

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Meditation: Resisting Unto Blood

Editorial: The Nature of the Atonement: Limited or General?

Barth's Doctrine of Scripture

Israel's Rejection of Jehovah

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Edgerton Ladies' Aid Society wishes to express its sympathy to the family of

MR. ARTHUR BLEYENBERG, SR.

Mr. A. Bleyenbergh passed away on October 3 after 93 years of life. During these years he has proved to be a spiritual friend and brother of many, and we all rejoice in the conviction that he has received the glory which he loved.

Rev. B. Woudenberg, Pres.
Mrs. G. Broekhouse, Vice-Pres.

MEDITATION—

Resisting Unto Blood

by Rev. M. Schipper

"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

Hebrews 12:4

An old legend comes to mind when we consider the implications of the text inscribed above which is preserved in the book entitled "Quo Vadis." The title is the question: "Whither goest thou?", a question which Peter asked of Jesus in John 13:36. In verse 33 of this chapter, the Lord had said to His disciples that He was about to leave them, and where He would go they could not come. This statement raised in Peter's soul

and which he also expresses the question: "Lord, whither goest thou?" And Jesus replied: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." To this Peter replies in apparent exasperation: "Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake." And Jesus replies to this with the warning that Peter instead of following, will deny his Lord.

Now the legend declares that Peter asked this question of the Lord again one day many years later as he was fleeing from Rome and certain death. As the story goes, he was walking swiftly south on the Appian Way, when suddenly the Lord, Who was going in the very opposite direction, met him. It is said that Peter recognized Him and asks: "Lord, whither goest Thou?" To this the Lord is said to have replied: "I go to Rome to be crucified." Hearing this, Peter is said to have been converted from his cowardice. He turns himself about and follows to Rome where, the legend has it, he met his death by crucifixion.

The moral of the legend consists undoubtedly in this, that even the strongest disciple of Jesus is liable to flinch when the real hour of testing comes. Especially is this true if the test requires that we lay down our lives for the cause of Christ in our fight against sin. Really, the moral simmers down to this: Not, Quo Vadis to Jesus, but, Jesus' Quo Vadis to us. We do not ask Jesus: Whither goest Thou? but, Jesus asks us that question!

Resisting unto blood, that is the ultimate requirement that is laid upon every disciple of Christ!

In the battle against sin, we, like the Hebrew Christians, are liable to become wearied and faint in our minds!

Therefore the writer of this Epistle exhorts to consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself; Who, for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. And he prods them on with the reminder: "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

So far you must be ready to go, if that is necessary!

Resisting unto blood!

Striving against sin!

Resistance presupposes that there is some opposition, some antagonist over against which one takes his stand with the purpose to withstand or oppose it. The figure is that of a wrestler or a pugilist, who grapples or fights in the ring. The Christian is, as it were, in the ring and he not only faces an antagonist, but he grapples with him. The Christian's life is one of effort, endurance and antagonism. O, it is very well to sing of green pastures, and walking by still waters. But there is also another side to the reality of life, namely, that of toil, pain, and resistance. It is given unto us not only to believe on Christ, but also to suffer with Him!

The great antagonist and opponent of the Christian is sin!

This antagonist approaches us principally in two forms!

First of all, this horrible monster attacks us from within! Every Christian who is truly spiritual and who really knows himself will confess, I am sure, that his worst enemy is his own sinful self. As another before he has said, "My worst enemy I carry under my own waistcoat." Daily the Christian has to struggle with his evil lusts and passions. Always he is confronted with his own faults and vices of his flesh that war against the Spirit within him. It is this struggle

that the Apostle Paul calls to our attention in Romans 7:14ff, where he says: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate that do I . . . For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do . . . I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." It is the knowledge of this spiritual battle that causes the apostle to conclude this passage with the apparently despairing out-cry: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

The other form of antagonism against which the Christian has to struggle comes to him from without. The devil and the corrupt world constitute the opposition with which daily he has to deal. Very really each day he has to meet the onslaughts of the evil one, and the temptations and judgments of a sinful world. Then, too, he has to cope with the actual sin of the world. Society, he finds, is not organized on Christian principles. And the Christian is often called upon to stand in the midst of the world as a dynamiter of the world's social structure!

It is this latter form of opposition that receives the emphasis in the text: "Resisting, striving against sin," sin, namely, as it is embodied in the scheme of this world. When the Christian who is principled by the Spirit of Christ reveals himself in the midst of an evil social order, he immediately becomes marked for persecution, opposition. Light and darkness cannot agree, Christ and Belial have no concord. When these two principles of light and darkness come into contact, there needs must be opposition, antagonism, and resistance!

The actual resistance of which the text speaks includes two things. By it is understood first of all that the one resisting places himself in opposition to another. As the soldier on the battle-field is ordered to his position in the line, or the sailor to his battle-station; as the pugilist or wrestler in the ring plants his feet, keeps his guard, fastens his eyes on his opponent, so the Christian is to take his stand over against sin.

In the second place, and closely related to the first, the text presents the added notion of struggling, i.e., the actual meeting of the opposition. The word that is translated "struggling" in our English version, comes from a word which often is properly transliterated by the term "agonizing." To agonize is to struggle with pain, with great emotion. The soldier in battle not only resists his opponent by setting up the opposition, but he comes into direct combat, he struggles and agonizes with his opponent. The real soldier is not the uniformed man who sits behind a desk in Washington with a pencil behind his ear. He is the one who comes back from the front bleeding and torn, exhausted in the struggle. So, too, the Christian has the calling not only to face sin, but to grapple with it, and in the course of the struggle to agonize!

Unto blood!

That is the extent or extremity of the struggle as described in the words of our text!

The meaning is not that the Christian is to shed the blood of his opponent, for sin has no blood. Though it is true that the sin of the world is embodied in the flesh and blood of the wicked; nowhere in Scripture, least of all in our text, do we read of our battle as being against flesh and blood. Nay, rather, it is against the spiritual powers of darkness. And in this battle it may be necessary that the Christian lose his own blood, i.e., his life.

Ye have not yet resisted unto this extremity!

Evidently there is here contrast in life and experience of the readers of this Epistle with those who are mentioned in Chapter 11 and the first part of Chapter 12. In Chapter 11 a long list is given of the heroes of faith, those veterans in the battle against sin, some of whom were stoned, sawn asunder, burned, and died in the midst of the battle. Perhaps even the Hebrew Christians knew of some who had sealed their faith with their lives. Had they not heard of Stephen who was stoned, and of James who was killed with the sword? And does not the writer in the verses immediately preceding our text point to the greatest Agonizer of them all? Indeed, Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, is described in His capacity of the Prince of Sufferers for righteousness sake!

Like this long list of heroes, like Jesus, Who agonized unto death, fighting against sin, ye have not done!

And this must imply either one of two things: either the struggle of the Hebrew Christians did not as yet demand that they go to the limit of laying down their lives; or there was something radically wrong with these Christians! And naturally, what applies to them also applies to Christians of any age, and therefore also to us!

Now we know that not all the children of God are required to seal their faith with their blood. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that the world and Satan do not always use the severest means of persecution. Not always does the Devil appear like a roaring lion. Sometimes he comes in the cloak of a lamb. Not always does he challenge the faith of God's people with the sword of persecution. Not all the faithful are required to go to the stake because of their testimony. For this the Christian may be thankful indeed!

On the other hand, though it is true that not all are required to resist unto blood, it is also true, as it was

of the Hebrew Christian, that not all are prepared to make this tremendous sacrifice for the sake of the truth! We must remember that the opposition never really changes, though it may appear in different forms. Sin never ceases to be sin, and the wicked world not only continues to be wicked, but it develops in sin. And the Scriptures prophesy that toward the end of this age ungodliness will increase until it culminates in the man of sin. Sin, you see, is most emphatically not restrained. The philosophy that sin is restrained by a certain general or common grace of God is both contrary to Scripture and experience. That God in His providence sometimes restrains the sinner from fulfilling his evil plans, no one will deny. But sin is never restrained!

We submit that though our present age may appear in the garb of so-called Christianity, being quite civilized, it is still the same old wicked world that always kills the prophets, crucified the Lord Jesus, and has no room for those who persistently profess that they are Jesus' disciples in the true sense of that term!

But how is it that Christians in general, and you and I in particular, are not shedding our blood today?

This question may perhaps be answered, as we already suggested, by the fact that the opposition appears in the form of the lamb. Then I would warn you that he is much more dangerous than when he appears as the lion!

But this question may also be answered by the fact that we are shrinking back from our calling to resist! Today, the Christians are few and far between who are willing to take a stand overagainst the system of this world! Today, it is for many the bread question, not, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Nay, my brethren, we are called to resist! And let it clearly be understood that this resistance is to be first of all within you and me. Let no one go out to fight the sin of the world who has not first struggled and in principle overcome the sin within him. Then, and only then, shall we go forth to meet the antagonist in the world. No small antagonist stands ever before us. Fight him alone we can not! But in and with Jesus, the Captain of our salvation we can. Nay, more, in Jesus we already are more than conquerors! For He has overcome! In His death and resurrection, the world, sin and Satan, are already vanquished! By faith in Him we also have the victory!

Quo Vadis!

Whither doest thou?

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EDITORIALS—

The Nature of the Atonement Limited or General?

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

We have seen that Dr. James Daane very bluntly denies that the atonement is limited in its nature. He denies that our Reformed creeds teach a doctrine of limited atonement. He claims that the term "limited atonement" is not a proper term to designate the truth that the atonement does not save all men, and he even makes an attempted appeal to Canons II, 6 and 8 to substantiate this claim. Moreover, the doctor assumes the offensive, and asserts that it is Prof. Dekker's opponents, and not Dekker, who are skirting the heretical on the matter of the nature of the atonement.

These claims of Daane we shall now examine carefully and at length. We are interested especially, of course, in the question whether Daane's views can stand the test of Scripture and the confessions. We are interested in the question: is the atonement in its very nature limited, according to Scripture and the confessions? But we are also interested in other questions. There is the matter of the historical background of this doctrine; I refer to the history of the Arminian controversy, including the Arminian articles, and including also the deliberations which preceded the actual writing of the *Canons*. We are, of course, also interested in the question of *method* on which Dr. Daane has laid so much emphasis in this connection. He has attacked the method which would reason back from the results of the atonement to the nature of the atonement, which claims that if the results are limited, then the atonement itself must be limited, while if the nature of the atonement is a redemptive love for all men, then the result must be that all men are finally saved.

All these matters we must consider.

CLARIFYING THE ISSUE

Sometimes a lengthy discussion such as has arisen in connection with the "Dekker Case" tends to obscure issues. Everyone, I am sure, who has any Reformed sensitivity was immediately shocked by the assertion of Prof. Dekker that it is legitimate to say to every man, "Christ died for you," as well as by his further explanation that the atonement is general (not limited)

in its sufficiency, its divine desire, and its availability. Statements of this kind are, to say the least, "eye-openers" wherever there is any Reformed feeling left. I dare say that this is true in Christian Reformed as well as Protestant Reformed circles. I would even hazard the guess that among those who more or less agree with Prof. Dekker there were those who gulped a bit when they read his first article, if for no other reason than that it was so very candid. Since the appearance of Dekker's first article, however, page after page has been written, both in favor of and against Dekker's position. The result is that gradually the issues have tended to be obscured somewhat through the very complexity of all the writings. Not a little have Dr. Daane's writings contributed to this obscuring of the issues. Let it be added that the ever-present necessity of maintaining the First Point of 1924 has not made matters more simple in Christian Reformed quarters.

However, let us remind ourselves that the issue is after all very simple.

It is this: *Is the atonement by the death of Christ limited, that is, for the elect alone? Or is it unlimited, general, that is, for all men and every man?*

If anyone, Dr. Daane included, wants to phrase the question so that it speaks of the atonement "in its very nature," or, "in its design," that is perfectly all right. It really adds nothing of value to the question. Moreover, if the terminology *particular. . . general*, rather than *limited. . . unlimited*, is used, that is also good. The simple fact is that everyone knows, even though the precise term *limited atonement*, does not occur in our confessions, that what is commonly called the doctrine of limited atonement is the doctrine that Christ died and atoned only for the elect, not for all men.

Nor does it really add anything to the question to add the words "in its very nature."

For, in the first place, it stands to reason that when we speak of the atonement in relation to its beneficiaries, we must *per se* speak of the *nature* of that atonement.

But above all, in the second place, we are not merely speaking in the abstract of *atonement*, or of *an atonement*, but of *the atonement*. That is, we are speaking of a very definite, concrete, accomplished *fact*, the fact that some nineteen hundred years ago, on the hill of Golgotha, God through our Lord Jesus Christ atoned, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing our trespasses unto us. And the simple question is: *what was that act of God, that fact?* What actually took place on Golgotha, according to Scripture's own testimony and according to our creeds?

This, then, is the very simple question to which we must address ourselves and which we must not lose from view in the entire discussion that has grown up round about Prof. Dekker's original claim.

EMPHASIZING THE NEGATIVE

It is frequently of benefit in clarifying issues and clarifying one's doctrinal position to emphasize the negative, that is, to state what one does *not* believe, what he *rejects*.

This method has much to commend it. Not only is it generally true that every "yes" has its "no" implied; but the history of dogma shows us very plainly that the confession of the truth has frequently, if not always, been formulated over against some heresy about a commonly held doctrine which necessitated such a formulation. Thus it was in the fourth and fifth centuries, for example, with the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of the natures of Christ: the rise of heresy compelled the church to formulate these doctrines confessionally. Thus it has been with all the great Reformation creeds. And thus it was with the *Canons of Dordrecht*. Besides, it clears away a good deal of rubbish, so to speak, if a man tells us plainly and unequivocally what he rejects.

Now it is a simple fact of history that the Second Head of Doctrine was formulated by the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-'19 over against the Arminian heresy of general, or unlimited, atonement, specifically over against the *Second Article of the Remonstrance*.

A clearer understanding of the issues, therefore, would certainly result from a statement of what men like Dr. Daane, Prof. Dekker, and others do *not* believe, a statement of what they *reject*.

The Second Article of the Remonstrance reads as follows:

That, agreeably thereto, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, reconciliation and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer, according to the word of the Gospel of John 3:16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And in the First Epistle of John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Any Reformed man should be able to answer with a simple, unqualified, wholehearted "yes" this question:

do you reject, without any reservation, the above article?

Any Reformed man should be able to say "yes" to the question: *do you, without any reservation, declare that the above article is repugnant to the true and complete doctrine of salvation?*

Any Reformed officebearer should be able to give an unqualified "yes" to this question: *are you disposed to refute and contradict the above article and to exert yourself to keep the church free from such an error?*

My own answer to all three questions is an unqualified "yes."

Although I cannot understand, in the light of all that they have written, how Prof. Dekker and Dr. Daane could possibly give an affirmative answer to these questions, let them speak for themselves. I believe it would be for their own benefit if they would answer with a "yes" or a "no." It would clear the air. Furthermore, I believe that the Christian Reformed Church, under the Formula of Subscription, should long ago have confronted them with these questions.

Then we would at least know where everyone stands.

These same questions might be asked with respect to the Rejection of Errors of The Second Head of Doctrine of the Canons. Specifically, those same three questions should be confronted with respect to the Rejections of Errors of Canons II, Article 1, which reads:

(The Synod rejects the errors of those:) Who teach: That God the Father has ordained his Son to the death of the cross without a certain and definite decree to save any, so that the necessity, profitableness and worth of what Christ merited by his death might have existed, and might remain in all its parts complete, perfect and intact, even if the merited redemption had never in fact been applied to any person. For this doctrine tends to the despising of the wisdom of the Father and of the merits of Jesus Christ, and is contrary to Scripture. For thus saith our Savior: "I lay down my life for the sheep, and I know them," John 10:15,27. And the prophet Isaiah saith concerning the Savior: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand," Is. 53:10. Finally, this contradicts the article of faith according to which we believe the catholic christian church.

Do Daane, Dekker, and those who agree with them agree, without any reservation, with this article of the Rejection? Again I say that I cannot understand how it is possible for them to do so. But they surely ought to declare themselves; and the Christian Reformed Church is duty bound to inquire about this under the Formula of Subscription.

Article 5 of the Rejection of Errors of Canons II is also very plainly at issue, in the light of what Dr. Daane has said about Christ dying for the original sin of every man. How can Dr. Daane subscribe to this language? Take note of it:

(The Synod rejects the errors of those:) Who teach: That all men have been accepted unto the state of reconciliation and unto the grace of the covenant, so that no one is worthy of condemnation on account of original sin, and that no one shall be condemned because of it,

but that all are free from the guilt of original sin. For this opinion is repugnant to Scripture which teaches that we are by nature children of wrath. Eph. 2:3. (*italics added*)

Again, Article 6 of the same Rejection of Errors is pertinent, in the light of the fact that Prof. Dekker makes a distinction between the availability of the atonement for all and the efficacy of the atonement for the elect only. This article makes essentially the same distinction when it speaks of the difference between merit and appropriation (or application), and ascribes this distinction to the Arminians. Our fathers use no uncertain language in rejecting this error:

(The Synod rejects the errors of those:) Who use the difference between meriting and appropriating, to the end that they may instill into the minds of the imprudent and inexperienced this teaching that God, as far as he is concerned, has been minded of applying to all equally the benefits gained by the death of Christ; but that, while some obtain the pardon of sin and eternal life, and others do not, this difference depends on their own free will, which joins itself to the grace that is offered without exception, and that it is not dependent on the special gift of mercy, which powerfully works in them, that they rather than others should appropriate unto themselves this grace. For these, while they feign that they present this distinction, in a sound sense, seek to instill into the people the destructive poison of the Pelagian errors.

Again, I do not understand how the position of Dekker and Daane allows for an unqualified subscription to an article like the above.

But it would clear the atmosphere if they expressed unqualified agreement and manifested a disposition to oppose such errors. As matters stand now, there is no one who can understand how their views can be harmonized with the above rejections. And the burden of proof is on them, for they introduced new ideas and attacked the supposedly commonly held view of the Christian Reformed Church.

AS TO METHOD

Dr. Daane has attempted to make a big point of the matter of method throughout his articles. Specifically, as I pointed out in my October 15 editorial, he has criticized the method of those who want to reason from results to cause, from the limited result that only the elect are saved to the limited nature of the cause, namely, the atonement. Daane claims this method is not valid.

Now I would point out, first of all, that this is by no means the only method of proving what is called limited atonement. I maintain that the proper method, first of all, is to prove the doctrine of limited atonement by the use of Scripture and the confessions, by quoting Scripture and exegeting Scripture and by showing that this exegetical proof is also the clear line of our confessions. This I intend to do in the course of this discussion.

But the method which Daane so heartily disapproves is nevertheless *one* of the proper methods. I believe it is legitimate, that it is compelling in its logic, pro-

vided one has a clear understanding of the *nature* of the atonement as an objective accomplishment of God in Christ that took place at Calvary. And I believe that this method places one in good theological company. It is in harmony with the Reformed tradition.

I wish to call attention to the latter fact only, for the time being.

First of all, I submit that the method which Daane so heartily disapproves is at bottom the method followed by the Synod of Dordrecht in Canons II, Rejection of Errors, Article 1, quoted above. The fathers draw a logical consequence here from the Arminian doctrine of an indefinite, general, unlimited atonement. They do this when they say: "so that the necessity, profitability and worth of what Christ merited by his death might have existed, and might remain in all its parts complete, perfect and intact, even if the merited redemption had never in fact been applied to any person." Let Daane analyze this statement once, and he will discover that the fathers by putting this consequence on the Arminian doctrine are following the same method that he criticizes. They destroy the doctrine of general atonement by showing that it leads to an illegitimate, and, in fact, inconceivable consequence! The critics of Dekker and Daane have done the same thing. This is also the plain meaning of the statement of our fathers in this article that "this doctrine tends to the depising of the wisdom of the Father and of the merits of Jesus Christ." Why? This illegitimate consequence tends to make the Father look foolish because in that case God designed an atonement that would be in part *wasted!* And it tends to make the merits of Christ (this is the nature of the atonement: MERIT!) despicable because those merits would be exposed as not objectively and in reality having merited anything at all.

In the second place, I want to point out that this method was literally followed by none other than the Netherlands Professors in their opinion about the Arminian doctrine of atonement. They write as follows, and I translate from the Acts of the Synod of Dordrecht (Opinion of the Netherlands professors):

For those for whom Christ powerfully (*krachtiglijk*) died, He died in the place of them as their Surety (*Borg*); that is, He thus died for them that He freed them from the guilt of death. But He has not died in the place of the reprobate as their Surety, that is, He has not thus died for them that He freed them from the guilt of death. . . . The second part of this proof is certain. For otherwise they could not be justly punished by God, since God cannot punish a sin twice, once in Christ, and again in those who go lost, of whom He demands their debt to the uttermost farthing. . . ."

The meaning of this is plain beyond a shadow of a doubt. The Netherlands professors reasoned that unlimited (general) atonement necessarily means unlimited salvation. If Christ died for all men, including the reprobate, then all men, including the reprobate, must necessarily be saved. Therefore, Christ did not die for all men because all men are not saved. On the contrary, the reprobate are punished for their sin, which means that Christ did not atone for them, that is, did not bear the punishment of their sin.

Hence, it ought to be clear at least that when Dr. Daane so severely criticizes this method, he is departing from the Reformed tradition in his theological method. Personally, I prefer to be in the company of the Netherlands professors.

But we may also ask the question: why, in Reformed theology, is this method correct? Is this a matter of mere human logic? Does it have no real basis in the truth?

The answer ought to be plain as soon as one considers the nature of those *results* from which Danne does not want to reason backward. Those results are expressive of a purpose, the divine purpose of election. In the deepest sense, the reasoning of this method is not from results to cause, from salvation to atonement; but it is a reasoning from purpose to result, from elec-

tion to salvation. And included in that realization of the divine purpose (a sure and sovereign realization) is not only salvation, but also the way of salvation, to which belongs the atonement of Christ. Hence, begin with the denial of sovereign predestination, begin with a love of God for all men, and you must needs follow through with a denial of particular (limited) atonement.

This is Daane's fundamental error. He criticizes others for reasoning from result to cause. He ought to criticize himself for failing to reason, Scripturally and confessionally, from purpose to realization of purpose!

I suggest that the doctor ought to climb down from his ivory tower of theological speculation and ought to ascend the watch-tower of revelation. Then he might produce some Reformed theology.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Israel's Rejection of Jehovah

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. . .

And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

I Samuel 8:4, 5, 7

Of the greater portion of Samuel's life, of the days of his greatest strength and influence, of the major part of his work we know very little. We remember Samuel mostly for those events, spectacular in themselves, which marked the beginning and end of his labors in the church of God. They are the events which are recorded for us because they have the greater significance for the continuing history of the people of God. But between those beginning and closing events, we must remember, there were many years in which Samuel served faithfully, traveling his circuits throughout Israel, instructing and judging the people in the law of the Lord. Those were the quiet years, but they were also the most effective years. Gradually under Samuel's patient labors, the spiritual life of Israel which had reached an all time low in the early days of Samson and Eli began to rise again and the people began to draw closer to their God.

After an extended period of silence, the Scriptures

take up the record of Samuel's life as he was approaching old age. The burden of years was beginning to tell on him. It was not as though he had now become in any way decrepit or incapable of performing his work. There were still many years of faithful labor in Samuel before he would finally be permitted to lie down in his final rest. It was just that some of the vitality, some of the enthusiasm, some of the eagerness which had characterized his younger years was beginning to wane. More and more he was inclined to seek the quiet peace of home over the duties that carried him out upon the way. Rather frequently he found it convenient to delegate duties to his two sons for them to perform in his stead. It was a perfectly natural thing. As a person grows older, he naturally seeks a more relaxed and leisurely pace of living. This he found in his home at Ramah.

It was a delegation of elders from the people that suddenly one day brought him to the realization that

all was not yet right in Israel. They had a request to make of Samuel and curtly, without sympathy, they expressed it. "Behold," they said, "Thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations." There were barbs, a sting in those words and they cut deeply into Samuel's sensitive feelings. It must have taken all of the will power Samuel could muster not to reveal the hurt which that request made upon his feelings until after he had dismissed them with the promise that he would bring the matter before the Lord in prayer. But once the door was closed and the men were gone, it came, the anguish and dismay of his soul pouring forth before the Lord as the contents of a bitter fountain. Samuel knew what those words meant. The people weren't satisfied with him any longer. They didn't want him any longer to be their judge. They wanted another, one to be their king. They were politely telling him that as far as they were concerned he was through.

The first reason which the elders had given for their request, the one that he was now old, was only partially true. It was true enough that he was no young man any more, he was well advanced toward old age. But their implication was that he was now so advanced that he could no longer perform his labors properly, and that was far from so. Maybe he had slowed down somewhat and stayed closer to home than formerly, but only after he had taken care that the needs of the people were provided for. Moreover, if special needs should arise, the strength of his body was still there and could be expected to be for a good many years. His eyes were not dim, his mind was far from senile, his legs could carry him along on the way with the best of the young men. No, the plea of his age was only an excuse, there was more under the request of these elders than that.

In fact, they had said what it was: that was what hurt. There was only too much truth in the accusation they laid before Samuel that his sons did not walk in his ways; and he was one who should have known so much better. After all he knew so well what had happened to the labors of Eli through his children, he had seen the sin which Hophni and Phinehas had committed, he had seen the failure of Eli in correcting them, and he was in fact the one through whom God had reprimanded Eli with a special revelation. Now the same thing had happened to him. It was true, perhaps, that he had not been as completely negligent as Eli; neither had the sins of his sons, Joel and Abiah, been as many and serious as those of Hophni and Phinehas; but the similarity was there just the same. It all had come so naturally. Joel and Abiah were his children, they had grown up in his house, they had been thoroughly instructed by him in the word of God, they had lived for years before his example. When finally they had come of age and the press of duty had become heavy, it had seemed the most natural thing to delegate some of the duties of his office into their hands. Oh, he had known. The rumors had come back to them that his sons had not been able to resist the temptations of the office. They had been unable to resist the temptations of this world

and its pleasure. They had even gone so far as to take bribes in their duties to the perversion of justice. He had told them that he knew; he had rebuked them often; but somehow he had never found the strength to take from them the duties of this office. They were his children, and he had never been able to give up the hope that the next time they would listen to him and become a credit to their father. But now the time of reckoning was come. The people were through with him too. They wanted a king, and they threw the sins of his sons in his face as the reason. No wonder he had been unable to answer. The truth of the accusation and the guilt cut Samuel deep, to the very quick.

But still there was more to that request than just this. Samuel knew it; their request, so brief, still reflected it.

It was not as though the desire of the people for a king was so terrible in itself. Any serious student of the law and of the Scriptures knew that the day was sure to come when Israel would have a king. Already Jacob had said of Judah in his final blessing, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come," and the royal implication was clear. Even more frankly, Moses had said to the people before he died, "When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shall possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shall say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose. . .," and from there Moses went on to give several commandments about such a king. The teaching was plain. A student of God's word knew that the day was going to come when Israel would have a king. But such an understanding of the word of God, and a desire for the fulfillment of the promises of God was not the motivation behind this request of the elders.

The greatest truth in this request of the elders was in the last few words of what they asked. They said, "Make us a king to judge us *like all the nations*," and those last few words told the whole story. That was what hurt Samuel more than anything else. He had spent his life telling them that they could not, they should not try to be like the heathen nations about them. They were a different people, the chosen nation of the living God. Their joy was not in the things the heathen sought. Their goal was not to have the things the heathen had. Their strength was not to be in the earthly weapons in which the heathen trusted. They belonged to God, and their life was to be found in Him. They would have all of these things, strength, joy, and prosperity, only through trusting in Him. But this the people would not believe.

It was true, on the whole, that the days of the judges had not been pleasant for the children of Israel. They had been overrun by many enemies, they had experienced famine, they had suffered much. What Samuel tried to show them, as had all the judges before him, was that the reason for this was only one thing — their lack of faith in the living God. but it was this that they would never really believe — at least, not for long. They

would always come back claiming again that if they could have the things the heathen had, if they could have the same weapons, if they could have the same friendships and alliances, if they could have the same gods, then everything would be all right. And now they had a new one, now they wanted a king, convinced that this, rather than the way of faith, would make them mighty and strong.

It was for this reason that Samuel wept when he came that night to the Lord in prayer. He felt that he had failed in his duty, in the instruction of the people, in directing them in the better life. But the answer of God told him differently. It was not his fault, it was the people's. He assured Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." It was not the failure of Samuel. It was the same old sin which had plagued that nation from its beginning and would continue to do so until its end.

But to this sin God had an answer. It was very simple -- give them what they want. He said to Samuel, "Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee."

Actually, had the people waited for the time of the Lord, it would not have been very long anyway before the people would have received a king. David had been appointed by God from eternity to sit upon the

throne of God's covenant people; and he was now already born. But the people were impatient. They could not wait for the time of the Lord, and anyway they really wanted a king of an entirely different sort. There must be first for them a lesson.

Thus it was that Samuel called the people to him once again. He told them exactly what God would do -- He would give them a king exactly as they wanted. Even more, Samuel told them what the king would be like. He said, "This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you; He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots and to be his horsemen. . . And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks. . . And he will take your fields. . . And he will take the tenth of your seed. . . And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants. . . He will take the tenth of your sheep; and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

But the people were adamant. They would not listen. They were convinced, as so many generations before and after them, that they knew better than the way of the Lord. They answered, "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that your king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." The miseries of Israel were only those which they brought upon themselves.

IN HIS FEAR—

The Beginning of Wisdom

3

by Rev. J. A. Heys

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

And that it is the beginning means that here you must start in obtaining wisdom. Paraphrased with the use of the New Testament equivalent of the fear of the Lord it means that all wisdom begins with faith in God. He who does not believe in God is a fool and nothing less than a fool. He has not even *begun* to obtain wisdom in his soul. You will have to give him that faith in God -- and no man can do that -- or else he remains nothing but a fool. That is why the psalmist states, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Psalm 14:1. Note, once again, that those who do not fear God will dare to rebel against him.

But the same element of truth must be noted here in regard to the instruction of our children. The

teacher or educator who does not speak the language of faith, who is not himself a believer, who does not seek to train in that faith, cannot serve the wisdom of your child and only trains him to be a bigger fool. Fools come in all kinds of sizes; and that cannot be denied! Folly begins with a denial of God, with lack of faith in him, with ignorance of Him and ruling Him out of all the works of His hands. But there are degrees of folly to which all this leads men. Adam was a fool when he ate of the forbidden fruit and chose means to plunge himself and the human race to the worst possible end for man. But man today has increased in his folly and will increase until the days of the man of sin, the son of perdition who will sit in the temple and shew himself there as God. II Thessalonians 2:4. Then the folly of man will have reached its apex; and then the folly of man will also be made plain to

the whole human race as the unbelievers are cast into the lake of torment.

Faith is not wisdom, but faith is essential to wisdom. And the fear of the Lord—which is faith in Him—is the beginning of wisdom in the sense that it is the principle of wisdom. Wisdom has its source in the fear of the Lord so that if the fear of the Lord is not in a man's soul, no wisdom can be found there. Wisdom is that which flows forth and out of the fear of the Lord. Faith produces wisdom, and even as a tree without buds will never bring forth leaves or fruit, so the man without faith will never have wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the foundation on which all wisdom rests. Take a man's faith in God away, deprive him of his fear of the Lord and you have robbed him of his wisdom. That is why Satan, the Big Deceiver is also the Big Thief! He made a fool of man exactly by robbing him of his fear of the Lord through the lie in paradise. Man, deceived into believing that God is not what He is, and so being robbed of his faith in God as He is, became fool enough to try to be God's equal. And all today are born as such fools. Man from the moment of his birth rebels against God and seeks to dethrone Him. Today, with all his exploits and conquests in outer space, reaching beyond the planet on which God placed him, he looks so very wise to the men of his age and seems destined to greater wisdom; but as we look back upon the generations past and are amused at their stupidity and point out their folly, the Church of God in the new Jerusalem will look back and see the folly of the greatest of man's achievements in the antichristian kingdom. The ungodly shall see this, and they shall lament over Babylon and its complete ruin. They will then understand how in utter folly they built their house on the sand. They built a beautiful superstructure—from the view point of the flesh of man—upon a paper foundation. For they did not build in the fear of the Lord and were not guided by faith in Him.

Faith, or the fear of the Lord, is an essential element of wisdom. There is more to wisdom than faith, but take faith away and you take man's wisdom away. When God gives His elect faith, He gives them the principle, the basis and foundation, the indispensable element of their wisdom. As we wrote before, wisdom is the ability to use knowledge aright. It is the power to choose the best means along the best way to reach the highest good. But that means that you have to know and believe that which actually is the highest good and by faith to see the means and the way as that which will serve the reaching of this goal.

Leaving aside for the moment true, spiritual wisdom and saving faith in God in Christ, it is true even as far as natural wisdom—to use the term for the present and to bring out the point—and faith in men and creatures is concerned, it is so very true that one will not choose the means that he does not trust, nor employ them in the way that he is convinced will not succeed. In this “natural wisdom”—which actually is folly—a man will not choose an acid, dry desert soil in a hot, treeless waste to plant his seed, when the goal or good he has in mind is food and an abundant

crop. Jesus speaks of the fool who has a nice home with comfort and convenience for himself and his family as the good he seeks and then builds upon the sand in a area where torrential rains are known by him to sweep through the valley. The wise man, however, puts confidence and trust in the rock that cannot be swept away by the floods and fixes his house firmly to that rock. Both men may have the same goal in mind, but the one shows wisdom by choosing the proper means and putting his natural trust in that which is naturally strong and immovable. The other puts his trust in that which is not trustworthy, and fixes his hopes to that which is hopeless. Truly faith is an essential of wisdom even as far as “natural wisdom” is concerned.

And as essential as the proper means employed along and in the best way are, there is also the element of the highest good to consider. A man to be wise must select means and instrument that can serve the attaining of his goal. He must use them properly and know how to use them to achieve the end which he has in mind. But unless he has the ability to choose a good goal towards which to work he is yet a fool: in fact his use of means and method is in his folly a waste of time and energy. It is, as Solomon in his wisdom declares, “Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity.” All is vanity exactly because the natural man is a fool and works hard with all the earthly creatures to seek a worthless and hopeless goal. He will never become like unto God. He never will attain to true peace, joy and happiness apart from the cross of Christ. He never will conquer sin, death and hell by all his exploits and achievement, by his research and inventions, by his universities and educational systems. Natural man is simply wasting his time! Nay, worse than that, natural man is simply digging himself deeper into hell! He is adding reason upon reason for his utter and everlasting desolation in the lake of fire! He has good means—the whole of God's creation—and a rational-moral nature according to which he can think, reason choose and plan. But all his choice and planning avails nothing and is just so much foolishness, because he is not and cannot seek the only good and the highest good. He can choose only to satisfy his flesh and to seek to exalt himself above God. He may be skilled and use his talents and possessions with what men call wisdom, but when he uses all these to oppose God, to go contrary to God's command and in an attempt to set up and strengthen the kingdom of darkness, he is a fool, for he only adds to his guilt and insures himself a deeper place in hell.

Indeed, he has glimmerings of natural light left to him, and in that sense we can probably speak of natural wisdom, but note that our forefathers said of this natural light in Canons III, IV. Article 4, “But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, that *he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil.* (Underscoring is ours) Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before

God.” Plainly our forefathers knew nothing of and condemned the idea of a grace of God, or benefit of the cross of Christ whereby the reprobate natural man could do that which *is pleasing in God's sight*, even in things “natural and civil.” The Reformed faith has said and still says today that the natural man is a FOOL and in his folly performs no civic *righteousness*. Righteousness is that which is right in GOD's sight and not simply that which looks good to man. We only deceive ourselves and talk foolishly when the highest good, or for that matter true good, for us is nothing more than that which satisfies the flesh of man, serves that flesh and is not an act of love to God.

Unless our goal is the glory of God, all that which we do in utter folly. That is the highest good -- to glorify God -- and that is the only good. Whatever fails to glorify Him, whatever serves any other purpose is evil. For that purpose we were made. For that purpose we receive rain and sunshine, life and health. For that purpose the earth turns on its axis, the sun gives its light, the rivers run into the sea, the sea gives up its moisture to the clouds and they in turn pour it down upon the land for food and drink. No creature exists for itself. And certainly man, made in the image of God does not exist for himself but for the God in Whose image he was created. We can quote text after text for this basic truth but three will suffice. “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.” Revelation 4:11. This is a general statement of all created creatures and objects. More specifically with a view to the Church, which shall through the work of salvation attain to this highest good, we read in Isaiah 43:21, “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.” The same truth in the New Testament we find in I Peter 2:9, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” It follows, of course, and the wise

can see that the creature is made for the sake of the Creator. The Divine Potter makes of the clay that which will serve His purpose.

The fool never takes this into account. Creation exists for him, so he thinks. History is his great adventure and is explained apart from the God Who with His hand moves all the creatures and fulfills His own counsel. The earth is filled with resources and creatures that man can press into the service of his flesh. He has not the fear of the Lord. He does not see the God Who created, sustains and gives these excellent gifts. And all that which this man does with these possessions is wrought in folly. For he seeks them and uses them for the wrong goal. He has not the glory of God in mind. And he has it not in mind, because he has it not in his heart.

Void of that faith in God, not believing it to be his calling to use it all in God's service and to His glory, he acts foolishly and lives in a world of vanity. It is a vicious circle. Man comes out of the dust of the ground, serves that dust of the ground and returns to that dust of the ground. The wise man also comes out of the dust, makes use of that dust but through mind and heart, with tongue and soul he lifts these creatures of the dust in praise and adoration to God. He seeks and expresses the glory of God in and through them. His works ascend up to God on high. His life is not emptiness but fullness, and he lays up for himself treasure in heaven. He is no fool. In the wisdom which God gave him he sees all as God's, chooses the way of God's precepts with these creatures and directs his life to the glory of God. He is a wise man. And he is the kind of man who ought to teach your children.

You choose the wrong means to prepare your children to fulfill their life's calling and obligation when you send them to those who will direct them to build their house on the sand and ignore the Creator while they use His creatures. Be wise! See the goal! Choose the right means, and employ them correctly that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

TRYING THE SPIRITS—

ASTROLOGY

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

The writer in early childhood spent many a summer on the East coast at the seashore of Atlantic City, N.J., where daytimes were spent on the beach, bathing in the surf, reveling in glorious sunshine and embibing the delicious, invigorating salt air. Evenings, when in our teens, we were permitted to “walk the boardwalk”

alone, visiting the auctions, the gadget demonstrations, and, among the many other intriguing sights, the free lectures. It was at the latter dubious place we were first introduced to astrology. Being Presbyterians, we soon learned that this was one of the devil's methods of fishing for fools and baiting the ignorant. For astrology

was then presented as God's plan, having a basis in the book of Genesis, and expressive of the wisdom of God latent in the universe. By the universe the astrologer meant the great universal soul of all souls. Later, it became apparent that the point of view of astrology is thoroughly anthropocentric. Its basic symbol, heathen in origin, was the triangle and the square, which together represent the human figure. Thus astrology has a theosophical connection with Nebuchadnezzar's image and the symbology of Masonry.

In connection with this basic symbol, the original scheme of the horoscope was worked out from the figure of a square. The cube was the ideal geometrical figure and, as in the Kabbala, Masonry and Theosophy, was the accepted symbol of the world as a whole. The Star of David is said to come from this square of the horoscope. Within the square are two other and consecutively smaller ones, which, with a few developing lines soon fill the square with twelve triangles, the "houses" of the Zodiac. Two of these triangles are taken, the one pointing N., representing fire (and air) and the one pointing S., representing water (and earth). Then the one triangle is superimposed upon the other, thus forming the well-known Star of David. In alchemy this symbol was the representation for fire-water, or alcoholic liquors. In the symbology of Kabbalism, however, the figure signified the letters in the name Jehovah. The four E-W points of the star represent the letters Yodh, He, Vav, He (Yahveh or Jehovah). Thus the Jews departed from the spirit of the second commandment, from the biblical condemnation of astrology (Ex. 22:18; Isa. 47:13, 14; Jer. 10:2 and Dt. 18:10) and so from the scriptural doctrine of divine providence.

Astrology is one of the most ancient forms of superstition, being found among the Egyptians, Chaldeans, the Hindus (their Adepts and spiritist mediums), and among the Chinese. Later the Jews, but especially the Mohammedans became addicted to it. The noted astronomer Kepler thought he had something in astrology. He believed that his astronomical discoveries furnished the key to all events of history. He felt that astronomy had raised astrology to the apex of a perfect and independent science. But if anything, astronomy gives the death-blow to the claims of astrology, so astronomers today will be quick to tell us. Caesar Augustus believed in astrology and protected it. Cicero protested it vigorously but in vain. In the Christian period, Constantine threatened the astrologers with death. Augustine fought it. So did Calvin. Both the Catholic Encyclopedia and the Encyclopedia Britannica say that Melancthon accepted astrology. Goethe thought it worthy because it could commend itself to great minds! But one of the most satanic of philosophies, "Ye shall be as God," also commends itself to the world's greatest minds. Man has for so long believed that Big Lie that now he believes, "Ye shall be God." But to go on: the spread of astrology was furthered by Jewish scholars in their expositions of the Kabbala and the Talmud. However, the Jewish scholar Maimonides opposed it energetically. He found it forbidden by Lev. 19:26, "Ye shall not observe times."

Despite the Talmud, he declared it idolatry, "a disease, not a science, a tree under the shadow of which all sorts of superstitions thrive, and which must be uprooted in order to give way to the . . . tree of life." (Jew. Ency., II, 245). To the most enlightened Jews, even the salutation "Mazel Tobh!" (Good Luck!) is but a remnant of the discarded belief. Romanism, too, has been infected with this disease, as certain Popes took up astrology, such as, e.g., Popes Leo X and Paul III. Jonathan Swift in his "Prediction for the Year 1708, by Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq." gave the death-blow to English astrology. General Albricht von Wallenstein, warrior of the Thirty Years' War, believed absolutely in astrology. Napoleon did in part. Shakespeare writes in *King Lear*, IV, 3, "The stars above us govern our conditions." In our time, Adolf Hitler was sold on astrology.

Modern astrology dates from 1822. Near the end of the century Theosophy adopted astrology in England. Rosicrucianism with its ancient Masonry adopted it in America. It is a system of Babylonian superstition and Greek philosophy clothed in the terms of modern psychology. It is the point of view of Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics that astrology supposed the influence of the planets upon the fortunes of men and nations, but that this "is now regarded by all sober minds as an extravagance of the human intellect, as something that the race has finally left behind." (Vol. 12, 53). In another place we read, "As a serious and systematic world-view claiming the allegiance of many of the best intellects in every rank of society, astrology is dead." (Ency. Brit.) Science and scholarship have dethroned astrology. When a rusty, bent pin will do to puncture a bubble blown by the spirit of error, the Lord does not go to such length as to blast out with a thunderbolt of His wrath. The above claims to the death of astrology may be to an extent true. But it still remains that the world is filled with this superstition. Tons of astrology literature, the daily newspapers, the almanacs, manuals, magazines and the ubiquitous paper-backs feed the naively curious and the wishful dreamers. We agree with Hastings' that astrology is not only a by-way to superstition, but is, in fact, one of the main sources of superstition (ibid., p. 57).

Under some astrological forecasts we came across the following prophecy of note. "The fee for. . . \$5.00 . . . includes the privilege of asking any one question . . . We do not answer questions with the \$1.00 readings . . . Remittance may be made by check, P.O. of Express M.O., or currency may be enclosed, which will be found perfectly safe." The latter is so certain, I would imagine, because it is all settled and determined in the horoscope of the post office! Otherwise, better not send cash through the mails!

At the back of Seward's cloth-bound book on popular astrology one will find what company it keeps in its catalog of works on palmistry, star-worship, spirit-mediumship, sorcery, black magic, infernal necromancy, seership, hypnotism, mind reading, mind power, mental magic, crystal-gazing, fortune telling in cards, the human aura, memory training and attainment of perpetual youth!

Astrologers in searching for biblical support appeal to Isa. 13:10; Jer. 31:36; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10; Lk. 21:25-28, which but teach that the stars, constellations, sun and moon shall fail, that the very heavens and the earth shall be shaken, which will be, in part, the way God will punish the world for its evil (Isa. 13:11, 13). These astral bodies shall pass away, but the seed which the Lord hath blessed, the holy nation of God's elect shall remain. It may be true that "this grand science (sic) will live and flourish *until* (ital., RCH) time shall be merged into Eternity." (The Zodiac and Its Mysteries, Seward, 1917, p. 212). But with the doom of the very atomic elements of all heaven and earth, astrology is doomed. Yet the Word of God shall not pass away. It liveth and abideth forever. Astrology states a "great and fundamental truth—that there can be nothing accidental or supernatural in the operation of nature's (God is ruled out. RCH) laws" (ibid.). The natural order is not the providential working of the sovereign, personal, triune God as Jesus said (Jn. 5:17), but rather is directly traceable to intra-cosmic causes.

The following is what the Calvinistic churches have to say in condemnation of astrology. "The prophet forbids the children of God to fear the stars and signs of heaven (Jer. 10:2) as is the custom of unbelievers. He certainly condemns not every kind of fear. But when infidels transfer the government of the world from God to the stars, pretending that their happiness

or misery depends on the decrees and presages of the stars, and not on the will of God, the consequence is that their fear is withdrawn from Him, whom alone they ought to regard, and is placed on stars and comets. Whoever, then, desires to avoid this infidelity, let him constantly remember, that in the creatures there is no erratic power, or action, or motion; but that they are so governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing can happen but what is subject to His knowledge, and decreed by His will" (Calvin, *Institutes*, I, XVI, III). Matthew Henry called astrologers "all cheats, and their art a sham." Astrologers do not view the heavens as revealing Jehovah's eternal power and Godhead, but as a means of giving them a "dominion in the earth" (Job 38:33). They are blind to the Word of God in nature, deny the Word of God incarnate, and pervert the Word of God in Scripture. Matthew Henry also said that "By our law, consulting, covenanting with, invoking, or employing, any evil spirit, to any intent whatsoever, and exercising any enchantment, charm or sorcery, whereby hurt shall be done to any person whatsoever, is made felony, without benefit of clergy; also pretending to tell where goods lost or stolen may be found, or the like, is an iniquity punishable by the judge, and the second offence with death. The justice of our law herein is supported by the law of God recorded here." (At Ex. 22:18). Henry lived in a more masculine age. But the Law of God knows no sentimental tolerance for these star-gazers and their monthly prognosticators.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD . . .

(Psalm 68:11)

Particular Love, Particular Atonement, and Missions

by Rev. C. Hanko

GOD IS LOVE

The Bible tells us so. And it also adds that love is the bond of perfectness. Col. 3:14. Since love has its source in the heart, it is the ethical bond that unites two persons in the sphere of truth, righteousness, justice, holiness, and devotion. Love is the power that draws two persons together in truth, in righteousness, and in holiness. It knits them together in perfect harmony, trust, and friendship, so that they experience complete unity and fellowship. Love seeks its perfect object, longs for it, yearns for its companionship, and delights in the joy, peace, and sublime blessedness that they experience together. You have, no doubt, heard the expression: "I love you, not merely for what you are, but for what I am in your presence."

That love is abiding, can only be broken by death, for such love is of God. How beautifully that is expressed in the genuine love between husband and wife, who love one another in the Lord.

Since true love can exist only in the sphere of moral perfection, there is no love in darkness. Darkness, in the ethical sense of falsehood, deceit, hatred, bitterness, unfaithfulness, and selfishness, always disrupts the bond of perfectness. Therefore the believing husband and wife must always meet at the cross of Christ, finding their unity in the blood of the cross, forgiving one another, even as in Christ each is forgiven. That which passes for love in the sphere of darkness is nothing but a wicked corruption, a carnal caricature of the genuine article. It is actually hatred,

selfishness. For the wicked love those who love them. They walk in darkness, for they hate God and the neighbor. They are interested in the neighbor only in as far as the neighbor serves their own interests. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." I John 3:10.

GOD LOVES HIMSELF

This follows from the very fact that He is *God*, the fulness of infinite perfections. God loves His holiness, His justice, His truth, and His grace. In them His soul delights. In them is all His blessedness. This love finds expression within God's own Being, for God is one in Being and three in Persons. The Father loves the Son, and gives expression to that love by saying in every conceivable manner: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." The Son loves the Father, and turns His face to the Father to delight in His perfections, in order that they may radiate upon His countenance, and He may show forth the glory of God as the Word, the revelation of the Father. Father and Son love the Spirit, even as the Spirit seeks them in love, always delving into the infinite depths of God's glorious virtues, that through Him the Word may give expression to the exalted NAME of the Most High, writing that NAME upon all God's handiwork, now and unto all eternity, that God may be all in all.

GOD LOVES THE CHRIST

Since love is the bond of perfectness in God, it also follows that God loves the Christ. God loves Him because in the eternal counsel Christ "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and *for him*: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. 1:15-17. Or to express it in the majestic language of Hebrews 1:1-6, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."

Those two passages of Scripture so profoundly and so beautifully declare to us the love of God that each word deserves to be underscored. But the point I want to make is this, that Christ is the perfect object of the love of God. In Christ God reveals that bond of perfectness that is so uniquely His, *for God is love*.

GOD LOVES HIS PEOPLE IN CHRIST

Scripture uses the figure of the Bridegroom and His Bride to describe the exclusive and intimate bond of love that exists between God and His people in Christ. Christ is also called the Head, while His people are the members of His Body. And again,

Christ is the Good Shepherd Who loves and cares for His sheep. In fact, one of the basic truths of Scripture is the intimate fellowship of God's covenant, whereby God unites Himself to His people, and His people to Himself in everlasting blessedness. God says to Abraham, and in him to all his spiritual seed, to all true believers, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." Gen. 17:7 Therefore when all things are accomplished, John in vision sees "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Rev. 21:2. And he hears a great voice out of heaven, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, *and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.*" vs. 3.

THIS LOVE IS ALWAYS PARTICULAR

God loves His people in Christ, but He hates all the workers of iniquity. Psalm 5:5. Since God loves holiness, that very love turns in hatred against unholiness and sin. Since He is righteous, He burns with righteous indignation against all wickedness. Since He loves Himself as the sole Good, He banishes from His presence all that is in conflict with His Holy Name. God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. No one has ever dared to deny that God hates the devil. And yet also the devil is one of God's creatures, who was created as a holy angel. If God hates the devil and his host, does He not hate those who are branded in Scripture as the very seed of the serpent, a generation of vipers? Nor can we distinguish between the deed and the person, as if God hates the sin but loves the sinner. For the deed can never be separated from the depravity of the one who commits the sin, nor can the guilt be reckoned to anyone but the guilty party. Therefore God does not banish sin to hell, but the sinner. The Word of God never hesitates, therefore, to declare that God's very soul hates the wicked and him that loveth violence. Psalm 11:5. "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." Romans 9:13. See also verses 17 and 18.

Anyone who proclaims the glorious Gospel of God's eternal, sovereign love to His people in Christ can and must declare the whole counsel of God, even as Scripture always does.

PARTICULAR LOVE AND PARTICULAR ATONEMENT

Now this may seem to be an unduly long approach to our present subject of particular atonement. Yet the love of God and the atonement of the cross are most intimately related. Also Prof. Dekker speaks of both in one breath when he wants to declare on the mission field to all men promiscuously, "God loves you, Christ died for you." If, as Prof. Dekker and others maintain, God loves all men, it must necessarily follow that Christ died for all men. A universal love and a universal atonement go hand in hand. There can be no doubt about that. While, on the other hand, if we maintain with Scripture and our Confessions that God's

love is a particular and distinctive love to His people in Christ, then it must also follow that the atonement of the cross is particular in all its aspects.

God reveals His love to us in the cross of Jesus Christ as nowhere else. There the love of God shines forth in all its radiant brilliance of divine majesty. There the full power of that love is revealed in consuming wrath and redeeming mercy. God never loved His Son more, if I may say so, than at the moment when the Son brought the sacrifice for sin in His own body. And yet there God's love burned in consuming wrath against our sins. God so loved us, that He spared not His only begotten Son, but gave Him unto the accursed death of hell for our sins. Rather would God commit His Son to the torments of hell than that His people should perish. God paid the price of His own blood in the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the ransom price for our sins. Greater love than that there simply is not, according to the Gospel. Love and atonement are inseparably one.

Now Prof. Dekker likes to speak of but one love of God. And he is so very right. He also likes to speak of one grace of God. And again, he is absolutely right. God's love and grace are always one in God. They have their source in the heart of God. They are perfections of His glorious Being. They have their meritorious basis in the cross. They find their expression by the work of the Holy Spirit of Christ in our hearts. They are the power of God that draws us from death into life, from darkness of banishment of sin into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's love is saving, even as God's grace is saving. Dekker is right about that.

But Dekker wants to maintain that God's love is unlimited in its scope, that it is universal, to all mankind. He wrote in the Reformed Journal of December, 1962,

"Love without limit! Can an unlimited love be limited in its scope? Can an unrestricted love be restricted in those whom it loves? Can the infinite love of the incarnation have as its object only a part of mankind? Hardly. Neither does the Bible teach this. Rather we are told, "God so loved *the world* that he gave." Whether taken as the cosmos or as the human race, "world" in this passage clearly covers all men. By no strain of exegesis can God's redemptive love be confined to any special group. Neither the language of this verse nor the broadest context of Scripture will allow any other interpretation but that God loves all men.

And yet Prof. Dekker wants to distinguish between love that is "redemptive" and love that is "redeeming". He writes:

"There are, therefore, three senses in which we may legitimately speak of the atonement as being universal in design, i.e., the *sufficiency*, and *availability* of salvation for all men and the divine *desire* that all will receive it. The only point at which Scripture and the Reformed confessions point to a limited design in the atonement is at the point of *efficacy*. Only there can a doctrine of limited atonement be formulated which does not do clear violence to Biblical teaching concerning the universal love of God." Reformed Journal, December 1962.

Is Dekker talking about a divine love that is thwarted by some?

Are there instances where God loves in vain? Or is the Almighty capable of loving with a love that does not exert all its power to draw to Himself and to save? Did Christ die in vain?

By what right, on the basis of Scripture, can we distinguish between one and the same love that saves and does not save?

ALL AROUND US—

The Vatican Council

by Prof. H. Hanko

THE VATICAN COUNCIL

The Roman Catholic Church has already passed some important resolutions in what is generally agreed to be the last session of the Second Vatican Council.

The session began with a speech by the pope in which he expressed his intention of establishing what he called a "Synod of Bishops" which will be called together from time to time to discuss problems arising within the Church and serve the pope with advice on these problems. The establishment of this organiza-

tion is intended to implement a former decision of the council which called for an increased share of the government of the Church to be given to the lower echelons of clergy. The avowed purpose of many was to try, if possible, to curtail the power of the Roman Curia which is composed mostly of Italians, is conservative and traditional in matters of church policy, has tremendous power within the Romish hierarchy, and which is cordially hated by a vast segment of the liberal wing of the church. But this hatred is due

mostly to the fact that the Curia is always attempting to block the reforms that are so dear to the hearts of the liberals. This new Synod of Bishops will not be allowed to detract however from the power of the pope. He intends to retain the right to choose 15% of the members; and he alone will determine when the Synod meets and what it discusses.

As far as the decisions of the Council thus far are concerned, the most important decision has to do with the "schema" on Christian liberty. This deals with an issue that has burned in the Roman Church for centuries. The Church has always taken the position that the Roman Catholic Church is the only legitimate and God-ordained denomination, that there is no salvation outside of it, and that therefore it is the only church which has a right of existence in the world. In bygone years this policy was carried out by means of severe persecutions of, e.g., Waldensians, individual heretics and Protestants after the time of the Reformation. This policy of persecution has continued even in the present day in such countries as Spain and Columbia. And from this policy came also the efforts of the Romish Church to establish itself in various countries in which it had a majority of the population as the established religion.

But in recent years this policy has been the object of criticism by liberals within the Church. The liberals contend that every man has the right to decide for himself what his religion shall be. Hence there was throughout the sessions of the council intense agitation for adopting some schema to spell out this position as being the official position of the Church. Last year the council was about ready to vote its approval of such a policy when the pope himself intervened to prevent a vote. The result was that last year's session ended on a very sour note. Once again this year the schema dealing with this subject came up for discussion and debate. By a vote of 1997 to 224 the schema carried. The result is that the Church has changed her position on this crucial issue and repudiated her position of the past. (Although it is interesting to note that there has been no condemnation made by the council of the actions of the Romish past, and no apology made or confession of sin for the blood of God's people that was shed.) The Church now recognizes the right of every one to believe what he chooses. It affirms the right to religious liberty because this liberty is based on both divine revelation and the very dignity of the human nature of man. It asserts that no one at all can be forced to act against his conscience, that the state must protect this human right, and that governments can neither impose any religion on an individual nor prevent him from joining or leaving any religious group. This includes every religion be it Hinduism or atheism.

The liberals were elated for many had made a favorable vote on this one issue the deciding factor in whether this was to be a successful council which would truly reform the church or a wretched failure.

However, the decision of the council is not yet the last word on the schema. It must still go to the pope. And while he cannot refuse to accept the schema itself (and indeed will not since he took a hand in seeing to

it that it came to a vote when the conservatives made one last effort to sidetrack the matter), nevertheless he does retain the right to alter the language as much as he sees fit. Thus there is still fear that the language will be watered down and made so ambiguous that the conservatives win out after all and the tradition-encrusted Curia gets its way in the end. What the pope actually intends to do has not been made public.

The second decision of importance dealt with the Council's statement on non-Christian religions.

While this schema dealt with such religions as Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, atheism, etc., the real bone of contention was a statement in the document which partially absolved the Jews from blame for crucifying Christ. There was a great deal of politics involved in this one. On the one side is the lingering charge made against the Romish Church which claims that it is anti-semitic. This charge was recently made by some when the claim was made that the Roman Church did not do enough to help the Jews who were being persecuted by Hitler when it was within the power of the church to do much to alleviate the suffering. The statement of the council therefore was intended to put this charge to rest once and for all. And, naturally, the Jews themselves were heartily in favor of this. But on the other side stood the Arabs many of whom belong to the Romish Church. And these Arabs hate the nation of Israeli with passionate hatred. Any statement made which in any way would speak kindly of the Jews was anathema to the Arabs and would be interpreted as pro-Israel and anti-Arab. The whole issue revolved around the question whether the Council should take a stand against the charge that the Jews were responsible for Christ's crucifixion. The teaching of Scripture was scarcely considered in the matter; it was primarily a question of ecclesiastical politics.

The schema finally adopted stated that not only the Jews but also the whole world was responsible for Christ's death. This was less than the liberals wanted; it was a disappointment to the Jews; and it did not satisfy the Arabs either. In other words, it was a compromise satisfying no one but not deeply antagonistic to any. The pope still has the final word on this matter, too.

Although the changes made in the schema on Christian Liberty were perhaps the most important changes in the position of the Church, it is still evident that while the church speaks of reform and adaptation to the needs of people in the 20th century, Rome is only interested in putting on a new suit of clothes tailored in 20th century fashions while it remains the same kind of a Church it has always been throughout the centuries since the Reformation. It is therefore, still the enemy of the Church of Christ, the new clothes and the nice smile notwithstanding.

* * * *

A couple of other items of interest in this connection.

We reported in these columns a short time ago that there was agitation among some liberal theologians for a change in the doctrine of transubstantiation. It

appears as if this agitation hit a raw nerve in the church, for the pope decided to issue an encyclical concerning the matter. In this encyclical the pope made it clear that he had no intention of stifling research or squashing free investigation in matters of the faith. But he nevertheless considered these new opinions to involve the Church in grave dangers. He warned all that the doctrine of the church was still emphatically that in the mass, the bread and wine are miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Christ even though they appear unchanged to the participants. This doctrine may not be touched.

It is well known by this time that the pope's visit to this country has attracted worldwide attention. We are not interested in discussing the whole matter any more than it was discussed by the news media. In fact, the newspapers, radio and television covered the whole visit so thoroughly that it was even somewhat indecent.

What particularly is of importance is that the pope's plea for peace before the United Nations was so completely secular. In all the speech this man who claims to speak for Christ and represent Christ upon earth never mentioned Christ's Word or His cross and scarcely mentioned the name of God. His entire plea for peace on earth was a plea to which any man could subscribe — as the atheistic Russians were quick to point out when they spoke of the pontiff's speech as "helpful". The pope became then, not the spokesman of Christ but the spokesman of the secular world which denies Christ and strives to attain peace here on earth apart from the blood of the cross.

It is well to remind ourselves at this point that the pope had only one calling before the United Nations; that was to inform this body that the cause of war was the utter depravity of man's human nature; that there

is no possibility of peace in this world until that depravity is taken away; that this is accomplished only through the blood of atonement; and that consequently the peace of the cross is the peace of a heavenly kingdom which shall be given graciously by God only to God's elect. Can you imagine such a speech before the U.N.? But this is all there is to say.

To sum up the work of the Vatican Council: there have been five schemata adopted by the Council before this last session. They are "Constitution on The Church", "Constitution on Liturgy", "Decree on Ecumenism", "Decree on Mass Communications", and "Decree on Oriental Rite Churches". Apart from the two discussed above, the following are still to be discussed:

— The Church In The Modern World; this is a kind of a catch all which discusses such questions as international relations, culture, politics, economics, family life, birth control.

— Missionary Activity; Brought up by Paul himself at last year's session, it received a thorough overhauling.

— The Priest's Life and Ministry.

— Divine Revelation; dealing with the relation of Scripture and tradition. This is an important one, voted on in principle last year, but still subject to further debate and amendment.

— The Lay Apostolate; dealing with the laymen's role in the Church.

— On Religious; discussing mainly vows and orders.

— Priestly Formation — Statement on seminary life.

— Christian Education; General list of principles on parochial education in the Romish Church.

— The Pastoral Function of Bishops; Important schema discussing the relation of the bishops to the church bureaucracy in Rome.

HEEDING THE DOCTRINE— "Take heed . . . unto the doctrine" I Tim. 4:16

Barth's Doctrine of Scripture

by Rev. D. J. Engelsma

In *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, Barth remarks on the so-called "formal principle" of the Reformation, the principle of the sole authority of the Bible, and, in one statement, shows his deep disagreement with the historic, Reformed estimation of Scripture: The Reformers "had the courage to allow so accidental, contingent, and human a thing as the Bible to become a serious witness of the revelation of God, to allow a book which was in itself profane to become Holy Scripture" (in the chapter entitled, "Task of the

Reformed Churches."). The Bible is accidental and contingent, even profane, that is, secular, worldly. It is these things, with all they imply, because the Bible is thoroughly human. Barth loves to speak of "the humanity of Scripture," most forcefully when opposing the historic, Reformed dogma of an inspired, infallible Scripture. We have seen that Barth utterly repudiates the "orthodox" doctrine of an infallible, inerrant Scripture. We must now note with what Barth would replace that doctrine in the mind and confession of

the Reformed Churches.

The Bible is a fallible book, full of errors of every kind.⁽¹⁾ In our day, the introduction into a church of the denial of an infallible Bible inevitably takes the form of an arbitrary distinction between that which is "central" and that which is "peripheral" in the Bible. That which is "central," including Scripture's teachings on the great facts of redemption and on the believer's walk, is said to be infallible. That which is "peripheral," including Scripture's "incidental" historical, geographical and scientific facts, is fallible. This distinction between "central-infallible" and "peripheral-fallible" is supposed to permit the Church to recognize and admit the "obvious" discrepancies and mistakes in the Bible, while, at the same time, safeguarding all the doctrinal and ethical passages from suspicion of error and attack. Drawing false security from this distinction, men have allowed, perhaps grudgingly, within the Church the teaching of a fallible Bible, who otherwise were inclined to resist the entrance into the Church of any and all forms of the view that Scripture contains errors. They console themselves with the notion that the "important" parts of Scripture are safe. In reality, they have taken the Trojan horse into their city. For the fact is that the distinction is sheer human invention, not only without basis in Scripture but, in fact, a contradiction of Scripture's testimony concerning its own essence. That "all Scripture is God-breathed" (II Tim. 3:16) means, at the very least, that "Scripture" is not a conglomeration of books and texts but a single, unified entity. There is such a unity as "all Scripture." And the essential oneness of all these books and texts is their common "God-breathedness," their inspiration, and, therefore, also, their fallibility or infallibility. The point here is merely that Scripture demands, on the matter of inspiration and the intimately related matter of infallibility, that all its parts be regarded in the same way. If the inspired historical parts are fallible, the inspired doctrinal parts are fallible also. Thus, the distinction between "central-infallible" and "peripheral-fallible," no matter how unwitting and sincere the defenders of it may be, will not and cannot stand. Eventually, the concept of fallibility will be applied to the entire Scripture, also the doctrinal and ethical parts.⁽²⁾

Common as this distinction is in introducing into the Church the idea of a fallible Bible, it is not at all the approach of Barth. The Bible is indeed a fallible, erring book but the fallibility holds for every part of the Bible. Scripture errs in its historical, geographical, chronological, and scientific material but, as well, fallibility "extends to its religious or theological content." "There are obvious overlappings and contradictions — e.g., between the Law and the prophets, between John and the Synoptists, between Paul and James" (CD,I,2,p.509). The so-called secondary authors "speak as fallible, erring men like ourselves" (CD,I,2,p.507). "The prophets and apostles as such, even in their office, even in their function as witnesses, even in the act of writing down their witness, were real, historical men as we are, and therefore sinful in their action,

and capable and actually guilty of error in their spoken and written word" (CD,I,2,p.529). Over against the doctrine of an inerrant Scripture, Barth becomes extremely bold: "To the bold postulate, that if their word is to be the Word of God they (the prophets and apostles — D.E.) must be inerrant in every word, we appose the even bolder assertion, that . . . they can be at fault in any word, and have been at fault in every word. . ." (CD,I,2,p.530). All of the words of the Bible are fallible, human words and, therefore, we must acknowledge the Bible's "historical and scientific inaccuracies," its "theological contradictions," and "the uncertainty of (its) tradition" (CD, I,2,p.531).

A concrete instance of the Bible's fallibility is the presence in Scripture of saga and legend. This pertains, of course, to the Bible stories. Although these stories present themselves as actual history, as the literal account of the way things happened, in fact most, if not all of the stories are a mixture of history and saga. "Saga" is the "share of the narrator or narrators in the story narrated" (CD,I,1,p.376). And "legend" is "the depiction in saga form of a concrete individual personality" (CD,III,1,p.81). That is, saga and legend are the embellishments of an event or personality by the story-teller, namely, the human writer of the Bible story. Usually, the Bible stories are the combination of history, that is, actual fact, and saga, that is, the imagination of the story-teller. But there is one story, at least, that is "pure saga." That story is the Biblical account of creation. Genesis 1 and 2 are "divinatory and poetical. . . saga" (CD,III,1,p.82). This means that some human or humans guessed how this present, visible world began ("divination") and, then, poetically articulated this guess. Barth will not deny, concerning the Biblical account of creation, "that there are myths, and perhaps in part fairy tales, in the materials of which they are constructed" (CD,III,1,p.84).⁽³⁾

The Canon of Scripture itself may not be regarded by us with certainty. The Reformed Churches have confessed, through the years, that the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments are canonical Scripture, the divinely inspired rule and authority for the Church. None of these books may be challenged and no writings may be added. The Canon is closed, absolutely. Having listed the sixty-six books of the Bible, the Belgic Confession states: "We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical. . ." (Art.V). With an appeal to Luther and Calvin, Barth dissents. "With a view to the future," we must say that "the Canon is not closed absolutely, but only very relatively" (CD,I,2,p.476). We must allow for the possibility that there lies buried "in the sands of Egypt" a book which the Church must and will confess to belong to the Canon, perhaps, Paul's missing letter to the Laodiceans (cf. Col.4:16 and CD,I,2,p.478). Possibly, the Church will even have to declare that one of the sixty-six books now accepted does not belong in the Canon: "We cannot rule out a consideration of the possibility of an open alteration in its (the Canon's — DE) constitution, either a narrowing as in the 16th century⁽⁴⁾ or an extension" (CD,I,2,p.478).

All of this is necessary, Barth insists, if the Reformed Churches are going to give due honor to the Word of God and the wholly gracious character of God's revelation of Himself to us. This is the only way, in the matter of Scripture, of saying "No" to our natural arrogance and "Yes" to Jesus Christ, *the* Word of God.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Literally, the word *fallible* only means "liable to error" or "capable of a mistake." Thus, someone might press the distinction between a "fallible" Bible and an actually "erring" Bible, as if he could teach a "fallible" Bible without committing himself, at the same time, to an "erring" Bible. Now and then, Barth plays with this distinction and rather speaks of the "vulnerability of the Bible" and its "capacity for errors" than of the concrete errors of the biblical authors (CD, I, 2, pp. 508, 509). This is an impossible distinction at best and a deceptive one at worst. For consider: if someone means by a "fallible but inerrant" Bible that the Bible *might* have contained errors but that God, when He authored it through the prophets and apostles, *actually* kept it free from all mistakes, he is saying nothing else than that the Bible as God gave it to men was from the outset without an error and, therefore, also without any capacity for error. Only if the Bible actually errs does it also have a capacity to err. Barth, in all his distinguishing, does not mean to teach a bare capacity of the Bible to err but an erring Bible. Throughout, we will use "fallible"

as the practical equivalent of "containing errors" or "erring."

(2) The Reformed confessions know nothing of this division of the Bible into parts, one central part that is reliable and another peripheral part that is untrustworthy. On the contrary, the Heidelberg Catechism states that "True faith is . . . a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in his word" (Lord's Day VII, Q. 21) and the Belgic Confession puts into the mouth of the Reformed Christians: "We receive all these books . . . believing without any doubt, all things contained in them. . ." (Art. V).

(3) Klaas Runia mentions that Barth, lecturing in Holland, was asked whether the serpent of Genesis 3 really spoke. Barth replied that he could not take the Genesis account as historical "for a speaking serpent -- well, I cannot imagine that any more than anybody else." Those who defend this account as literal history, Barth refers to with typical, if sarcastic levity as "friends of the speaking serpent." (cf. K. Runia, *Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture*, pp. 100, 101)

(4) Barth maintains that the Churches of the Reformation excluded from the Canon, in the 16th century, those books which we now consider to be apocryphal but which the Church for a thousand years before the Reformation had received as canonical. He probably refers to the fact that the Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397), which declared on the New Testament Canon, included in the Canon of Scripture, such books as Judith and the Maccabees.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

Calvin - Hodge

by Rev. H. Veldman

CALVIN

Having discussed in several chapters, in Vol. I, Chapter XIV, on his Institutes of the Christian Religion, the creation of angels, Calvin then resumes his discussion of the creation of the world. In this discussion, he is very brief. Later, in chapter XV, he discusses at length the creation of man. Having discussed the creation of the angels, Calvin writes:

Yet let us not disdain to receive a pious delight from the works of God, which every where present themselves to view in this very beautiful theatre of the world. For this, as I have elsewhere observed, though not the principal, is yet, in the order of nature, the first lesson of faith, to remember that, whithersoever we turn our eyes, all the things which we behold are the works of God; and at the same time to consider, with pious meditation, for what end God created them. Therefore to apprehend, by a true faith, what it is for our benefit to know concerning God, we must first of all understand the history of the creation of the world,

as it is briefly related by Moses, and afterwards more copiously illustrated by holy men, particularly by Basil and Ambrose. Then we shall learn that God, by the power of his Word and Spirit, created out of nothing the heaven and the earth; that from them he produced all things, animate and inanimate; distinguished by an admirable gradation the innumerable variety of things; to every species gave its proper nature, assigned its offices, and appointed its places and stations; and since all things are subject to corruption, has, nevertheless, provided for the preservation of every species till the last day; that he therefore nourishes some by methods concealed from us, from time to time infusing, as it were, new vigour into them; that on some he has conferred the power of propagation, in order that the whole species may not be extinct at their death; that he has thus wonderfully adorned heaven and earth with the utmost possible abundance, variety, and beauty, like a large and splendid mansion, most exquisitely and copiously furnished; lastly, that, by creating man, and distinguishing him with such splendid beauty, and with

such numerous and great privileges, he has exhibited in him a most excellent specimen of all his works. But since it is not my design to treat at large of the creation of the world, let it suffice to have again dropped these few hints by the way. For it is better, as I have just advised the reader, to seek for fuller information on this subject from Moses, and others who have faithfully and diligently recorded the history of the world.

In these words, the noted reformer of Geneva states plainly that the Lord created the heavens and the earth out of nothing, and we are reminded by these words of what we read in Art. XII of our Confession of Faith.

Continuing his treatment of God's work of the creation of the world, Calvin, leaving no doubt as to the length of time in which the Lord made the universe, writes:

There remains the other point, which approaches more nearly to faith; that, while we observe how God has appointed all things for our benefit and safety, and at the same time perceive his power and grace in ourselves, and the great benefits which he has conferred on us, we may thence excite ourselves to confide in him, to invoke him, to praise him, and to love him. Now, as I have just before suggested, God himself has demonstrated, by the very order of creation, that he made all things for the sake of man. For it was not without reason that he distributed the making of the world into six days; though it would have been no more difficult for him to complete the whole work, in all its parts, at once, in a single moment, than to arrive at its completion by such progressive advances.

Calvin certainly believes that the Lord created the heavens and the earth and all that is therein, in six days, and he certainly means days as we know them.

Writing on the creation of man, although he does not treat the account in Genesis in any detail, Calvin writes:

We shall afterwards, in the proper place, see how far men are fallen from that purity which was bestowed upon Adam. And first let it be understood, that, by his being made of earth and clay, a restraint was laid upon pride; since nothing is more absurd than for creatures to glory in their excellence, who not only inhabit a cottage of clay, but who are themselves composed partly of dust and ashes.

There is surely nothing in this quotation to cause us to wonder whether Calvin was addicted to the evolutionistic theory of the creation of man.

HODGE

On the doctrine of creation in Vol. I of his *Systematic Theology*, Hodge, discussing Different Theories concerning the Origin of the Universe, writes as follows:

The question concerning the origin of the universe has forced itself on the minds of men in all ages. That the mutable cannot be eternal, would seem to be self-evident. As everything within the sphere of human observation is constantly changing, men have been constrained to believe that the world as it now is had a beginning. But if it began to be, whence did it come? Without the light of a divine revelation, this question

is unanswerable. The data for the solution of the problem do not lie within the sphere either of experience or of reason. All human theories on this subject are nothing more than conjectures more or less ingenious.

Apart from the pantheistic doctrine which makes the universe the existence form, or, as Goethe calls it, "das lebendige Kleid" (the living garment) of God, the most prevalent views on this subject are, First, those theories which exclude mind from the causative origin of the world; Secondly, those which admit of mind, but only as connected with matter; and Thirdly, the Scriptural doctrine which assumes the existence of an infinite extramundane mind to whose power and will the existence of all things out of God is to be referred.

It is a self-evident truth that existence cannot spring spontaneously from non-existence. In this sense *ex nihilo nihil fit* is an universally admitted axiom. Those, therefore, who deny the existence of an extramundane mind, are forced to admit that as the universe now, it must have always been. But as it is in a state of perpetual change it has not always been as it now is. There was a primordial state out of which the present order of things has arisen. The question is, How?

Then, calling attention to the purely Physical Theory, Hodge writes as follows:

According to the first hypothesis just mentioned (the theory which excludes mind from the causative origin of the world-H.V.), the primordial condition of the universe was that of universally diffused matter in a highly attenuated state. This matter has the properties, or forces, which it now everywhere exhibits; and under the operation of these forces and in accordance with the laws of heat, motion, etc., not only the great cosmical bodies were formed and arranged themselves in their present harmonious relations, but also all the organisms, vegetable and animal, on this globe and elsewhere, were fashioned and sustained. Every man knows enough of physical laws to be able to predict with certainty that on a cold day in the open air the moisture of his breath will be condensed; so, according to Professor Huxley, on this hypothesis, with adequate knowledge of those laws, it would have been easy from the beginning to predict, not only the mechanism of the heavens, but the fauna and flora of our globe in all the states and stages of its existence. . .

And then Hodge calls attention to the Nebular hypothesis, which would explain our world purely from the physical point of view. Assuming that the matter composing our entire solar system once existed in the condition of a single nebulous mass, gradually this single mass broke up into several satellites, thereby constituting our various planets, without the intervention of mind.

Then Hodge calls attention to those theories which assume Intelligence in Nature itself, and he writes:

The obvious impossibility of blind causes acting intelligently, as of necessary causes being elective in their operation, has led many who deny the existence of an extramundane Mind to hold, that life and intelligence pertain to matter itself in some at least of its combinations. A plant lives. There is something in the seed which secures its development, each after its kind. There is, therefore, something in the plant, which according to this theory is not external to the

plant itself, which does the work of mind. That is, it selects or chooses from the earth and air the elements needed for its support and growth. It moulds these elements into organic forms, intended to answer a purpose, and adapted with wonderful skill to accomplish a given object. With regard to this principle of life, this vital force, it is to be remarked that it is in the plant; that it is never manifested, never acts, except in union with the matter of which the plant is composed; when the plant dies, its vitality is extinguished. It ceases to exist in the same sense in which light ceases when darkness takes place.

What is true of the vegetable, is no less true of the animal world. Every animal starts in an almost imperceptible germ. But germ has something in it which determines with certainty the genus, species, and variety of the animal. It fashions all his organs; prepares the eye for the light yet to be seen; the ear for sounds yet to be heard; the lungs for air yet to be breathed. Nothing more wonderful than this is furnished by the universe in any of its phenomena.

If, therefore, vegetable and animal work all these wonders, what need have we to assume an extramundane mind to account for any of the phenomena of the universe? All that is necessary is, that nature should act just as we see that the vital principle does act in plants and animals. This is Hylozoism; the doctrine that matter is imbued with a principle of life.

Another form of this theory is more dualistic. It admits the existence of mind and matter as distinct substances, but always existing in combination, as soul

and body in man in our present stage of being. The advocates of this doctrine, therefore, instead of speaking of nature as the organizing force, speak of the soul of the world: *the anima mundi*, etc.

Concerning these theories, the purely physical and that which admits of mind but only as connected with matter, Hodge declares:

(1) That they leave the origin of things unaccounted for. Whence came the matter, which the theory in one form assumes? Whence came its physical properties, to which all organization is referred? And as to the other doctrine, it may be asked, Whence came the living germs of plants and animals? To assume that matter in a state of chaos is eternal; or that there has been an endless succession of living germs; or that there has been an eternal succession of cycles in the history of the universe, chaos unfolding itself into cosmos, during immeasurable ages, are all assumptions which shock the reason, and must of necessity be destitute of proof. (2) These theories are atheistic. They deny the existence of a personal Being to whom we stand in the relation of creatures and children. The existence of such a Being is an innate, intuitive truth. It cannot be permanently disbelieved. And, therefore, any theory which denies the existence of God must be not only false but short-lived.

Wicked man invents these theories because he hates the living God and refuses to acknowledge Him as the Creator of the world.

Forbes' New House of Worship



The above is a snap-shot of the new church at Forbes, N.D. The building was recently moved from the neighboring vicinity of Ashley, N.D., and placed in the new location in the center of the town of Forbes. It is rectangular in shape, 24 by 40 feet in size. The interior has been newly decorated and is equipped with acoustical tile ceiling. It has twenty 10-foot pews plus two smaller ones which provide Forbes with room for growth and expansion. The Lord has provided this needed church property for the congregation of Forbes at the cost of about \$2,500.00. For miles around one can see the cross firmly affixed atop the high steeple. For many years it has seemed to be the sole prerogative of the Roman Catholic churches to have a cross on

their steeples, but it is becoming prevalent among Protestant churches as well to claim their members to be sheltered under the symbol of the Cross on which their Savior paid the bitter price for their sins.

Congratulations, Forbes! May you prosper under the preaching of the Word as it reveals to you the whole counsel of God in regard to His chosen people. May your new church truly be a "house of God," wherein the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached; in which the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ is maintained; and where church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin according to the Scriptures. God bless you in that way.

J. M. Faber

BOOK REVIEWS—

A History of Christian Missions *by Rev. H. Hanko*

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS, by Stephen Neill. (Vol. VI in "The Pelican History of the Church"). Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 622 pages. \$7.50.

The author of this book is thoroughly acquainted with his subject, having spent some time as missionary in South India, 20 years as a wandering evangelist, lecturer to educated Hindus and Muslims, theological teacher and finally Bishop of Tinnevely. He was also a member of the Joint Committee which brought into being the Church of South India.

The book covers the whole field of the history of Christian Missions from the beginning of the New Testament Church till 1963 when the book was completed. It contains a thorough and interesting description of the progress of missions and is of great

value to those interested in this subject.

While it is almost a "must" for anyone making a study of missions, if the reader expects a discussion of the theology of missions, he will be disappointed. The book is strictly history. And, inasmuch as the author is not interested in any theological implications of the mission calling of the church, he does no evaluation of mission work either. All of it, carried on by no matter what denomination, meets with approval. The author is strongly in favor of ecumenical mission movements of today, particularly the mission arm of the World Council of Churches.

There is a valuable discussion of the problem of establishing indigenous churches in former lands and an excellent bibliography of considerable value to the student who wishes to pursue the matter further. The book is highly recommended to our readers.

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The Epistles of John

"The Epistles of John" (Tyndale Bible Commentaries), N.T. Series, Vol. 19. 230 pp. Price: \$3.00. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.

This series of commentaries is advertised as "A concise, workable tool for laymen, teachers and ministers." My general comment on all the volumes of this series which I have seen thus far is two-fold: 1) The aim of the series is too broad. For a commentary to be a tool useful to laymen and at the same time to be a tool useful to ministers is a goal rather difficult of attainment in my opinion. Laymen desire a less technical tool; and ministers desire a more technical tool. 2) The striving after conciseness in a work of this kind too often results in a lack of thoroughness and depth. This is also true of this work on the Epistles of John. As is well-known, the simplicity of the language in John cloaks a richness and depth of meaning which are not always easy to probe thoroughly. It stands to reason that to cover all three of the Epistles of John in the space of 230 pages will almost necessarily result in a balance that favors brevity rather than thoroughness. This, in my opinion, is the chief shortcoming of this little commentary.

Nevertheless, Mr. Stott does a creditable job within the limits described above. His commentary is more thorough than some others in this same series. Not only is there a serious attempt at exegesis in these pages; but, — and this is sometimes one of the chief benefits of a very brief commentary, — there is frequently an insight furnished into some of the problems of interpretation and into various views on the meaning of certain passages and terms. For these reasons I would recommend the book to those who are looking for something brief. This recommendation, of course, does not imply agreement with all that is written.

Basic Introduction to the New Testament

"Basic Introduction To The New Testament," 179 pp. (Paperback) Price \$1.45. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.

This little book is intended to be a popular introduction to the New Testament, not a technical work in N.T. Isagogics. Its avowed purpose is "an attempt to introduce the New Testament, its authors and their writings, to the man in the pew" and to "encourage Christian people to read the New Testament for themselves." The author faces the fact that this is a day when "The practice of daily Bible reading, whether by individual Christians or in family prayers, is becoming rare." And he intends this book to be an incentive to Bible reading, not a substitute. Frankly, I fail to see how a work of this kind can serve as such an incentive. The best incentive for Bible reading for Christian people, it seems to me, is the Bible itself! If the Scriptures themselves hold no attraction, how will a human word about those rich Scriptures serve as an incentive?

Nor can I agree with the content and basic approach of this work. It is obviously Arminian, for example, in regard to regeneration. This is evident from page 20, where the author writes: "It (the new birth) is a deep, inward, revolutionary change of heart effected by the Holy Spirit. Without it a man cannot even 'see' the Kingdom, let alone 'enter' it (John 3:3, 5). But how can this change come about? *On what human conditions will the Holy Spirit effect it?*" (emphasis added) And the author goes on to spell out these supposedly human conditions for the new birth as being repentance, faith, self-surrender.

For one who is looking for a good, solid, Reformed addition to his library, this is not the book to buy. This is not to say, of course, that there is nothing of value in the book.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

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

November 1, 1965

Rev. B. Woudenberg, of Edgerton, Minn., has received a call from Forbes, N.D.

Rev. Woudenberg has accepted the call which he had received from Lynden, Wash.

* * *

Rev. Robert Decker was installed into office in Doon, Iowa, Friday evening, Oct. 1. Prof. H.C. Hoeksema preached the sermon, which was based on 2 Cor. 2:14-17. Rev. J. Kortering read the Form for Installation. Rev. Decker preached his inaugural sermons on the following Sunday; the morning sermon was on Romans 1:16,17 and the afternoon's was on Romans 5:1. The congregational reception for their new minister was scheduled for the next Friday evening. And so we have a new worker in the vineyard of the Lord.

* * *

And now a look at "the other side of the coin". It has pleased the King of His Church to counter-balance the above news. Rev. G. Vos has requested Hudsonville's consistory for emeritation due to failing health. Rev. Vos has consented to occupy the area pulpits whenever health permits, his first such assignment was in First Church while Rev. Van Baren was in Hudsonville on Classical appointment Nov. 1. Rev. Vos preached his farewell sermon Sunday, Oct. 24.

* * *

The long awaited—and much planned for—Reformation Day Rally held in the Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids belongs to history. A very large audience (the place seats 5,000!) were pin-dropping-attentive as the Prof. H.C. Hoeksema, spokesman for all our churches, witnessed to the fact that the "faith of our fathers" is "living still" in the pulpits of the Prot. Ref. Churches. He spoke on "Our Reformed Heritage," exhorting all sons and daughters of the Reformation to return to the truth as epitomized under the T-U-L-I-P of Calvinism. The chairman of the evening, Rev. M. Schipper, led in opening devotions, and welcomed our guests, members of other denominations, to share with us something of the rich inheritance God had given us. Music was furnished by a massed choir under the direction of Mr. Roland Petersen, with Mrs. C. Lubbers accompanying. Mrs. Lubbers also rendered the Prelude and the Postlude. Rev. H. Veldman led the huge gathering in closing prayer, after which the audience stood and sang the Doxology.

The work of the Mission Committee, of the broader committee consisting of members of each of the area churches, of the 120-voice choir with its director and accompanist, of the 40 or more ushers and usherettes assisted by several deacons; and of the gifts of all our people to foot the cost; and especially the speech of our Seminary professor, all added up to a worthwhile project that served as a Protestant Reformed witness to the churches in Michigan's "Jerusalem". *We thank Thee, Lord, for this privilege!*

Did you know—that Rev. Veldman made a hurried train trip from Lynden to Grand Rapids and arrived at the Civic Auditorium ten minutes before program time to take his place (which he did not know he was to occupy) on the platform as scheduled on the printed programs? *and*, that many of the stalwart members of our Oak Lawn and South Holland churches also drove the three hundred mile round trip to attend the Rally?

* * *

Redlands' Ladies Aid Society is re-discovering the Book of Revelation, examining the 16th chapter at present, in their Bible Study. The after recess activity centers around the history of our churches. Other news in their bulletins included a renovation of the lawn by the men of the congregation called out *en masse* by the building committee. Some saddening news also reached us from that California outpost: Mrs. C. Hanco suffered a double fracture of her left arm in a recent fall. Rev. Hanco wrote, "God teaches us that we must wait upon Him, committing all our way to Him, and trust Him to provide for us in every contingency of life. 'O, we of little faith!'"

* * *

The Young People of Hull sponsored a Reformation Day Rally scheduled to be held in Hull Oct. 31. Rev. B. Woudenberg, of Edgerton, was to be the speaker. An offering was taken for the Scholarship Fund of the *Beacon Lights*.

* * *

The Northwest Iowa P.R. School Society sponsored a public lecture by Prof. H.C. Hoeksema to be held in Hull Sept. 29. His topic, "Reformed Christian Instruction—In the Fear of the Lord". The Board requested Rev. Kortering to write a series of newsletters which stress the need for such. In the first of these Rev. Kortering discussed the fact of our children being comprehended in the Covenant of God and that the instruction the parents provide for their children must be *covenantal*.

* * *

Monday evening, Oct. 18, the League of Mens' Societies sponsored a public lecture in Hope Church. The speaker, Prof. H.C. Hoeksema; his topic, "Our Mission Activities". This lecture may have sparked the enthusiasm that was evidenced at the Rally and talked about ever since. To quote our Rev. Vos: "It is the beginning of a new era. We have among us his (Rev. H. Hoeksema's) son; and with him is a worthy companion, Prof. Herman Hanco. And we have a band of young and devoted men who love to preach the truth he loved, preached, taught, and suffered for. But what is more: We have God!"

* * *

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. . . . Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." Psalm 150.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.