

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

**In Memoriam (see special section, page 3)**

**Beginning: Significant Doctrines in the Theology of Karl Barth**

**Our Reasonable Service**

**Depravity and Mission Preaching**

## CONTENTS

Editorials —	
Editorial Notes .....	2
Our New Seminary Professor .....	23
Prof. H. C. Hoeksema	
Meditation —	
The Eternal God Our Refuge! .....	5
Rev. M. Schipper	
From Our Nestor —	
To Bring To Remembrance .....	8
Rev. G. Vos	
Heeding The Doctrine —	
Significant Doctrines in the Theology of Karl Barth .....	10
Rev. D. J. Engelsma	
Trying The Spirits —	
Unitarianism .....	12
Rev. R. C. Harbach	
In His Fear —	
The Beginning of Wisdom .....	13
Rev. J. A. Heys	
From Holy Writ —	
Our Reasonable Service .....	16
Rev. G. Lubbers	
News From Our Churches .....	18
Mr. John Faber	
The Lord Gave The Word —	
Depravity and Mission Preaching .....	19
Rev. C. Hanko	
All Around Us —	
Man's Animal Ancestry	
Church and State .....	20
Prof. H. Hanko	
The Voice Of Our Fathers —	
God's Government and Sin (Continued) .....	22
Prof. H. C. Hoeksema	
Book Reviews —	
De Verborgenheid der Godzaligheid	
Rondom Israel .....	24
Rev. H. Veldman	

**ATTENTION, CONSISTORIES!**

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D.V., Wednesday, October 6, at 9 A.M. at our Hope Prot. Ref. Church. Consistories will please take note of this in the appointment of delegates.  
M. Schipper, S.C.

## THE STANDARD BEARER

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**NOTICE**

Never let it be said that the men of our churches do not have a good evening the night of the Men's League Meeting.

When	October 18, 1965 - 8:00 p.m.
Where	Hope Prot. Ref. Church
Who Speaks	Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
What Topic	Our Mission Activity
Why not?	

Hollis Heenstra, Sec'y

**EDITORIALS—****Editorial Notes . . .**

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

The reader will note that there is a change of format in this issue of the *Standard Bearer*. We are presenting a special section in memory of our beloved past Editor whom the Lord has taken to glory. For this memorial section Rev. M. Schipper prepared his comforting funeral message in meditation form; and the Rev. G. Vos, the nestor among our ministers, kindly consented to write a special article in his own, inimitable way. From several photographs available

we chose one taken by Rev. B. Woudenberg several years ago and furnished through the courtesy of Prof. Hanko.

Due to the publishing of the memorial section, some of the usual departments do not appear in this issue.

The attention of our readers is also called to the first article in a new department, "Heeding The Doctrine." We welcome Rev. Engelsma to the ranks of our contributors.

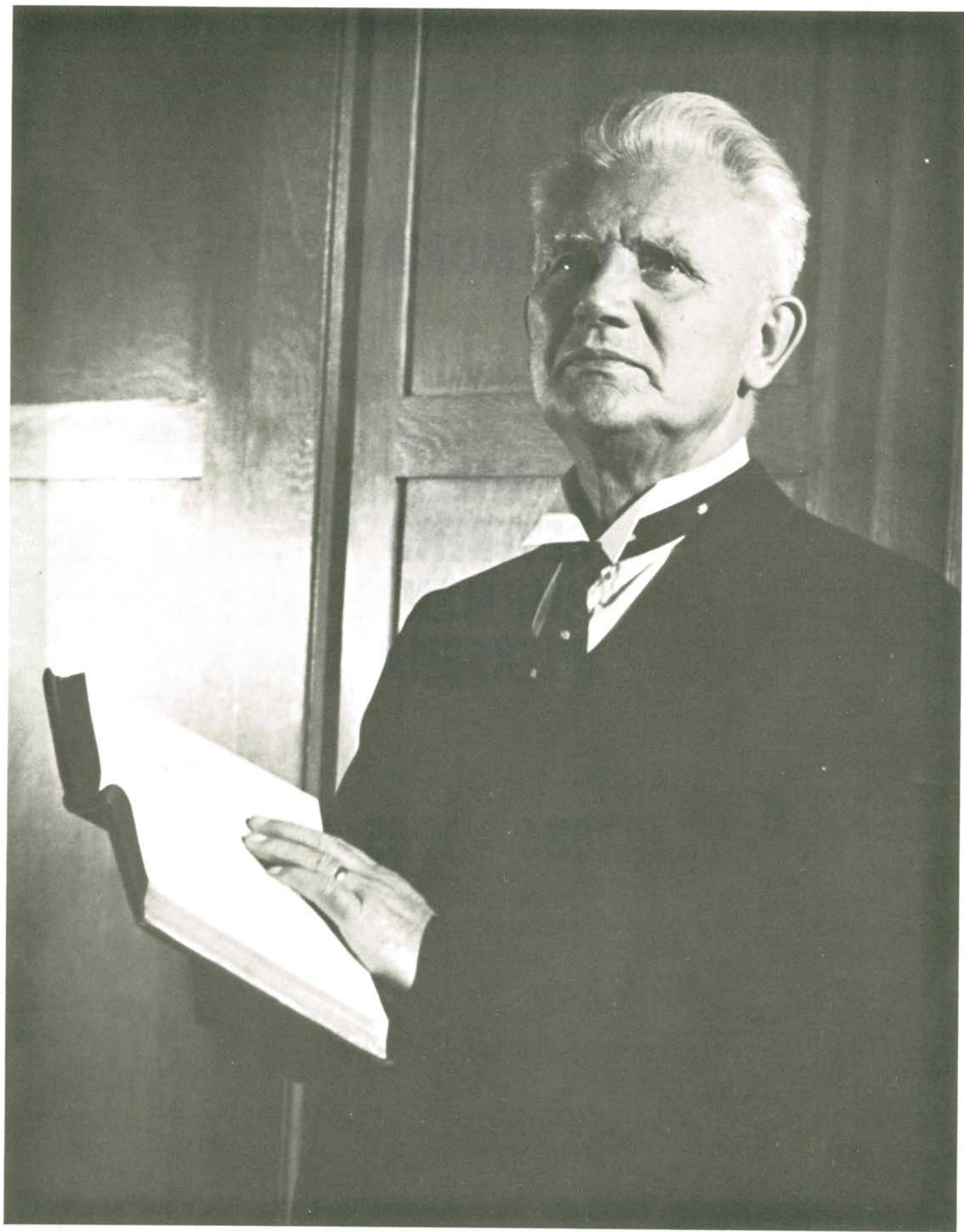
*(Editorials continued on page 23)*

**IN MEMORIAM**

**THE  
REVEREND  
HERMAN  
HOEKSEMA**

**1886 - 1965**







## MEDITATION—

# The Eternal God Our Refuge!

Rev. M. Schipper

*"The Eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."  
Deuteronomy 33:27a*

Reverend Herman Hoeksema has departed from us, and is gone into glory! Just a few more months, and he would have reached the age of the strong. Seventy-nine years he sojourned among us, and the Lord took him out of all the suffering of this present time into the presence of Him whom he loved and served. He was born in the Netherlands on March 13, 1886, and in the early morning hours of September 2, 1965 he folded up his feet into the bed and gave up the ghost. He is therefore now no longer with us.

And what shall we say at his passing?

Shall we presume to express eulogies, and utter paeans of praise concerning him?

Indeed, he was a great man! Even those who opposed him would freely attest to that! And if eulogies are in order, then surely they could be uttered with respect to him!

He was first and foremost a theologian, *par excellence!* He stood on the shoulders of his forebears, and went beyond them! He contributed to the Reformed theological climate expositions of doctrine that surpassed those of his predecessors!

He was also a great teacher and preacher! We remember him especially in his prime, when he could hold you spell-bound in his audience. He could set forth the truths of God's Word so clearly that you could see them, and never forget them!

He was a prodigious worker! Who at one time could prepare for and deliver as many as three and four sermons on a Sunday; and at the same time he prepared instruction for his students and taught in our seminary. At the same time he was editor of *The Standard Bearer*, filling most of its pages for many years, while he also prepared and published many books, brochures, and pamphlets. All this he did while often he was in the midst of ecclesiastical strife which demanded his attention and called for his leadership!

He was an invincible debater! Who understood and used extreme logic, which sent fear into the hearts of those opponents who knew him!

He was a fighter in the good sense of the word! Who fought against every semblance of corruption incipient in or threatening the church. And who did this all the years of his ministry!

He was the faithful pastor of what at one time was one of the largest Reformed Churches in our country, a congregation of over 500 families and 1300 souls. Who, though he was not always able to care for the pastoral needs of his flock because of his many other pressing duties, nevertheless always had his congrega-

tion at heart, and gave consolation to them that needed it!

He was a very dear friend and brother in Christ! Whom we knew personally for over fifty years, and most intimately for the last thirty-five. Who was always ready to help with advice and comfort when that was most needed!

He was, last but not least, a beloved father! Who loved his family, his dear wife who preceded him in death by almost two years; and his children for whom he provided of the very best, often under difficult and trying circumstances!

Perhaps you, my reader, if you knew him, could also add to the list we have enumerated!

Indeed, our departed leader was graced with many talents and exceptional gifts. And the churches to which he gave such faithful leadership have suffered a great loss!

But to all this eulogy and praise, he would, if he were able, be the first strenuously to object; and against it he would violently protest! For you see, he was also a very humble man! But even this statement, though not specially cast in the form of eulogy, would have been seriously objected to by him. He would inform you in no uncertain terms that he was by nature proud and haughty. He would insist that he was thoroughly corrupt, that there was no good in him! But that was exactly his greatness, that he understood by experience the awful depravity of the human nature, and that even after grace comes, there is but a very small beginning of new obedience. He found his hope only in the sovereign and redemptive mercy of his God! Man nothing, and God everything! That was the tenor of the Gospel he preached, and the Gospel he lived!

Much rather, yea, very much rather would he that our attention be called to his God!

If there was one thing which we have learned from him and to which he gave expression in all his preaching and teaching, it was his beautiful conception of God which he formed out of the Holy Scriptures. How often, we recall, the expression he made: God is God! And how bitterly he opposed every attempt to make an idol of Him! Like Elijah of old, who on Mount Carmel cried into the ears of the people: Jehovah or Baal! Choose whom ye will serve! So he would thunder from his pulpit: It is either -- or; never: both -- and! It is God or the idol! How often, when in the midst of doctrinal controversy, he would call attention to the fact that every departure from the truth is to make an idol of God!

And so, at this time we would draw our attention



away from the deceased, to the God of his and our salvation! In this great God the bereaved family will have to find all the comfort they need in this time of sorrow. The congregation he served in particular, and our churches in general, which shall be required to go on without him, will also have to look to this God for all their comfort and guidance! There are those who have predicted that our churches would pass out of existence when their great leader would disappear from the scene. But those who spoke thus have never known his and our God!

We would call your attention to our God on the basis of the text as it appears above this meditation!

The words of this text are found at the conclusion of the series of blessings Moses pronounced over the tribes of Israel just before his death. You may recall how Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes, also pronounced blessings on his sons before he folded up his feet into his bed and yielded up the ghost. And now Moses, the servant of the Lord, was about to depart this life; but before he does so, he pronounces blessings on these generations of the sons of Jacob! And he concludes that all these pronouncements will be realized only because: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heavens in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky." And he continues in our text to say: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

\* \* \* \* \*

Glorious God!

Full of infinite perfections!

Moses mentions only one of His attributes here: His eternity! That already refers to God as the Wholly Other! The word translated "eternal" in the original looks at God's eternity from a peculiar point of view. The word literally refers to that which is before, before in antiquity. Here it most probably means: that which has no beginning. The idea then is, that everything in creation has a beginning, but God is before this! He has no beginning. He is before the beginning. In the beginning God was, He did not become! And when we read in the text of "everlasting arms," this also refers to His eternity, only here it emphasizes: no end! Thus the idea of eternity in the text is: without beginning and without end! Moses, in the Psalm we read in your hearing (Psalm 90:1,2) declares this same truth: "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

But we know from all the Scriptures that God is full of infinite perfections! This is not the time or the occasion to enumerate and define all these virtues of our God. Let it suffice only to mention some of them: His Immutability, Independence, Omnipresence, and Omniscience. His righteousness, holiness, love, grace, and power! And let it be understood that the sum total of all these virtues make up, so to speak, the one, true, triune, blessed God!

The radiation of these virtues is His glory!

This exalted and glorious God we could not know

unless He came down to show Himself to us! He creates a creature, and after the fall of man recreates a creature that is capable of receiving that revelation. And He condescends to give us that revelation! The sum total of His glory is the multiple display of His attributes! This glory is seen in creation, the works of His hands! Therefore the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament His handiwork! And Paul tells us that this revelation is even to the extent of the perception of His eternal power and Godhead, so that men are without excuse! More particularly, however, these virtues and His glory are revealed in the work of redemption! Therefore the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest," when they behold the Babe of Bethlehem! And therefore the shepherds and the wisemen rejoice in the birth of the King of the Jews!

The central revelation of this glorious God is in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is come in the flesh! Of Him the Scripture repeatedly asserts that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily! Therefore He could say to Philip: He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father! As I have said to my congregation often: All that we shall ever see of God shall be seen in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord! And so it is!

This God is Israel's God!

He is not the God of all men! Contrary to the modern conception, according to which God is the Father of all men. And so they speak of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. This view is opposed by all of Scripture!

Nor is it true that God wants to be the Father of all men, so that on God's part He has a strong desire to be the Father of all, but it depends upon man whether or not he will accept Him as Father. For also this view is opposed by all of Scripture!

Nor is it true that His grace and love are intended for all men! A view which is creeping into even Reformed circles today! Let it be said without any equivocation: God's grace and love are always only particular -- never common! That is the truth of the Word of God throughout!

The truth is He is the Covenant God of Israel! And we hasten to add: of Israel whom He hath chosen. For also here, all is not Israel that is called Israel. Nor is he a Jew which is one outwardly, whose circumcision is only in his flesh; but he is a Jew, a true Israelite, whose circumcision is of the heart. God is, according to Scripture, the God of His chosen people in Christ! With them He has established an everlasting Covenant. Concerning this great doctrine respecting the Covenant we are most thankful to God for the new light and development given to us through our now departed brother. He, more than any other of the theologians of the past, has developed and presented most succinctly in his writings, particularly in his dogmatics which will soon come off the press. God, the in Himself Covenant God because He is triune, has willed to form in and through Christ Jesus a people with whom He establishes and keeps an eternal Covenant of grace!

Of this God, Israel is most ill-deserving! Moses describes them in another portion of Deuteronomy



(9:3-5) repeatedly as a stiff-necked people. They were a people who rebelled against Jehovah all the way from Egypt to the borders of Canaan. Always they refused to enter Canaan, the land that flowed with milk and honey, a type of heaven and rest! Israel is a people that is estranged from the womb! There is nothing in that people that could move God to choose them! Surely God could never have chosen you and me because He foresaw some good in us that moved Him in His choice. Depraved and undone we are by nature; as Isaiah describes us, so we are: "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores." (Isa. 1:6a).

Yet this people hath Jehovah formed for Himself; they shall show forth His praise. (Isa. 43:21). If God delighted Himself in that people, it can only be because His grace to them is purely sovereign and free. He chose them in order that they might become conformable unto His image. This judgment God's people will always make of themselves as they by grace see themselves in the light of His Holy Word and Law!

\* \* \* \* \*

This great and glorious God is a safe retreat!  
He is our asylum, a refuge, our hiding place!

As we mentioned before, Moses uses the same word in Psalm 90:1, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." But God is not only an abiding place, He is also a refuge! This would imply that God's people are always threatened with danger, and to them God is a place of refuge. Also implied is the fact that He was that in the past, that He is now, and always will be!

Underneath are the everlasting arms!

Not only hands in the palms of which we are engraven by the steel point of His eternal counsel, as described by Isaiah (49:16); but arms of everlasting strength! O, those arms of love that reach down to lift up and embrace! Like the mother reaches down with her arms to snatch her darling babe from threatening danger and to draw that child in loving embrace to her bosom, so our God is described in our text. Anthropomorphically, of course, the Scripture describes God to us in His watchful, loving care of His beloved people!

In Him the Israel of God is perfectly safe!

He is the antitype of those cities of refuge which were placed strategically throughout the land of Canaan

during Israel's sojourn in that land! Those cities where sinners could flee for refuge, and where they would be safe from avenging justice!

In Christ Jesus, the God of our salvation, we are safe for evermore! He is our hiding place! His arms wrought our salvation. Under the avenging wrath of a holy God, we were snatched up by His powerful arms and delivered from that wrath, while all the vials of that wrath He bore by Himself and in our stead! With His everlasting arms under us, we are safe!

\* \* \* \* \*

Comforting truth!

For the church of all ages!

For the church in the day of Moses and Israel! All the blessings Moses pronounced would be of no avail without the truth of our text! But Jeshurun must know that the eternal God is his refuge, and always underneath are those everlasting arms!

All through the history of the church in the New Dispensation! Each time the church sought an arm of flesh to help, she was put to shame! But when her eyes were on the God of her salvation, she weathered all the storms, and was perfectly safe!

Also for us!

The bereaved family! This God was your father's God! And I would exhort you to put your eye of faith upon Him!

For all our churches in general! Our future, as well as our past, does not rest on a man. Thankful as we are for all God has given us in our great leader now deceased, we believe God will raise up other leaders to go before us. But our confidence is not in any man whose breath is in his nostrils only so long as God does not snuff it out. In Jehovah alone, our Covenant God, in and through Christ Jesus are we sheltered safely, and His arms of strength omnipotent will hold us fast! I would exhort you to fix your eye upon Him! And when the wicked mock, and sneeringly ask what will you do now that your leader is dead? Tell them of your God Who has saved you, and will yet save you unto the uttermost!

And for First Church in particular! For over forty years you have had this God presented to you in all the preaching of your now departed pastor. Believe this Word of God! Never forget it!

Indeed, always underneath are the everlasting arms!  
Amen, and Amen!

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Board of the Association for Christian Education herewith expresses its sincere sympathy to the principal of our school, Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema, in the loss of her father-in-law

REV. H. HOEKSEMA

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."  
Psalm 55:22.

The Board of the Association  
for Christian Education  
J. Vander Woude, Secretary

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

Whereas it has pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our faithful and beloved pastor,

REVEREND HERMAN HOEKSEMA

the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church, although deeply feeling his passing away, gratefully turns to God in thanks for giving us the gift of his labors in the Word and doctrine among us these many years. "For of him and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Romans 11:36  
Cornelius Jonker, Sec'y



## FROM OUR NESTOR—

## To Bring To Remembrance

Rev. G. Vos

It's improper, so they tell me, to begin an essay, article or meditation with the pronoun of the first person singular "I". So be it. And therefore I sneaked in this opening paragraph.

I saw him!

I must have been about twenty-two years old, just two years from the Netherlands.

My friends told me: "Tonight we are going to hear a man whom you MUST meet and listen to!" You see, this man's reputation had already at that early date preceded him. I had a large circle of friends in that Reformed church, and we very often talked about the fact that we heard so little of the Biblical doctrine of predestination. Our minister was a regular Methodist, and we were often at odds with him. Indeed so much that he had told me personally not to mention election and reprobation anymore in the presence of the other young people in our catechism classes and young people's society meetings.

But now, so said my friends, you are going to hear a man who loves the doctrine of predestination.

And yes, I saw him!

How could I ever forget that evening? From my early youth in the Netherlands I was raised on that doctrine of election and reprobation. And never did I hear it proclaimed. In those days the older youths would also attend Men's Society, and there we had to wage a battle against the Arminian heresy.

And I saw him!

He spoke for the Christian School Society at the occasion of the graduation of our children. And his text was Deut. 6:6,7. Look it up, if you so please.

I was young, barely twenty-two years old. You hear the phrase rather often. But in my mouth this phrase is not conventional, but simple truth: I had never before in my life heard something so beautiful. I said to my companions afterwards: He speaks like the prophets of the Old Testament!

After that speech I went up front and shook hands with him. I later asked him, but he did not remember it. So many people came and talked to him afterwards.

A strange coincidence: She, who three years later became my wife, also came forward that evening to shake hands with him. But I did not know her, nor see her then.

The hearing of that speech changed my entire life. I wrote to Hope College and entered there the following fall. For several years I had the burning desire to become a minister of the glorious Word, but never dared to talk about it to anyone. But that speech engendered courage and conviction.

And I saw him again, for the second time.

It was in the old Van Raalte church. The text: Jehoshaphat's league with Ahab of II Chronicles 18.

It was during my fourteen days' stay at Hope College. And again it was decisive in my young life. I broke with Hope and the Reformed Churches and went to Calvin and Dennis Avenue Christian Ref. Church.

Here comes a hiatus in my life. For family relations I had to break my course at Calvin and move to Mt. Clemens to help my father and mother who came to this country during my stay at Calvin, and mistakenly had settled far from a Chr. Ref. Church. So I stayed with them for eighteen months; but when we were able, I returned with them to our Jerusalem (Grand Rapids).

And I heard and saw him again. During this hiatus he had accepted the call to Eastern Ave. Chr. Ref. Church. I give you one guess as to what I did. You are right: I took my papers from Dennis Avenue Chr. Ref. Church and attended Eastern Avenue.

And the storm had already arisen.

And what a storm! I followed it from step to step.

I could not believe my eyes or my ears. Men whose sermons I adored, such as Volbeda and Rink Kuiper turned against him.

In those days I was a taxicab driver. I drove him around during week days and nights, as also on Sundays on his classical appointments. Yes, I had learned to know him intimately. We often spoke together. They were golden hours. During those days Verhil, he, and I had a meeting with but one purpose: seek a medium through which he could divulge the beautiful truth. And from that meeting grew our beloved R.F.P.A.

The storm became a tempest. Dark and threatening clouds gathered about the heads of the THREE. In those I wept, fool that I was. I neglected my business, and attended all the sessions of classis and synod. I saw it all.

Here were men who loved what is called HEART OF THE CHURCH! Yes, my beloved reader, yes, the doctrine of predestination was called THE HEART OF THE CHURCH. In some books that are still among us it is stated in the Latin tongue: *Cor ecclesiae*.

My dear heart! I could go on and on, but I'm afraid you would grow weary of my prattlings. And so I will hurry on.

In those days I saw him again! Churchill would call it HIS FINEST HOUR!

It was in Kalamazoo. Whenever I ride past that church my heart melts within me. To that church is



attached the shame of the churches that threw us out in mid-winter.

But I saw him!

I had prodded him on and on, and kept on asking him: why don't you speak!!!!?

But he smiled and kept silent. But at the right moment he rose up and spoke. It is not trite now when I say: you could hear a pin drop. It was *benauwd* still.

And he received the privilege to speak after supper. The word went out and many published it, and the church was full. I smile when I write this.

The church full? If the local fire department had known it they would have cleared the church. We were packed in like the proverbial sardines in a can.

And I saw him and heard him.

He spoke for two hours, and I bless the name of Professor Clarence Bouma who handed him a drink of water at the halfway point of his address.

But O that speech! Would that it were written in the rock with a pencil of steel. But be you still, my heart. God has written that speech in His annals which are both true and enduring.

If synod would have voted at the conclusion of that speech, we would never have had a Protestant Reformed Church in the world.

But corruption set in during the night, and in the morning of the next day the lie prevailed. And the die was cast. The THREE POINTS were born! The infamous Three Points which place a hedge around the reprobate and which cast out God's servants and hand-maidens!

After that speech? That speech which outlined God's adorable virtue of lovingkindness for His people that are foreknown in His indescribable love and grace and mercy? That speech which clearly proved from the Holy Scriptures that God hates and judges the wicked every day? He was cast off.

But I saw him and heard him that night, and my heart rejoiced in the truth, and right there I dedicated my whole life to the TRUTH! And I determined to preach that truth to God's beloved people to life's last breath.

Yes, I know that you know the succeeding history. But this is to bring to remembrance.

The school was organized, and there we sat: eleven of us. With our three professors.

And I saw him again.

I openly confess, dear hearts, that he showed me the whole system of the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. His lectures on Dogmatics made the Scriptures live. I said to him on many occasions: if I hear you at any time in your lectures and sermons, I can preach ten sermons.

Yes, they threw him out of their communion.

At Christmas morning we travelled through the snow to that blessed field house in Franklin Park. We had lost our church, our parsonage, our name and our church confession, as well as the communion of God's people, and we were cast out as the offscouring of the world. But even today they write: "and thus it came to a schism and the start of the Protestant Reformed Church." DE WACHTER, Sept. 14, 1965, page 13.

Schism? No, dear brother, a cast-away!

The three brethren were cast off on the basis of Articles 79 and 80 of the *Dordtsche Kerkenorde*. On a par with murderers!

*En het schreit ten hemel!* (And it cries to heaven!)

No, they do not want him in their midst, but they embrace the man who teaches future missionaries that God loves all men and that Christ died for all men. What is this? It is rank methodism and Arminianism. Everyone knows that.

But I must hasten. I wrote my *VALE!* And I never thought that I would write again for our beloved *Standard Bearer*.

I saw him.

Yes, but now I saw him weep.

Yes, I saw him weep three times.

The first time in the midst of the most terrible warfare we ever had. That warfare was between us and the brethren with whom "we took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company."

In the midst of that warfare he wept in sight of all the people, crying out in the agony of his soul: "They have corrupted my church!"

The second time I saw him weep was when his wife called me in Hudsonville and said: "Come, Gerrit, and comfort my husband, for he is weeping."

Why he wept?

He wept bitter tears of lamentation because of the reading of the crossbill before the Court of men. And I said to him: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you."

And the third time I saw him weep was in my house at midnight, later, much later. And he said: "Gerrit, I weep because of the brethren that left us."

Beloved readers, I think that God has caught those tears in His bottles. They are precious in His sight.

And then I saw him again. I can hardly write about it.

It was in Pine Rest. He saw me and stretched out his hand towards me and gurgled my name. It was a gurgle. No more. The golden-tongued man could speak no more.

I saw him once more. It was at his funeral. But it was not he anymore. No, it was not he whom I knew and loved. It was his earthly remains which we would soon bring to the earth again, yes, again.

And I saw him once more, but I cannot prove that.

It was while I was praying at the graveyard. Then I saw him in heaven, and his eye was on Him Whom he loved and served during a long and very stormy life. His mouth was again opened, and he sang the sweet melodies of heaven.

And my heart was at rest.

Yes, I know that you will ask: But did you not see during all those fifty years any evil at all in him?

My answer is very simple: he was a poor sinner, and every day he told God so. I often heard him struggle in his long prayers on the pulpit.

And there is a great silence with God about the sins of His beloved people. Oh, read Psalm 103 and be at rest. He forgives all thy transgressions. And remembers them no more.



Somebody said to me: This is the end of an era.  
And I agreed.

But it is also the beginning of a new era.

We have among us his son; and with him is a  
worthy companion, Prof. Herman Hanko. And we have

a band of young and devoted men who love to preach  
the truth he loved, preached, taught, and suffered for.

But what is more: We have God!

Amen.

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Redlands Hope Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sympathy to the family and relatives of Rev. Herman Hoeksema. May the Lord sustain you in the loss of one so dear to you and beloved to all of us these many years.

"And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel 12:3.

Edwin B. Gritters, Clerk

#### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory and Congregation of the Oak Lawn Protestant Reformed Church expresses heartfelt sympathy with Mr. J. W. Regnerus and Mr. L. R. Regnerus and their families, in the loss of their beloved mother and grand-mother:

DORA REGNERUS

whom it pleased our Heavenly Father to take from this earthly vale of tears on the 14th of September, 1965 A.D., at the age of 82 years. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth." Revelation 14:13a. Oak Lawn, Illinois.

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

## Significant Doctrines in the Theology of Karl Barth

Rev. D. J. Engelsma

### INTRODUCTION

We must concern ourselves, in this and subsequent articles, with "contemporary theology." The divisions within Protestantism since the 16th century make this subject not only vital and fascinating but also overwhelmingly extensive. At the outset, some limitation of the subject is in order, even though this limiting will be rather arbitrary. One ought not bite off more than he can chew.

Since we neither should nor can view, analyze, and criticize present-day theologies from some neutral, presuppositionless vantage point, above all theologies, but rather are wholeheartedly committed to the Reformed faith, particularly, to the Word of God revealed and confessed in the Protestant Reformed Churches, we intend to concentrate on those theological teachings which bear most directly upon our theological position.

Admittedly, along with the world, the theological world is shrinking so that it becomes impossible for us to develop the truth and carry on controversy, exclusively within the framework of the Reformed community. Once more, Rome herself abandons the relationship to Protestantism of implacable enmity (the relationship marked by the *anathema sit*, "let him be anathema," of Trent) and challenges Protestantism either to state the fundamental principles that separate Protestantism from Rome or to manifest, in union with Rome, the oneness of the Church. When we note that the stated clerk of the Reformed Church in America (grandmother!), as a "participating observer" of a "formal ecumenical encounter" between United Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, prays the ominous

prayer, "Deliver us from sectarianism" (cf. *Christianity Today*, Aug. 27, 1965) and when we read G.C. Berkouwer's weak and unsatisfactory presentation of the issues that divide Rome and the genuine sons of the Reformation (Berkouwer, *The Second Vatican Council and the New Catholicism*), it becomes apparent that we shall be forced to restate, once more with all practical urgency, the Reformation truths, over against Rome.

Still, mighty winds are now blowing throughout the camp of the Reformed Churches. Apart from the overtures of Rome and the resultant gymnastics of Protestants-eager-to-be-wooed, radical changes of the historic, Reformed faith, the faith expressed in the Reformed creeds, are being effected. No piecemeal revamping of this or that point of doctrine but a reworking of the entire structure of Reformed theology confronts us. No doctrine escapes this re-formation; scripture, creation, predestination, the atonement, all are recast. And the authors of the on-going changes herald these new developments as the flowering of genuinely Reformed seeds. These men insist that they themselves are legitimate offspring of Luther and Calvin; they claim that their theology is, essentially, the fruition of the Reformation plant. These claims, at once emphatic and striking, are buttressed by heavy quotations of and constant appeal to the writings of the Reformers, especially, Luther and Calvin. One who takes his stance, therefore, in the line of the Reformation that runs through Calvin, must first scrutinize the theological development within the Reformed community, before he scans the state of affairs of contemporary theology among the Lutherans or Roman



Catholics. And this is our intention.

We have no business, of course, to render an *a priori* verdict of condemnation, merely because the "new Reformed theology" differs, perhaps, even drastically, from the old. No Reformed man denies that the Holy Spirit in the Church works the development of doctrine. And if, as its proponents maintain, this theology is true development, we must expect it to differ from the embryonic form of the truth, just as an oak differs from an acorn. Even though the theologians of the new order, from time to time, and at crucial moments, forthrightly dissent from Luther and Calvin, trim the Reformers' doctrines, and attempt refutations of them, we may not allow ourselves to be prejudiced against the theologians or their work. We are not traditionalists, nor are we eager to expose ourselves to the charge.

We must, instead, plunge into the doctrines themselves in order to understand them as completely as possible. What do they assert? What do they deny? What are their implications? What presuppositions control them? What connection holds between this doctrine and that? The crucial test follows. The doctrines in question are compared with Scripture and, according to their conformity with Scripture or divergence from it, are either confirmed in their claim to be authentic, Reformed truth or are uncovered as spurious. Then, we may also proceed to measure them against the standard of the Reformed confessions and, finally, to weigh them in the balances of the writings of the Reformers in order to determine whether or not they are, as is said, in the "spirit," if not the letter, of Luther and Calvin. Perhaps, at the end of the process, we will have the boldness to undertake the dangerous business of tracing the effects of these theological endeavors upon the life of concrete Churches.

We begin with Karl Barth. Karl Barth is a living, German theologian, now, in his eighties, in semi-retirement at Basel, Switzerland. The publication of his *Commentary on Romans*, in 1919, catapulted him into a world-wide prominence which he has not been spared up to this day. A professor at the University of Bonn, Germany during the rise of Hitler to power, Barth, in distinction from many of his fellow pastors and professors, severely criticized the state's domination of the church. When he refused to use the Nazi salute in his classes or to take the oath of loyalty to Hitler(1.), Barth was driven out of Germany to Switzerland, where he has remained ever since.

If Barth is not the most widely known and influential theologian in the world today, he comes very close. Certainly, he has pre-eminence among those theologians who claim, with more or less semblance of truth, to represent the "orthodoxy" of the Reformers. That which makes Barth of special interest to us is his position in the Reformed Church, a position he asserts, emphatically. At the same time, he insists that Reformed Churches and Reformed theologians must listen anew to John Calvin. He began to make this latter claim at a time when Calvin was held in general disrepute and was so successful that he has been credited with the rediscovery of Calvin. He states: "We cannot

practise indifferently Anglican, Lutheran or Reformed dogmatics, but only Reformed dogmatics. For us, therefore, Church dogmatics is necessarily Reformed dogmatics. By this we mean the dogmatics of the particular Church which was purified and reconstituted by the work of Calvin and the confession which sealed his testimony. We mean the dogmatics of the Church which hears the Word of God in this determination imposed upon it and recognised and confessed by it to be the best."(2.)

Concerning ourselves with Barth, however, will not be a provincial activity. The auditorium in which the lectern of Basel stands is the whole theological world. Rome, as well as Protestantism pays surprising attention to Karl Barth. Pope Pius XII described Barth as "the greatest theologian since St. Thomas Aquinas." And Hans Kung, highly acclaimed Roman Catholic theologian, boasts of displaying on his desk the *Dogmatics* of Barth rather than the *Summa* of Thomas.

Two things remain to be said, by way of introduction. We will not be committed to anything as auspicious as a thorough-going critique of the *theology* of Barth. The heading deliberately reads, "Significant *Doctrines* in the Theology of Karl Barth." At least two such analyses are available to the English reader, C. Van Til's *The New Modernism* (3.) and G.C. Berkouwer's *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Secondly, our attitude towards doctrine and doctrines does and must root more deeply than in intellectual curiosity. Throughout this study we too shall be motivated by the conviction that "because. . . it is essential for the ministry of the Church that it concerns itself about the purity of its doctrine. . . therefore. . . the question of the Church's ministry is decided in dogmatics. Bad dogmatics-bad theology-bad preaching. And, conversely: good dogmatics-good theology-good preaching" (CD, I,2,p.767).

#### FOOTNOTES

(1.) Barth's characteristic staunchness, as he puts it, his "readiness to fight," is evident in this refusal, especially, when one contrasts it with the statement, in 1934, of a sizeable group of respected, evangelical theologians in Germany: "We are full of thanks to God that He, as Lord of history, has given us Adolf Hitler, our leader and savior from our difficult lot. We acknowledge that we, with body and soul, are bound and dedicated to the German state and to its *Fuhrer*. This bondage and duty contains for us, as evangelical Christians, its deepest and most holy significance in its obedience to the command of God." (quoted in Berkouwer's *The Providence of God*, p.162)

(2.) K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, I,2,p.831. This is the authorized English translation, under the editorship of G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance, of Barth's *magnus opus*, the *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. The publisher is T.&T. Clark, Edinburgh. Hereafter, all references to Barth's *Dogmatics* will be made to this authorized English translation, as CD.

(3.) Concerning this book, Barth has said that he cannot recognize himself in *The New Modernism*.



## TRYING THE SPIRITS—

## UNITARIANISM

Rev. R. C. Harbach

Originally, Unitarianism was not a movement independent of the Christian churches, nor strictly, a schismatic group, but an intra-church movement apostatizing from Christ, His church and the confessions. Its purpose was not to form another denomination, but to gain control of the churches in the ecclesiastical association. The Calvinist members, rather, had to relinquish their church properties and withdraw. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in buildings, furnishings and funds fell to the Unitarians as a result of litigation. The peculiar church-political situation contributed to the great loss the Calvinist party suffered. The churches resided in parishes. Fund and Wagnalls define a parish: "in New England, originally a district (usually a town) under the control of one church and taxed for its support; hence the people in such a district, either as controlling the temporalities of the church (society), or the district as the field for the Christian work of the church." The town contributed to the support of the church, and so had a hand in the choice of pastors. The church was answerable to the parish (town), being under its control for material support, and so in most instances was outnumbered by the parish. A parish could elect a minister without the consent of the church. This was upheld by the worldly court. The church was adjudged as having no legal rights apart from the parish. Properties were awarded to the minority in the church which went along with the decisions of the parish. Thus the olive tree of the true church was replaced with the cactus of heterodoxy.

In order to win Protestant young people to their liberal philosophy, Unitarians made a practice of securing property near the universities, with churches or offices close by so that propaganda for the cause of modernism might be most effectively executed. What university does not feel the influence of Unitarianism? Appeal is made to students to cut loose from the historic Protestant faith for the more intellectual humanism. Students are called to exchange their childhood *sola Scriptura* for a mature *bonae literae*. The devil tempted our first parents to eat of the forbidden tree. Now he tempts college students with grafts into the deleterious cactus. When any turn from historic Christianity, Unitarians regard it as a "breaking a hole through the Chinese wall." In breaking down the hated Christian faith, it regards as helpful allies the Masonic lodges, the granges, Odd-Fellows, the labor unions, and sects such as the spiritists, Universalists, Reformed Jews, Christian Scientists and Hicksite Quakers.

Unitarianism cannot be recognized as Christian any

more than Islamism or Judaism. It is more akin to atheism than to any of the above. It has no place for prayer, claiming that casting one's care on the Lord is failure to bear one's own responsibility. Progress intellectually in religious ideals and one soon reaches the point where prayer is abandoned as childishness. Prayer is uncivilized. It is a waste, for God is not a personal being. The sooner we realize that we live in an impersonal universe, the sooner we may carve a civilization out of the wilderness. There is no sovereign Friend behind, above and directing the world toward a predestined goal. Then there can be no redemption, for that has the goal of immortality and glorification of man, soul and body. There is no immortality. To even broach such a subject is to commit the world's worst social *faux pas*.

Unitarianism has been dubbed "honest modernism" because while modernism, dishonest in using orthodox terminology with altogether different meaning, and dishonest in being crypto-unitarian, it (Unitarianism) has never pretended to the biblical faith. Passing up an infallible Bible does not make the bottom drop out of the universe. For the word of god may also be found in Plato, Holmes, Emerson, or Sears-Roebuck. Still if it were strictly honest, it would take a position as unhyprocritical as blank atheism. For Unitarianism denies everything atheism does: the doctrine of the trinity, the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Spirit, and especially the truth of man's total moral depravity. It never sings, "I am evil, born in sin, Thou desirest truth within, Thou alone my Saviour art, Teach Thy wisdom to my heart; make me pure, Thy grace bestow, Wash me whiter than the snow." It never admits, "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe," nor will it pray, "Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing." The Unitarian will not admit to having a "defenceless head." It may be bloodied, but is always unbowed. Man is inherently sublime. He is principally good. He need only let the good will which flows from his fellowman flood his own soul. Jesus on the cross praying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" is legend which via hero worship reveals: (1) what man is capable of doing, and (2) the pent up goodness just bursting to blossom from his bosom. This is the old, moth-eaten, fly-specked, skid-row "theology" in Fifth Avenue attire. It is the old Pelagianism gone stark, raving mad.

Unitarianism is no mere step-sister to atheism. The dress of humanism cannot disguise the twin-sister relationship. The idea of religion is somehow important to this movement, but not the idea of God. Theism is bound to end in zero. Humanism alone will finally add



up. Ethical liberalism will stand even if it could be proved that no God exists. God is simply the good which lurks in humanity. The holy communion, if ever observed, is a memorial for our dear departed dead. The rejection of Jesus is worthy of emulation. The communion elements may be placed on a table, while "He Was Rejected of Men" from Handel's "Messiah" is rendered, and then the audience is dismissed without any partaking. Jesus, of his day, was the paragon of ethicists who came to give us a religion, not his religion, but to teach every man to develop his own ideas and work out a religion for himself. Progression is attained when one's religion graduates to a point beyond the need for Christ, the Church or God himself. The underlying principle of Unitarianism is that a man must be free to stand for anything or for nothing. Heaven is for the birds, and the sparrows at that. Sun-worship is far more respectable than the worship of Jesus or of a personal God (Theosophy!), and furnishes "God" enough for any man. Hell is the vicious continuance of a Protestant Inquisition. The doctrine of a last judgment is a superstition more hateful than witch-burning, its adherents worse than Ku Kluxers.

More than this, more than the few articles of Fundamentalism, Unitarianism hates the Reformed Faith and the Five Points of Calvinism. It prefers naturalism, humanism and incipient atheism. Unitarianism's method is the insinuating of the lie "into the back door of the mind unawares when the front entrance has been barricaded." The policy is, in distinctly Christian circles, never to be suspect of Unitarianism, which would discredit the cause and bring opposition, but rather to inoculate, to permeate with the leaven of liberalism. Liberalism is cowardly atheism. So conceal your radicalism. Give the auditors heresy in such a way that even the saints cannot detect it. This is admittedly bad ethics, but in war all's fair. Ultimately all denominations must be merged in one world church, then to enervate any vestiges of Christianity of their power and content, so that the amalgamated church may be free of all divisions and become thoroughly humanized. They call this process "spiritualization." Nazis and Communists employing the same tactics call it "liberation."

This new "liberation" replaces living membership in Christ's church with active service in the socialist

state. The sin against the Holy Spirit is made the "refusal to co-operate with the principle of self-improvement." The liberal method used to be "survival of the fittest," now it is "survival of the most co-operative." The Apostolical, Nicene and Athanasian creeds are discarded for the universal brotherhood of man and the universal fatherhood of God. Preaching of the word is displaced by "quiet talks" on sociological topics. The sacraments are given up for the service of the cause of "world peace." The church is used as a secret society to secularize the whole of humanity. The church has been made a "back-door nightclub."

If we were to attempt a compilation of Unitarian tenets, it might look something like this: 1) Christ is not truly a divine person, nor as Socinus taught, a mere man exalted to the throne of the whole created universe, but a paragon of human perfection. 2) Scripture is not a divine revelation, but an exclusively human book. 3) The Sabbath day is to be used in resting from secular business, but is not "set apart from our common lives to religion." 4) The soul is probably a personality distinction separate from the body. 5) There are no such spirit beings as devil, angels or demons. 6) The Scripture does not teach the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the wicked. 7) Also rejected are: the miraculous conception of Christ, the doctrine of the atonement as a satisfaction to divine justice, the doctrine of imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness. The doctrine of predestination is a product of the age of dragons.

The Unitarian movement is not a Christian movement. It may be an ethical or philosophical society. But it is not Christian. It makes this plain when it honestly admits that it does not hold to "the Christianity of the apostolic church nor to any ecclesiastically controlled scheme of salvation, but rather to the teachings concerning human relations in the religion of Jesus." Jesus himself was merely "a normal man. . . endowed with powers differing in degree but not in kind from those of other men." (The Presbyterian Guardian, Vol. 27, No. 35, p. 5). It has no creed. It is a free-thinker's society established for the purpose of developing human character in the name of "charity" and "liberality."

## IN HIS FEAR—

# The Beginning of Wisdom

*Rev. J. A. Heys*

All over our land last month schools have opened their doors to receive students and teachers in the interest of formal education. From elementary schools that wrestle with children who have never assembled with others of their age to receive training, and resent

being "cooped up" so long, through high schools, colleges and universities a set period of time has begun for turning or returning to books and instruction. One has only to travel a little and to see the sprawling university campuses, the high school layouts, the



broad expanse of rooms in the elementary schools in our land to realize what a vast undertaking this really is. What a tremendous amount of fact will be reported, digested and remembered during the next nine months! Parents of kindergarten and first grade pupils will at the end of this nine-month period be amazed to see what a mass of knowledge, what an abundance of facts their children have acquired and what skills, such as reading, writing and even reasoning their children have achieved!

The question, however, is not, How much knowledge have they obtained? This is important, and essential in fact. We must know, and the more we know the better it is. But the important matter is wisdom. Listen to that wise king of old of whom it was stated, "Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like." (I Chronicles 1:12) He states in Proverbs 4:5, "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not." And again in verse 7, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding."

But will our children get wisdom?

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. How many of the millions of children who will attend school this year will get wisdom? How many will be trained in the fear of the Lord? How many will have even the beginning of wisdom? Sad to say but so very true, millions of children shall be taught by men and women who have not themselves the very beginning of wisdom, because they have not the fear of the Lord. Wisdom is such a rare item, because the fear of the Lord is so exclusive a matter. Although protests will go up from shore to shore, it must be said: better is it that most of the schools in the land remain closed and formal education in these institutions be brought to a complete stop. For, instead of promoting the fear of the Lord and training in that which actually is wisdom, they militate against the very beginning of wisdom and train the children of the land to be fools!

All that glitters is not gold. All that goes by the name of Christian is not Christian. All that passes for wisdom is not wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and it is the fool who denies this. Men reveal their folly exactly in denying this Word of God that the beginning of all wisdom is His fear. Men reveal that they do not have the very beginning of wisdom in that they challenge and deny His Word. And, therefore, you and I may not send our children to be taught in every elementary school, in every high school, in every college and in every university! Call that bigotry, if you will. Advocate tolerance of the lie, if in your folly you must. But you are never going to change the Word of God, even though you oppose it. Philosophize about freedom of speech and freedom of religion, but be sure of one truth: You are never going to change God's mind and make Him agree with you. There is speech that He forbids. There are theories and philosophies which He condemns. There are practices upon which He pro-

nounces the death sentence--and one of them was simply eating forbidden fruit. And you are a fool, utterly bereft of even the beginning of wisdom, if you tolerate this wickedness, and if you allow others to teach it to your children. God is not mocked, and he who has the beginning of wisdom knows that and believes it.

We may state only in passing, for we shall in a later installment of this subject treat the matter more fully, there is a vast difference between knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge is essential to wisdom but is distinct from it. Knowledge, then, in general, we may say is the mental possession of fact. And the more facts a person knows, the greater is his knowledge. Wisdom, very briefly, is the ability to use these facts aright. Or, if you will, wisdom is the ability to choose, out of the known facts, the best means along the best way to attain to the highest good.

And the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

The fear of the Lord, as the beginning of wisdom, is the Old Testament equivalent for the New Testament faculty of faith. We are not one given to pile fact upon fact and to list dry fact. But let it be pointed out that Young's Concordance lists *only two* verses in the whole Old Testament where the word faith appears. They are Deuteronomy 32:20, "And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith", and Habakkuk 2:4, "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith." Even then, in each instance the word is faithfulness or fidelity rather than faith in the sense of belief. As far as the last passage quoted is concerned, Paul as directed by the Holy Spirit did interpret this faith as belief, when in Romans 1:17 he uses the word faith that comes from the Greek verb to believe. The relation between faithfulness and faith in the sense of believing, we can leave for another time. Let it simply be stated now that the word faith as appearing in the two passages quoted comes from the verb which means to be steadfast.

Then, too, the passages in the Old Testament, even though this Old Testament contains thirty nine books to the New Testament's twenty seven, and contains nine hundred and twenty nine chapters to the New Testament's two hundred and sixty chapters, and six hundred and ten thousand, five hundred, seventy seven words to the New Testament's one hundred and eighty thousand, seven hundred and fifty one words (all this in the English translation), the word believe appears four times as many times in the New Testament as in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, however, the word fear, and in the combination of the *fear of the Lord* far outnumber the word and its use as the *fear of God* in the New Testament.

But as we began to say, the fear of the Lord in the Old Testament is the equivalent of the expression faith in God in the New Testament. This appears in many uses of the word and expression, and in many striking ways. To mind comes first of all the words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 12:13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His



commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Can we avoid the truth that what is meant here is that our whole duty is to believe God and to keep His commandments? The hymn is certainly true in that respect, "Trust and obey, for there is no other way." And trust is the principal element in faith.

There are other passages too numerous to mention. But a few more will reveal the truth of this matter. Abraham explains his lie about Sarah being his sister, according to Genesis 20:11, with the words, "Because I thought, surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will seek to slay me for my wife's sake." By the way, we may note here also the proper relationship between that fear and obedience of Ecclesiastes 12:13 and understand how the "trust and obey" of the hymn must be maintained. Abraham found that there was no faith in God in Gerar, and therefore he did not expect the inhabitants to keep God's commandments. We will not obey if we do not trust. We will not keep God's commandments unless we fear Him, that is, fear Him in the sense of believe in Him. The devils know that there is one God, and they tremble in fear, according to James 2:19, but they do not keep His commandments or even try to do so. On the other hand, Pharaoh, who did not believe in God, was not afraid of Him, did not have the fear of the Lord and dared to defy Him. He dared to ask the question of Moses, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go". Exodus 5:2. Though God sent ten terrible plagues upon Pharaoh and his country, he still did not believe in God, and therefore he still did not obey His command. If one has the fear of the Lord, which is faith in Him, he will obey Him with love.

But to return to Abraham and his conviction that the fear of the Lord was not in Gerar, if one does not fear God even in the sense of standing in terror before Him, that one will not hesitate to do anything that will "safely" bring advantage to his flesh. We say safely, because not fearing God, he may fear his fellowmen or some idol. The heathen nations round about Israel dared to attack God's children, because they did not fear God and instead put their trust in their own gods. The Philistines dared to bring Samson out to make sport for them and praised their gods for the "victory" which they had given over Samson and his God. In that respect the devils seem to have more wisdom than the multitudes which they have deceived. The unbeliever is very, very bold. He dares to defy God, to disobey Him, to ignore and insult Him, to ascribe His works—and so teach them to your children—to the creature or to mere chance and accident. He dares to ascribe God's glory to man; to present God with the weaknesses and frailties that characterize man; to place God at the feet of man instead of man at the feet of God; to picture God as dependent upon man (and how true this is even in the church-world that ascribes to Arminianism and Pelagianism with an offer of salvation and invitation whereby man can snub God, and God is dependent upon the sinner's will to finish the work which they must claim Christ only began, and to apply the salvation which

Christ only made possible) rather than to present the truth that man IN ALL THINGS SPIRITUAL AS WELL AS MATERIAL depends entirely and always upon God. All this is nothing less than unbelief. All this is nothing less than a lack of the fear of the Lord. We repeat, the sinner is bold! The unbeliever is conceited! And he is a fool. He does not fear God, and therefore goes his own headstrong way; but he is as big a fool as the man who dares to run down the railroad track towards the rushing freight train with all its power and momentum. Some day, he, as Pharaoh to his regret in the Red Sea, will know Who this God is. He will call for the mountains to fall upon him, the hills to cover him. And then in hell he will acknowledge his folly in hopeless despair.

Joseph obeyed God because he feared Him. He states to his brothers, according to Genesis 42:18, "This do, and live, for I fear God." The other side of the picture is found again in Psalm 36:1, "The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes." Transgression and the lack of the fear of the Lord go hand in hand. He who lacks the one has the other. The man who has transgression lacks the fear of the Lord. And the man who has the fear of the Lord does not transgress His law.

And the reason why faith is called the fear of the Lord is not because faith was imperfect in the Old Testament times and has finally grown to the point where it may now be called belief and trust. There is no such thing as imperfect faith. For faith is the gift of God, and all His works are perfect. Jesus speaks of having little faith. We speak of that faith being weak or strong, but faith is never imperfect. And surely the faith of the Old Testament saints was not a sickly faculty that could only be filled with terror before God and had not yet come to its own. We will not take the time to show the folly of this and will only ask you to read Hebrews 11 where the deeds of the so-called "heroes of faith" are displayed before our eyes. If that fear of the Lord, called faith here in Hebrews 11, is an imperfect faith, then let us have more of that imperfect faith in the New Testament church. We can use the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham through David, Samuel and the prophets. Let this chapter teach us what a wonderful gift that fear of the Lord is. And let it also work within us a desire to have our children possess this fear and to obtain the wisdom, of which that fear is the beginning.

Your children?

Are they being trained in His fear?

Do you send them to school to become wise or to become fools?

#### *Notice to Officebearers and Ex-Officebearers*

The Officebearers Conference will be held, D.V., on October 5, at 8 P.M., at our Hope Church. Topic: "May the deacons offer assistance to another diaconate when it is public knowledge that an outstanding need arises in another church? And does the diaconate need the approval of the consistory in such a matter?" Rev. G. Lanting will be the speaker.



## FROM HOLY WRIT— **OUR REASONABLE SERVICE**

Rev. G. Lubbers

Romans 12:1, 2

### *THE SACRIFICE: OUR BODIES — continued*

It is therefore in the duty of strict exegesis to maintain that all the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord. Only Christ had the perfect ear and heart, He had the body prepared for Him, so that He fulfilled what was written in the volume of the book. He said: "Behold, I come to do thy will, O my God!" And unto this the saints are exhorted. They are thus to present their bodies. The term *present* in the Greek is the technical term for offering a sacrifice. The wicked may do many things with their natural light in the body, but they cannot *present* themselves to God. They can only present their members as servants of unrighteousness unto sin. Rom. 6:13. Never do they present themselves to God as those who have been made alive and brought forth out of death. They do not do this in their learning, their business, their art and culture, their verse and poetry. Fact is, that all the worldly institutions stand in the service of sin. It is man without God in the world. They are not the brethren who are tenderly yet earnestly and seriously exhorted by the tender mercies of God!

### *OUR NEED OF CONTINUAL TRANSFORMATION*

It is a very holy and delicate task to present our bodies to the Lord as a holy, well-pleasing sacrifice. Only the reborn child of God has the necessary requisites for this service at the altar. And this task of standing at God's altar in our entire life calls for a continual and an ever increasing transformation by the renewal of the mind.

We are not amiss if we call this transformation the positive side of the believer's conversion. There is also a negative side to conversion. You will recall, dear reader, that the Heidelberg Catechism in Questions 88-91 speaks of this conversion in its twofold aspect, to wit, the mortification of the old and the quickening of the new man.

Perhaps just a word of illucidation will not be considered redundant in regard to the matter of "conversion" in general, so that we may the more pointedly see this question of our spiritual transformation of which Paul here speaks and unto which he admonishes. It ought to be understood clearly by every Bible believer that God's people are not saved by means of conversion, but rather that they are saved by grace through faith. Conversion proceeds from faith even as the effect follows from the cause, and water flows from a fountain. Faith is the root from which all conversion follows. Wherefore it also follows that conversion is, in the Scriptures, ever the entire life of sanctification and thankfulness. The Christian has

much sin in his members; daily he does what he would not, even though he has a delight in the law of God after the inward man. Now it belongs to our reasonable service that we are sorry for our sins, sorry that we have provoked God, and that we more and more hate and flee from them. Fact is that the German text of the Catechism in Question 89 speaks of the "longer the more" (*je lenger je mehr*) and this means a stepping up of the tempo of hatred for sin and fleeing from it, and that too with the more earnestness and intensity. Let it not be forgotten by us! On the other hand conversion also has a positive side. It means that we have true joy in God through Christ, and that with love and delight live according to the law of God in all good works!

It is our belief that Paul teaches both these elements of conversion, of continual conversion here in Romans 12:2. Without both of these elements it is not possible to please God and to be well-pleasing to God, and to present our bodies, as above circumscribed, a well-pleasing and holy sacrifice to God.

Let us attempt to see this.

Paul says that we are not to be conformed to this world. This is an exhortation and not the mere statement of a fact of existence or of a *status quo* to which we have already arrived. And we ought to observe that the exhortation tells us what we must *not* do. The form of the negative in the Greek text indicates that the apostle does not mean to say that we must not *begin* to be conformed to this world, but rather that we must *no longer* be conformed to this world. We must *stop* being thus conformed. Besides, the tense of the verb indicates that we must continually stop, *never cease* our no longer being conformed to this world. This indicates a life-long battle—up till the moment of our death when we shall have perfectly died unto sin. Moreover, we ought to consider also that the phraseology "not be conformed" is very significant in the Greek text. The term or verb employed indicates that this world has a basic "scheme", a pattern of life. It is anti-God and anti-Christ and also anti the fellowman. Its pattern of life is that of the profane; it is never in accord with the altar of consecration to God. This must be rigidly maintained all along the line in the light of all Scripture. This pattern is graphically and clearly set forth in Rom. 3:10-18. Now it requires no battle to conform to this world. Conformists have no battle. They simply need to float down the mid-stream of this life of the world. For our flesh finds a ready ally in this world. However, this must stop! It must stop resolutely. The unclean and the harlots cannot come near to God to present their



sacrifice. God is holy and therefore we are to be holy in all our conversation! Such is the negative side of conversion which is necessary to present our bodies to the Lord.

However, there is also the positive side of conversion!

Paul expresses this in the words "but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds". Rom. 12:2

Here too we must keep in mind that Paul exhorts and that he does not simply state a fact, whether actual or potential. The Greek text does not simply indicate the need of an activity of faith and conversion once and for all, but refers to an activity which must constantly be carried on progressively. We underscore once more that this is an activity of *faith*, a faith by which we are ingrafted into Christ and by which we receive all his benefits. Keeping this in mind we shall understand that the term in the Greek for "transformed" is that from which our English term "metamorphosis" is derived. This metamorphosis is the law of life, of all life. The child is "metamorphosed" that is, transformed from the embryonic state to that of the child, and from that of the child to adolescence, and from adolescence to the matured man. The larva pupates and through the process of metamorphosis becomes the beautiful and matured butterfly. Thus also according to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus the believer through conversion becomes such, more and more, that he presents his body a living sacrifice to God, which is our reasonable service!

Do not overlook the *manner* of this spiritual metamorphosis in conversion. It is "by the renewing of our mind"! This renewal is given us in all its potentiality in regeneration. However here Paul speaks of a "renewing" of the mind. The term in the Greek text is "anakainoosis" and is translated *renewing*. Our minds must be renewed. This is the work of the Spirit, to be sure. However, this renewing is our activity as the fruit of the Spirit's operation who works in us this renewing. The mind must ever be constantly renewed. This mind is not the same as our mere intellect, however. Scripture does not employ merely the verbiage and concepts of the Greek psychology, or that of Scholastic theology of the days before the Reformation in the Sixteenth Century. The term in the Greek is "nous". And our "nous" or mind in Scripture includes not only the intellect, but also the will with all its emotions. It refers to the entire man as he consciously lives the new life of regeneration. Shall there be metamorphosis, or transformation, then there must be this making new again in the consciousness of the believer by the Word and Spirit. This renewal proceeds from the heart whence are the issues of life, and with which heart we believe unto salvation. Then there is true joy in God through Christ. This transformation is the sign of the well-being of faith! Here we observe the going from strength to strength, out of faith unto faith.

This renewal of the "nous" with which we have a delight in the law of God after the inward (new) man must be applied in every dimension of life in which

we live in our body. (see above) Here is no room for the Anabaptistic recluse who shuns to live the full-orbed life of the christian to be some first-fruits of God's creation. We must live this life in our body in all of creation! The arena is as wide as the world. However, there is a theory of "common grace", which ought not to be glorified with too much attention; it too can have no place here, for it cannot be placed on the altar of God! There are not two spheres for the christian. The christian claims the total creation of God to which totality his body is here adapted, his seeing eye, his hearing ear, his touching hand, his tasting tongue and his nose with which he smells. It is all *pro rege*, that is, for the King. And in all of this by the renewing of our mind ("nous") the Christian presents his body a living sacrifice, and thus brings the entire creation upon the altar. This is the real motive for Christian instruction in the home and school. The Lord must smell the sacrifice upon the altar of consecration as a sweet savor! With less He is not well-pleased. And that requires a constant life of conversion, of not being conformed to the world, but being transformed by the renewing of our minds.

#### THE APPROVING OF THE GOOD WILL OF GOD

The "will of God" in this passage refers to the will of God's command as laid down in His law to His people. It is the perfect law of liberty and not the being "under law". Compare James 1:25 and Rom. 6:14, 15. This law too is as wide as creation and as wide as our "body", and concerns all that which is placed on the altar of God. It is God's stipulations concerning the altar and concerning our lives at the altar.

This law is spiritual, holy and good!

In climactic effect Paul writes concerning this law of God: the *good*, the *well-pleasing* and the *perfect*. That the law is "good" means that it is good as God is good. God alone is good. He is the only and Highest Good. He is holy and there is no evil in him. Besides, this law can only be good for us, our salvation. It is well-pleasing because it expresses God's inner delight in it. We hear here echoes of Psalm 19. There we read "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the commandments of the Lord are pure enlightening the eyes." The law is "perfect" because it brings out the ultimate potential of all that is in the image of God in man. Its fruition will be the perfect sacrifice in heaven which will not pollute nor even besmirk the throne!

Thus is conversion seen in positively approving the will of God in every dimension, in every faculty, in all of creation. Surely unto this we can only come by the "mercies" of God. These mercies are the deep bowels of God from which our salvation comes, and which assures our ultimate perfection, and holiness, when our *metamorphosis* shall be completed in the glorified body, when our ear shall have been perfectly pricked to be attentive upon His will. Now we have the struggle, but then we shall rest from our labors in doing the will of God, bringing the perpetual sacrifice about the great white Throne!



## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

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

Sept. 15, 1965

The Consistory of Randolph, Wis. has named a trio consisting of the Revs. R.C. Harbach, J. Kortering, and G. Lanting. The congregational meeting for the purpose of calling one from this trio has been scheduled for Sept. 13.

\* \* \*

The Reformed Witness Hour has prepared a series of sermons on the Prophet Elijah by the Rev. G. Vanden Berg of Oak Lawn, Ill. The dates and topics are: "Sept. 26 -- "Standing Before God"; Oct. 3 -- "Wonderful Preservation"; Oct. 10 -- "Who Is God?"; Oct. 17 -- "Elijah's Resignation". Again the Radio Committee offers printed copies of their messages. Write to The Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 1230, Grand Rapids, 1 Mich.

\* \* \*

Thursday evening, Sept. 9, was another milestone in the history of our churches. At that time Rev. Herman Hanko was installed into the office of Professor of Theology. The Rector of the Seminary, Prof. H.C. Hoeksema, preached the sermon and Rev. G. Lubbers, vice-president of the Theological School Comm., read the Form for Installation. The Rector's sermon was an exposition of the words, "And he gave some. . . . pastors and teachers. . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ" found in Eph. 4:11,12. The speaker's theme was "Christ's Gift of Pastors and Teachers"; and he developed his theme under the three points: "The Pastors and Teachers Given"; "The Fact That They are Gifts of Christ"; "The Purpose of These Gifts". Among other points to ponder the Rector stated that Seminary Professors quite really shepherdize the whole denomination because, "as the faculty -- so the seminary; as the seminary -- so the pastors and teachers; as the pastors and teachers -- so the churches. Corrupt the seminary, you corrupt the denomination; and, conversely, maintain the Truth in the seminary: so will the churches remain strong in doctrine." The Rector further admonished the new professor that he must vindicate the sound doctrine of the Scriptures, drawing the lines according to the foundation laid by the Apostles. May our entire membership esteem our new Professor for the sake of his office and appreciate him as a gift of Christ to His Church "for the edifying of the body of Christ."

\* \* \*

The "war" in Viet Nam seems so very far from us, and so it is, geographically speaking; but that great distance shrinks quite rapidly when one reads in the church bulletin excerpts from a letter from a youth of the congregation written from Viet Nam! Ken Haak, of Oak Lawn, wrote that he receives some of our P.R. literature and passes it on to his Chaplain after he has read it. Oak Lawn's Church Extension Committee's latest pamphlet, "The Answer of Hope" also found its way to the far side of the Pacific Ocean and was a great source of comfort to Ken. Navyman Dale Bartelds, of First Church in Grand Rapids, has sailed to that Ori-

ental spot on the map and has been home on furlough since that time.

\* \* \*

The Young People's Society of Southeast Church in Grand Rapids has opened the season with its first meeting scheduled for Sept. 19. The bulletin notice reminded the young people that this early start was occasioned by the need of extra time due to their assignment of preparing for the 1966 Convention!

\* \* \*

The plans for the Reformation Day Rally to be held in Grand Rapids' Civic Auditorium are going forward steadily. Mr. Roland Petersen, director of our Radio Choir, has accepted the challenge to organize and train a large choir in the few weeks remaining before that event. His bulletin notices in the area churches calling for singers to make up this choir met with heartwarming success. One hundred twenty men and women responded and joined their voices in their first rehearsal at First Church Sunday afternoon, Sept. 12. If all our people are as enthusiastic as these 120, this Rally will be assured of success. The aim of the Mission Committee is to fill the 5,000 seats of this huge auditorium, that the true children of the Reformation may be reminded of that great heritage which we are in danger of losing. The Committee's slogan seems to be, "Bring your family, and invite your neighbors".

\* \* \*

Loveland's congregation unanimously voted to furnish room in their new church basement for their own Prot. Ref. Christian School.

\* \* \*

Our Theological School opened its doors Tuesday, Sept. 14 at 9 A.M. The two professors gave the assignments for the beginning of the semester. The Revs. G. Vos and M. Schipper were at hand to represent the Theological School Committee.

\* \* \*

Kalamazoo's congregation are now in occupancy of their new church on the corner of Glen St. and Stassen Ave. Rev. Harbach had this observation and prayer in the bulletin of Sept. 5: "As we for the first time begin our worship in this new building, let us do so with the prayer that the King of Glory will come, dwell with us and bless us with His crown and covenant. May this be a place where we shall imbibe the whole counsel of God, His truth and love, in the communion of saints." Rev. Harbach and congregation; in the communion of saints the whole denomination rejoices with you, and wishes you God's richest blessing in your new place!

\* \* \*

First Church's Diaconate scheduled a special collection Sept. 12 to receive the congregation's gifts for a special thank offering for the *Standard Bearer* in memory of their beloved and departed pastor, Rev. H. Hoeksema.

\* \* \*

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.



## THE LORD GAVE THE WORD . . .

(Psalm 68:11)

# Depravity and Mission Preaching

*Rev. C. Hanko*

The question quite naturally is raised: Is it possible to preach human depravity from the pulpit, and, more specifically, on the mission field? Is it the proper approach to tell the unconverted sinner who is brought under the preaching of the Word that he is dead in trespasses and sins, incapable of any good, and prone to all evil? Still more, is it proper to declare to the unconverted that God does not offer salvation for man to accept, and that it is impossible for anyone to believe the gospel except by the regenerating and saving grace of God?

One might even want to argue that this doctrine of total depravity and moral inability should be kept in reserve until the unconverted sinner is able to digest the more solid foods of doctrine. Possibly it might be suggested that the sinner be allowed the impression that he can accept the salvation, which is freely offered to him, and then after conversion he may be brought into a clearer insight into the truth of his depravity.

Yet Scripture requires of the sincere minister of the gospel that he proclaim "the whole counsel of God." In fact, it is the truth that makes one free, and not the error. It is the pure, unadulterated milk of the Word that is food for our souls, and not the philosophies of men. For it is God Who saves us by the work of His Spirit in our hearts, and not man, who at best is but an instrument through whom God works. And God has given the pure preaching of the Word as the sole means of grace used by the Holy Spirit to work and strengthen faith in those who are saved. Therefore the Word of God, and that Word alone, in all its purity is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe. But besides all that, Scripture itself leads the way in proclaiming the truth of man's depravity, and therefore anyone who preaches Scripture as the Word of God must necessarily also preach depravity, whether from the pulpit or on the mission field.

Scripture does not hesitate to call sin SIN. The Bible uses many different words to describe sin in all its wicked corruption. The most common word that appears both in the Old and the New Testament means "to miss the mark." The idea is not that the sinner aims at the target but often misses or falls short. The idea is rather that we are so perverse that we deliberately aim our lives in the opposite direction. The sinner always deliberately misses the mark. For God demands that we love Him with our whole being, and we are prone by nature only to hate; every imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth. (Gen. 3:21.)

There are many other words describing sin in Scripture. Sin is "a passing over the boundary", a transgression of God's law, a wandering away from the living God to follow vain idols. Or sin is described as open rebellion, a perversion or distortion of the nature, deception, unrest, toil, vanity, emptiness, and ruin. Therefore Scripture compares us to sheep which have gone astray, every one in his own wilful way wandering off to destruction. Or again, the sinner is described as a leper, cast out of God, given over to the ravages of death in soul and body. For he who sins is made sin's slave, according to the apostle Paul. And from another aspect, sin is described as spiritual separation from the living God, death. No more than a dead corpse can arise and eat, no more can a dead sinner arouse himself to accept a proffered salvation. But God is mighty to cleanse the leper and to raise the dead by the Word of His power, even as Jesus revealed that power while He was with us in the flesh. Therefore He told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3.)

Obviously this description of sin and the sinner applies to every single member of the human race. Human considerations, mere sentiment, or outward appearance cannot change that estimation which God gives of us. There are various degrees of sinfulness and guilt; but that does not change the fact that there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that doeth good, not a single one. Every mouth must be stopped and all the world must be declared guilty before God. (Rom. 3:10-19.) There may be an outward appearance of virtue, that even makes quite an impression upon us; yet Scripture is very definite in declaring that the imagination of man's heart is only evil continually. When God lays bare the inner recesses of the heart and mind, even the secret springs of life, God declares that "every desire and purpose" which arises in man's mind is corrupted, twisted, perverted, because the heart is evil, perverse, corrupt. And that condition prevails even from our "youth," since we are conceived and born in sin.

Now this was told to Noah before the flood. And Noah, the preacher of righteousness (II Peter 2:5), was called to proclaim just that to the wicked world of his day. Many years before him Enoch had spoken of the impending judgment of God upon ungodly men for all their ungodly deeds and hard speeches. (Jude 14, 15.) And now Noah was called to proclaim that the time was at hand that God would execute His righteous judgment upon that first world.



After the flood the situation was actually no different. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob declared by word and deed that they could have no fellowship with the wicked idolaters of Canaan, because they served Jehovah Who alone is God. Moses stood before Pharaoh to demand in the name of his God that Pharaoh let His people go that they might serve Him. The Psalms and the book of Proverbs speak repeatedly of the sin and guilt of the wicked, testifying that God is angry with the wicked every day. The prophets never ceased from condemning the sins of carnal Israel and prophesying of God's certain judgment. God made Naaman the Syrian a leper and sent him to Elishah, who scorned the Syrian's high position, refused his gifts, and simply told him to wash in the river Jordan, that Naaman might realize that salvation is the sovereign gift of God to His people in Christ Jesus. Jonah preached the judgment of God against the sins of Nineveh, upon which many repented.

These are but a few isolated examples that could readily be multiplied. And also the New Testament concurs in every respect with the Old in proclaiming the depravity of man. Jesus states that "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, false witness, blasphemies." (Matth. 15:19.) And He did not hesitate to tell the Pharisees, "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." (John 8:44.)

Paul in his epistles speaks the same language. These are sometimes referred to as missionary epistles, because they are addressed to newly established churches. But this is the more reason to read carefully Romans 1, which speaks of the wrath

of God that is revealed from heaven upon the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. God gives them over to vain idols and to all the abominations that are always associated with idolatry. And also Romans 3:10-18, and Ephesians 2:1-3, as well as other passages, too numerous to mention, describe the depravity of man in all its corruption.

This belongs to the preaching of the gospel! How could it be otherwise? The Holy Spirit does not approach a sinner with the formula, "God loves you, Christ died for you," but proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ. He uses the Scriptures to speak of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He calls sinners to repentance. He convicts of sin, so that the prodigal son "comes to himself," realizing that he craves the husks that the swine eat. The Holy Spirit causes him to arise and go to his Father, only to discover that Father's love has never faltered, but draws His own unto His bosom. (Luke 15)

That is entirely in harmony with the gospel call of our Lord, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Although many hear the proclamation of the gospel, only those who are convicted of sin and guilt will "labor and be heavy laden." They, in turn, will know that this voice is calling them, and they will come to Jesus in sorrow and repentance to find rest for their souls.

But then, how about these other passages of Scripture that seemingly teach a desire and willingness of God to save every individual, if he will but accept Christ? To that we turn our attention next time.

## ALL AROUND US—

*Prof. H. Hanko*

### MAN'S ANIMAL ANCESTRY

An alarming article appeared some time ago in *Christianity Today* written by Rev. Leonard Verduin, minister emeritus in the Christian Reformed Church. This article, entitled "Man, a Created Being: What of an Animal Ancestry?" was evidently also alarming to the editors of this paper, for they took the unusual and unprecedented step of commenting directly upon the article — and much of the comment was critical.

We cannot offer a complete review of the article, but give instead a few quotations to illustrate how far the theory of evolutionism has penetrated the thinking of theological leaders even in the Reformed Churches.

After discussing the idea of creation "out of nothing", the author goes on to say:

But . . . one can speak of creation in more senses than one, that not all that can rightly be called creating is covered by the formula "to make something out of nothing."

## Man's Animal Ancestry Church and State

The Bible also calls it creating when God exercises his creative power upon already existing materials and uses them as the raw materials for further creative performance. The creation of man according to the Bible was an act performed upon already existing stuff, called "the dust of the ground." Man's creation therefore was not *ex nihilo*.

Apart from the fact that it is highly doubtful whether one is correct in speaking of "creation out of nothing" (at least Scripture never uses the expression), the author surely speaks truly here. But then, after a discussion of the meaning of immanence, the way is paved for evolutionism by these remarks:

It would seem, moreover, that the creative act of God seen from the vantage point of his immanence has the dimension of the drawn-out, the processive, the gradual, the progressive, the time-consuming.

It would seem, finally, that the creative act seen in the light of God's transcendence is immediate creation,



whereas the creative act seen in the light of God's immanence is mediate creation.

A glance at the Genesis account shows very clearly that the inspired writer had no desire whatsoever to keep the idea of process and of progress out of the narrative. He manifestly did not think that the idea of process was foreign to the creationism he was promoting. . . . If the figure is permissible, the writer of Genesis thought of the creating hand not simply as a hand that snaps a finger and, lo, there it is, but quite as much as a hand that molds and makes, with the prodigal disregard for the passing of time that marks the hand of him who fashions a work of art.

From here the author turns to a discussion of the orthodox rejection of evolutionism in bygone years and gives a brief history of pantheistic thought, of modernism and fundamentalism. But then he shows clearly his disregard for the narrative of Scripture and for its infallible inspiration. He writes:

We have noted that God was creating mediately when he made man and did so with recourse to already existing stuff. The Bible says that this stuff was "dust" -- for we read: "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground," and there is added, "and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

But what was this "dust"?

It is hardly in keeping with the lofty tenor of the Genesis account to conjure up the picture of Deity stooping down to scoop up a shovelful of pulverized earth, adding the necessary liquid to bind it together, then kneading it into shape, with groins, ridges, eye sockets, and a protuberance with nostrils in it into which the Almighty then blew a puff of air, so concluding the experiment. This is out of keeping with the primitive dignity of the Genesis story.

How did the word "dust" get into the story? We submit that it was by way of a Hebrew fondness for circular representation. One finds among the Hebrew poets of the Bible an often recurring fondness for beginning at a point and then returning to it after a circuit has been made. . . .

Can it be that it was this beautiful device of the circle that led the not prosaic writer of Genesis to say that God took of the dust of the earth as he went about to create man? This poetic soul had contemplated the solemn fact that man's last chapter is written in the dust--did he perhaps, to satisfy his love of the circular, take the poetic license to say that man's first chapter is likewise written in the dust? Did not he, or a colleague of his, introduce God as saying, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. 3:19b)?

With this "prodigal disregard" for the meaning of creation and the significance of the Scriptural narrative, the author has paved the way for saying that the creation of man is a process so that man was formed by God from lower forms of life. Turning to the fact that man was created in the image of God, Verduin finds this image to consist (at least in part) in the fact that man, even as God, creates--but in creating, never does this from scratch, but always uses the work of his predecessors. So:

If this is implied in "after his likeness" -- as we are convinced it is -- then the Lord God also does not

start "from scratch" but utilizes the already existing, takes the most likely raw materials, touches this with his creative finger, thereby raising it to a new level of existence.

This would imply that the "dust" that constituted the raw materials in man's coming into being was not on the chemical nor even on the vegetable level. This rather was the raw material, the end result of God's immediately preceding creative act. Which is to say that he started on the sixth "day" with the givens of the fifth. . . .

By this formula man is genuinely continuous with the lower animal world and with the still lower that preceded the animal world; he is genuinely continuous with the whole organic order and with the inorganic. By this formula he is also genuinely discontinuous, different, unique -- the result of the creative touch of the Almighty.

This is not the end of the article. The author goes on to discuss a few other aspects of his problem and concludes with a warning that the geological evidence to support "missing links" in the evolutionary change which leads to man is negligible. He concludes with saying:

Men went into the earth to prove process. They have proved much of process, much of continuity; but the records of their diggings prove just as plainly that there has been plenty of discontinuity. In fact, the evidence of "gaps" is as eloquent as that of continuity. First-class scientists are saying that the hiatus is at least as apparent as the link.

For all the field work tells us, man popped onto the scene all of a sudden -- precisely as Genesis has it. . . .

But the entire argument finally comes down to this: from a total perversion of the Scriptural doctrine of the image, the author concludes the theory of evolutionism as applicable to man also. And in doing so, the Word of God must again be abused.

#### CHURCH AND STATE

From the time that Constantine the Great made Christianity a legal religion in the Roman Empire and threw the weight of the State's power behind the Church in the early part of the fourth century, the knotty problem of the relation between Church and State has troubled the people of God. There were times when the question was purely academic -- something nice to talk about and debate, but not of pressing importance. There were other times when the problem was urgent and demanded some solution to preserve the Church itself. Such a time as the latter was the time of the Reformation. Such a time was also the time of the Synod of Dordrecht and the years of the Secession which began in 1834.

In the early days of the settlement of this country, the colonies usually established state churches. For example, in Virginia the Anglican Faith was the "state" religion; in Massachusetts it was Congregationalism. All this gradually was changed with the Revolutionary War, and the time after the war was a period of building the wall of separation. The First Amendment to the Constitution was the final word.

However, in recent years cracks have been showing



up in the wall. The question of the relation between Church and State is once again being discussed in connection with such matters as federal aid to education, devotions in the public schools, etc. Many felt that the old wall was crumbling and this is probably true.

Now something new has turned up. *Time* has recently reported on a facet of the problem which is not generally known. We quote a paragraph from a recent issue:

In Mississippi, a \$7,000,000 Government-financed program for retraining unemployed poor, mostly Negroes, is being run through an agency organized by a Roman Catholic diocese. In New Mexico, the \$1,261,000 appropriated to retrain migrant workers was granted by the Federal Government to an organization set up by the state Council of Churches. In city after U.S. city this summer, churches played a major role in launching Project Head Start, the preschool training program for underprivileged children. In all, more than 100 federal programs are providing vast amounts of Government money to church related agencies — and uncounted millions of dollars more will be heading their way as a result of Lyndon Johnson's education and medicare legislation.

There has been some opposition to this strange turn of events; but the opposition is surprisingly mild, scattered and weak. Most seem eager to get on with the thing without asking too many questions about what problems of the relation between Church and State are raised.

The point is that millions of dollars which are spent each year by the government in social welfare programs are now being channeled through the Church. The Church has become a sort of welfare agency of the

government. It is the left arm of the government to help eradicate social ills which plague our times. It has entered into a partnership with the government to pursue the goals of a "great society".

There is something frightening about all this.

Obviously, what was long suspected is indeed true. The goals of the Church which ought to be busy seeking the kingdom of heaven are now identical with the goals of the secular state. Both labor together in a common cause. And the cause is evil. The Episcopalian bishop of Chicago put it this way: It is the duty of American Christianity to do something relevant about social problems. "From there it is only another short step into deliberate partnership in the war on poverty and in educational projects."

Nor can we escape the nagging question of what all this does to Christian charity. The Church, called to dispense the mercy of her faithful High Priest Jesus Christ, has tried to join Christ with Ceasar and lost every vestige of mercy that there is.

Yet one can hardly blame the government. The Church has forsaken her wedding vows by which she was betrothed to Christ. Instead she has begun flirting with the secular government and all but begged to be wedded to it. Handing out advice of every conceivable sort and in every possible situation to the government, the Church has flirted with other lovers. No wonder that the government is sorely tempted to make use of the church to serve its own ends. This is now being done. This is only the beginning. Prostituted in the service of the state, the Church shall at last lose all when the man of sin appears, who is not only a universal political ruler, but also sits in the temple of God.

## THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS—

## THE BELGIC CONFESSION

### Article XIII

## God's Government and Sin

(Continued)

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

### CONCLUSIONS WITHIN "THESE LIMITS"

2. The government of God with respect to the moral creature includes in its compass that creature precisely as a *moral* creature, even as the divine government always deals with all creatures according to their nature. God's government does not deal with a rock as though it were a tree; and it does not deal with a tree as though it were a monkey; and it does not deal with an animal as though it were a moral creature.

So also that government of God does not make of the moral creature a non-moral creature. It does not intervene between a man's will and his actions, but always so governs him that a man's own nature comes to manifestation in his deeds. The sinner can never say before God, "I did not really want to sin, but God forced me to sin against my will." He must always admit that he sins according to the inmost desire of his own will.



3. This implies that even the very heart and mind and will of the moral, rational creature are included in the compass of God's government, yet in such an inscrutably holy way that while God remains absolutely sovereign over the entire existence and operations of the moral, rational creature, yet that creature is morally responsible and knows that he is morally responsible, but also knows that God is sovereign and will ultimately have to acknowledge that sovereignty.

I will conclude this part of our discussion with the following quotation from Rev. H. Hoeksema's "Anthropology," mimeographed edition, pp. 105, ff.:

"... God's work has never been spoiled. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning. Always He follows a straight course to the end He has in view. Never was He forced by any power outside of Himself to deviate from that course. He rules alone, sovereignly and absolutely, — rules also through the means of Satan and ungodly men. There is, indeed, conflict between the purpose and intention of the ungodly and the holy will of God, but never between the counsel of God and the operations of the creature. The ship of creation, leaving the coast of the *Bereshith* (the 'in the beginning' of Genesis 1:1, H.C.H.), sailing over the ocean of time, follows a straight course to the harbor the Almighty destined her to reach. There are to Him no contrary winds, for all winds are His. For this reason we may never separate the fall from the providential government of God. Not only must we never hesitate to say that the fall of man took place according to the determinate counsel of the Most High, in order to serve Him as a means to an end; but we must also understand that it occurred entirely by His own providential power and government. Never was the counsel of God frustrated. And the work of grace is no repair work. Only under God's providence was Satan empowered to use the serpent as an instrument, could he enter paradise, could he tempt the woman, lead her, and through her Adam, to the fall, and could man and the whole creation fall under sin and the curse. This does not mean that we chime in with the morbid exclamation, 'O blessed fall into sin!' For the fall

itself is not blessed, but is our great guilt. But neither are we, as redeemed children of God, filled with a sad longing for a paradise lost, but must rather boast in the manifold wisdom of God, Who even through the deep way of sin and death and the curse executes His counsel to the salvation of His church.

"Hence, we may never separate in our minds the providence of God from the facts of sin and grace. There is no operation of God's providence next to and apart from that of grace and the curse, love and wrath, election and reprobation. The government of God is exactly of such a nature that it guides the organic whole of creation unto the final glory of the new heavens and the new earth, to the glory of God's eternal covenant and to His eternal tabernacle which shall be with men, while through the same government of the Most High the reprobate element falls away and becomes ripe for eternal desolation. For it is God's positive purpose to unite all things in Christ as the new head of all creation, to preserve and perfect His covenant and His everlasting kingdom. Unto this end all things in heaven and on earth are directed; and the Most High so governs all things that they must infallibly lead unto that end. All things under God's providence cooperate unto that end. All things in heaven and on earth and in hell, angels and devils, righteous and wicked, the curse, death, and all the sufferings of this present time, sin and grace, fruitful and barren years, rain and drought, war and peace, sickness and pestilence, — all things work together to the glorification of all things when the tabernacle of God will be with men. Of course, the devils and the ungodly cooperate unto that end in a different way from that of the angels and righteous. Hence, the former gather unto themselves treasures of wrath, while they nevertheless cooperate in the execution of God's counsel; and the latter receive the eternal reward of grace. There is no dualism: all work together unto the realization of the counsel of the Lord. God's government is motivated by electing and redeeming and glorifying grace, on the one hand, and by reprobating wrath, on the other."

## EDITORIALS (continued)—

# Our New Seminary Professor

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Although we did not like to think of it, all of us have for several years seen the time coming when our original leaders would no longer be with us and instruct us. And though our seminary is small and sometimes is perhaps rather distant from our thoughts, the coming of that time was especially serious for that institution. No matter how small, our Theological School occupies an indispensable place in the life of our denomination.

No communion of churches can long exist without its own seminary. And no seminary, of course, can exist without a faculty. Moreover, a seminary such as ours, with a faculty of two instructors, is especially stricken when one of those instructors is taken away. And yet exactly that has happened to our school twice in the last few years. First the Lord removed Prof. Ophoff from his labors and, shortly thereafter, took him to



Himself. My father was never one to influence anyone's decision on a call; but I well remember that in 1959, when I had the call to replace Prof. Ophoff in our school, he said to me, "It would be nice if we could work together yet for a few years."



*Prof. Hanko*

Well, it was only a few years. Last December the Lord took him also from his labors in our school; and now he has joined his former colleague, Prof. Ophoff, in glory.

But the Lord has also provided for our seminary!

It was only for one semester that the teaching staff was crippled. That our Synod, in spite of our severe

shortage of ministers, had the foresight and the insight without any hesitation to call another professor was a source of special joy and encouragement to me. Already then the Lord was providing. And that Rev. H. Hanko, after only a brief stay in the congregation of Doon, was led to accept the call to become Professor of Theology was also the Lord's provision. I am happy that he has come: for I esteem him as a friend and brother not only, but as a capable and faithful servant of the Lord. Moreover, all our churches should be glad and thankful to the Lord because He has so soon and so well provided for the needs of our seminary. I take great pleasure in introducing to our readers our new Professor of Theology, who will give instruction to our future ministers especially in the New Testament branches and in Church History.

A few weeks ago he and I stood together at my father's coffin in the funeral chapel, and suddenly the full impact of reality struck us both. I said to him, -- and I said it with weeping: "Now you and I have to stand in the seminary in the place of Ophoff and my Dad." But we are encouraged because we have a goodly heritage and because we have the promise of the indwelling of the Spirit of truth. The reader will forgive, I am sure, the personal note in this; I injected it, not to be sentimental, but to try to impress our people with the seriousness of our position as faculty members in our seminary and thereby to impress upon our people that we urgently need and covet your prayers.

## BOOK REVIEWS—

*Rev. H. Veldman*

## De Verborgenheid der Godzaligheid Rondom Israel

"De Verborgenheid der Godzaligheid," by Ds. E. Th. van den Born e.a.; J. H. Kok N.V.; Netherlands.

This book contains 5 Pentecost "sermons" by four different writers, including Prof. B. Holwerda and Prof. C. Veenhof. Four of these sermons are based on Acts 2 and one on II Tim. 4:10, 11. The title of the book, translated into English, would read: "The Mystery of Godliness." This little booklet is a Pentecost booklet. It reads easily. The style is clear and easy to read, provided that one can read Holland. The material appears to view the heart of Pentecost in the universality of salvation, as embracing all peoples. To this meaning of Pentecost we, of course, have no objection. But we would rather emphasize the heart of Pentecost as being the feast of the fulfillment of the promise of salvation in Christ Jesus, in distinction from the Old Testament when the same salvation was possessed by the Church of God in connection with symbols and shadows. I recommend this booklet to our readers. The price is \$3.95 in Holland money.

"Rondom Israel," by Dr. H. Bergema; J. H. Kok N.V., Netherlands; price: fl.95.

This is a mission booklet of 53 pages, and the title, translated in English, would read: "Round About Israel."

This is an interesting brochure. The author attempts to penetrate behind the political and economical contrasts to the psychological and religious background, which fundamentally governs the entire struggle in the Middle East between Israel and its surrounding countries. The occasion for this booklet was a visit by him to Israel and Jordan when he was returning from Indonesia to the Netherlands in 1956. We repeat: it is a mission booklet, written to stimulate interest for mission work among the Jews. One wonders whether he is of the opinion that God has reserved a special place for Jews as Jews, as held by the premillenarians. The book is well written. We recommend also this booklet to our readers who are able to read Holland. The price is \$1.95 in Holland money.