come to a head. Science and art, all the marvelous genius of man, all the power of the antichristian world must come to manifestation. When all things are burned up, the highest possible earthly development will have been realized. No more inventions could possibly have been made. No other works of man could ever have been produced. So the number 666, which is the number of man without God, will be fulfilled. And God shall usher in the perfect seven by burning up the completed six. Sin and grace shall have served God's purpose. Light and darkness develop together with the earthly organism. The kingdom of Christ and the antichrist grow side by side in the world. However, when both have developed to the point that God's purpose is reached, the power of antichrist will be destroyed; all the proud accomplishments of sinful man shall be burned up. Then all those works which are lauded by this wicked world, and even praised by those who see in them a fruit of grace which is said to be common, shall all be wiped out. Nothing of man shall pass through the final liquid fire!

All things shall become new!

Out of the old shall the new come forth! From the fiery molten mass, much like the unshaped chaos from which the present world came forth, shall the new appear!

Of that new we can only stammer! Its beauty is indescribable! Only in Scripture's light can we say that there will be no trace of corruption in the new. No thorns or thistles! None shall ever say: I am sick! No enemies or angels of darkness will be in it!

It will be a heavenly world! Not a return to the glory of the first and earthly Paradise, which is lost and never returns! Which was but an image, an earthly image of the heavenly Paradise; the splendor of which surpasses the glory of the former as the greatness of the last Adam surpasses that of the first. In Him shall all things in the new find their union, and through Him in the Most High. For it was the Father's good pleasure that in Christ all the fulness should dwell!

Yes, all things will then be heavenly! Heavenly relations, heavenly life, and joys shall characterize the new! The true church of Christ shall walk there! With heavenly bodies, clothed in heavenly garments, clean and white! The covenant of God shall be with men! No more shall they see in a darkened glass, but then face to face! Then shall they enjoy the inheritance that fadeth not away!

Wherein dwelleth righteousness!

Unrighteousness, and all sin shall be done away!



Righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the bottom of the seas. None shall enter there who is not clothed in garments of righteousness, the righteousness of their Redeemer! All will be in perfect harmony with the will of God, with God Himself, and that, too, according to His judgment. That righteousness dwells there, means that it is not transitory, but permanent! Righteousness dwells where it prevails and is practised! And the attending blessedness of this righteousness is perfect peace!

\* \* \*

We look for it!

The apostle and the elect strangers to whom he is writing!

And we with them, who have obtained precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ, to whom grace and peace have been multiplied through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. (Chapter 1:1, 2). We, who by divine power have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue, who have been given exceeding great and precious promises by which they might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. (Chapter 1:3, 4). The elect strangers, chosen of God in Christ from the foundation of the world in the counsel of His good pleasure. Chosen to be strangers in the world that is passing away. Strangers, therefore, because of their election! Who manifest themselves as aliens and foreigners in a strange land! Beloved of God, who are loved by Him with an eternal, unchangeable love, a love that in its initial manifestation had to be one-sided, because we did not love Him. This love He showed us in the sending of His Son to suffer, die and to rise again, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him, and be made conformable unto His image. That love was His eternal desire to make us perfect even as He is perfect! And because His love was one-sided, and He loved us when we were yet enemies, He was longsuffering over us, not willing that any of us should perish! Therefore also He withholds the destruction of the world until all His people come to repentance. Not one of them may be lost! And being renewed by His grace, and having His love shed abroad in our hearts, we come to repentance, confess our sins, and desire to walk in a new and godly life. His love returns to Him through our hearts! Therefore also,

we become estranged to the world, and look for new heavens and a new earth where sin shall be no more!

These are they who expect the new!

For in them is created a new hope! Which looks not at the things of sight and sense, but at the invisible, the spiritual, the heavenly, which the new world will bring to them! They, like Abraham, father of all the faithful, look for the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God!

\* \* \*

According to His promise!

Our hope does not rest on a vain imagination!

Nor does it rest on mere tradition or institutions of men!

But the infallible, unchangeable promise of God in the Scripture!

God has promised in His Word that we shall have new heavens and earth wherein righteousness shall dwell! "For, behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come to mind." Isaiah 65:17. "For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." Isaiah 66:22. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts: yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land." Haggai 2:6. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Matthew 24:29. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." Revelation 21:1.

These and more are the unfailing promises of God! For the fulfillment of them we look!

We live, therefore, not as the fools who live as though the day of Christ will never come, to whom He also will come as a thief in the night, and they shall perish in the final catastrophe!

Nay, rather, we live as wise!

Our lamps are brightly burning!

We are watching and sober!

The Bridegroom cometh! And when He shall appear, He will make all things new!

For that our faith looks, and our hope stretches out! Where righteousness shall dwell!

Where God shall be all and in all!

---

O Lord, if only my will may remain right and firm toward 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



## EDITORIALS—

# THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT: Limited or General?

## Satisfaction the Key According to the Canons (Continued)

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In my previous editorial I called attention to the fact that in the very first article of the Second Head of Doctrine our Canons lay down the principle of atonement through satisfaction.

There are several more articles which make reference to this idea of satisfaction in Canons II. In these articles there are various other elements belonging to the nature of the atonement which are set forth; and they are set forth, too, in connection with this key idea of satisfaction. To these other elements we shall give our attention later. For the present we are interested in these articles only in so far as they present the truth of satisfaction.

Article 2 is the first of these. It reads as follows:

Since therefore we are unable to make that satisfaction in our own persons, or to deliver ourselves from the wrath of God, he hath been pleased in his infinite mercy to give his only begotten Son, for our surety, who was made sin, and became a curse for us and in our stead, that he might make satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf.

As far as the doctrine of satisfaction is concerned, this article emphasizes: 1) That we are unable to make that satisfaction ourselves. This aspect is not further explained. But you will remember that the Heidelberg Catechism expounds this at length, as was pointed out in a previous editorial. 2) That the provision of such satisfaction is an act of God, and that too, an act that proceeds from God's good pleasure ("he hath been pleased...."), and an act of infinite mercy. 3) That the provision of satisfaction is in the gift of God's only begotten Son. 4) That the only begotten Son made satisfaction as our "surety" and by being made sin and becoming a curse for us. 5) That satisfaction is concerned with divine justice and the wrath of God, which is the expression of divine justice against sin.

The rather well-known and somewhat controversial Article 3 reads as follows:

The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin; and is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.

We will not at this point busy ourselves with a discussion of that last expression in the article. We

are at present interested in the element of satisfaction. Suffice it to point out here that the article does *not* say that Christ died for the whole world or made satisfaction for the whole world, even if it be granted that here "the whole world" is used in the sense of all men. But as far as satisfaction is concerned, the article emphasizes: 1) That the death of the Son of God constitutes that satisfaction for sin. 2) That this satisfying death of the Son of God was a sacrifice, that is, a voluntary offering. 3) That it is "only and most perfect." This last expression again is very important. It means that the satisfaction made was complete. It very really satisfied divine justice. It actually accomplished what it was intended to accomplish. Hence, to that satisfaction nothing can be added, nor can anything be taken away. It is once for all. Divine justice has been satisfied; the divine wrath has been borne. All those covered by that death are very really and objectively redeemed and have escaped the punishment of sin.

Article 4 does not speak literally of satisfaction, but of the infinite value and dignity of Christ's satisfying death, a subject which was introduced already in Article 3. Nevertheless, it points to the very essence of the idea of satisfaction when it emphasizes that that death "was attended with a sense of the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin."

Also Article 8 of Canons II does not mention the term *satisfaction*. When read, however, in the context of the Second Head, it sheds important light upon the idea of satisfaction. In the first place, it speaks of *effectual redemption*. That redemption is effectual simply means that it truly redeems. And that our Canons employ the term effectual redemption does not at all imply that there is also an ineffectual redemption, or atonement, as Prof. Dekker teaches. By this terminology the Canons simply emphasize the truth over against the false theory of the Arminians. The Arminians taught a redemption that did not actually redeem all for whom it was made. In other words, it was ineffectual. And it is over against this theory of an ineffectual redemption that our fathers spoke of effectual redemption and of the quickening and saving efficacy of the death of the Son of God. We do the same thing when we speak of *total depravity*. That we use the term *total* does not imply that there is also *partial*



depravity or even that a partial depravity of man would be conceivable. But there are false theories that present human depravity as being only partial. And over against these false theories we speak of depravity as total in order to emphasize that such is the very nature of human depravity. Thus also we speak of effectual redemption. As I have emphasized before, an ineffectual redemption or atonement is a contradiction in terms: it is no redemption whatsoever. But I especially want to emphasize here that this mention of effectual redemption is possible only because the very nature of the atonement consists of satisfaction of divine justice. In the second place, we should notice that this article speaks of faith and all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit *as having been purchased for the elect by Christ's death*. Here again the emphasis is upon the fact that there was an objective accomplishment in the death of Christ, there was an actual event, a transaction. Faith and all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit were *purchased*. Our purging from all sin, both original and actual, whether sins committed before or after believing, was objectively accomplished. Our preservation to the end was obtained. All this is due to the fact that the very nature of the atonement is the satisfaction of divine justice. Before satisfaction was made, we were indebted. When satisfaction was made, the debt was paid. The result is that before God those for whom satisfaction was made, those for whom Christ died, are from that point on no more indebted. If all men are included in that death of Christ, then all men are no more indebted. If only the elect are included in the death of Christ, then only the elect are no more indebted. But whichever is the case, one thing is certain: he who would speak of the atonement must be willing to speak of *satisfaction* and to accept all the Scriptural consequences of that key element in the nature of the atonement. Take it away, and you destroy the entire beautiful truth of the atonement. With these remarks in mind, I ask you to read Article 8:

For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation; that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from

eternity chosen to salvation, and given to him by the Father; that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in his own presence forever.

There are, of course, other important elements of the atonement in this article; and we shall therefore refer to it again. I only quote it here in connection with the element of satisfaction.

There is also an article in the Rejection of Errors of the Second Head of Doctrine which mentions Christ's satisfaction, namely, Article III. In this article the Synod rejects the errors of those:

Who teach: That Christ by his satisfaction merited neither salvation itself for anyone, nor faith, whereby this satisfaction of Christ unto salvation is effectually appropriated; but that he merited for the Father only the authority or the perfect will to deal again with man, and to prescribe new conditions as he might desire, obedience to which, however, depended on the free will of man, so that it therefore might have come to pass that either none or all should fulfill these conditions. For these adjudge too contemptuously of the death of Christ, do in no wise acknowledge the most important fruit or benefit thereby gained, and bring again out of hell the Pelagian error.

In this connection we are not interested particularly in the Arminian error which is condemned here, but rather in what the fathers say about satisfaction in the course of their polemic against the Arminians. The article teaches us especially two things as to the Reformed view of satisfaction. 1) By His satisfaction Christ *merited* salvation itself and the faith whereby this satisfaction is appropriated. 2) The objective accomplishment of satisfaction is to be distinguished from the appropriation of that satisfaction by faith whereby the benefits of that satisfaction become our conscious possession.

From all the above it is abundantly plain that according to our Canons and all our confessions satisfaction is a key element in the Reformed concept of Christ's atoning death.

We must now turn to Scripture itself, to relate this teaching of our Reformed confessions to the language of Holy Writ. This we shall begin to do next time, D.V.

## Gift Idea?

\$5 per year

. . . . Gift Subscription

WRITE TO: James Dykstra, Bus. Mgr.  
1326 W. Butler Ave., SE,  
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507



# Vainglorious Man in the Space Age

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In these days of Gemini 6 and Gemini 7, newspapers, radio, and television are filled with detailed accounts of the wonderful accomplishments of our country's space scientists and astronauts. This is in itself not so bad, for undoubtedly these accomplishments are interesting and newsworthy.

But along with all the news accounts and play-by-play descriptions of these events there comes a constant barrage of editorial propaganda. And the keynote of all that propaganda is the pride, or vainglory, of life. Man has conquered space. Man's scientific achievements have reached new heights. Man has achieved a historic rendezvous in space. Man this, and man that. Man...man...MAN! This is all one hears and reads until, figuratively speaking, one could almost vomit!

My purpose in calling attention to this is not to belittle the event as such, nor to debunk scientific achievement. Undoubtedly this rendezvous in space was somewhat of an accomplishment when viewed from the viewpoint of puny little man. It is probably an instance of one of the greater accomplishments, scientifically speaking, that have arisen out of man's "remnants of natural light."

But let us, as children of God, keep our perspective.

In the first place, has man actually conquered space? Or is it much rather true that he has merely succeeded in exploring its fringes and in making a few temporary forays into the great reaches of the heavens. And is not his very necessary return to the earth in itself proof that he has not conquered after all, but is conquered? In the second place, does man so soon forget his failings even in this realm. Was it not only a few days ago that a mere little plug prevented him from leaving Pad 19 at Cape Kennedy? And did he not also discover an insignificant plastic dust cover in an

engine which would have doomed his mighty machine to failure and destruction?

But, in a deeper vein, does not all this boasting remind you of a past day, when a mighty Nebuchadnezzar boasted, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" or of another day, when men in the plain of Shinar vaunted themselves against God and said, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name....?" Or does it not remind you of the coming day when "all the world shall wonder after the beast?"

Let us keep our bearings.

God is not in all the thoughts of those vainglorious men who speak great swelling words of vanity. If this were not evident from anything else, it would be evident from the fact that they desecrated the sabbath by attempting to launch their Titan on the Lord's day. And was it not a bit of poetic justice that they failed on that day too? Personally, I cannot help thinking that.

Let us not lose our perspective.

With all his mighty achievements vainglorious man is unable to save his wretched soul, much less to rescue his world from the vicious cycle of "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit." In other words, his vainglory is indeed *vain*, empty.

And is this not Scripture's judgment? "For all that is in the world.....(including) the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof."

Children of God, be not enamored by the vainglory of man!

And "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." For: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

## HEEDING THE DOCTRINE—

# Barth's Doctrine of Scripture

by Rev. D. J. Engelsma

Barth's thorough-going criticism of the doctrine of an infallible Bible proceeds from his conception of the Word of God. The Word of God has three important forms. They are Church proclamation, Scripture, and revelation. Of these three forms of the Word of God, Church proclamation and Scripture are the Word of

God only conditionally. "They are God's Word, by from time to time *becoming* God's Word" (CD,I,1,p. 133). "The Bible is God's Word so far as God lets it be His Word, so far as God speaks through it" (*ibid.*, p.123). Revelation alone is the Word of God without any conditions. For revelation is Jesus Christ Him-



self. "Revelation. . . does not differ from the Person of Jesus Christ, and again does not differ from the reconciliation that took place in Him. To say revelation is to say, 'The Word became flesh'" (*ibid.*, p.134). That Jesus Christ in the flesh is the Word of God really means that the Bible cannot be the Word of God. Barth may continue to say, and even vociferously to insist that Scripture is the Word of God but he does so having made crystal clear that, in reality, it is *not* the Word of God. Scripture witnesses to the Word of God, that is, to Jesus Christ. But Christ and Christ only *is* the Word of God. The word of the Bible and God's Word are two different things, even though, from time to time, God may be pleased to make the word of the Bible "become" His Word. They are two different things because the word of the Bible is the word of men.

This must be our fundamental criticism of Barth's doctrine of Scripture. He does not go astray, to a greater or lesser degree in his explanation of the truth that the Bible is the Word of God; he maintains the opposite, namely, that the Bible is the word of men. He plays off Jesus Christ against the Bible so that the former is and the latter is not the Word of God: "in revelation we are concerned with Jesus Christ. . . , we are, therefore, concerned with the singular Word spoken, and this time really directly, by God Himself. But in the Bible we are invariably concerned with human attempts to repeat and reproduce, in human thoughts and expressions, this Word of God in definite human situations, e.g., in respect of the complications of Israel's political position midway between Egypt and Babylon, or of the errors and confessions in the Christian Church at Corinth between A.D. 50-60. In the one case *Deus dixit* (God said—D.E.), in the other *Paulus dixit* (Paul said—D.E.). These are two different things" (*ibid.*, p.127). They are two different things indeed. The one is the Word of God and the other is the word of man. In light of this distinction between the Word of God and the Bible, Barth's remark on the believer's conscious attitude over against the Bible becomes understandable: "we have to subordinate ourselves to the word of the prophets and apostles; not as one subordinates oneself to God. . ." (CD, I, 2, p.717). That Barth goes on to say that we ought to subordinate ourselves to Scripture as to "messengers which He Himself has constituted and empowered" does not undo the damage. There is now one kind of subordination rendered to God and another kind rendered to Scripture. This is so because Scripture is not the Word of God. If Scripture were the Word of God, our subordination to it would not differ from our subordination to words God might speak directly from heaven. This is, in fact, our contention.<sup>1</sup> But it is not Barth's because Barth considers the Bible to be words of men.

We may carry this criticism through, even though it is premature. Scripture is full of errors, according to Barth, for the simple reason that its words are man's words. And they are man's words, not in the sense that God used humans to write His word, which no one denies, but in the sense that men, not God, are the authors of those words. This is the inescapable

implication of every view of Scripture which posits errors in the sacred record. In so far as there are errors (and we have insisted in a previous article that to allow errors in any part of Scripture is to concede errors everywhere), the words of Scripture are not God's Word but man's. *God* cannot lie (Titus 1:2); *God* cannot contradict Himself; *God* cannot slip up on historical and chronological details. Errors point directly to the authorship of men. Therefore, with the rise of the view of Scripture that teaches a fallible Bible, the authority of the Bible falls with the heaviest of all possible thuds. Men's words are not authoritative. Man is a liar at worst and ignorant at best. By his view of Scripture, Barth not only surrenders the Reformation principle of the sole authority of Scripture but really makes it impossible to ascribe any authority to Scripture whatsoever. His doctrine of Scripture does less justice to the authority of the Bible than did Rome's, at the time of the Reformation. For Rome, although placing the authority of Scripture under that of tradition and the Church, at least maintained that the books "both of the Old and of the New Testament" had "one God" as "the author" and went on to say that these books were "dictated either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost."<sup>2</sup>

Since Trent, Rome has changed also. She too is willing to concede errors in Scripture. The document on Divine Revelation recently adopted at the Vatican Council not only reaffirms that tradition as well as Scripture is a source of Divine Revelation but also deliberately allows for historical errors in the Bible. The document carefully states that "those truths which God revealed for the sake of man's salvation are to be regarded in the sacred books as true and unerring."<sup>3</sup> Here, we have the familiar distinction between a "central" part of Scripture ("those truths. . . revealed for the sake of man's salvation"), which is infallible, and a "peripheral" part, which may be regarded as fallible. One Roman Catholic writer calls this distinction "very useful." "Thus," he says, "the point of historical inaccuracies is bypassed while the essential inerrancy of the Bible is maintained."

Concerning Rome's concession of errors in Scripture, one can only ask, "Why not?" She has no need of an inerrant Scripture; she has the infallible pope. To weaken the authority of Scripture is not a fundamental loss to Rome. For the churches of the Reformation, it is different. To lose the authority of Scripture is to lose all. We cannot say less about Barth's doctrine of Scripture than that it aims a blow at the cornerstone of the Reformation, a blow that would topple the entire structure of the faith of the Reformation. Personally, in all his bitter affliction, and theologically, in all his preaching, teaching, and writing, Luther stood rock-firm on the truth expressed pungently in this statement of his: "The supreme pontiff is a man, able to err. But God is true, who is not able to err."<sup>4</sup> Luther here opposes God's infallible *Word*, the Bible, against the human and, therefore, fallible *words* of the pope. The historian sums up well, "The sole and infallible authority of the Word of God was the primary and fundamental principle of the Reformation."<sup>5</sup>



There is a sense in which Barth would grant the validity of this criticism. That is, he freely acknowledges that the Bible does not claim authority for itself. "Why and in what respect," he asks, "does the Biblical witness possess authority? In that it claims no authority whatsoever for itself, that its witness amounts to letting the Something else (namely, Jesus Christ—D.E.) be the authority, itself and by its own agency" (CD, I, 1, p. 126). Here, he continues to play Jesus Christ, the Word of God, off against the Bible, which is not the Word of God but a witness.

Against this playing off of Christ against the Bible, we must register our strong protest. We do not, of course, protest against regarding the Bible as the witness to Jesus. Jesus Himself emphasizes this in John 5:39: "Search the scriptures. . . they are they which testify of me." The whole of the Bible, every book, chapter, and verse, but each in its context and in its connection with the whole of Scripture, witnesses of Jesus Christ. We affirm what Luther said somewhere, that if anyone reads a passage of Scripture and misses Jesus in that passage, he has simply missed the Scripture altogether. We like, however, to emphasize more strongly than did Luther that Scripture witnesses to Jesus as the Revelation of the glory of the Triune God. That the whole of Scripture is gospel and that the gospel is the revelation of Christ is the point of Questions 18 and 19 of the Heidelberg Catechism.

But our protest denies that the witness cannot itself *be* the Word of God, except with all Barth's conditions and qualifications. The Bible is the witness to Jesus, to be sure, but it is *Jesus' own* witness to Himself and, as such, the Word of God, needing only one qualification, namely, the Word of God *written*. In proof of the fact that the Bible is Jesus' own witness to Himself, we adduce I Peter 1:11: "the Spirit of Christ . . . in (the prophets) . . . testified beforehand ("testified beforehand" being basically the same word that occurs in John 5:39—D.E.) the sufferings of Christ. . . ." The prophets, that is, the Old Testament, did one thing. They witnessed to Christ. But their prophecy was *Christ's own* witness to Himself. In order to guard ourselves from the charge Barth would assuredly hurl at us, that we make the Bible into a second Jesus, we must be quite specific. If Jesus stood before us, at this moment, and said, "I am the Good Shepherd," would that phrase not be rightfully called, "the Word of God?" Because it was the Word

*spoken*, we would not say of that statement that it is the Word of God when and where it pleases God or that, from time to time, it *becomes* the Word of God. No, it would *be* the Word of God. So it is with the Bible. Because it is Jesus' own Word, it is the Word of God, albeit *written*. We do not mean that it is the *incarnate* Word, the *personal* Word, nor must Barth charge us with such folly. But it is Barth's preconceived idea, which he takes with him *to* the Bible and does not elicit *from* the Bible, that a book which *is* the Word of God, which *is* revelation poses a threatening challenge to the Lord Jesus. Ultimately, it is his presupposition that we may apply the title, "Word of God," to Jesus Christ only. Thus, he begs the question, the question whether the Bible is the Word of God. Therefore, he plays the one off against the other and supposes that this enhances Jesus Christ. But the Bible must tell us whether it is the Word of God and whether calling it the Word of God infringes on the prerogatives of Jesus. The opposite is true. "The Bible, the Word of God" does not threaten Jesus. As little as one honors Jesus by denying that His spoken Word is fully the Word of God, so little does one honor Jesus when he denies that the Scriptures are fully the Word of God. Jesus' own words are never a threat to Jesus; man's words, however, are.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 In contrast with Barth's assertion is this statement of Calvin: "the full authority which they (the Scriptures—D.E.) ought to possess with the faithful is not recognised, unless they are believed to have come from heaven, as directly as if God has been heard giving utterance to them" (*Institutes*, I, VII, 1).
- 2 *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Fourth Session, "Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures")
- 3 Quoted in the *Denver Catholic Register* of Thursday, November 4, 1965, p. 2, Sec. 2. The pertinent statement on tradition is this: "The Church does not draw its certitude about all things that are in revelation from Sacred Scripture alone." At the time of this writing, the entire document is not yet available.
- 4 My translation of a quotation in D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation*, I, p. 317. The Latin reads: "*Homo est summus pontifex, falli potest. Sec veritas est Deus, qui falli non potest.*"
- 5 *ibid.*, p. 204

God is a Being, whose will acknowledges no cause, neither is it for us to prescribe rules to His sovereign pleasure, or call Him to account for what He does. He has neither superior nor equal, and His will is the rule of all things. He did not therefore will such and such things because they were in themselves right, and He was bound to will them; but they are therefore equitable and right because He wills them. The will of man, indeed, may be influenced and moved, but God's will never can. To assert the contrary is to undeify Him.

—Martin Luther



## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

# The Anointing of Saul

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

*And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day.*

*And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him, and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them . . . .*

*Therefore it became a proverb, is Saul also among the prophets?*

*I Samuel 10:9, 10, 12*

One might be inclined to wonder why it was that God brought Saul to Samuel prior to his public presentation to the children of Israel at Mizpeh. It surely was not so that Samuel might know whom to present to the people. When the time came for Israel to receive its king at Mizpeh, it was not upon the weight of Samuel's authority that he was presented. Rather the long but indisputable use of the lot was made to select exactly the man which God had chosen; and it was, of course, this same Saul who had stood before Samuel a short time before. But Samuel could well have waited for the casting of the lot to meet Saul. No, the reason for this meeting was with Saul.

Saul, the son of Kish, was a man of this world. He was an Israelite all right. Genetically he was, born of the seed of Abraham from the tribe of Benjamin. Politically and socially he was; his loyalty and concern were very strong with the nation of Israel and its people. It was just that he, like so many of the young men of his generation, had no real feeling at all for the religion of Israel. It was not so much that he was opposed to the worship of Jehovah; if the occasion demanded, he would even go along with the formalities of worship. But it meant nothing to him, he was indifferent to its importance and meaning, he felt quite capable of getting along in his life without God. And this was really the kind of man that Israel wanted for a king. They wanted to be like the other nations with a man of this world to rule over them. Thus it was that God separated out Saul to be their monarch.

Nevertheless, before God placed Saul upon the throne, he wanted him to understand from whom it was that he was receiving his office. Had God waited until the casting of lots at Mizpeh, Saul would have been the first to ascribe his selection as king to his good fortune, or luck, as we would say. Thus it was that before the gathering at Mizpeh, God through His all-comprehensive providence directed the feet of Saul until he stood before Samuel at Ramah.

Saul's reason for coming to see Samuel in the first place was, perhaps, more curiosity than anything. He

was not one, like his servant, to really expect that Samuel could or would help them to locate the lost asses. But the experience of challenging the prophet was bound to be interesting and a diversion for the night before they returned to his father's home. The meeting took place as soon as Saul and his servant entered the city, having ascertained from some young girls that the prophet, or seer as they called him, was present in the city. There, just within the city, they found themselves approached by a man, a stranger to Saul, who came up to them almost with a look of recognition on his face. Saul had time only to ask in complete politeness, "Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is," and with that he, a man accustomed himself to dominate, suddenly found his life taken over by a person of even stronger character than he. This stranger answered Saul, "I am the seer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye shall eat with me today, and to morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that is in thine heart. And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy Father's house?"

Samuel had indeed recognized Saul. It was not that he had ever seen him before; it was rather because God had been speaking to him. Through the years, Samuel had come to dwell on terms of very close communion with God. He spoke to God freely, and God answered him always concerning all of the problems which he met. For some time now, they had been speaking together about the future king of Israel. It was just the day before this that God had come to Samuel and said, "To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people, Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me." Samuel had indeed known that Saul was coming. In fact, when Saul first entered the city as Samuel was making his way toward the



evening sacrifice of the city, God in secret communion had whispered to him, "Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people." That was why Samuel had approached him and spoken as he did.

Saul was utterly amazed at what Samuel had to say to him. He had expected nothing at all from the prophet, except perhaps some cleverly evasive answers. And now, not only did the prophet tell him immediately that his father's asses were found, and that without even being asked but he went on to lead Saul's mind into areas he had never before allowed any one else to enter. Samuel first commanded them to come with him to the evening sacrifice of the city. This was not the kind of activity at which Saul was usually to be found, but he could endure that. It was the other that bothered him. Samuel told him that afterward he would take him aside and "tell thee all that is in thine heart." This bothered Saul because in actual fact he had been preoccupied with an over-bearing dream that would not leave him. He knew that the people of Israel were looking for a king, and for some time now he had been filled with the burning desire to be just that. He had been very careful to keep this dream to himself because it had seemed so impossible and hadn't had the least of an idea how he could implement it. And now suddenly Samuel told him that he was going to talk to him about this dream and he intimated clearly enough that he knew exactly what it was. It made Saul, a man usually so composed, flush with shame to think that someone else should know about his extraordinary ambition; but at the same time his heart began to beat wildly with intoxicated excitement at the mere suggestion that his fondest dream might soon be realized.

Unable to trust himself in this heat of excitement to say more, Saul parried the remark of Samuel with the seemingly modest but untrue answer, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore than speakest thou so to me?" This was the proper and polite thing to say. Saul's family was far from the least in Benjamin, and Saul did not really think that being a Benjamite should interfere with being king, but his senses had not left him completely, and he knew better than to sound too presumptuous.

Of the sacrificial ceremony that night, Saul remembered very little. It was an unusual thing for him just to be in attendance at a religious function such as that, but his thoughts were far too preoccupied even for him to feel out of place. Frantically he was trying to get hold of his thoughts and come to terms with the sudden surge of hope that perhaps this prophet did know what he was talking about, and in the end he, Saul would actually come to be king.

It was at the feast after the sacrifice that Saul gradually seemed to come back to reality, and it was wonderful. Once the sacrifice was over, Samuel took Saul and his servant and led them back to his own house. There a great feast had been spread, and soon about thirty leaders among the people appeared. At first, it seemed strange to Saul that he and his servant

should be allowed to remain among all of these devotedly religious people. But soon it became apparent that this feast was appointed in special recognition for him. To him and his servant were given the seats of special honor; and when the food appeared, the cook gave to him the thigh of the sacrificial animal while Samuel said, "Behold that which is reserved! set it before thee, and eat: for unto this time hath it been kept for thee since I said, I have invited the people." Beyond that, nothing more was said as to the specific reason for this honor; but as yet this was not necessary for Saul. He was more than satisfied with what honor he received.

That night, after their supper, Samuel took Saul up unto the roof of the house alone. For a long time they sat and talked together. The words of Samuel were gentle and kind but very definite. Again and again, in this way and that, he pointed out to Saul the distinctive place of Israel as a nation devoted to the worship of Jehovah. This was unfamiliar talk for Saul; but he did his best to follow the old prophet and to make it appear as if he understood perfectly what Samuel was trying to say. He especially appreciated the veiled but perfectly apparent implication that his future was of primary importance for the whole of the nation of Israel.

It was late before they retired and early the next morning again when Samuel aroused him. But to Saul it mattered not; his mind was much too preoccupied to care for sleep. According to Samuel's instructions, he sent his servant ahead while the two of them followed more slowly. It was just outside of the city, at a quiet bend in the road, that Samuel took out a vial and anointed his head with oil. As ignorant as he was of religious ceremony, he somehow realized that this was the appointment from God for him to be king.

It was a different man that left Samuel that morning to proceed on his way, at least from a certain point of view. No longer was Saul the cynical, religiously indifferent man he had been. Through the night Saul had come to the conviction that there must be something to this matter of religion after all. He didn't know much about it, although he intended to find out more. It surely had not tempered his ambition or made him repentant for his pride. If Samuel had said anything about that, and he very likely had, it did not register with Saul. He was only convinced that a God who foretold so much good for him, must be worthwhile having, and that Samuel was a wonderful man.

Saul's journey home was like a dream. Samuel had told him exactly what would happen, and it did. First he met two men who told him that his father's asses had been found and that Kish worried now about Saul. This was not too remarkable except that Samuel had foretold it, and for Saul that made it an amazing thing. Next he was met by three men going to Bethel to sacrifice to God. They were strangers; but when they saw Saul, they gave to him two loaves, part of their sacrificial offering. It was a mark of recognition that thrilled Saul to the depth of his being. Finally, he was met by a company of prophets, making music, singing and dancing as they went upon their way. Saul could contain himself no longer. As often as he had



scorned religion before, he now thought it the most wonderful thing in all the world. Soon he was in with the prophets, singing and dancing in praise to Jehovah, Israel's God.

By this time he was close to his own home, and many who met this company of prophets recognized

Saul. It appeared to them one of those impossible, almost unbelievable things. They had known Saul in his former days too well. It seemed to be the ultimate incongruity of life, the final improbability fulfilled until it became a proverb in the land, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

## THE LORD GAVE THE WORD (Psalm 68:11)

# Vicarious Atonement and Missions

by Rev. C. Hanko

For whom did Christ die?

The most common answer is: For all men.

One frequently hears it said over the radio, from the pulpit, and in the mission field that Christ died for all men individually, so that salvation is "full and free" for every one who makes a commitment to Christ. It depends only on man's willingness to accept the proffered salvation merited for him on the cross. Even the general, well-meant offer of salvation as officially adopted by the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924 implies that somehow the salvation merited on the cross is now offered to all men for their acceptance. It need not surprise anyone that Prof. Dekker and those in agreement with him appeal to the Three Points of 1924 to maintain that mission preaching is a proclamation to every man, women and child, "God loves you, Christ died for you."

The assertion is often made that it is impossible to preach the gospel to the unconverted unless we can proclaim to them the glad tidings that Christ died for them. In fact, this must be proclaimed even though we are compelled to make certain mental reservations. Even Prof. Dekker feels compelled to make this statement with tongue in cheek, it seems, since he wants to make the reservation that the atonement of the cross is not efficacious for all. He maintains that the death of Christ is sufficient to save all men. He also teaches that the atonement of Christ's death is available to all men. He even declares that God desires to save all men through the death of His Son. But he makes one reservation. The cross is not efficient for all, that is, it does not actually save all men. No, it does not actually save. (See the Reformed Journal, December, 1962).

Let us ask what Scripture teaches concerning the atonement of the cross. One often is compelled to bemoan the great dearth of Scriptural references in the current discussions on this subject. And yet the Scriptures must be our criterion, and Scripture alone. The question is, does Scripture teach a particular or a universal atonement? Did Christ die for all men, or did He die for the elect, and for the elect only?

In answer to that question, I wish to point out, first, that Christ died *vicariously*.

The word "vicarious" means "substitutionary". Man needs a substitute to save him from his sin. And God has prepared the perfect substitute in Christ. For God gave His only begotten Son.

This is already evident from the sacrifices that were brought in the old dispensation. Immediately after the fall, God gave to Adam and Eve the skins of animals to replace their miserably devised fig-leaves as a covering for their nakedness. God showed them that blood had to be shed, that atonement had to be made, that a substitute had to be provided, and that God would provide the substitute to cover their sins. Therefore the believers of the old dispensation always approached God through the sacrifice that burned upon the altar. In faith they looked for the promised Christ. This altar with its bloody sacrifice became the very center of Israel's shadow worship. The temple was later built around this altar. God had opened the way to a living fellowship with Him through the blood of atonement. Therefore the repentant sinner brought his sacrifice to the temple, laid his hand upon the head of the victim to show that the guilt of his sins had to be borne away. The scapegoat was sent out to perish in the wilderness as a token of the bearing away of the iniquity of God's people. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled before the Lord in the Most Holy Place. Always the eye of faith was directed to that one and only sacrifice that must be brought by God Himself. And therefore when John the Baptist as the last of the old testament prophets reached the climax of his ministry, he pointed out the Christ by saying to the people, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

This same idea is expressed repeatedly in the new testament. Christ died *in the place of* His people. He died *instead of* them. He suffered on Calvary *in behalf of* those given to Him by the Father. He died *for* sin, that sin might be condemned in the flesh. The wrath of God against our sin was reckoned to Him. For God eternally appoints Christ as The Anointed One, the



great High Priest, Whose task it is to bring the sacrifice for sin. It is for that very purpose that the Son of man came into the world, to give His life as a ransom for many. He became flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, like unto the brethren, in order to atone for their sins. He deliberately set His face toward Jerusalem, went to the cross, and suffered torments of hell under the righteous judgment of God as the sacrifice for sinners slain.

We are taught in 2 Cor. 5:21, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Christ became the very embodiment of sin. He bore our sins and stood under the consuming wrath of God until the flames had completely burned out. And that for the purpose, which is also realized in us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

This same idea is presented in Galatians 1:4, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Here we are told that Christ gave Himself for the very purpose that He might deliver us from this present evil world. Did He fail in attaining that purpose as far as some men are concerned? Or is that purpose always attained? It must be that this purpose is also attained in all for whom it is intended, because the text adds that this deliverance is according to the will of God our Father. God's counsel stands and He does all His good pleasure. For whose sins did Christ give Himself? For the elect's.

Paul teaches the same truth in Galatians 3:13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." This refers to the cross where Christ became a curse. And He became a curse for us, in our stead, and in our behalf. He *has* redeemed us. That is simply an accomplished fact that was realized almost two thousand years ago!

Therefore Hebrews 7:26,27 shows us, "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices . . . for this he did once, when he offered up himself."

Here Christ is described as the High Priest ordained of God to bring the sacrifice for sin. He is the representative Head of those for whom He must atone. But is He the representative Head of the whole world as it perished in Adam? Or is He the representative Head of His people? Obviously the latter. (See Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18.) As representative Head of His people He brought the sacrifice for sin once. And it is our eternal comfort and assurance that He did that once for all.

Vicarious atonement means that Christ is the substitute for His people. It means that atonement is always particular.

But I wish to point out that this is the implication of *atonement*. The very idea of atonement makes it particular.

Sin requires satisfaction. For sin is transgression against the Most High Majesty of God. The righteous,

holy God cannot condone sin, not allow it to be unpunished. In His righteous judgment He declares that the soul that sins must die. Therefore the only way of escape from everlasting condemnation is restitution. Satisfaction must be made. God's justice must be satisfied. Perfect obedience must atone for our disobedience. The burden of God's wrath must be borne in complete submission of love. And this we can never do. Nor can any other creature, angel or sacrificial lamb make such satisfaction for us. Only Christ, God's perfect substitute can redeem and deliver us from our sins.

This also is taught us throughout Scripture. We turn first to Hebrews 2:17: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

We should notice, that Christ was made "like unto His brethren." He took upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh, and became like us in all things, only sin excluded. And yet Hebrews wants to emphasize that He became like unto His *brethren*. He became like unto those who are given to Him by the Father from eternity, for whom He lays down His life on the cross. The reason why this is emphasized is because also here Christ is referred to as the High Priest, Who brings the sacrifice for sin. He is the High Priest, not for all men, but for the brethren. Scripture is very clear on that point. He brings the sacrifice as a divine Substitute for those whom He represents before the Father. He is the Head of the Body, and that Body is the Church, the elect.

And therefore this passage also points out that Christ came to "make reconciliation for the sins of the people." He became the covering for their sins. He stood under the consuming wrath of God's judgment in our stead to bear the full wrath of God until it had been completely borne away. Therefore He is also our 'covering' as He intercedes for us in the sanctuary. God sees us in Christ, redeemed, saved, worthy of eternal salvation, clothed in Christ's righteousness. Therefore Christ also prays for us in heaven, "Father I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." (John 17:24). And He is also heard. God bestows on Christ the blessings of salvation eternally appointed for us, in order that we may be drawn to Christ, and that we may be with Him forever in His glory.

For whom did Christ die? The text tells us: For His people.

For whom does Christ now intercede in heaven? For that same people.

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Particular love, particular atonement, and therefore we also have particular assurance of that accomplished work for the elect.

Important in this connection is also that beautiful section of Paul's epistle to the Romans, the fifth chapter, of which I will quote only verses 10 and 11. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to



God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (reconciliation).

Three times the apostle refers to our *reconciliation*. Reconciliation means that the former relationship of friendship is restored after estrangement. The idea is that God has established an eternal relationship of friendship with His people in Christ. Of this paradise was a picture. That relationship of friendship was disrupted by our willful disobedience and fall. But God restores that bond of friendship by the atoning death of His Son on the cross.

Paul speaks of this as an accomplished fact. When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son. Not: God desires to reconcile by the death of His Son; nor: God made reconciliation available by the death of His Son; nor merely: the death of the cross was sufficient to reconcile. But God was

in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing our sins to us, but to Christ. 2 Cor. 5:19,20. We are reconciled. The relationship of friendship is restored. Therefore God also comes by His Spirit into our hearts to restore us into that relationship of friendship, as if it had never been disrupted. In Christ He brings us into eternal, heavenly fellowship with Himself.

Therefore Scripture can also speak of the atoning death as a ransom for many. Matthew 20:28. 1 Tim. 2:5,6.

The atoning death of Christ is always efficacious for the elect.

By why right can anyone speak of an atonement that is not efficacious? The debt is paid. It can never be imputed again. God's people are completely and fully saved.

Let it be preached to the ends of the earth: Jesus actually, fully *saves*.

## TRYING THE SPIRITS—

# BAHA'ISM

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

### 1. ITS HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

The origin of this cult will naturally seem quite distant and foreign to the Reformed reader, since it is a cult stemming from a Persian schismatic Moslem sect. Nevertheless its rather communistic purpose and reason for existence will prove of absorbing interest to us. A brief sketch of its history may not seem to have much to do with its aim, but, since this is an *eastern* cult, its history will serve to *orient* us in our investigation through very strange territory.

Baha'ism separated from Mohammedanism in that prayer is offered, not five, but three times a day (David prayed seven times a day! Ps. 119:164), and that facing not Mecca in Arabia, but Akka in Palestine about ten miles north of Mt. Carmel. In this miserable prison city of the Turks the founder of the Baha'i faith endured great suffering. Further divergence from Islamism is also seen in the prohibition of polygamy, divorce, advocacy of discontinuance of the woman's veil, and woman's equality. Baha'ism also prohibits gambling, lotteries and partaking of alcoholic liquors.

The infallible book of this cult is, naturally, the Koran. That book and the new Baha'ism, not to be outdone by the Old or the New Testament, have not

only their infallible, but also omniscient, sinless and divine prophets to interpret the book and the Baha'i faith. But be warned that these would-be, divinely deluded (Ezek. 14:9) prophets unhesitatingly insisted on blasphemously assuming the very incommunicable attributes and names of God. The forerunner of the sect was Mirza Ali Muhammad, a young man, about twenty-five in 1844, who called himself Bab (Arabic), "Gate." He claimed to be a descendant and successor of Muhammad. This put him in the ascending line from Moses to Buddha to Zoroaster to Jesus to what Baha'is think an even greater prophet, Muhammad, thence to "His-Holiness-My-Lord-the-Supreme" Bab. In 1850, the Bab was executed by an Armenian firing squad. The body now lies buried on Mt. Carmel.

Next in this Ishmaelitish line was Mirza Yaha, who was rather quickly elbowed out of the picture by his half brother Beha, the founder of Baha'ism, and the one from whom the religion derived its name. He was better known as Mirza Husayn Ali, but preferred to be called Baha'u'llah (Glory of God). He also was pleased to bear the nickname "the Blessed Perfection" (although I doubt that his wife ever called him that) and especially in Persia was known as "God Almighty."



This Baha'i "Father Divine" affirmed "There is no God but me,"<sup>1</sup> yet he was succeeded by his son Abbas Effendi, the interpreter of this mongrel Moslemism. The latter was called Abdul Baha (Servant of Baha) and Ghusni Azam (the Most Mighty Branch). He, on his visit to this country in 1912, spread his religion by addressing groups of Socialists, Mormons, Jews, Modernists, Agnostics, Esperantists, Peace fronts, New Thought clubs and Women's Suffrage societies, addicts all of the Antichrist one-world philosophy. He died in 1921, and was succeeded by his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, the First Guardian of the Baha'i Faith. Then Shoghi died in 1957.

## 2. ITS PHILOSOPHICAL TENETS

It must be maintained that this system of thought is not much of a religion, but more a political and economic philosophy thoroughly based on pragmatism, embracing Platonism, pantheism and also agnosticism as emphatically as did Huxley and Spencer (*ibid.*, 245). It comes packaged in a frivolous garb, but hardly has a god, claiming as it does that God is unknowable. Agnosticism has no worship since it does not know what to worship. Consistent with this aspect of the Baha bubble, it has no theology, no creed, no ministry, no liturgy, no preaching and no tithes or offerings. It pretends to love God, but does not explain how the unknowable can be loved, as it does not believe in either argument or controversy, only "peace." Prayer is enjoined (to an unknown God!), but it is never in the name of Christ. They pray to the Father, but they dishonor the Father (Jn. 5:23)! Free will is tenaciously held. "There is nothing to keep men from forsaking religion if they wish to do so. . . God Himself does not compel the soul. . . The exercise of the free human will is necessary" (*ibid.*, 161). So total depravity of man is denied. Man is inherently good. Man is evolving toward a universal brotherhood. Creation, Heaven and Hell have no basis in reality, being only spiritual symbols. The universe was not created by divine fiat but is an emanation from the essence of God. The history of man reaches back millions of years and relates man's evolutionary origin, not to the grace and elegance of primordial perfection, but to an embryonic beginning. The Resurrection "has nothing to do with the gross (sic) physical body. That body, once dead, is done with. It becomes decomposed and will never be recomposed into the same body" (*ibid.*, 271). The Return of Christ does not mean the personal, visible, bodily second coming of the Lord from Heaven, but the appearance of another person, born of another mother, having the Spirit of God. This requires a bringing forth of Matt. 24:23. Its attitude toward the Bible as the infallibly, plenarily inspired, absolutely authoritative Word of God is expressed thus: "A religious system which draws its authority from a Book without provision for succession and an instrument to bring about change when required, is bound to become bigoted, intolerant, divided and corrupt."<sup>2</sup> But see Isa. 8:20 and Gal. 1:6-9. The Baha'i opinion of Christianity is that it is outdated and has been surpassed by the more advanced teaching of the Baha'i prophets. (But

Jeremiah warned us of these wild dreamers. Jer. 29:8,9). Christianity is inherently weak and inadequate. (That cuts right across Matt. 24:35 and 16:18.) "Christian love arouses pity for a starving man but remains helpless in the face of famine in India or slum conditions in Alabama. To the poor are offered charity and hope but not a social revolution. . . Social justice is a problem left unsolved by Christianity. . ." (*ibid.*, 61-2). The latter is a plain lie, as the Book of Proverbs alone proves. As for India, it would not have famine if its pantheistic philosophy did not make it a crime to eat cow meat or monkey stew. The woes of Indians, Hindus, Negroes and others are due to their hateful departure from and rejection of the good, old, pure Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ!

From this and from what is about to follow it ought to be as plain as day that the principles of Baha'ism are identical with those of the Communists. A Canadian Communist paper, *Northern Neighbors*, boasts of "the people's peace fight," of the "victories scored by the USSR's drive for lasting peace", of "the brotherhood of man," "social righteousness," of working only "for the good of society," of a "multi-nation free of race hatred or national prejudice," the "increase of public wealth above private possessions," and then reference is made to the enemies of all this Godless socialism as "the enemies of peace." Now compare these quotations with what you have just read and with what you are about to read.

## 3. ITS ONE-WORLD AIMS

In this connection Baha'ism produces propaganda we might call theistic socialism or pious communism. It proudly traces its beginning to 1844, the era of emancipation of slaves, the socialist and co-operative movements, as well as the "spiritual Renaissance" of this new humanitarianism. As a syncretistic system it is incomparable. Like Theosophy, and one of its branches, Freemasonry, Baha'ism accepts all the religions of the world, deeming them fundamentally alike, and finding in them a basic unity. All the religions mark out "different stages in the constant evolution of one religion" (*ibid.*, 107).

The aim is to bring humanity to a universal faith in one common God, and to complete international unity. The chief concern of the Baha'i faith "is the creation of a world government. . . based on justice. . . Justice. . . is the collective moral expression of the community" (*ibid.*, 70, 107). One remark here: What would justice be in the Amazon head-hunters' community? Baha'is assume to call on America to lead the world in international agreement to the complete unity of mankind. To this end there must be a universal educational system, a universal language (as Esperanto), a universal currency, a supranational civil service with an International Postal Union (already in existence), a world trade union, and a world court to administer "justice" in a world commonwealth under a federalized world government, realizing a planetary welfare economy. In this utopia there is no room for country, color, class, creed, nor for racial, religious or social prejudice. It is believed this alone will still



the clamor of religious fanaticism and strife, and that thus racial animosity will be eradicated (ibid., 132). Would then Baha'is themselves be over their prejudice against "the bigoted Puritan" (ibid., 175)? For lasting peace there must be a final religious, social, political and economical integration of humanity. Faith in God, even faith in self is deemed not enough. "We must also have faith in society," i.e., in man (ibid., 179). It follows then that "the least possible government interference" is now an idea that finally "has been rejected. Government control has come to stay" (ibid., 24). Nationalism must end. National patriotism and national sovereignty are the root causes of international anarchy, and the arch-enemies of world prosperity and peace. Recourse must be had to a world legislature, the members of which will act as

the trustees of mankind, and will entirely handle the resources of all the member nations. International law will regulate life, supply the needs, and "adjust the relationships" of all races and people (ibid., 133) under universal socialism. This is one-worldism more vehemently contended for than ever did Henry A. Wallace or Wendell Wilkie. There is no more avid building of the end-time Tower of Babel and the coming kingdom of Antichrist. This is more than a monstrous dream. From Rev. 17:13 we know that this shall be realized. From Rev. 17:17 we know why it shall be realized! From Rev. 18:8 we know how it all shall surely end!

1 Baha Ullah and the New Era, 295.

2 This Earth One Country, 112.

## THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP— (*"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."* Ps. 96:9a)

# The Purpose of the Lord's Supper

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

To what end or purpose did the Lord institute His Supper in the church?

It is with this question that the next main section of the Communion Form is concerned. We must not only be subjectively prepared to celebrate the Lord's Supper in the proper way, so that we may be received of God in mercy and be made partakers of all His benefits, but we must also understand objectively what we are doing. If this is not the case with us, the celebration of the sacrament becomes nothing more than a dead formalism.

Knowingly or unknowingly there is purpose or motivation in everything we do. Because we do not always analyze our deeds and discover for ourselves the deepest reason for the things we say and do, we are not always conscious of the purpose of things, but it is nevertheless there. Moreover, we may add that this motivation of our deeds is of just two kinds: good or bad. Either we aim to glorify and honor God in the things we say and do and thereby do good, or we have an ulterior motive which is sin. We either think and act in disobedience to God which is sin, or we live from the principle of obedience which is the evidence of faith. An ethical sphere of neutrality is non-existent. And so it is also with respect to the Lord's Supper. There has to be a reason or purpose in our celebrating this sacrament and that purpose is either good or bad. There is not another alternative. In a sense then it may be said that this part of the Communion Form also belongs with the self-examination, since it is

designed to direct us to the consciousness of the *purpose* of the sacrament. We must be sure that the purpose mentioned here coincides with that which lives in our hearts.

The Communion Form enjoins us to "consider, to what end the Lord hath instituted His Supper, namely, that we do it in remembrance of Him." Ideally speaking this should not be necessary. If we lived in the awareness of our spiritual fulness we would not have to be told to remember Christ and His death. But idealisms are not reality. Sin is very much present with us, and we are so preoccupied with the things of self and the present world that the thoughts of what Christ has done for us become rather remote. We need a constant spiritual awakening and this must come to us, not once in three months when the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated, but continuously through the preaching of the Word. The aim of the celebration of the Lord's Supper then must not be construed in such a way that it serves to arouse in us a consciousness of those things that we are otherwise oblivious of but, it serves, in assisting the preaching of the Word, to focus our attention upon Christ, Who dwells in our hearts richly by His Spirit and grace.

The remembrance of HIM is the exclusive objective of the celebration of the sacrament. Fruits, results and effects of this celebration must not be confused with *purpose*. It may indeed be said that we commemorate the Lord's death in order that through this means of grace we may be spiritually nourished and



edified in faith, but this is not the purpose. The purpose is Christ exclusively, and only when that purpose is sought in sincerity can those other desired effects be reaped in reality.

Although then the remembrance of Christ in the celebration of the sacrament is objectively the aim that permits the intrusion of none other, this also must subjectively be the desire and purpose of the hearts of those that participate in this commemoration. We must not celebrate the Lord's Supper simply in compliance with a certain ecclesiastical regulation or to conform to a certain accepted tradition amongst members of the church. We must experience in ourselves the honest desire to probe the depths of the passion of our Lord and to do this through the means which He has instituted for that purpose. There must be a genuine hunger and thirst for the knowledge of God and this cannot be a spasmodic thing but is a continuous experience that finds a real satisfaction in the observance of the Lord's Supper. The sacrament is designed unto that end. The child of God does not desire knowledge just for the sake of knowledge, but he longs to know in order that he may possess and in possessing may experience the spiritual benefits of that which he knows. He wants to remember the death of Christ, not simply as a historic fact, but because he seeks constant enrichment by spiritual possession of the benefits of that death. In this attitude he approaches the table of the Lord.

With this in mind we may consider the *manner* in which we are to remember the death of our Savior in the celebration of His Holy Supper. We shall follow the communion form in enumerating the objective significance of this remembrance, and although it is quite possible to enter into a detailed discussion of each of the points enumerated, we will refrain from doing so lest we intrude upon another rubric of our paper. We suggest, however, that these points be the subject of serious meditation in the hearts of each of us; that they be discussed in our homes and in our social visitation. Our age of worldly-mindedness is not conducive to this sort of spirituality, we know, and the results are all too apparent. But us not be conformed to this world but always remember and speak about the death of our Lord for without this we cannot possibly be *filled* with its benefits.

Herein are we to remember HIM:

(1) Christ was sent of the Father into the world. This statement touches on the reality of His incarnation, and directs us to the truth that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all the promises of God contained in the Old Testament. Of this we must be confidently persuaded in our hearts, for unless we are able to see HIM as the central realization of all God's works from of old, the remembrance of His death will be meaningless. Long may we then ponder this point of remembrance, for before us is opened the vast storehouse of treasure contained in the Old Testament Scriptures. They, too, are the revelation of Jesus Christ and the focal point in them is that they reveal Him as the promised Savior in Whom God will accomplish the deliverance of Israel.

(2) Christ assumed our flesh and blood. Here we must remember that this was necessary because, as our Heidelberg Catechism explains, the only mediator that can possibly deliver us from the misery of sin and death is one who is "very righteous man and very really God". And if we desire to engage in some dogmatic probing we have a wonderful opportunity here to search out the Scriptures and the Confessions with a view to discovering the true teaching concerning the natures of Christ and their relation to each other. But the significant point from which we may elicit unspeakable consolation is the fact that in assuming our flesh and blood, He became like us in all things, sin excepted. We have a High Priest that can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. We have the sinless Jesus Who is and can be our representative before God for He is one with us.

(3) The third point of our consideration is the fact that "He bore for us the wrath of God from the beginning of His incarnation, to the end of His life upon earth." In parenthesis we are reminded here of the fact that under this wrath which He bore "we should have perished everlastingly". Since several other points that follow also direct our attention to this suffering of Christ in the flesh, the emphasis here must be placed on the fact that He suffered Divine wrath *for us* and also that He suffered this all His life time. Our Catechism mentions this in answer to the question: "What do you understand by the words, 'He suffered?'" Consider this beautiful confession: "That He, all the time He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, sustained in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind: that so by His passion, as the only propitiatory sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the favor of God, righteousness and eternal life."

(4) Next, "that He hath fulfilled, for us, all obedience to the divine law, and righteousness." Here we are to consider that His work of suffering was not simply a negative work but it was very positive. In the obtaining of the positive benefits of salvation, Christ died — and this is emphasized once more here — *for us*. He did not need righteousness for Himself, for He is the eternally righteous One! But we, who are unrighteous and disobedient, need one to obtain righteousness for us in the way of perfect obedience. This Christ did by walking in love in the way of all the commandments of God. He performed the Father's will. He did all His good pleasure. Of Him it was and could be said: "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." And while considering this point it is not at all superfluous to give attention to the fact that Christ *hath fulfilled* all obedience to the divine law, and righteousness. Of this, too, we are confidently persuaded. We do not speak of a Christ Who suffered and died in an attempt to accomplish salvation or of a Christ Who made salvation possible for those who are willing to comply with the condition of acceptance, but the Christ of God has performed a perfect and complete work. He obtained salvation!

(5) The fifth point of our consideration directs us



to the manner in which Christ did this. Our Form of Communion states: "Especially, when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of Him the bloody sweat in the garden, where He was bound that we might be freed from our sins." There is more here but let us take just this much first. Oh, what a glorious contemplation there is for us here when we take time in our busy (?) life to remember the sufferings of our Lord and Savior. Shamefully we must confess that also this is not done as faithfully as it should be. But without probing the depths of the theological

implications of that suffering of Christ and limiting the scope of our observations to the historic revelation of that suffering, we must attempt at least to understand a little bit of what He endured. Have you ever tried to live those hours with Him in the garden, before the Sanhedrin and Pilate? If you have, the remembrance of the Lord's Supper becomes meaningful. Then we begin to understand the meaning of His death.

There are still more points of consideration mentioned here in our Communion Form but these will have to wait until our next article.

## CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

# The Doctrine of Creation

by Rev. H. Veldman

### VARIOUS "INTERPRETATIONS" of SCRIPTURE'S ACCOUNT OF CREATION.

There is, first of all, the ideal or allegorical interpretation. This interpretation emphasizes the idea rather than the letter of the Scriptural narrative. Genesis 1 is regarded as a poetic description of the creative work of God, representing this from different points of view. However, it must be very evident to the reader of Holy Writ that Genesis 1 surely gives us an historical narrative, that it is intended as a record of history and clearly set forth as such in the Scriptures. Besides, if Genesis 1 be merely an ideal or allegorical presentation, giving prominence to the idea rather than to the letter of the narrative, what, then, do we have in Genesis 1? What happened here at the dawn of history? What idea, we pray, is really set forth here? What must we believe when we read Genesis 1? If I cannot take hold of the literal interpretation of the Scriptures here, what can and must I embrace?

Secondly, there is the mythical theory of modern philosophy. This philosophy does not only reject the historical narrative of creation, but also the idea of creation, and regards Genesis 1 as a myth embodying a religious lesson. The literal and historical interpretation of Genesis 1 is set aside. Genesis 1 is to be regarded as what the Lord showed the first man in a vision as to how the worlds were created, and we must not regard this account in Genesis 1 in the literal and historical sense. The same also applies to the creation of the woman whereof we read in Genesis 2. This view, we understand, is also contrary to the fact that Genesis 1 certainly comes to us as a historical narrative, and it is surely not to be regarded as a myth.

Thirdly, we have what is known as the restitution

theory. Some theologians have attempted to reconcile the narrative of creation with the discoveries of science in the study of the earth by adopting the restitution theory. This theory assumes that a long period of time elapsed between the primary creation mentioned in Gen. 1:1 and the secondary creation described in Gen. 1:3-31. This long period was marked by several catastrophic changes, resulting in the destruction supposedly described in the words "waste and void." The second verse should then read, "And the earth became waste and void." This destruction was followed by a restitution, when God changed the chaos into a cosmos, a habitable world for man. This theory might offer some explanation of the different strata of the earth, but it offers no explanation of the fossils in the rocks, unless it is assumed that there were also successive creations of animals, followed by mass destruction. But this is not in harmony with Scripture, inasmuch as the creation of the animals occurred later, as recorded in Genesis 1:3-31. Besides, that the earth was "waste and void" is not ascribed to catastrophic changes, was not a condition resulting from destruction. Some would contend that the earth was "waste and void" because of the fall of the angels. Prior to the fall of the angels the world was habitable, but the fall of the angels resulted in the destruction expressed in the words "waste and void." The angels, then, originally inhabited the world, and, when they fell, the earth became "waste and void." But this conception surely finds no support in the account of Genesis 1.

A fourth theory is known as the concordistic theory. This refers to the interpretation of Genesis 1 which would have us believe that the days of Genesis 1 were not days but long periods. We will not discuss this



conception at this time, but will return to it in due time.

### *The Doctrine of Creation and the Theory of Evolution*

Evolution or Evolutionism is the view that the whole world and all it contains was not established once for all, but that it is in a state of perpetual motion and development.

Evolution is not the only theory which would explain the origin of the world. Besides this theory, there are also the dualistic and emanation theories. The dualistic theory proceeds from the idea that there are two self-existent principles, God and matter, which are distinct from and co-eternal with each other. And the emanation theory would have us believe that the world is a necessary emanation out of the divine being. According to it, God and the world are essentially one, the latter being the phenomenal manifestation of the former. The idea of emanation is, of course, characteristic of all pantheistic theories. According to this theory, we understand, there is no God. If the world be the emanation of God, there is no God, and this for the simple reason that all we have is world. Then the world is God and God is the world. Then, one of two things must be true: the world is eternal and infinite, or God is finite and temporal. Then all we have is the world. And this, of course, is the end of all morality and consciousness of sin, the end of all prayer. It is the end of all sin and consciousness of sin for the simple reason that there is no one against whom we can sin, and it is surely the end of all prayer for the same reason: there is none to whom we can pray.

Now, however, we are principally concerned with the theory of evolution. And we may say immediately that we do not intend to enter into a detailed discussion of evolution and the various phases of evolution, as also including the Darwinian conception of naturalistic evolution, which would present to us a rational account of the development of all things. In his Reformed Dogmatics, the late Prof. L. Berkhof gives us the following resume of the doctrine of creation and the theory of evolution, pages 160-163:

**6. THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION AND THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION.** The question naturally arises in our day, How does the theory of evolution affect the doctrine of creation?

*a. The theory of evolution cannot take the place of the doctrine of creation.* Some speak as the hypothesis of evolution offered an explanation of the origin of the world; but this is clearly a mistake, for it does no such thing. Evolution is development, and all development presupposes the prior existence of an entity or principle or force, out of which something develops. The non-existent cannot *develop* into existence. Matter and force could not have evolved out of nothing. It has been customary for evolutionists to fall back on the nebular hypothesis, in order to explain the origin of the solar system, though in present science this is supplanted by the planetesimal hypothesis (the nebular hypothesis is the hypothesis that the solar system existed originally in the form of a nebula, which by cooling, condensing, and revolving, was formed into the sun and into rings of matter which later were consoli-

dated into the planetary bodies: this also applied to all the heavenly bodies.—H.V.). But these only carry the problem one step farther back, and fail to solve it. The evolutionist must either resort to the theory that matter is eternal, or accept the doctrine of creation.

*b. The theory of naturalistic evolution is not in harmony with the narrative of creation.* If evolution does not account for the origin of the world, does it not at least give a rational account of the development of things out of primordial matter, and thus explain the origin of the present species of plants and animals (including man), and also the various phenomena of life, such as sentiency (possessing powers of sense or sense perception,—H.V.), intelligence, morality, and religion? Does it necessarily conflict with the narrative of creation? Now it is perfectly evident that naturalistic evolution certainly does conflict with the Biblical account. The Bible teaches that plants and animals and man appeared on the scene at the creative fiat of the Almighty; but according to the evolutionary hypothesis they evolved out of the inorganic world by a process of natural development. The Bible represents God as creating plants and animals after their kind, and yielding seed after their kind, that is, so that they would reproduce their own kind; but the theory of evolution points to natural forces, resident in nature, leading to the development of one species out of another. According to the narrative of creation, the vegetable and animal kingdoms and man were brought forth in a single week; but the hypothesis of evolution regards them as the product of a gradual development in the course of millions of years. Scripture pictures man as standing on the highest plane at the beginning of his career, and then descending to lower levels by the deteriorating influence of sin; the theory of evolution, on the other hand, represents original man as only slightly different from the brute, and claims that the human race has risen, through its own inherent powers, to ever higher levels of existence.

*c. The theory of naturalistic evolution is not well established and fails to account for the facts.* The conflict referred to in the preceding would be a serious matter, if the theory of evolution were an established fact (and the undersigned would add to this: how could the theory of evolution possibly be an established fact? Yet, it is worthy of note that we are able to point to the fact that this theory is not an established fact.—H.V.). Some think it is and confidently speak of the *dogma* of evolution. Others, however, correctly remind us of the fact that evolution is still only a hypothesis. Even so great a scientist as Ambrose Fleming says that "the close analysis of the ideas connected with the term Evolution shows them to be insufficient as a philosophic or scientific solution of the problems of reality and existence." The very uncertainty which prevails in the camp of the evolutionists is proof positive that evolution is only a hypothesis. Moreover, it is frankly admitted today by many who still cling to the principle of evolution that they do not understand its method of operation. It was thought at one time that Darwin had furnished the key to the whole problem, but that key is now rather generally discarded. The foundation pillars, on which the Darwinian structure was reared, such as the principle of use and disuse, the struggle for existence, natural selection, and the transmission of acquired characteristics, have been removed one after another. Such evolutionists as Wiessmann, De Vries, Mendel, and Bateson, all contributed to the collapse of the Dar-



winian edifice (and we may add to this that Darwin himself frankly acknowledges that his theory does not explain tremendous problems, and that renowned scientists candidly admit that the reproductions of original men, such as are found in our modern museums, are the biggest fraud perpetrated upon mankind—H.V.). Nordenskiöld, in his *History of Biology*, speaks of the “dissolution of Darwinism,” and O’Toole says, “Darwinism is dead, and no grief of mourners can resuscitate the corpse.” Morton speaks of “the bankruptcy of evolution,” and Price of the “phantom of organic evolution.” Darwinism, then, has admittedly failed to explain the origin of species, and evolutionists have not been able to offer a better explanation. The Mendelian law accounts for variations, but not for the origin of new species. It really points away from the development of new species by a natural process. Some are of the opinion that the mutation theory of De Vries or Lloyd Morgan’s theory of emergent evolution points the way, but neither one of these has proved to be a successful explanation of the origin of species by natural development pure and simple. It is not admitted that the mutants of De Vries are varietal rather than specific, and cannot be regarded as the beginnings of new species.

The Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation in our following article.

---

#### IN MEMORIAM

Our consistory wishes to express its sympathy with our fellow elder Kenneth Lanning in the loss of his brother

#### JOHN LANNING

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville,

Rev. Gerrit Vos, pastor emeritus  
Donald Dykstra, Clerk

#### IN MEMORIAM

We herewith express our sympathy with our pastor emeritus the Reverend Gerrit Vos in the loss of his sister

#### RENA VOS

Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville

Kenneth Lanning, Vice-Pres.  
Donald Dykstra, Clerk

---



---

### ALL AROUND US—

## The Formula of Subscription Under Attack

### A Letter From Moscow

by Prof. H. Hanko

#### THE FORMULA OF SUBSCRIPTION UNDER ATTACK

The one chief barrier to doctrinal apostasy in the churches is the presence of the confessions. Especially the churches which trace their spiritual parentage back to the fathers of the Reformation find protection from heresy in the confessions which were formulated in the post-Reformation period. Ministers, theological professors, and officebearers intent on introducing into the church heresy always have the problem of the confessions with which to contend, for the truth is clearly defined in them.

This is the more true since all officebearers (especially in the Reformed Churches, but true in others as well) must promise that they will uphold and defend these confessions which their churches have adopted. Some are only asked to make this promise verbally before they are admitted into the ministry of the Word; in the Reformed Churches ministers (and all officebearers) are asked to sign the “Formula of

Subscription.” In this Formula officebearers “sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord declare” that the confessions “do fully agree with the Word of God.” They further “promise . . . diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same” in public preaching or writing. And they promise that, should they have any objections to the confessions, “they will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, classis and synod, that the same may be there examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the consistory, classis and synod, under the penalty in case of refusal to be, by that very fact, suspended from office.”

This strong language, binding the minister tightly to faithful adherence to the creeds, is a necessary safeguard against heresy.



It has however, become common today to ignore this strong language and deliberately to flout it. Many sign the "Formula of Subscription" with a smirk on their faces and with all kinds of reservations in their hearts—which they do not openly express. This is horribly dishonest before God and before the church. But it is nevertheless often done.

Obviously, a situation of this nature cannot go on. So, if one is really intent on getting heresy in the church one chooses sooner or later to get rid of the creeds. And to get rid of the creeds, the first step is clearly to get rid of the "Formula of Subscription".

Such attempts are being made.

One such attempt is to be found in a recent article in the *Reformed Journal* written by Fred Baker, a layman in the Christian Reformed Church.

At the risk of doing injustice to his rather lengthy and well-written article, we shall refer only to parts of it.

He begins by discussing the need for the church to engage in "self-criticism". This, he says, is what Luther did in 1517 when he nailed the theses on the chapel door in Wittenburg. He wants to hear these same hammer blows which sounded in that city within the walls of the Church.

The secret of the Reformation was, and is, self-criticism, not other criticism. This is the moral of my whole story.

From this he goes on to argue that self-criticism is possible and necessary because we are still imperfect people in an imperfect church. This, of course, no one will deny. But then he goes on to apply this particularly to the confessions. He insists that he is not picking an argument with the creeds:

I must pause to pay homage to our creeds and traditions. I am not attacking them as I seek to put them into perspective. I like them. I enjoy them. I have benefitted from them. I would even fight for them. Just as I am with my own five children, I find myself almost always on their side. But I know they cannot possibly be perfect, even though I would like to think so.

But the reservations which he has about the creeds become an argument against the use of the "Formula of Subscription." Particularly he objects to the statement in the Formula which elicits from all who sign it a declaration that they "sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord . . . heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine" in the confessions "do fully agree with the Word of God." And I presume, from reading his article, that he would want to underscore the word "fully."

In objecting to this, the author raises two questions: "Does the Church have the right to require agreement with this declaration?" and, "Has it been good for the Church to do so?"

His answer to both questions is "No."

The reason for saying "no" to the first question is primarily because it seems to him that this places the creeds on a par with the Scriptures, raises them above

criticism and makes them infallible. But, he insists, this is not true. The creeds have errors in them. And they have errors in them because they were written by imperfect men with imperfect understanding of the truth.

When we emphasize that even the best works of man are not perfect, we cannot say even that it is "improbable" that the creeds do "fully agree" with the Word of God. We are forced to say (are we not?) that it is impossible that they do. Is it really wrong for me to repeat it? Nothing less than the Word of God itself could possibly "fully agree" with the Word of God.

He then proceeds to show that the creeds are indeed mistaken on some points and that, consequently, the "Formula of Subscription" does not have the right to make us declare that the creeds fully agree with the Word of God. The examples he chooses are interesting. The Heidelberg Catechism obviously does not agree with the Word of God fully because it does not speak of missions nor does it emphasize the importance of the stewardship of time and money. The Belgic Confession falls under the same charge because it speaks of the fact that the books of Chronicles are "commonly called Paralipomenon" -- which, he insists, they are not called very commonly, although they are called this sometimes. He finds the Canons of Dordt so "wordy and obscure" in some parts that he cannot understand how many men "could in good conscience declare that they even understood them, much less declare before God that these lines fully agree with His Word."

And so the result of all this is that he chooses to urge the church to dispense with the "Formula of Subscription" altogether. It is better, he insists, that the church ask her officebearers whether they will accept the Scriptures as the infallible rule of faith and practice; and that officebearers be asked to promise only that they accept the creeds of the church for what they are, the best we have been able to devise to make sure the Word of God is faithfully applied. This removes effectively all the binding power of the creeds.

In answer to the second question: "Has it been good for the church to do so?", i.e., insist on this binding declaration of faithfulness to the creeds, the author writes:

In effect, this seems to screen out from office the very men the Church needs, men who are restless to test their beliefs against the Word of God. To the potential Martin Luthers it seems to say, We do not want you unless you are complacent with weakness as well as strength. We want you in the Church only, it seems to say, if you are so set in your ways that you believe, in good conscience before God, that further reform is virtually impossible.

Hence, the church would be far better off if the binding character of the creeds were dispensed with.

Several points ought to be made.

In the first place, the "Formula of Subscription" does not demand that an officebearer commit himself to the belief that the confessions exhaust the truth of Scripture. There is no one who ever claimed that all the truths of God's Word were included in the confessions. Even the authors of the creeds did not insist



on this. While together they do include all the major doctrines of God's Word, there are some which are not included. This is obvious. To find then a lack of a particular truth such as that of stewardship is not to lodge a legitimate complaint against the creeds.

In the second place, no one ever claimed the creeds to be infallible. They are not. They have never been maintained to be. This is not their intended purpose. Their authority is not that of Scripture. It is a derived authority which places them below Scripture and makes them authoritative only inasmuch as they agree with Scripture.

In the third place, the creeds themselves do not block theological investigation nor hamper continued study of the truth. Indeed, they do quite the opposite. They are invaluable instruments to incite the church to further investigation of the truth. Only, they mark clearly the channels in which this investigation must proceed. And they do this because they define truths already uncovered by the church upon which any further development must be based. And if any one finds himself in disagreement with the creeds, the "Formula of Subscription" itself provides the way to express that disagreement. The Formula itself makes perfectly clear that the church admits that there is possibility of error in these man-made confessions.

In the fourth place, the purpose of the creeds is to put into writing what the church confesses to be the truth of the Word of God. This purpose cannot be obscured by pointing out that the Heidelberg Catechism does not include some statement about stewardship; that the Belgic Confession calls the books of Chronicles "Paralipomenon;" that the Canons are wordy and obscure in some places. The Spirit of Truth which Christ promised to the church has worked mightily in the church. The fruit of this work is the confessions. In them the church possesses a remarkable heritage of the truth entrusted to her care by the church of yesteryear. She loses this truth at her peril. She must retain it to retain her name as the church of Jesus Christ.

And finally, the binding character of the confessions must be maintained at all costs. This binding character of the confessions is guaranteed in the "Formula of Subscription". There are those in the Reformed churches in general and in the Christian Reformed Church in particular who want freedom within the church to dispute the truth of the confessions. This is not so strange, for already there are many indications of the fact that the confessions are openly denied and the truths in them publicly repudiated and the errors condemned by them boldly taught. And no one lifts a voice to remind these men of their solemn promise which they made before God.

The result is that heresy rushes in as a mighty stream that soon overwhelms the church.

We do well, in this day of apostasy and confessional decline to be reminded of the importance of our creeds. And we do well to remember that the "Formula of Subscription" was drawn up just so that the heresies which run rampant in today's church might be kept out.

Where the creeds are despised and the Formula ignored, there the life of the church is short.

#### LETTER FROM MOSCOW

A letter came into my possession which was addressed by The Union of Evangelical Christians Baptist, Post Office Box 520, Moscow, USSR. Although it was addressed to our churches in general, it was written with Christmas in mind and requires no specific action on the part of our Synod. I quote here the letter in full.

To all the Christians of the world.

Dear Brothers, Sisters, and Friends who share our faith in Jesus Christ.

The Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists sends you its warmest greetings for Christmas, the Christians' dearest and most joyful feast, and for the coming New Year of 1966.

The birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem means the advent of God on earth, into our human family. But Christ came on earth not only as a bright visitor, but also as a Ruler and His will must therefore be done by all His followers, by all the Christians of the world.

The first commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ was that of love. But the love to which Christ summons us must be active. Christ Himself gave us an example of active love by healing the sick when He saw them, by giving bread to the hungry who surrounded Him, by saving the life of those who were in danger of death. Even now we hear His voice saying: "I have given you this example that you may do the same as I did unto you." (John 13:15).

Dear Brothers and Sisters, we are all glad that Christians do many things for love, to fulfil the will of our Saviour. We rejoice at the Christians' care for the sick, at their efforts to ease the sufferings of sick people. We rejoice at the Christians' care for the hungry, manifested in the great campaign of Christian churches under the slogan: "Bread for the world". But there is today a place on the globe to which Christians do not yet devote sufficient attention. A place where men perish daily in the flames of war which threaten to spread over all mankind. This place is Vietnam.

At the time when all the Christians of the world will glorify the Saviour who came to it and contemplate in spirit the images of bright angels flying over the fields of Bethlehem, the black angel of death will hover over Vietnam, killing children, youths and maidens, old men and women. What discord! What disharmony!

Dear Brothers and Sisters, when we rejoice at Christmas over the birth of our Saviour and Teacher Christ, let us also weep with those who weep in Vietnam, let us devoutly pray for peace for the people of Vietnam, for the end of war in Vietnam.

We wish you all a merry Christmas and we pray that the New Year of 1966 may be a year without any wars in the world.

With kindest regards and brotherly love on behalf of the Union of Evangelical Christians - Baptists:

Yakov Zhidkov, President  
Alexander Karev, General Secretary

Surrounded by those who constantly exhibit defects of character 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



**BOOK REVIEWS—****The Lord Protector****Faith On Trial****The Resurrection of Jesus**

THE LORD PROTECTOR, Robert S. Paul; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; 438 pages; paper, \$2.95.

The subtitle "Religion and Politics In The Life Of Oliver Cromwell" reveals the chief content of this book. It is not in the strictest sense of the word, a biography of this leader of Protestantism in England. Nor is it a history of the stirring times in which he lived—17th Century England. It is rather a scholarly study of the religious views of Cromwell in relation to his position in English 17th Century politics. It deals with Cromwell's battles to defeat the English monarchy, subdue Ireland and Scotland, destroy Roman Catholic authority and worship, and establish Puritan Protestantism in England. It discusses the struggle with the Anglican sector of the population and with the problems involved in establishing parliamentary rule in England. Yet it discusses all these things in order to analyze Cromwell's own religious beliefs as they related to such questions as established religion, freedom of religion, and the erection of a thoroughly Protestant commonwealth. This sympathetic treatment of Cromwell throws interesting light on the man, the struggles of Protestantism in the 17th Century,—particularly in England, although also on the continent,—and the problem of the relation between Church and State.

It is written much like a doctoral thesis, filled with extensive and, on the whole, illuminating footnotes, and is highly recommended to students of history who are interested in the political aspects of the Calvinistic Reformation in England.

It is claimed that the book (while first published in England) was published in this country because the religious and political beliefs of this time formed "the basis for the political democracies in" England and America. But, while Puritanism came into this country, especially New England, it is dubious whether there is any connection between the views held by Cromwell and the political fathers of this country.

H. Hanko

"Faith On Trial," D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 125 pages; \$2.95.

The author is preacher at Westminster Chapel, London.

This book is a series of brief sermons or meditations on the well-known and well-beloved Psalm 73.

Although the form of these meditations might not be such as we are accustomed to, and although the author is not in every instance as exegetical as we

might like, and although there might be statements after which we might place a question-mark and desire a little further explanation, nevertheless there is much in this book that appeals to anyone who loves the truth according to our Reformed confessions. There is much clear language that would warm the heart of a Reformed reader. I enjoyed particularly the chapters entitled "Facing All The Facts," "Beginning To Understand," and "The Final Perseverance of the Saints."

Anyone interested in meditations on the Psalms could profitably read this book in a winter's evening.

I have just one comment in regard to the workmanship of the book. The copy I received for review had several loose pages in the very beginning of the book. It is to be hoped that this flaw is not common to all copies.

H.C.H.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS by James Orr. Published by Zondervan, 292 pages. \$3.95.

In this book Dr. James Orr defends the historic position of the Church of God in regard to the actual, bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. He declares in his introductory remarks that in the past the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was regarded as an immovable corner-stone of Christianity. Of late, however, this fundamental truth has been under ruthless attacks by those who have no place in their thinking for the miracle.

In this book the author subjects these attacks upon the resurrection of our Lord to a very careful scrutiny in the light of the Word of God. He shows the ridiculous nature of these attempts of wicked modernism to undermine this corner-stone of the Christian belief. One does wonder, when reading this book, whether Dr. Orr inclines to the view that there are discrepancies in the gospel narratives relating this fact, or whether he mentions these "minor discrepancies" to bring into sharp focus the malicious intent of the higher critic to deny this basic truth of the Word of God. Bearing this in mind, we can recommend this book to our readers. It can be read also by the laymen. And it can certainly be read to solidify one's faith in that cardinal truth of the Word of God: Jesus is not here, but is risen. Of course, the child of God does not need logical proof to believe in the resurrection of the Lord. But it can do no harm to allow the Scriptures to speak in re this matter. It is a book of 292 pages, and the author views the Scriptural truth of our Lord's resurrection from several Scriptural aspects. The book is easily read, and it can serve our edification.

H. Veldman



## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

Dec. 15, 1965

Rev. D. Engelsma, of Loveland, declined the call from Hudsonville, Mich.

Rev. R. C. Harbach, of Kalamazoo, has received a call from Randolph, Wis., from a trio which included the Revs. Engelsma and Lanting.

\* \* \*

An Inspirational Christmas Mass meeting was scheduled to be held in Hope Church Friday evening, Dec. 17. Rev. Van Baren, of First Church, was secured to give a message befitting the commemoration of the Incarnation of the Lord of Glory, our Lord Jesus Christ.

\* \* \*

The Men's Society of Oak Lawn invited the Rev. G. Lubbers to speak at a public meeting held Thursday evening, Dec. 9. Rev. Lubbers spoke on his labors in Houston, Tex., while Missionary of our churches. A question and answer period was scheduled to be held after the speech.

\* \* \*

The Men's Society of South Holland sponsored a lecture by Prof. H. Hanko Dec. 3. The subject of the lecture: "Civil Rights in the Light of Scripture".

\* \* \*

Rev. B. Woudenberg has taken up his duties in his new church in Lynden, Wash., and has begun a new venture which has all the earmarks of a worthwhile neighborhood mission program. His concern is for the sickness prevailing in Christendom today, the symptoms of which may be seen in a faith that is cold and comfortless, which gives neither courage nor strength. The Pastor claims that the words of Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee", are applicable to the situation in modern day Christianity. Rev. Woudenberg's program provides for a weekly study class to be held in their church Wednesday evenings treating "some aspect of Christian doctrine as taught by the Word of God." Mimeographed introductions will be handed out at the church and will be mailed out within the community, and the Reverend urges everyone to invite friends, relatives and neighbors to attend. Their new pastor expects the members of this class "to carry their Bibles to the meetings, use them, study them at home, and memorize those passages marked with an asterisk in these Introductions." It surely looks like our little church in Lynden is striving to give witness to the Glory of God by uncovering her light, which we too often hide under a bushel, to let it shine as a light on a hill that cannot be hid.

\* \* \*

Hudsonville's congregation met in social gathering to bid their emeritus Minister and his wife the blessing of God upon them, that they may "fare well" in his retirement from the active ministry. Rev. and Mrs. Vos intend to live in Hudsonville and continue to wor-

("All the saints salute thee . . ." Phil. 4:21)

ship with the congregation he has served for almost 18 years. According to the bulletin a "princely gift" accompanied the expression of love and "well wishing" of his people. Rev. Vos' response to all this in the bulletin was, "God bless you all for evermore!"

\* \* \*

The January schedule for the Reformed Witness Hour radio broadcasts, featuring Rev. G. Vos, are as follows: Jan. 2 "Judas, the Praise of Jehovah;" Jan. 9 -- "Divine Destruction" (Ex. 11:7b); Jan. 16 -- "Salvation is of the Lord" (John 10:27-30); Jan. 23 -- "The Heavenly Gift" (Jer. 32:39); Jan. 30 -- "The Judging King" (Matt. 25:40).

\* \* \*

The Young People's Society of Loveland is studying "The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches". Each week a chapter of the book is discussed after having been introduced by a member of the society. That history might be profitably studied by all our young people that they might be reminded of the reason for our existence as a separate denomination.

\* \* \*

The Young People's Society of Southeast Church is keeping alive the tradition of an annual potluck supper involving the entire congregation. Another such supper was held Dec. 11. The main object of such potluck supper is that of Christian fellowship as stated in the bulletin, "this is a good time for our people to get acquainted with each other."

\* \* \*

As small as is Lynden's congregation, they nevertheless have one of their members, James Vander Veen, in the Armed Forces, evidently in foreign service; for his address in the bulletin is under an A.P.O. out of San Francisco, Calif. The congregation is urged to reveal their concern for him by writing to him regularly.

\* \* \*

The congregation of Hull celebrated their 40th anniversary Dec. 10. Rev. C. Hanko and Rev. J. A. Heys, both former pastors of that church, were invited to attend the celebration and to take part in the program. Rev. Heys came by train and conveyed his greetings to his former charge, but Rev. Hanko travelled by plane and was grounded in Denver where he spent the week-end. In Rev. Hanko's spot on the program a taped message of greeting was played. This tape had been prepared before it was known that Rev. Hanko was expected to be there in person. The splendid program included: Opening devotions by Rev. Kortering; church history by Mrs. T. Kooima; Piano - organ duet by Mrs. H. Van Maanen and Mrs. A. Kooiker; solo by Jane Van Maanen; some numbers by the choral society, and by a group from the Ladies Society, and by two Sunday School classes. Rev. R. Decker, of Doon, closed the joyous occasion with prayer and thanksgiving. A social hour followed the evening's program.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.