

The
Standard
Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Meditation: Calm In The Storm

**Editorials: An Attack Upon The Very Foundation
THE BANNER Misses The Point**

Beginning: Vatican Council—Third Session

Union Of Evangelicals

Progress With Blake and Pike

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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LEAGUE MEETING

The Eastern Ladies League will hold its Fall meeting, D.V., on Thursday evening, Nov. 11, 1965 at Southwest Protestant Reformed Church.

Prof. Herman Hanko will speak on the topic "Racial Rioting and the Signs of the Times".

We invite all our ladies to meet with us for an evening of edification and Christian fellowship.

MEDITATION--

Calm In The Storm

by Rev. M. Schipper

"For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar."
Acts 27:23, 24a

Paul was on his way to Rome!

He had been taken captive and tried before Felix and Agrippa, at which trial before the latter he had appealed unto Caesar. So to Caesar he must go! He therefore was given in trust to a centurion who was charged to bring Paul and a band of prisoners to Rome. The boat on which he was placed was to sail for Asia Minor, the last point of contact with the land of Pales-

tine being Sidon. They passed the island of Cyprus, coming to a coastal town called Lycia in Asia Minor, where they were to change ships. All the while Paul was given great liberty aboard ship!

Having boarded a different ship which was headed for Alexandria in Egypt, and because of the wind, they came to Crete, and the port called Fair Havens. It appears that much time was spent here, both in lading the

ship, and waiting for better weather conditions. Fair Havens was not a commodious harbor for winter quarters, and winter was coming on. Paul sensed that with winter approaching it would be dangerous to sail further. He therefore advised the centurion not to go on but to stay here until weather conditions warranted further sailing. The captain of the ship, however, was of a different mind, and prevailed upon the centurion to set sail.

No sooner had they gotten out of the harbor when strong contrary winds carried the ship helplessly out to sea. Every attempt was made to keep the ship from sinking. The cargo they hoisted overboard. All the sails were taken down, except the short mainsail which was to keep the ship headed with the wind. But with all this effort, it appeared the ship was to be broken to pieces with the waves, or to founder in the sea. All the passengers except one despaired of ever seeing land and home again!

Now just when all seemed hopeless, and the time most opportune had arrived, Paul stood up and began to speak. Mildly he rebuked the ship's master for not having listened when he warned not to sail from Crete. Then he spoke to all a word of comfort and good cheer, telling them that no man's life would be lost, for the Lord had reassured him that he must go to Rome, and that all those in the ship would be spared.

Listen to him speak: "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

Like a light-house beacon on the tempestuous sea our text looms! Not only is this so because it gave new hope to the troubled seamen, but because it speaks of a calm assurance of safety and reliance on a faithful God!

Indeed, here was calm in the storm!

A calm that was based upon true convictions!

Expressed negatively, Paul's conviction was that he was not his own! That is the very first conviction the child of God comes to when he is made aware of his sinful and hopeless condition as he is by nature, and when he has been delivered from sin and death by the grace of Christ Jesus!

The natural man has convictions that are quite the opposite of this! Actually he thinks that he is his own. He believes he is "the master of my fate," and "I am the captain of my soul." And so he lives out his life on the earth. He believes and actually lives out of the principle that with body and soul he is his own. No

one, yea, no one is going to tell him what to do and how to live!

The spiritual man, on the other hand, lives out of an entirely different principle, and is of wholly other convictions! He deposes and dethrones self. When he analyzes himself in the light of God's Holy Word and Law, he learns that he is nothing, yea, less than nothing! Or, to put it in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely, the people is grass." And again, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." Isaiah 40:6,7,15. Such is the estimated value the spiritual man, regenerated by grace, places upon himself!

He is not only convinced that he is not his own, nor will he serve himself! Again, we remark that his convictions are quite different than those of the natural man. The latter serves only himself, and would have all things serve him. He lives for himself, and strives to make all things work for his own honor and glory. The evidences of this we see daily all about us. Every man seeks himself. Let another stand in his way, and he will steal, murder, and commit adultery to bring the thing he desires for himself into his service. The spiritual man serves another. He is not his own. He seeks not himself. He belongs to another, and that other he must serve!

That is what Paul negatively and positively implies when he declares: "Whose I am, and whom I serve." These convictions are the very essence of true religion. True religion is the spiritual consciousness of being possessed by the only true God; and thus, all we can do is worship!

Whose I am!

That expresses the universal truth that men belong to God by virtue of their being the creatures of His hand. As the 100th Psalm says, according to a probably correct reading, "It is He that hath made us, and we are His." But the apostle is going a good deal deeper than any such thoughts, which he, no doubt, shared in common with the heathen men around him, when he declares in a special fashion, God had claimed him for His. "I am Thine," is the deepest thought of this man's mind and the deepest feeling of his heart. And that is godliness in its purest form, -- the consciousness of belonging to God! This saying of Paul must be interpreted in the light of another of his sayings: "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are His." I Cor. 6:19. He traces God's possession of him, not to that fact of creation, but to the one transcendent

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act of the divine love, which gave itself to us, and so acquired us for itself. The divine ownership of us is only realized when we are consciously His, because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ!

And if you and I are His, then that involves that we have deposed from his throne the rebel *Self*, that ancient anarchy that disturbs and ruins us! They who belong to God cease to live to themselves. There are two centers of human life, and only two! The one is God, the other is my wretched Self. They who have themselves for their centers are like comets with a wide elliptical course, which carries them away out into the cold abysses of darkness. But they who have God for their sun are like the planets, those "sons of the morning", which make music as they roll and as they flash back His light!

Whom I serve!

Employed is the word which means the service of a worshipper, or of a priest -- not that of a slave. Paul's purpose was to represent how, as his whole inward nature bowed in submission to, and under the influence of God, to whom he belonged, so his whole outward life was a life of devotion. He was serving Him there in the ship, amidst the storm. His calmness was service; his confidence was service; the cheery words that he was speaking were service. God's priests are not far from the altar, and never are without something to offer.

Sincere confession!

Confession may be made by one's walk as well as by his words. But both are so closely related that it is difficult to conceive of the possibility of the one without the other. Shipboard is a place where people find out one another very quickly. And such circumstances as Paul had been in for the last fortnight, tossing up and down in the sea, with "Death" looking over the bulwarks of the crazy ship every moment, were certain to have brought out the inmost secrets of his spiritual life. Paul durst not have said: "the God whose I am, and whom I serve", if he had not known that he had been living day by day a consistent and godly life amongst them. Long before Paul spoke, his shipmates had taken notice of his walk.

Confession of the mouth has no value unless there is sincere faith in the heart. Excessive verbiage without sincerity of heart is worse than profanity. A man who continually boasts of his religion and who lives not near to his God is a hypocrite. Paul experienced a great calm even before he gave expression to it. And this should be the peculiarity of every Christian who is faced with difficulty and who is cast upon the storms of life!

How many are the times when such a confession is most necessary! You who work in the shops where you are required to eat your noon meal out of a bucket, how many of you dare to fold your hands and close your eyes before you eat and offer a brief prayer for God's blessing? How many of you who daily are surrounded with those who flippantly curse and swear, dare to open your mouths in protest against them? In another place this apostle says: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." That makes confession very important

and necessary, doesn't it? You may easily offend a man by saying to him: "Won't you be a Christian too?" But it is hard to offend if you simply say that you are a Christian!

Only remember that the avowal must be backed up by a life, as Paul's was backed up on board that vessel. Do you think that these Roman soldiers, and the other prisoners, would not have smiled contemptuously at Paul, if this had been the first time that they had any reason to suppose that he was at all different from them? I am sure they would have said: "The God whose you are and whom you serve? Why, you are just the same as if you worshipped Jupiter like the rest of us!" And that is what the world has a right to say if our walk and our confession do not match.

And so there is calm in the storm!

Calm in the storm? Why, apparently there was much room for the very opposite. It was most natural to fear. Even the child of God will have moments of distress and fright. Paul undoubtedly also experienced this. If this were not the case, how would you explain the appearance of that angel? And the address of the angel? "Fear not, Paul!"

There would be no need for this exhortation where no fear was! O, indeed, there are moments of fear! The Christian is not a stoic, a cynic, who sets his face like flint and feels no pain, and experiences no misery, or fear. Nor is it so that in the storms of life he has no doubts. Very well, the apostle too may have been troubled with the question how he was now to reach Rome and appear before Caesar. How will the promise of God now be realized that he must witness in the court of Caesar in the face of such a storm as this?

But the Lord thinks constantly of His own! His watchful eye is always upon them! He also knows their hearts and fears, and comes at the exact moment to dispel them. That is what Paul experienced aboard ship. One who can speak as Paul did in the face of great danger, need not trouble himself about the danger at all!

He to whom it is given of grace to say, "I am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour," will also believe that it is the Saviour's business to look after His own property. He is not going to hold His possession with such a slack hand as that they shall slip between His fingers and be lost in the storm! God keeps His treasures, and the surer we are that He is able to keep them unto that day, the calmer we will be in all our trouble!

And when the crash comes, as it surely will for all of us, we may rest assured that we will come safely to the shore! We do not know to which of two groups Paul belonged: whether he could swim, or whether he had to hold on to some bit of wreckage to get safely to the land. But whichever it was, it was neither by his swimming nor by the spar to which he clung that he landed safe on shore. It was the God to whom he belonged. When the Owner counts His subjects and possessions on the quiet shore as the morning breaks, there will not be one who is lost in the surges, or whose name will be unanswered to when the muster-roll of the crew is called!

EDITORIALS—

The Banner Misses The Point

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

It was to be expected that the religious press would take note of the death of our beloved Reverend Herman Hoeksema and that in connection with our bereavement there would be not only expressions of condolence but also evaluations expressed. It surely is not my intention to take note of or to reply to all such expressions. But since one such expression comes from a quarter historically close to us, *The Banner* of the Christian Reformed Church, and since, further, it goes beyond a mere expression of condolence, and since, moreover, it also addresses a word to our Protestant Reformed Churches, I feel impelled to reply.

Ignoring what seems to be at least a hint of innuendo in his remarks about the "mantle of charity" being thrown "over what some may have deplored and resented in him," let it be noted, first of all, that the editor of *The Banner* writes many complimentary words about Herman Hoeksema, *the man*. He was a crusader, a man with a mission, a man of a brilliant mind and a facile pen, a man of a strong constitution, a dynamic leader, a theologian of no mean ability, a rather prolific author, a man of exceptional scholarship, a fearless editor, and a man with an astounding capacity for work. All these we recognized in him also. But he and we always insisted that these were God-given talents for which God alone was to be acknowledged, not the man Herman Hoeksema.

In the second place, *The Banner* approaches a little closer to the point, but nevertheless misses it, when it refers to Rev. Hoeksema's insistence on the truth that God is GOD, to his tireless guarding of divine sovereignty, of predestination, and of the antithesis, to his lifelong emphasis on divine sovereignty and his conviction that we must be antithetical in our thinking, and to his warnings against the error of Arminianism. Surely, the loss of such an one is proper occasion for condolences in the church. Nevertheless, for *The Banner* and for the Christian Reformed Church, this is also aside from the point.

Well, what is the point?

The point is that, by the grace of God, Herman Hoeksema was a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, without compromise faithful to Scripture and to our Reformed confessions.

The point is that to its shame, and also to its own continued detriment, the Christian Reformed Church cast out that faithful servant of Jesus Christ as a heretic and a schismatic, and that in that light *The Banner's* posthumous "honor to whom honor is due" is but faint praise, — in fact, no praise at all.

The point is that *The Banner* is guilty of a serious distortion of history when it states that "Things came to a head when Rev. Hoeksema and others insisted that the teaching of common grace is unscriptural, Arminian, and not to be tolerated in the body of Reformed theology." The truth is, — and the records will bear this out, — that "things came to a head" when, after the Jansen case, and at the instigation of supporters of Jansen, common grace was elevated to the status of church dogma in the Three Points of 1924 as an occasion to seek the ouster of Rev. Hoeksema and those others. The truth is that the Synod of 1924 having refused to discipline or to advise discipline, and, in fact, having given Rev. Hoeksema the testimony that he was "Reformed in the fundamentals," Classis Grand Rapids East proceeded with hierarchical and unjust discipline.

The point is that Rev. Herman Hoeksema always, in all his preaching and teaching and writing, came with Scripture and the confessions in hand. That cliché about Rev. Hoeksema's view failing to do justice to the whole of Scripture and being more in keeping with human logic, is a tired old horse that has been ridden ever since 1924. All that Herman Hoeksema has ever written gives the lie to that cliché. His soon-to-be-published dogmatics will reveal plainly that he cherished the exposition of Scripture as nothing else.

And why, — why, if the strength of Hoeksema's position was mere, weak, human logic; why, if the Christian Reformed Church was right in 1924 and thereafter; why, if it is proper to spare no effort to convince "erring brethren;" why, if you are genuinely interested in reconciliation; — why, pray, do you twice emphasize, Editor Vander Ploeg, that it seemed the better part of wisdom not to engage in continued controversy with him while he was still alive? And another question presses itself to the fore; why have the Christian Reformed Churches repeatedly refused, both officially and unofficially, to discuss the issues that separate us? That this is the case is not to be denied!

In conclusion, let me remind *The Banner*:

1. That a mere prayer for reconciliation is not sufficient. Such prayer must arise out of a genuine concern for reconciliation; and such genuine concern must be evinced in honest efforts toward reconciliation.

2. That reconciliation is not the same as compromise. A "reconciliation" that is based on the idea that "what we have in common is so much greater than that which is keeping us apart" is not reconciliation at all, but compromise.

3. That the issues which separate the Protestant Reformed Churches from the Christian Reformed Church are not minor but strike at the very heart of the Reformed faith. It is certainly true that the Christian Reformed Churches do well to take to heart Rev. Hoeksema's (and our) warnings against Arminianism and opposition against the evil practices and teachings that are inherent in common grace. But then let them go

back to the root of these evils: the Three Points of 1924.

4. That genuine efforts at reconciliation must honestly look at the causes of the breach and remove them. For *such* reconciliation the Protestant Reformed Churches have always been, and are today, ready. For we love the Reformed faith, and we stand opposed to any departure therefrom!

An Attack Upon The Very Foundation

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

There is currently appearing in *Christianity Today* a series of essays on "Fundamentals of the Faith." In that series, there appeared an essay recently by Billy Graham entitled "The New Birth." (See *Christianity Today*, September 10, 1965)

This ought to be of interest to Reformed people because it offers an opportunity to compare Graham's doctrinal position with that of the Reformed faith, and that too, with respect to a very fundamental aspect of the truth, the *new birth*, or regeneration. Dr. Billy Graham has a large following and many supporters also among supposedly Reformed people. There are many ministers, leaders, church members, and even consistories and congregations who lend their support to his crusades and those of Leighton Ford. In some cases, people of Reformed persuasion travel by the bus-load and for miles to attend his meetings. Reformed periodicals openly lend their support to Graham's work. In fact, one can most easily arouse a storm of protest and questions by criticizing Graham's work and the support of him by Reformed people.

One of the tests that ought to be applied to determine whether he should have the support of Reformed people is: *does Billy Graham proclaim the truth of the gospel, according to the Scriptures and according to our Reformed confessions?* If he does, he is worthy of support. If he does not, then Reformed people ought not only to withdraw their support; but they should oppose him and his "preaching" militantly.

This test I propose to apply to Graham's "gospel" as set forth in his essay on the new birth, or regeneration.

I will certainly agree with Graham and with *Christianity Today* that the new birth is one of the "fundamentals of the faith," that is, it belongs to the very foundation of the faith of the gospel. But I must insist that Dr. Graham's essay does not constitute an exposition of and a defense of this "fundamental" of the faith, but, on the contrary, *an attack upon the very foundation.*

Graham does not really teach the new birth and its necessity, but he denies it.

It is not my intention to review Graham's entire essay. The doctor is obviously not much of a dogmatist: for instead of limiting himself to an exposition of the new birth in this comparatively brief essay, he virtually covers the entire subject of the "order of salvation" from regeneration to perseverance. But let that be; I would not even criticize this if Graham's presentation were the true one.

Nor is it even my intention to criticize in detail everything that Graham writes here about the new birth as such.

I wish to make but one point.

That point is that Billy Graham, in spite of the fact that because he quotes Scripture so often he seems to leave the impression of being a Biblical teacher, denies the Biblical truth of regeneration and the absolute necessity of the new birth by making the new birth something that is in final analysis dependent on man.

On page 4 of his essay we find the following:

Jesus Christ demanded: "Ye must be born again" (Jn. 3:7). He would never have given such a challenge, had it not been a possibility. Yes, man can be changed, radically and permanently, from the inside out. There is the possibility of a completely new man.

It is interesting that Jesus made this statement to Nicodemus, an upright and devout religious leader, who must have been stunned by it. If Christ had said this to Zacchaeus. . . .or to the woman at the well. . . .or to the thief on the cross. . . .or to the woman taken in adultery, it would have been easier to understand. We know that those persons needed changing. But Jesus said this to one of the great religious leaders of His time. Nicodemus fasted two days a week, spent two hours daily in prayer at the temple, tithed all his income, taught as a professor of theology at the seminary. Most churches would have been glad to have him; but Jesus said: "It is not enough. You must be born again." This implies that all men need the new birth, and it also implies that all men can be born again.

Notice in the above quotation that Graham already is beginning his teaching that the new birth is up to man:

1. Jesus words of John 3:7 he calls a *challenge* to Nicodemus. There is nothing of the kind in the text. There is not even a "demand" here. Jesus simply flatly states the absolute necessity of the new birth, without which, mark you well, a man cannot even *see* the kingdom of God.

2. Graham speaks of a "possibility" of a completely new man. He means, of course, a *possibility for men*, as is plain from the fact that he connects this possibility with the "challenge."

3. He not only speaks of the necessity of the new birth for all men (something with which, in the abstract, we could agree), but he speaks of a possibility of the new birth for all men. This he states literally in the last sentence quoted above. Where does he get it? Not from the text, which only speaks of the *absolute necessity* of regeneration for Nicodemus and for any man in order to see the kingdom of God.

Take note, next, of the following quotation:

Thus the Bible teaches that man can undergo a radical spiritual and moral change that is brought about by God Himself. The word that Jesus used, and which is translated "again," actually means "from above." The context of the third chapter of John teaches that the new birth is something that God does for man when man is willing to yield to God. As we have already seen, the Bible teaches that man is dead in trespasses and sins, and his great need is LIFE.

One day a caterpillar climbs up into a tree where nature throws a fiber robe about him. He goes to sleep and in a few weeks he emerges a beautiful butterfly. So man — distressed, discouraged, unhappy, hounded by conscience, driven by passion, ruled by selfishness, belligerent, quarrelsome, confused, depressed, miserable, taking alcohol and barbiturates, looking for escapisms — can come to Christ by faith and emerge a new man. This sounds incredible, even impossible, and yet it is precisely what the Bible teaches.

Notice in this quotation that Dr. Graham comes out very bluntly with his Arminian and Pelagian conception of salvation:

1. He teaches that the new birth is something that God does for man *when man is willing to yield to God*. This means nothing else but that man is the deciding factor in regeneration. God's work of regeneration is dependent on man's willingness to yield to him. Graham tells us that "the context of the third chapter of John teaches" this. Again, this sounds Biblical. Fact is, however, that Graham does not prove this statement; and I make bold to say that he cannot prove it either from John 3 or from any other portion of Scripture.

2. In his very next statement Graham *seems* to teach total depravity in plain Biblical terms. For he writes: "...the Bible teaches that man is dead in trespasses and sins, and his great need is LIFE." Remember, however, that Graham does not actually believe that the natural man is dead: for this "dead" man of Graham's theology can nevertheless have the willingness to yield to God and the decision to be re-

born. By the same token, Graham does not actually believe the Biblical doctrine of the new birth. For just as the natural man is not truly dead, so his great need is after all not LIFE, but some kind of moral reformation. This is the only possible conclusion one can come to, and it is based on Graham's own statements. He contradicts himself, of course. He asserts that regeneration is more than reformation. And he asserts that man is dead. And he asserts that man needs "LIFE." In the meantime, however, *man* can undergo the change of the rebirth, and *man* can yield himself to God, and *man* can come to Christ by faith, — all BEFORE the new birth.

3. This Pelagian conception of man and of regeneration as something short of the radical change of the heart from death unto life becomes more explicit in the next paragraph of the above quotation. Man is like a caterpillar! Yes, but that caterpillar that emerges from a cocoon as a beautiful butterfly is not *dead*! As Graham puts it, he goes to sleep! Man is "distressed, discouraged, unhappy, hounded by conscience. . . ." Here Graham piles up descriptive terms, and I could probably add a dozen more. But is he dead? Is he by nature incapable of doing any good and prone to all evil? Not in Graham's conception! For this sinner is never so dead that he cannot "come to Christ by faith and emerge a new man."

Graham writes that "this sounds incredible, even impossible." I say, with Scripture and the Reformed confessions, that this is indeed incredible and impossible, — unless, of course, one pours a different meaning into the terms *death* and *life*. Graham adds that "this is precisely what the Bible teaches." I say that Graham cannot point to a single passage of Scripture which offers this idea of the new birth and of the natural man.

I could quote several more paragraphs from Billy Graham's essay which present the new birth and salvation as a matter of man's decision and willingness. But let the above be sufficient.

Now let us place along side of Graham's teaching the teaching of our Reformed confessions.

First I quote Question and Answer 8 of the Heidelberg Catechism:

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

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

Next, I quote Canons III, IV, 3:

Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation.

Further, take note of the Reformed teaching concerning the exercise of "free will," Canons III, IV, 10:

"But that others who are called by the gospel, obey the call, and are converted, is not to be ascribed to

the proper exercise of free will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others, equally furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversion, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains; but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who as he has chosen his own from eternity in Christ, so he confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, that they may show forth the praises of him, who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light; and may glory not in themselves, but in the Lord, according to the testimony of the apostles in various places.

Or, note how the Reformed conception stands diametrically opposed to that of Billy Graham in Article 12 of the same chapter of the Canons:

And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. (literally: *which God works in us without us*. H.C.H.) But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. — Whereupon the will thus renewed,

is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received.

The conclusion is very plain.

Graham's gospel is not the gospel of the Scriptures, no matter how frequently he likes to say, "The Bible says. . . ." On the contrary, his message is that of an Arminian, "do-it-yourself" religion.

I write this as a word of warning to Reformed people, first of all. When you support Billy Graham, you are supporting one who by our Reformed confessions and by Scripture stands condemned as a false teacher! If you value your Reformed heritage, you will never do this.

Secondly, I write this as a word of warning to Reformed ministers and elders. When you support Billy Graham, you violate the Formula of Subscription, the vow of your office. In that Formula you promise:

1/ Diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the doctrine of our Reformed confessions, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same by public preaching or writing.

2/ Not only that you reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, and particularly those which were condemned by the above mentioned Synod (Canons of Dordrecht), *but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these, and to exert ourselves in keeping the Church free from such errors.*

For Reformed churches to lend their support to the teaching and preaching of Billy Graham is nothing short of ecclesiastical suicide!

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

Significant Doctrines in the Theology of Karl Barth

by Rev. D. J. Engelsma

BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

Reformed theologians usually begin their *Dogmatics* with "The Doctrine of Holy Scripture." This should always be the case. In treating the doctrine of Scripture before taking up the doctrines of God, man, and the rest, one follows the example of Calvin in his *Institutes* and of de Bres in *The Belgic Confession*. Such a beginning reflects the Reformed principle that Scripture, and Scripture only, is the source of all doctrine. In his treatment of the doctrine of Scripture, the Reformed theologian asserts that all his dogmatic labor, including that on the doctrine of Scripture, has its source, ground, and standard alone in the Bible.

How one conceives of Scripture is vital for the whole of his doctrinal thinking. If Scripture is not the sole source and criterion for the Church's doctrine but merely a source and criterion alongside another, say, tradition, as is the case in the Roman Catholic Church, the result will be such doctrines as the assumption of Mary and the infallibility of the pope. However, even within the framework of the Reformation's insistence that Scripture alone is authoritative for doctrine and life, there is room (whether there really is such room, "before the face of God," is another matter!) for wide divergence of theological opinion as to what Scripture is. The questions that confront theologians at this point come down to one root question, "What is the content of Scripture's designation of itself as 'The Word of God?'" In the course of answering this question, the theologian must express himself on the inspiration of Scripture and the intimately related matter of the Bible's infallibility/fallibility. What answer the theologian gives will affect the whole of his theology; the doctrine of Scripture is basic to all of dogmatics.

We will have taken a giant stride, therefore, in the direction of determining whether the "new Reformed theology" is genuine progress along the path of purity, as it claims, or whether it is deviation, all the more dangerous since heralded as "Reformed," simply by putting its "Doctrine of Holy Scripture" to the test of Scripture.

Barth begins his massive *Dogmatics* with two volumes on *The Doctrine of the Word of God* in which he treats also the doctrine of Scripture. In this "prolegomena to dogmatics," Barth "inquire(s) into the

word of God as into the criterion of dogmatics" (CD, I,1,p.46, the italics are Barth's, as always unless otherwise indicated). This is soundly Reformed method. He considers himself, in this opening *Doctrine of the Word of God*, to be evolving the "authority and normativity of Holy Writ" (*ibid.*, p.47), the doctrine "which Old-Protestant theology, in its defence against Catholicism and also, soon after, against the inroads of Modernism, dealt with under the title *De scriptura sacra*" (*ibid.*).

Seemingly, Barth is also in agreement with the historic, Reformed estimation of the Bible. The Bible is of tremendous importance for the Church, in fact, it is absolutely necessary: ". . . this bit of past happening (namely, the Bible-DE) composed of definite texts is her (the Church's-DE) directions for work, her marching orders, with which not only her preaching but she herself stands or falls, which, therefore, cannot under any circumstances, even hypothetically, be thought away or under any circumstances . . . be thought of as replaced by others, unless we mean to think away proclamation (preaching-DE) and the Church herself" (*ibid.*, p.114). He takes both Roman Catholicism and modern Protestantism to task for making the Church relatively independent of Scripture, "i.e. . . . the relative devaluation of the said canon" (*ibid.*, p.118). Against Rome, he claims that Scripture is an authority objective to and above the Church. The Church does not make the Bible the canon but "the Bible constitutes itself the canon. It is the canon because it has imposed itself as such upon the Church and invariably does so" (*ibid.*, p.120). Also, Scripture is inspired. The meaning of the classic passage on inspiration, II Timothy 3:16, is that "all, that is, the whole Scripture is -- literally: 'of the Spirit of God,' i.e., given and filled and ruled by the Spirit of God, and actively outbreathing and spreading abroad and making known the Spirit of God" (CD, I,2,p.504). This inspiration must be understood as plenary (full, complete) inspiration. "It would be arbitrary to relate. . . inspiration only to such parts. . . as perhaps appear important to us, or not to their words as such but only to the views and thoughts which evoke them" (CD, I,2,p.518). And "inspiration. . . must be regarded quite definitely. . . as verbal inspiration" (CD,

I,2,p.518). The "final word" is simply this: "Holy Scripture too is the *Word of God*" (CD,I,1,p.122).(1)

This is purest, Reformed language. Indeed, not only does this seem to square with the doctrine of Scripture embodied in *The Belgic Confession* but even to be an advance over it, inasmuch as the confession does not, in so many words, specify "plenary" or "verbal" inspiration. It is important to note this carefully, since, in actual fact, Barth does not *mean*, with this language, what the Reformed faith has always meant with it. Into the containers of these phrases and words, "the Bible is the Word of God," "inspiration," "plenary inspiration," and "verbal inspiration," Barth pours wholly new content. Nor does he attempt to hide this. In distinction from the procedure of many heretics who tried to slip new meanings into the Church's old terms when no one was looking and, then, clamored to high heaven that the Church had always really meant what the heretics were teaching, Barth readily confesses that his doctrine of Scripture differs radically from the teaching of the Reformed Church, from the 17th century on. Bluntly, he contends that, almost immediately, the Reformed Churches fell away from the doctrine of Scripture held by Luther and Calvin into the doctrinal position of "high orthodoxy," (2) the view of Scripture, namely, that supposes "that the Bible must offer us a *divina et infallibilis historia* (divine and infallible history-DE); that it must not contain human error in any of its verses" (CD,I,2,p.525). "High orthodoxy's" doctrine of Scripture, of which Barth will have no part and from which, according to him, the Reformed Churches must be delivered, maintains that "Should there be found even the minutest error in the Bible, then it is no longer wholly the Word of God, and the inviolability of its authority is destroyed. The same is true if even the tiniest fraction of it derives from human knowledge, reflection and perception. 'All Scripture is given by God. . . ' is what it says in 2 Tim. 3:16. Therefore we cannot find in it even the smallest word which is not given by God and therefore infallible truth. If it were otherwise, neither for theology nor for faith would there be any certainty, any certainty of grace and of the forgiveness of sins, any certainty of the existence and divine sonship of Jesus Christ" (CD,I,2,pp.524,525). This doctrine is "almost terrifying pedantry" (*ibid.*). Indeed, "we have to resist and reject (it). . . *as false doctrine*" (*ibid.*, italics mine-DE). That doctrine which maintains an infallible Bible is false doctrine, asserting "things which cannot be maintained in face of a serious reading and exposition of what the Bible says about itself, and in face of an honest appreciation of the facts of its origin and tradition" (CD, I,2,p.526). As is always the case with false doctrine, this doctrine has a deleterious effect wherever it is maintained. It is "a kind of theological bogeyman. . . which has prevented whole generations and innumerable individual theologians and believers from seeing the true, spiritual biblical and Reformation meaning of the statement" (namely, "The Bible is the Word of God"-DE. CD,I,2,p.526).

There is no camouflage here. The historic, "orthodox" doctrine of an infallible, inerrant Bible must

not be viewed as a somewhat stringent doctrine that, having gone too far, now needs to be modified; it is heresy! This charge is all the more grave since Barth is not one to bandy the term "heresy" about, reserving it only for desperate assaults on the faith.

What may not be missed is the fact that, although admitting the diametrical opposition of his doctrine to the historic and prevalent doctrine of the Reformed Church, Barth does not for a moment concede that he stands, regarding this doctrine, outside the pale of the Reformed faith. Not at all! On the contrary, he calls the Reformed Church back to her origins. She has not remained true to the genuinely Reformed faith on this point. What Barth advocates regarding the doctrine of Scripture is not some new, foreign idea, borrowed, perhaps, from modern Protestantism, but an authentically Reformed thought, even though neglected and combatted these many years by Reformed Churches faithless to their own principles. His doctrine merits the appellation, "genuinely Reformed truth," especially on two grounds: 1) It is the teaching of Scripture. 2) It was the doctrine held, in embryo, by the great Reformers. (3)

Undoubtedly, this is also why Barth refuses to give up the old Reformed terminology, such as "verbal inspiration," although intending with that terminology a "wholly other" meaning. He does not desire to gull anyone. Rather, as far as he is concerned, that terminology belongs to him and his true expression of the doctrine of Scripture, not to the "high orthodox" and their false doctrine.

The claim of the "new Reformed theology" to be the defender of sacred Scripture and the faithful representative of the Reformation, as well as its scathing and, ostensibly, scriptural criticism of the historic, Reformed position, makes it a challenge which they who love and confess the Reformed faith may not ignore. If Barth is right, about Scripture now, Reformed men cannot banish the doctrine of an infallible Bible too quickly.

If Barth is wrong, he poses a most serious threat to the Reformed faith, first, because he assails, head-on, that doctrine basic to all other doctrines and, secondly, because he assails this doctrine from "within the gates," in the name of the Reformation. And there is every reason to believe that his view of the doctrine of Holy Scripture has had and continues to have much influence, whether tacitly or confessedly, in the sphere of Reformed Churches.

FOOTNOTES

- (1) A popular presentation of Barth's view of Scripture has it that Barth states that "The Bible *is* not the Word of God but the Word of God is *in* the Bible." Apart from the fundamental accuracy or inaccuracy of this popular presentation, Barth is not averse to identifying the Bible and the Word of God.
- (2) In Barth's usage, "high orthodoxy" is not a phrase of commendation. It is pretty much the same as "dead orthodoxy" connoting, perhaps, the superciliousness of the "orthodox."
- (3) Both of these grounds, we intend to examine, later.

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

THE LORD'S SUPPER FORM

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

GRATITUDE

The third part of the believer's self-examination, which is requisite with a view to preparing one's self for participation at the Lord's Table, deals with the matter of gratitude. This is not some sort of appendix or an isolated part of the self-examination but it is inseparably related to the two parts we have thus far considered. The child of God who is spiritually aware of his deservedness of the wrath of God on account of his sin and who through faith is made the recipient of redemption by the blood of Christ is thankful. Thankfulness is not a work which we perform and on the basis of which God receives us at the table of His Son. On the contrary, thankfulness is the fruit of divine grace and, therefore, the evidence of it in our experience gives comforting assurance that we are partakers of the benefit. Even as it is not possible for those who are outside of Christ and therefore strangers to His redemptive work, to know the experience of true gratitude, so it is not possible for those who have received the gifts of His grace to fail to realize an awareness of thanksgiving.

Thus it is necessary that we examine ourselves also with respect to the matter of gratitude. In our Communion Form we are enjoined as follows:

"That every one examine his own conscience, whether he purposeth henceforth to show true thankfulness to God in his whole life, and to walk uprightly before Him; as also, whether he hath laid aside unfeignedly all enmity, hatred, and envy, and doth firmly resolve henceforward to walk in true love and peace with his neighbor."

To this we shall come back presently but first of all we do well to bear in mind that the matter of gratitude is a special, spiritual something. It must not be confused or identified with a certain verbal utterance that is so meaninglessly spoken. We receive a certain gift or favor and traditionally we say, "Thank you." But all too often that "thank-you" could as well have been left unspoken for it lacked the depth of sincerity and escaped our lips by no more than the force of habit. Does not this same thing characterize our prayers to God. We receive of Him each day the good things of life and, to be sure, we say our prayers giving Him thanks for these things but how often is it a heartfelt thanksgiving? Who will deny that these things are frequently done merely as a custom?

From this it may not be concluded that we advocate the abolishing of the prayers of thanksgiving. Not at all. The sole point we want to establish here is that we may not superficially conclude that we are thankful Christians because in one form or another we tell God

how thankful we are with our mouths. Although we certainly must also use our speech to tell the Lord's praise with thanksgiving, the latter runs in a deeper vein than that of lip-service.

Are we thankful?

That is the question to which an answer must be found in our self-examination. We may not push it aside. It is of vital importance because without a true sense of real gratitude there is no place for us in the communion of the body of Christ. And it is not a question of whether we say "thanks" but rather, are we. . . do we have. . . is thankfulness a real part of us?

To answer this question necessitates seriousness and honesty. We must not tell the minister and elders on family visitation that we are thankful for the preaching of the Word, the societies of the church, the catechetical instruction of our children and all the other spiritual benefits received in the church while we manifest disinterest in these very things and neglect the opportunities that the Lord gives us. We must not say that we appreciate Protestant Reformed Christian Day Schools and are grateful for the dedicated teachers the Lord gives our schools while we give our children to be instructed by the world or by teachers whose views diametrically oppose the fundamentals of our faith. We must not say that we are thankful for the Standard Bearer and Beacon Lights while at the same time we have to admit that we don't read either. Neither may we profess gratitude for the law of God and the precepts of the Gospel while our walk is manifestly contrary to them. Such a profession is obviously not the evidence of Christian gratitude but is deserving of the indictment of God's Word: "This people honoreth me with their lips but their heart is far from Me."

We establish then the truth that gratitude is more a living than a saying. It is more a matter of the heart than of the head. This, the paragraph we quoted earlier from the Communion Form, emphasizes when it speaks of an examination of the conscience, touching upon the matters of the whole of our life and particularly our relation to the neighbor. True gratitude is a singular facet of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Only when there is that purpose or determination of the heart to walk in love according to all the commandments of God can we say we are really thankful. The heart that is so motivated is one that God has regenerated and the fruit of that regeneration is manifest in the putting off of the old man of sin and the putting on of the new man in Christ.

In a lucid manner let us illustrate this practically. Suppose we think of a man with a family who is unem-

ployed and therefore unable to provide the necessities of life for his children. The deaconate of the church is made aware of the circumstances and a couple of the deacons go to visit this man. Finding the situation to be a real case of need, they decide to leave a sum of money with this man. He tells them, not once, but many times over how thankful he is for this benevolence. But is he? When the deacons leave he takes this money and, instead of buying the essentials of food and clothing for his children, he uses or rather wastes this money on non-essential things for himself. Certainly there is no evidence of true gratitude here even though the man said over and over, "Thank you, thank you!"

Now let us use another illustration and leave out the material element. Suppose that one professes with the mouth to possess the glorious and rich salvation which God has wrought in Christ Jesus. Freely he professes that this salvation is God's gift of grace and for this he is most abundantly thankful. However, he gives no evidence of that gratitude. He does not use the *power* of that salvation which he professes to have in a way that evidences real possession of it. Salvation, wrought by God, is the *deliverance* from the power of sin on the one hand and, more positively, it is the walking in fellowship with God in the way of His holy commandments. Doing this is the way of showing true gratitude for that wonderful gift of salvation. Saying thanks is excellent but that verbal profession must be accompanied with concrete deeds of gratitude or it remains empty and meaningless.

This is certainly the emphasis in the part of our Communion Form that speaks of self-examination on the point of gratitude. It mentions, for example, "to *show* true thankfulness to God in his whole life", and, "to *walk* in true love and peace with his neighbor". Other things are also mentioned here as we may observe from the complete quotation that appeared earlier in this article but we have emphasized by underlining the two words "show" and "walk" because the heart of the matter may be expressed thus: "To show God in our entire walk as related to our neighbor in the present world that we are truly thankful for His grace that enables us to live a new life."

Although then gratitude is a subjective experience and we have to probe our conscience to find it, nevertheless, it cannot be present subjectively without there also being objective evidence of it. To be sure, the objective evidence of christian gratitude varies in one individual child of God and another and we may hasten to add that it is very imperfect and practiced only in small beginning even in the holiest of them. Nevertheless, it is there and we must find within ourselves the sincere desire and determination to do in every circumstance what God would have us do or we cannot honestly say that we are thankful. Salvation means just that. It is in principle the renunciation of our own will *in toto* and the being brought into subjection to the will of God. It is to say and to do His will at all costs and that means something in a world that stands violently opposed to the will of God and denounces in wrath those that walk according to that will. In such a world then you will have to endure tribulations but you

will even experience a joyous gratitude in that because you know that "it is given unto you not only to believe on him but also to suffer for His sake." (Philippians 1:29)

This, we believe, is the reason the Communion Form speaks of showing true thankfulness to God in our whole life not only but also of walking uprightly before Him. These two are inseparably related. The latter is the evidence of the former. Showing true thankfulness to God can be done only by an upright walk. The unregenerate do not know gratitude even though they render pious prayers and audibly perform some kind of lip-service. It is only the child of God in Christ who is led by the Spirit to live in obedience to the Word of God that consciously experiences the blessing of gratitude.

Very closely connected with this is the last part of the paragraph quoted from the Communion Form which speaks of our walk in relation to our neighbor. Though this "upright walk" is before God, it is lived in the midst of this world and concerns our relationship to one another. To be an upright walk means that it must conform to the requirements of the law of God which are all essentially contained in the singular word, "LOVE". That love is mandatory for "he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20) The apostle John teaches us volumes of truth concerning the exercise of that love in his First Epistle. He shows us that this love is not some kind of sentimental or emotional nicety that people speak about today and by which social relationships are supposed to improve but that it is the emulation of God's essential virtue. God is love! And the love of God is revealed! It is manifest in the sending of His Son into the world. In love God Himself seeks and saves that which is lost. Love is the Divine power that liberates the sinner from death's prison and hell's bondage.

When the power of that love motivates our life, we, in the words of the communion form, "lay aside unfeignedly all enmity, hatred, and envy." That's the negative side, of course. Positively, we seek one another in Christ. We labor in love to save! We strengthen the weak, we admonish the erring. We give unsolicited witness of the way of salvation in the midst of the world that lies in darkness. We call sinners to repentance and we encourage the faithful to stand. This is the character of love. As Rev. H. Hoeksema once wrote: "Regard for the truth certainly does not shun discussion. Love does not avoid the brethren."¹ On the contrary, love invites discussion for the truth's sake and it seeks the brethren for salvation's sake.

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." (I John 3:18)

In the experiential confidence of that love we have the assurance that our lives are characterized by true gratitude to God for the grace given to and through which alone we are able to keep His commandments.

(1) History of Prot. Ref. Churches, P. 70 by H. Hoeksema

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD . . .

(Psalm 68:11)

Depravity and Mission Preaching

by Rev. C. Hanko

Those who defend a general, well-meant offer of salvation to all mankind also maintain that there is a certain ability in the unregenerated sinner to accept the gospel. An offer implies that one can accept or reject it; an invitation can be honored or turned down. And the ability to accept or reject must necessarily lie with the person who receives the invitation. Therefore since the offer comes to every individual who hears the gospel, it must follow that all men have the ability to accept as well as to reject the gospel-invitation.

Prof. Dekker and others appeal to the Three Points of 1924 to show that the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches in 1924 already spoke of a general, well-meant offer of salvation to all who hear the gospel. The contention is made that a general, well-meant offer of the gospel implies a universal love of God for all mankind. God desires to save all men. Therefore God shows His grace to all men by restraining sin, making the sinner capable of doing good, and placing him in a position where he can accept or reject the gospel-offer. Consistency can allow for no other conclusion.

Just as in 1924 various passages of Scripture are quoted to sustain this conclusion. In this present article I intend to examine a few of those passages.

The most familiar of all these passages is, of course, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Prof. Dekker refers to this text in particular when he repeatedly states in his writings, "For God so loved. . . all men." (See *The Reformed Journal*, February, 1963). At present we are particularly interested in the term 'world', which is taken to refer to 'all men', that is, to every individual man, woman, and child. It is argued that God so loves all men that Christ died for all, and as a result salvation is offered to all, and all are able to accept it, if they are but willing.

Now any serious student of the Scriptures knows that the term 'world' in Scripture is never synonymous with 'all men'; no, never refers simply to men. An untruth can be repeated so often that it is not even challenged any more. An error can become so common that it is accepted as the simple truth. Thus the term 'world' has so often been made synonymous with 'all men' that this has simply been taken for granted. But honesty demands that we admit that this is not the case.

We meet the term 'world', for example, in Hebrews 11:3, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which do ap-

pear." Here the term 'worlds' cannot possibly be translated as 'all men'. The term cannot even be limited to all rational creatures, including the angels. But the text itself includes under the term "all things which are seen."

We also meet the term 'world' in I John 2:15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Who would want to read this passage as if it meant, "Love not all men", including the people of God? Here the term obviously refers to this present evil world as it is subjected to the prince of darkness. The text mentions "the things that are in the world", warning us not to set our hearts on those things, because they belong to the passing things of this age. Moreover, this wicked world includes all the reprobate wicked, who are characterized by the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life. But the term does not and cannot refer to 'all men'.

And the same applies to the term 'world' in John 3:16. Here the world is the very opposite of the world of I John 2:15. There John spoke of the world of reprobation that is consumed by the righteous judgment of God, just because it stands antithetically opposed to the world of John 3:16. Here in John 3:16 Jesus is speaking of the world of God's sovereign election. It is the world as it is chosen, redeemed and saved in Christ. Of that world Jesus Christ is the Head, just because He is the Firstborn among many brethren, the First-begotten from the dead, to be exalted as Head over all things in the new creation. Colossians 1:12-20. Whosoever is given the grace to believe may also rest assured that he will not perish, but have eternal life as part of that world which God loves. Eph. 2:8.

Another passage often referred to by those who maintain that the gospel is offered to all men for mere man to accept, is the passage found in I Timothy 2:4, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

It must be granted that if 'all men' in this text refers to every man, woman and child upon the face of the earth, it also follows that God desires to save every one without exception. But then God does not attain to His desire. Yet how is that possible, since Job says of God, "But he is of one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." (Job 23:13. See also Isaiah 46:10, Daniel 4:35, Isaiah 46:10). Mere man cannot possibly prevent the sovereign power and will of God. For God is GOD.

But the expression 'all men' in Scripture never refers to every individual. It always refers to all kinds of men, that is, to people from every rank,

class, race, or color. That is even true when we use the expression in our conversations. I might say, for example, that 'all Chicago' came out to see the president. No one would consider this a gross exaggeration, even though every single individual did not make an appearance on the scene. No one would challenge my statement by asking whether the invalids, the infants, or the prisoners were also there. Every one would understand that I was speaking of all kinds of people from every part of the great metropolis.

And the same thing is true of the passage in Timothy. In the first verse of this chapter, Paul exhorts that prayers be made for all men. And immediately he adds, "for kings, and for all that are in authority." He wanted the early church to pray for people of all classes, not excluding those cruel rulers who were heaping persecution upon them. And the apostle encourages them to pray for all men with the assurance that God will save His elect out of every rank, class, race, or color.

A passage often quoted to show that man himself can and must accept the gospel invitation is taken from Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Frequently Christ is presented in pictures as well as in sermons as standing at the door of the human heart, pleading, even begging to attain entrance into the heart that has the knob on the inside. Christ cannot possibly enter unless sinful, rebellious man opens the door and lets him in. Concerning this interpretation, B. A. Warburton writes in his book on "Calvinism" as follows:

Men are asked to believe that Christ is represented here as knocking at the door of a sinner's heart, seeking admittance. Where, when and how did such a notion arise, for it has not the slightest vestige of support in the passage in question? Christ is speaking to a Church which has professed His Name, a Church embracing, as a Church must, many individual members, but a Church which now, bloated with its wealth and self-satisfied with its material prosperity, has turned its back upon the vital realities of the true faith, and so far as its corporate life is concerned, has become lukewarm. So far has it drifted away from the things which are Christ's, that Christ, as He addresses it, represents Himself as standing outside -- outside the Church, and knocking at the door of the Church. There may be (there must be, C.H.) some one or other in that Church dissatisfied with its condition, discontented with its present Christless, worldly state; some individual member who wants a return to a more spiritual position. This one is not a dead sinner but a living soul which mourns the declension which has taken place, and it is to this one Christ addresses His words. The common interpretation is one of the most glaring inconsistencies of interpretation which can possibly be imagined and yet on such a foundation men would seek to build an assumed doctrine which assigns creature power and free will to unrenowned man, and ability as a natural man to obtain salvation by his own efforts.

I will refer to just one more passage in this connection. This is taken from Revelation 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that

heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

This passage is quoted very often as if it presented a general, well-meant offer of salvation to each and every individual under the strain of "whosoever will may come." The acceptance of the gospel, it is said, depends entirely upon the human will. Anyone who is willing can and will be saved, if only he is willing.

Yet a sober look at the text must immediately show us that Christ is addressing a very definite group or class of people here. And of that group He addresses each one individually. He addresses the one who hears, the one who thirsts, the one who wills. In each case it is the same individual.

Now no one can possibly say that every individual hears the gospel call. Although he may hear it with his ear, he certainly does not hear it in the sense that it penetrates into the deepest recesses of his heart to draw him unto salvation. The Psalmist confesses, "The hearing ear, the willing heart, Thou gavest unto me." (See Psalm 40:6.) Jesus declares, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27.) And again He says, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44)

When Jesus adds in Revelation 22:17, "And let him that is athirst come", He again is speaking to that individual who by the grace of God is athirst for the waters of life. The sinner thirsts and pants after sin and corruption. God is not in all his thoughts. But the regenerated sinner is characterized by that very fact, that he realizes his sin and misery, turns in anguish of soul to God, longs for peace with God and mercy.

That is the individual whom Jesus addresses by saying, "And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Whosoever he may be, though his sins be as scarlet and his guilt greater than he can bear, he finds mercy and compassion in drinking of the waters of life as they flow to him from Christ, through the Spirit in his heart, by the means of the Word.

That leaves the question whether this does not deny the responsibility of men. On the one hand, how can God demand of the sinner that he repent when he is not even able of himself to repent from his sins? Our Catechism in Lord's Day 4 asks a very similar question. It asks: "Doth not God do injustice to man, by requiring from him in his law, that which he cannot perform? And there the answer is given, that applies also here: Not at all, man was created good, but by his own wilful disobedience deprived himself and all his posterity of his divine gifts.

On the other hand, the question may be raised, if we of ourselves cannot heed the call to faith and repentance, why does God call us? To that it must be answered, that God never deals with us as stocks and blocks, but always as rational, moral, responsible creatures. He works His grace in our hearts by giving us ears to hear, eyes to see, hearts to understand. So that as His sheep we hear Him calling us and we come. But this is all of grace.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

EBENEZER

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

The way of the Lord with His people has often been mysterious and very deep, defying the understanding of the human mind. In Isaiah 55:8,9 God stated it this way, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." This must have been quite evident to the believing children of Israel during the times of Samson, Eli, and Samuel, particularly in regard to the doings of God over against their heathen enemy, the Philistines. It seemed for so very long that the Philistines were always coming out on top.

It began already with Samson. The day was evil when he appeared and the people of Israel almost completely demoralized. The Philistines entered and overran the land while Israel had not the strength or the will to resist. Samson appeared and stood alone in opposing and seeking occasion against the enemy. So he lived and so he died. Although he personally destroyed many, he never lived to see the day when Israel was ready to rise up in the name of her God and overthrow the enemy. Nevertheless, through the ministry of Samson, there was a change that took place. It was slight, subtle and almost indiscernible, but it was there and very real. When Samson first went out against the Philistines, the children of Israel had opposed him. They were not particularly interested in the service of Jehovah, they didn't want trouble, they desired only to get along with the Philistines, they were willing to turn Samson over to the Philistines if they could. But gradually as they had watched Samson in his work, they began to recognize the greatness of their God, they became conscious of their separate identity as the people of God, they were even ready to receive Samson as a judge. For some twenty years he served in this capacity; and when he died, even though it was still fighting alone, we may assume the people mourned.

It was during this same period that Eli served as judge along with his priestly duties. It was disappointing labor for him also. He was often very much alone in the tabernacle at Shiloh, and he received little appreciation for his labors. Nevertheless, perhaps because his labors extended beyond those of Samson, Eli did observe a marked change in the attitude of the people toward Jehovah. Whereas at first they had been satisfied to ignore Him and follow the gods of the heathen, gradually they began to return to give recog-

nition to Jehovah and acknowledge Him as their God. But even this was not altogether wonderful. The people were worshipping Jehovah again; but they were treating Him in much the way that they might treat any idol. They worshipped him in form; but their hearts were given over to carnal satisfaction. They thought that they could use God in the way they chose and for their own gain. Nowhere was this more evident than in Eli's own sons. As priests, they led the worship of the tabernacle; but they thought nothing at all of corrupting it with all kinds of carnal sins. Finally matters came to a climax when the children of Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. In itself, it was right for them to rise up against the wicked enemy. But in doing so, they did not consult with the Lord through prayer seeking instructions. They only took up the ark of the covenant in utter disregard of the law and as though it were some magic charm, carried it off to the battle. The result was that the Lord gave His own ark into captivity among the heathen; and old Eli died in the sorrow of it.

It was in this situation that Samuel finally began his own independent work as a prophet and a judge in Israel. The ark was returned from the land of the Philistines within a year; but it never got beyond the home of Abinadab. There it remained alone, inaccessible to the people, a sort of captivity still. Without it the tabernacle at Shiloh had lost its meaning and was closed. All that remained for the young man Samuel to do was to travel from city to city teaching, admonishing, instructing the people as best he could. But the Philistines still dominated the land. They ran roughshod over the people of Israel from one end of the land to the other. The hand of the Lord was upon the people for all of the sin which they had done.

Nevertheless, the working of grace through the ministry of the judges was underneath. Samuel spoke to the people, and they were beginning to listen and understand. Their trouble was not due to the failure of Jehovah; it was not due to the power of the Philistines; it was due to their own sinfulness and iniquity. They had sinned in serving the idols of the heathen instead of Jehovah; they had sinned in serving Jehovah with the lips and not with the heart; they had sinned in treating Jehovah as an idol who could be dealt with according to their own whim and choosing; they had sinned in their failure to recognize their own guilt and turn in repentance. Slowly but surely the children of Israel be-

gan to understand that all of their suffering was no more than they deserved. They had sinned against Jehovah; and because He loved them with an unwavering love, He would not allow their sin to go unchecked and unpunished as He often did with the heathen. Each time He stretched forth His hand upon them until they felt the burden of their transgression. It was the way of the Lord with His people. Because they were sinful and hard of heart, it was true already then as Isaiah later expressed it, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." (Isa. 1:21)

So it was that after twenty years of faithful labor Samuel was able to discern a new spirit among the people. No longer was it a spirit of pride and of arrogance; it was a spirit of lamentation and of weeping -- of weeping for Jehovah. Once again Israel was beginning to see that its salvation was only in Jehovah.

For this Samuel was waiting and ready. Quickly he answered the lamentations of the people wherever he met them, saying, "If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." And the people listened. They put away all that remained of idolatry in their land. Some put them away willingly in sorrow for their sins. Others put them away out of regard for the wishes of their neighbors. Some had to be forced, no doubt, for there were always many unbelievers even in Israel's best days. But the land was cleansed, nevertheless. In fact, Samuel was able to gather the people together in a spiritual convocation such as had not been seen in Israel since the days of Joshua.

It was at Mizpeh that the people gathered. Samuel had promised them that he would pray for them there, and for this they came together. In former years such a promise would have meant little to them; but now they saw it as their only hope. There in a beautiful ceremony, they drew water and poured it out before the Lord. This is the first time we meet this ceremony in Scripture, and perhaps Jeremiah explains its meaning better than any when he wrote in Lamentations 2:18,19, "O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease. Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street." It was, along with the fast which they held that day, a ceremony of repentance for their many sins. Together, they cried out, "We have sinned against the LORD," and in humility they listened as Samuel instructed them in the law.

Meanwhile, though, the Philistines were not sleeping. They had not missed the fact that a new spirit was spreading through Israel. The people were not as proud and haughty as formerly, but neither were they as afraid. The people of Israel were not as interested in their heathen idolatry, and they looked at them more and more as enemies. The Philistines could feel that

trouble was brewing for them among the Israelites. Things were on edge.

Thus it was that as soon as they heard of Israel's gathering at Mizpeh, the Philistines concluded that it was with the purpose of organizing an army to overthrow them. Not to be caught unawares, the Philistines gathered an army of their own and immediately set forth to march against Israel at Mizpeh. They had misjudged Israel badly. Actually warlike intentions were, as yet, farthest from the minds of those at Mizpeh. There was hardly a sword among them if any at all. No one was armed for battle. Thus when the message was brought that the Philistines were approaching all arrayed for battle, a cold chill swept through the camp in a matter of moments. But this was the very wonder of Israel. It had always been. They did not need swords and spears, helmets and shield to gain a victory. Their strength was in a source far greater, and now the people knew where to find it. They turned to Samuel and cried, "Cease not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." In what little time remained, Samuel quickly prepared a lamb, and as the smoke of its sacrifice arose up to heaven, he lifted his hand in a prayer for deliverance.

It was a natural event which took place that day -- the storm that gathered over Mizpeh. The sky must have been days, and maybe even weeks, in preparing for it, from what we now know of meteorology. It was no more supernatural than any other event -- but no less either. There is a higher hand that directs all things; and it so directed the sky that day that at the moment that Samuel raised his hands in prayer it broke forth in a mighty, terrible storm directly over the army of the Philistines. Bolts of lightning ran across the ground breaking apart their ranks; torrents of rain beat directly in their faces making it impossible to proceed; great roaring peals of thunder pounded their eardrums from above, striking terror into their hearts. Without the raising of a sword, the mighty army of Philistia crumbled and turned to retreat in defeat. All that remained for Israel was to pursue and gather the plunder.

A new and joyfully different gathering met soon thereafter. It was at the very point near Mizpeh where the Philistines had been turned in defeat. There Samuel raised a great stone in memorial and named it Ebenezer, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." It was a beautiful saying full of significance. Many might have been inclined to say, "At last," or "This once has the Lord helped us," for this was the first great victory for Israel in many a year. But Samuel, and the people with him, recognized that the grace of God had been working much longer than this. That was implied in the word "hitherto". It marked the end of a long series of events. God had given them victory over the Philistines, but only after He had turned their hearts in repentance back to Him again. The latter was a victory over their enemy in the world. The former was a victory over the enemy of sin in their own flesh, and that was the greatest victory of all.

FROM HOLY WRIT—

Stephen's Apology Before The Sanhedrin

by Rev. G. Lubbers

THE SHINING FACE OF STEPHEN Acts 6:15

There stands Stephen before the entire Sanhedrin. All the eyes of all the members of this Jewish court are fixed upon him. The text says "they gazed upon him all. . . .and they saw", that is, while they gazed on him they saw something very significant on the face of this man who had been forcefully hauled into their court. They saw his face as it were the face of an angel!

As the writer relates this scene he only records what the impression was of those who saw him. He does not tell us anything more of the nature of this strange and wonderful countenance of Stephen; he does not tell us how this face had received this wonderful appearance. However, we cannot escape the conclusion that this face reflected the glory of the risen Christ, the glory of the heavenly, already in the earthly. For the Spirit of God and of glory rested upon him, to be sure. (I Peter 4:14) Do we not read that the opponents in the synagogue of the Hellenists could not resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake? (Acts 6:10) And was he not one of the seven who were "full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom"? (Acts 6:5) There must be some connection between Stephen's spiritual relationship to the risen and glorified Lord of glory, and the angelic appearance of his countenance! And that was the glory this Jewish counsel beheld. Was this Sanhedrin not led by Annas, Caiaphas, the Sadducean high-priests and the rest? And had they not had before them another man, the Christ of God, whom they had condemned as worthy of death because he said he was the Son of God? (Matthew 26:63) Well, here stands a man before them who reminds them of the words of this Jesus Who said, "From now on ye shall see the Son of man seated at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:64)

Were not the very heavens "opened" here as a completed state and fact, and would not Stephen see the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Are these "wolves" not now reminded here of the "LAMB" whom they had slain, from the countenance of Stephen, and presently from his lips?

It is a glorious hour for Stephen.

For this wicked Jewish court this is something dreadful to gaze upon. For this Sanhedrin has a covering over their heart so that they cannot believingly see the more excellent glory of grace. They do not understand that the glory of the law which killeth, hath no glory by reason of the greater glory of God. (II Corinthians 3:10,11)

On the face of Stephen is reflected the "sign" of the Son of Man, Whom Daniel sees in the night visions upon his bed, and Who came in the fulness of time and ascended on high, and who now continues this work here

on the streets and in the synagogues of Jerusalem, from out of heaven. For here in this court-room will clash the mountain in Arabia, which leads to bondage (Sinai) and the heavenly mount Sion, Jerusalem above, whither Jesus, the Mediator, has ascended! (Heb. 12:24; Galatians 4:21 f.f.)

For the children of Sarah are free!

The children of the desolate are more than of her who hath the husband! (Galatians 4:27; Isaiah 54:1)

ARE THESE THINGS THUS? Acts 7:1

In the mouth of this Jewish Sanhedrin this question was meant to be a pretended, formal question of a court which would introduce formal inquiry into the justice or injustice of the charge before them. For the charge and accusation is of the worse degree. It is a charge of wilful, uninterrupted blasphemy with which Stephen here stands cited. He had not ceased to speak words against this holy place of the temple and against the law, as given by Moses and all the prophets!

Stephen stands here condemned as being a heretic who is worthy of death. He speaks contemptuously of all that is held holy by God, so it is alleged. This was all implied in his preaching Jesus of Nazareth, Who was preached as having been delivered for the offenses of the sins of God's people and having been raised for their justification. This meant that the temple had been broken down, and had been rebuilt by Jesus in three days, and that now the ceremonial laws had been superseded by a better covenant, based upon better promises. It meant the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promises "in thee shall all nations be blessed." (Galatians 3:8, Genesis 12:3)

This question was possibly not meant by the high-priest Caiaphas in this pregnant sense. It was possibly meant on the low level of a mere formality. This man was to be processed by the court. His doom is prejudged by this high-priest without a doubt. But God has a higher and more important cause and purpose. Stephen must stand here before this Sanhedrin — a testimony unto them!

Stephen need not become anxious and distracted as he stands here suddenly before this counsel. He will presently address them, refute them, condemn them with the Word of God, the sword of the Spirit. For it is not Stephen who speaks, but the Spirit of our heavenly Father is speaking through him, by his lips. And the Scriptures will be opened; the true meaning of Israel's place as a nation will be set in bold relief; it will become evident that now truly the "Romans shall come and take away both their place and nation." Their place and nation was taken away at Calvary! Their house is left desolate as a Jewish nation. For God does not dwell in temples made with hands!

O, awesome question: Are these things thus?

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets. Here is where the Lord was crucified. It is the city which is spiritually Sodom and Egypt, both wicked and enslaved. But to them were the oracles of God entrusted. And they shall hear these Scriptures of which they have been custodians, and which Scriptures, though read by them every Sabbath, are neither understood nor believed!

Yes, these things are thus, though in sense at once far more exalted and glorious than this petrified priesthood in Jerusalem and the accusers understand!

Shall Stephen deny the meaning of the blood of the Lamb of God which is the fulfillment of the promise? Shall he gloss over the cruel and unbelieving opposition of the reprobate Israel at every step and juncture of the history of God's Covenant?

He will confess Christ before men, and be confessed by Him before the Father in heaven!

THE CHIEF POINTS OF STEPHEN'S APOLOGY

Perhaps it is important that I first say just a word about the term "apology" as I employ it here, and as it is a fit term to express the answer of Stephen (?) to the Sanhedrin. The term comes from the Greek language. It literally means: to speak away from. That means that the speaker is on the defensive, one might suggest? I would rather say that good "apology" is very offensive in nature. It is positive defense of the truth of the Gospel, of God, His truth, His judgments, His salvation, His love, and His glory. It is never used in Scripture in the sense in which in our English parlance it generally comes to mean "an admission of error or discourtesy accompanied by an expression of regret." (Webster)

In our present writing it means nothing more and nothing less than a "formal justification." In the Bible the term is translated "answer" in I Corinthians 9:3, II Timothy 4:16, and I Peter 3:15. It is translated "clearing of one's self" in II Corinthians 7:11. Finally, it is translated "defense" in Acts 22:1, Philipians 1:7, 17. In each of these cases it is ever taken in the positive sense, and never in the sense of expression of admission of error and regret.

Here we have true "apologetics"!

It is the apology of the Lord Himself who has a "controversy" with sinners.

We may well write above this "apology" of Stephen the words of the prophet Micah "Hear ye, o mountains, the LORD'S controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth; for the LORD hath a c-o-n-t-r-o-v-e-r-s-y with his people, and he will plead with Israel." (Micah 6:2) For the Lord is here speaking by the Spirit of the risen and glorified Christ; and it is truly "controversy" of the highest order, full of the majesty of Christ. Here is truly an ambassador of God who says: be ye reconciled to God, as if God were speaking through him. It is here not a cheap hawking of the Gospel, but a pointing out of the tragedy of unbelief in Israel's history, and an identification of these unbelievers with the unbelief of the reprobate Israel, to their eternal condemnation.

This is the majestic triumph of which Paul speaks when he says, "Now thanks be to God, which always causes us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish: to the one we are a savour of death unto death: and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient unto these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."

Such is the very bone and marrow of Stephen's apology.

It is truly the controversy of the living God with Israel to whom the oracles of God were intrusted.

Was not that the preeminence of the Jew? (Romans 3:2)

But now there is the great confrontation. It is the confrontation of all Jewish legalism and particularism with the Gospel of the Promise to Abraham as uttered by the Lord of glory and with the universality of the Gospel to all nations, tongues, tribes and people.

The question is not who has the "Law" (Old Testament Scriptures) but rather who interprets the Scroll of the Book correctly; who gives the sense of the Spirit of prophecy and of fulfillment, Stephen or these Hellenistic Jews, Saul of Tarsus included! And in this Apology we are given an excellent "case study", incidentally, of good and sound Hermeneutics, (science of interpretation) solid and irrefutable exegesis, valid and legitimate conclusions. Besides, we have here the true viewpoint of any preacher who addresses the church of God in the world at any time, as elect and reprobate, believers and disobedient, the chaff and the wheat, as they are organically connected in the church of God in the world! Here is key-power of the highest order, opening the kingdom to believers, and closing it against unbelievers!

This controversy of the Lord as executed in the trial and apology of Stephen touches on the following points.

1. The giving of the promise by the "God of glory" to Abraham as it is for all nations, sketching this history up till the time of the law-giving through Moses. (Acts 7:2-16)

2. The time of the fulfillment of the promise by delivering Israel out of Egypt through Moses, and the giving of the law and the building of the tabernacle according to the pattern shown Moses on the Mount. (Acts 7:17-40)

3. The history of apostasy of Israel from Moses till the Babylonian captivity; the sin of idolatry and departure from the worship of the temple and its subsequent destruction. (Acts 7:43)

4. The true temple of God, the type shown Moses on the mount, in its fulfillment in the spiritual temple of God's church. (Acts 7:49)

5. The Sanhedrin and all fleshly Israel placed in the class of those who always resisted the Holy Ghost, being disobedient and unbelieving to the promise of God to Abraham, as this promise is gradually unfolded in the temple-worship, the shadows and types.

ALL AROUND US—

Prof. H. Hanko

Union of Evangelicals

Progress With Blake and Pike

UNION OF EVANGELICALS

The tides of ecumenicity run strongly and seemingly irresistibly. Most of it is evil, and the Church of Christ can have no part of it.

But what about the faithful people of God who are still waging a battle for the truth within many separate denominations? Is it not their calling also to come together into one ecclesiastical household? Ought they not make every effort to join in the cause of Christ?

There are several options. There is the RES—the Reformed Ecumenical Synod which is not an organic union of denominations, but a grouping of several denominations who all belong to the Reformed faith. Our Synod has gone on record as favoring some contact with this organization. There is the ICCC—the International Council of Christian Churches which, headed by Dr. Carl McIntyre, is also a loosely knit organization of all churches who still maintain “the evangelical faith”. To this organization our Synod was invited this year. Synod declined chiefly on the basis of the fact that there are all kinds of “Holiness” Churches and “Pentecostal” groups which belong; that therefore this organization stands outside the stream of Reformed tradition.

But this has not yet touched upon the problem of *organic* church union; i.e., merger with others into one denomination. Are we in favor of this?

For the believer, the answer ought to be and undoubtedly is a resounding “yes”. Our Church Order, e.g., speaks of not rejecting churches “whose usages differ from ours merely in non-essentials”. This unity is certainly the content of the prayers of God’s people.

But there are problems.

The editor of the *Presbyterian Journal* recently turned his attention to this question and to these problems. He did this in an article entitled “Things That Separate Evangelicals”. There is no space in these columns to discuss this rather important article in detail. Nor is this presently necessary. But one section of it particularly attracts our attention. The author finds, generally speaking, three categories of issues which separate evangelicals. These are: 1) The Church—questions relating to its form, its order, its authority. 2) The Gospel—questions relating to primary doctrine and beliefs. 3) The Christian Life—questions relating to the fruits of the Spirit, to the separated life, to discipline, etc.

It is this second category which is of immediate

(and principal) interest. Surely, if doctrinal obstacles can be removed, the rest is bound to follow of itself, for the form of the church and questions of the Christian life flow forth from doctrine.

In connection then with this second category, the author comes to the overriding question of Calvinism vs. Arminianism. This is indeed an important question. How often has it not troubled us that those who seem to be fighting for the truth in denominations where liberalism and modernism run rampant nevertheless vitiate their witness with Arminianism?

The author writes about this problem as follows:

On the other hand we must not minimize the very real doctrinal obstacles to unity within evangelical Protestantism. Most important—and perhaps most representative—is the conflict between the Arminian and the Calvinistic views on the plan of salvation. This difference is not imagined—it is not superficial—it is not irrelevant. Any merger movement which tries to bypass the issue of the relation of freedom to sovereignty in theology is not really being helpful. This issue (and others like it) belongs to the heart of things.

It was the iron in Calvinism which made St. Bartholomew’s Day one to remember in French history; which brought Scotland her freedom; and which populated New England with Pilgrims. And it was the passion of Arminianism—from Wesley to the New World frontier—which often brought the flame of revival when the iron had turned to dead wood.

Surely there cannot be a hopeless incompatibility between interpretations of the Gospel that each have been blessed with such clear evidences of the Lord’s approval—no matter how irreconcilable they may seem to us. If it is true that by their fruits ye shall know them, *both* are of God. Surely the truth which is in Christ Jesus must somehow include both the iron of Calvin and the flame of Arminius. Without compromising conviction in any way perhaps it is the task of this generation to search out the possibilities of bringing these seeming opposites together. For many of us they already come close. I remember the sage advice of my homiletics professor who told his classes: “Gentlemen, believe like a Presbyterian and preach like a Methodist!” Perhaps in the emphasis there is a clue.

As you can see, this solution brings Calvinists and Arminians into a union in which each maintains his own position, complements the other and lives in ecclesiastical fellowship in this manner.

We shall have to go on record as emphatically disapproving of this sort of union. It would be a disastrous marriage.

The reasons are obvious.

In the first place, the two (Arminianism and Calvinism) can never *complement* each other. They are diametrically opposed to each other. And this is true because Calvinism is based on Scripture and Arminianism is a denial of Scripture. It is not merely a question of "by their fruits ye shall know them". It is rather a question of which is in harmony with God's revelation. The answer to this question is beyond doubt. There is here then a fatal flaw, for the true union of the saints -- union which is going to be successful can take place only on the basis of Scripture. There cannot be room for compromise here any more than anywhere else. Our basic objection against all ecumenicism has always been that the truth is sacrificed on the altar of unity. Churches join by compromise of the truth. We cannot now do what we criticize others for doing.

Secondly (and this point cannot be divorced from what I have just said), the church has historically condemned Arminianism as a heresy so terrible that there cannot be room for it within the church of Christ. This was done especially at Dordrecht in 1618-1619. It may be objected that this condemnation of Arminianism was done by only one branch of the church -- that branch in the Netherlands which produced the Reformed Churches; and that therefore this has nothing to do with say, Presbyterianism. But even this is not true. At Dordrecht were met delegates from all the Calvinistic Churches of the Reformation. These concurred in the decisions of Dordrecht and also signed the Canons which this Synod adopted in condemnation of Arminianism.

We cannot and may not now go back and undo what they did. We cannot and may not ignore the Spirit of Truth which led the Church to this development of the truth and condemnation of the lie in a bygone era. This would be a sin of the first magnitude, and it would destroy our firm connections with the church of all ages and cut us loose to drift hopelessly on the ecclesiastical seas. The result would be (and this is, after all, the logical conclusion of Arminianism) that we would be wrecked on the shoals of liberalism and modernism after all.

To change the metaphor, we destroy the foundations upon which we are supposed to build.

Union is indeed to be strongly desired with all God's people. But it must be union of those who love the truth of Scripture and who stand together in the battle for the faith. For this goal we must strive and pray.

The union of the body of Christ is not a crazy patchwork of disagreeing entities stitched together in false union. It is a unity of the organism of the body of Christ of which Christ is the Head.

PROGRESS WITH BLAKE AND PIKE

We have at various times reported in this column of the huge church merger proposed jointly by Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church and Bishop James Pike of the Episcopal Church. This merger, if effected, would bring together

into the largest denomination in this country outside of Roman Catholicism the United Presbyterians, the Episcopalians and the members of the United Church of Christ.

Although there has not been much news lately about progress in merger talks, the original planners of this merger consistently come into the news.

Concerning Eugene Carson Blake, the *Presbyterian Journal* reported on a speech he recently made in which he made, among others, the following points: 1) the Presbyterian Churches should be prepared to accept bishops as a condition of merger. This was because churches without bishops are in the minority. Hence, although Blake did not say this, the merger would be another step away from historical Protestantism and another step closer to Roman Catholicism. 2) There are many other churches which have parts of the truth, and merger between them would be mutually enriching. He said nothing about mutual destruction through continuous absorption of the lie. 3) The new "Confession of Faith of 1967" (the confession which the Presbyterian Church is preparing to adopt, which would do away with the historic creeds of the Church) is not intended, Blake says, to down-grade Scripture. The point is that there is question as to how Scripture must be interpreted; and it is well to get rid of the idea prevalent in some Reformed Churches that Scripture is of absolutely equal authority in every part of it over all of faith and life.

The other party in these merger proposals has recently been under fire within his own denomination. Bishop Pike had charges brought against him by fourteen (although one later retracted his charges) of his colleagues from Arizona. They charged him with denying the divinity of Christ, the incarnation, the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the truth of the trinity. That he indeed denies these most fundamental truths has long been evident. It has been generally known for years that he considered these Scriptural doctrines to be only myths and that their historic teachings have blocked modern man's search for faith.

These ministers protesting his heresy asked that the church require of Pike that he publicly repudiate these views or stand trial for heresy. And, if necessary, that he be put out of the bishopric.

But it didn't work. The Episcopal House of Bishops, meeting in Glacier National Park, was in no mood for a heresy trial. Pike was his own attorney for the defense; and when he stated that he would publicly defend his orthodoxy, the House of Bishops worked out a compromise in which they expressed satisfaction with the sincerity of Pike's faith and admitted the right of ministers to put old truths in new formulations. Of Pike they demanded nothing more than that he express his loyalty to the church and promise not to be too blunt in what he wrote and spoke.

One can scarcely imagine what an evil merger this will be when these two men are at its head.

And, indeed, this is proof positive that it is no longer possible to exercise discipline within the church even when the most outrageous heresies are being taught.

EXAMINING ECUMENICALISM—

Vatican Council - Third Session (1)

by Rev. G. Van Baren

One of the intents of this rubric is to review the continuing sessions of the Second Vatican Council being held in Rome. The reader may recall that about one and a half years ago the present writer presented six articles on the first two sessions of this Council. A re-reading of those articles may be helpful for a better understanding of what has been going on at the Council. The third session is already ancient history; it met from September 14 through November 21 of last year. Fact is, when this article appears in print, the fourth and probably last session will be in progress -- it begins meeting on September 14. In this, and subsequent articles, I hope to review the third session, and then, hopefully, continue with events of the fourth session.

Many Protestants have envied the Roman church for its ability to publicize the actions of its Council over the whole world. Hardly a day goes by, during the sessions, that press releases do not appear in every local paper. Every religious magazine both Protestant, Roman Catholic, and others contain detailed reports of the Council. One editor wrote:

The Vatican Council takes first prize as the most universally publicized religious event since the flood. No religious occasion in recent centuries has been so widely, completely and quickly reported as have been the first two sessions of the Roman Catholic Church's 23rd Ecumenical Council. The coverage which the council has received from every medium of communication, the daily blow-by-blow accounts of council proceedings, the secular press's publishing of long extracts from the council's deliberations and decisions, the plethora of human-interest stories -- all of these have been the envy of Protestant communications experts.¹

These articles, though in a very limited way, will further publicize this event taking place in the Romish Church.

On September 14, 1964, over 2,000 Roman Catholic prelates, mostly bishops, gathered for the third time in St. Peter's basilica in Rome. Many schemata remained on the agenda of the council. Many hopes and fears were expressed by both Roman Catholic and Protestant. There were especially questions asked concerning the possibility of bringing closer together Protestant and Roman Catholic.

POPE PAUL'S OPENING SPEECH

At the opening meeting of the third session, according to custom, Pope Paul VI gave the opening speech. Because of his position and power, the speech serves somewhat as a guide for the Council. It sets the pace, as it were, for the whole of the Romish church. There are therefore several points which are noteworthy in

this speech. First, the Roman pontiff made plain that he considered the decisions on the relationship between pope and bishops to be of extremely great importance. The first Vatican Council (1869-1870) had established the dogma of papal infallibility in matters of morals and doctrine. That council was hastily adjourned because of the threats of war then raging. It was unable to define further the relationship of the bishops to this "infallible" pope. One goal for the second Vatican Council was to remedy this deficiency. Now the present pope gave his views:

The Council has many other important subjects to treat of, but this one (bishop-pope relationship) seems to us to be the weightiest and most delicate. The Council's deliberations on this subject will certainly be what distinguishes this solemn and historic synod in the memory of future ages.

It must undertake a number of difficult theological discussions, it must determine the nature and mission of the pastors of the church, it must discuss, and with the favor of the Holy Spirit, decide the constitutional prerogatives of the episcopate, it must delineate the relations between the episcopate and the Holy See. . . .²

The pope made plain, though, that the Council could in no way rescind the decision of the first Vatican Council on papal infallibility:

The present ecumenical council is certainly going to confirm the doctrine of the previous one regarding the prerogatives of the Roman Pontiff. But it will also have as its principal objective the task of describing and honoring the prerogatives of the episcopate. . . .

As successors of Peter and, therefore, possessors of full power over the entire church, we have the duty of heading the body of the episcopate, although we are surely unworthy of this dignity. Nevertheless, our position is in no way among the first to respect that sacred authority. If our apostolic duty obliges us to impose restrictions, to define terminology, to prescribe modes of action, to regulate the methods which concern the exercise of episcopal authority, you realize that this is done for the good of the entire church. . . .

No one should regard as a device formulated by pride such centralization which will surely be always tempered and balanced by an alert and timely delegation both of authority and of facilities for local pastors. . . .

Oh, how deeply we admire, how staunchly we support the rights and duties proper to the sacred hierarchy, which is the very instrument, born of the charity of Christ, and fashioned by Him to complete, to communicate, and to safeguard the integral and fruitful transmission of the treasures of faith. . . .

The hierarchy is the mother of the community of the faithful. . . .

Placed at the head of this sacred institution, how could we fail to devote to it our solicitude, our trust, our support? How could we fail to defend it?²

But also a second significant element was noted in the pontiff's speech. He showed great "ecumenical" concern. He made it a point not to antagonize Protestants. Not only did he refrain from calling them "schismatics" as had been done by earlier popes, he went beyond calling them "separated brethren." He speaks of them as "Christian communities" and even as "churches."

We shall therefore strive, in loyalty to the unity of Christ's church, to understand better and to welcome all that is genuine and admissible in the different Christian denominations that are distinct from us, and at the same time we beg of them to try to understand the Catholic faith and life better and, when we invite them to enter into the fullness of truth and charity which, as an unmerited blessing but a formidable responsibility, Christ has charged us to preserve, we beg of them not to take it in bad part, but as being prompted by respect and brotherly love. . . .

Oh, churches that are so far and yet so close to us. Churches for whom our heart is filled with longing. Churches, the nostalgia of our sleepless nights. Churches of our tears and of our desire to do you honor by our embrace in the sincere love of Christ, oh may you hear, sounding from this keystone of unity, the tomb of Peter, apostle and martyr, and from this Ecumenical Council of brotherhood and peace, the loving cry we send you. . . .²

SUMMARY OF THE THIRD SESSION

There were many strange things which took place on the third session. There was again a marked division between what might be called the "liberals" and "conservatives" in the church. The "liberals" by far outnumbered the "conservatives," yet these latter managed often to frustrate the desire of the majority. I hope to call your attention to this in subsequent articles.

One schema was not yet finally voted upon — despite the will of the majority to do so. It dealt with the matter of religious liberty — the "right" of man to worship according to the convictions of his conscience. This is a rather touchy subject — particularly for bishops from predominantly Roman Catholic countries. For historically the Romish church appears willing to agree to a "religious liberty" only in such lands where it is in the minority. And when it appeared that a final vote was ready to be taken, the "conservatives" managed to postpone the final vote until the next session of the Council.

Three decrees were promulgated, that is, approved by majority vote of the council and officially endorsed by the Pope. I expect, D.V., to examine these in greater

detail later. The first decree is the "Constitution on the Church." It is this decree which appears to modify the relationship between pope and bishops. It also is concerned with the greatly debated stand over against the Jew. And it treats in one of its chapters the subject of Mary. The second decree is on "Ecumenism." The third discusses the "Eastern Churches."

As this third session was drawing to its close, many observers were convinced that great and favorable changes were about to take place in the Romish church. Then the Pope, suddenly and apparently unexpectedly, autocratically intervened in the actions of the Council — in opposition to the will of the great majority. His action deeply disturbed both Protestant observer as well as Roman Catholic participants. *Time* reported it thus:

Paul VI last week coldly and dramatically reaffirmed that it is the Pope, and not the bishops of the Vatican Council, who really runs the Roman Catholic Church. Just as the third session of the council was ending, Pope Paul — siding with conservative cardinals of the Roman Curia — took a major decision out of the hands of the progressive majority of prelates. Thereby, he raised doubts whether he essentially favors the *aggiornamento* begun by John XXIII and whether he intends to give anything more than lip service to collegiality — the doctrine, approved by the bishops, that they, as descendants of the Apostles, share ruling authority over the church with the Pope.

The bishops' sudden awakening to realities came two days before the session's end, when they were scheduled to vote on a revised declaration on religious liberty that strongly defended the right of all men to worship God as conscience dictates. Just before the balloting, Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, chairman of the twelve council presidents, announced that "many fathers have objected that there has not been sufficient time to consider the declaration. It seems proper therefore to the presidency that this question should not be decided now. We will not proceed to a vote."³

A petition was presented to the pope, signed by a majority of bishops, but was turned down by the pope. At the same time, on his own authority, he made 19 changes in the final draft of a schema on Christian unity, and also announced that he would proclaim Mary as "mother of the Church" — a title that the bishops had deliberately avoided. So the third session ended with grave doubts expressed by many.

1. *Christian Century*, February 19, 1964, page 227
2. *Vital Speeches*, October 1, 1964, page 739ff.
3. *Time*, November 27, 1964, page 66

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Edgerton Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to the sons and grandsons of

MR. ARTHUR BLEYENBERG, SR.
who was taken home by our Lord on Oct. 3, 1965 at the age of 93.

May the God of grace comfort the hearts of the bereaved.

Rev. B. Woudenberg, Pres.
Mr. Gerald Kuiper, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of Hudsonville Church wishes to express its sympathy to Rev. G. Vos, in the passing of his sister,

MRS. RENA LUYK

May the Lord graciously comfort and sustain the sorrowing ones.

Harry Zwak, Vice-Pres.
Mrs. G. Vander Kooy, Sec'y.

Annual Secretary's Report To The R.F.P.A.

Dear Brethren:

Reporting for the Board of the R.F.P.A. in this, the forty-first year of the *Standard Bearer*, our thoughts are in harmony with the words that appeared on the cover of the first issue, October 1, 1965: "Thanks Be to God." For it is of a certainty, the Lord has strengthened and blessed us in our witness to His Word these twelve months.

The I & E Committee, one of our three standing committees, was busy in its continuing efforts to enlarge the place that our paper has in the field of Reformed publications. They are now busy working with the Mission Board and local consistories in an attempt to reach persons outside our churches who may be aroused to an interest in the truth as we are privileged to know it.

Our Finance Committee, always aware of the need of a continual strong support from our people, requests that you remember the *Standard Bearer* with a generous gift whenever you are asked, be it through a church offering or at the time of your subscription renewal.

The Book Committee has been busy mostly with the binding and sending out of the bound volumes. There has been some increase also in requests for individual copies. Of volume 40, 75 copies have been sent out. The committee also filled an order for a complete set of volumes.

Presently the total number of copies printed for each issue stands at 1139, compared with 1120 a year ago. 939 are sent as paid subscriptions and complimentary copies; 60 are for the Mission Board, of which 25 go to Jamaica; 110 are reserved for stock and bound volumes; and 50 are kept as a mailing margin.

For the year we had a total of 72 new subscriptions and 46 cancellations, a net gain of 26, compared to an increase of 23 last year.

The board expresses its sincere appreciation to Mr. James Dykstra, who has again faithfully performed the business affairs of our publication.

We had four requests for permission to reprint some articles of the *Standard Bearer*. Of the four, two were from outside the sphere of our churches.

The board, in memory of Rev. H. Hoeksema, gives thanks to God for all the years he has labored in behalf of the *Standard Bearer*. We believe that the Lord has blessed and directed his labors to the end that the truth of Scripture has been more clearly revealed.

The Treasurer's Report of the Permanent Committee for the Publication of Reformed Literature, shows their balance on hand September 1, 1965, as \$5,980.46.

May everyone of us pledge his best efforts and support toward the continuance of our magazine. Also may we seek the Lord's blessing in this labor; for without His blessing our labors are in vain.

— G. Bouwkamp, Secretary

Annual Financial Report

Balance on hand September 1, 1964 \$ 1,336.81

Receipts

Subscriptions	\$3,674.10	
Membership	166.00	
Gifts	4,824.30	
Advertising	164.00	
Bound Volumes	525.00	
Total	\$9,353.40	\$ 9,353.40
Total receipts		\$10,690.21

Disbursements

Wobbema Printing	\$8,368.68	
Miscellaneous	176.50	
Holland Bookbinding	350.00	
Mr. Dykstra (gift)	300.00	
Total	\$9,195.73	\$ 9,195.73
Balance on hand — September 1, 1965		\$ 1,494.48

Gifts

Randolph	\$ 57.20
Hope	346.80
South Holland	281.83
First	1,112.31
Hull	131.73
Hudsonville	385.32
Southwest	156.07
Redlands	247.73
Doon	97.59
Southeast	174.33
Oaklawn	64.74
Holland	92.96
Edgerton	26.95
Kalamazoo	38.05
Loveland	39.61
Lynden	29.23
Isabel	23.55
Pella	25.00
Mary -- Martha (Redlands)	25.00
Hope Men's Society	25.00
Eastern Ladies' League	95.25
First Jr. Mr. & Mrs.	48.99
Hope Ladies' Aid	50.00
First Men's Society	75.00
South Holland Ladies' Society	50.00
Randolph Ladies' Society	10.00
First Ladies' Aid	50.00
P. R. Men's League	40.00
Western Ladies' League	44.65
40th Anniversary Collection	312.91
R.F.P.A. Collection	15.50
First Priscilla Society	55.00
Hope Mr. and Mrs.	50.00
Individuals	546.00
Total	\$4,824.30

D. Knoper, Treasurer

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

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

October 15, 1965

Rev. J. Kortering has declined the call from Randolph, Wis. Lynden, Wash. has called the Rev. B. Woudenberg, of Doon, Iowa.

* * *

Sunday, Oct. 3, Rev. M. Schipper, of Southeast Church, officiated at the installation of Rev. G. Van Baren in First Church, Grand Rapids. The sermon was an exposition of 2 Tim. 4:2, by which the speaker charged the new minister to "Preach the Gospel." The theme developed the truth that this charge is unique, constant, and serious. Rev. Van Baren preached his inaugural sermon that evening based on 1 Cor. 9:16 under the theme, "The Necessity of Preaching the Gospel." The following Wednesday evening Rev. Van Baren and his family were given a congregational welcome with a short program in the auditorium and a social gathering in the church parlors. At this writing Rev. Van Baren has plunged into the work of catechisms, family visitation, pastoral calls on the sick and preaching. It is the prayer of First Church that the Lord may be pleased to prosper their new minister in their midst.

* * *

Rev. G. Lanting, of Holland, Mich. was recently scheduled to lecture on two occasions. At the Annual Standard Bearer Meeting he spoke on, "A Personal Calling" in which he pointed out that the dissemination of the truth found in our magazine was a personal challenge to each member of our society, and of the entire membership of our denomination. Rev. Lanting spoke at the Office Bearer's Conference, held Oct. 5, answering two questions, "May the diaconate of one church offer assistance to another diaconate when an outstanding need exists?" and, "Must that diaconate who offers assistance have the approval of their elders?" To both questions the speaker gave affirmative answers, giving reasons founded on the Scriptures and our Church Order.

* * *

The Reformed Witness Hour presents Rev. J. Kortering, of Hull, Iowa, on their program Nov. 7 and 14, and Rev. B. Woudenberg, of Doon, Iowa, the next four Sundays. The topics for November are: Nov. 7 — "The Days of Prophecy" (Acts 2:27,28); Nov. 14 — "The Righteous Scarcely Saved" (I Pet. 4:17,18); Nov. 21 — "The Christian Stranger" (I Pet. 1:1,2); Nov. 28 — "The Christian's Hope" (I Pet. 1:3-5). Free copies of these sermons can be obtained by writing to The Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 1230, Grand Rapids 1, Mich.

* * *

Sunday, Oct. 3 will be a date of special remembrance to the congregation of Forbes, N.D. It was on that date that the congregation gathered for the first time in their newly acquired church building. Joy and thanksgiving overwhelmed the flock. During the previous week the building was moved from the neighboring vicinity of Ashley, N.D., some 25 miles distant. The men of the congregation erected the foundation on a lot next to the

parsonage in the center of the town of Forbes. On Thursday afternoon the movers set the building on its foundation; Friday evening saw the organ and books moved from their former meeting place — a schoolhouse in the country — to their new location; Saturday the men built the front steps and the ladies gave the church a thorough cleaning; thus everything was ready for the services on Sunday. This needed church property was provided by the Lord at a cost of about \$2,500.00 To meet this cost the church will seek assistance from our other churches. Classis West has already approved the request; and when the consistories receive it, the little congregation urges that liberality be shown, that their needs may be provided. Thus the last of our congregations has obtained its own church property, which is a cause of rejoicing, not only for Forbes, but throughout our churches. (*This contribution was sent in by Mr. Milo Dewald, their clerk.*)

* * *

We hope to have the description and a picture of Forbes' new church in our next issue if it is received in time.

* * *

Rev. C. Hanko, of Redlands, Calif. was delegated to Classis West, which met in South Holland, Ill. He made a hurried trip to Grand Rapids to see his children and grandchildren for a very short visit. His itinerary: Arrived in South Holland at 4 A.M., attended Classis, drove to Grand Rapids and back to Chicago; flew to California, and back home at 10 P.M. *the same day!* It sounds impossible, but with the speed of Jet aircraft and the time differential taken into account, it can be done!

* * *

Rev. D. Engelsma's catechism classes are somewhat separated by distance. Tuesdays and Wednesday afternoons he holds classes in Loveland, and Wednesday evenings he has two in Denver. His Adult Bible Classes follow the catechisms in both places: Loveland's class now treating the 16th chapter of the Book of Acts, and Denver's studying the 17th chapter thereof.

* * *

Both Classis East and Classis West have recessed to a later time, Classis East to Nov. 3 and Classis West to January. In both cases there was too much material to be treated on the floor of classis, and it was referred to committee for study and recommendation. Rev. G. Vos, of Hudsonville, was the only minister unable to attend his classis — due to a virus infection which kept him indoors. Reports of classis meetings will be made public when their work is finished.

* * *

Know this first: "That no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Pet. 1:21.)

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.