

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION—

# God's Good Pleasure in Repentant Wicked

by Rev. M. Schipper

*Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*  
Ezekiel 33:11

God's good pleasure!

Most beautiful word in the Holy Scriptures designating the counsel of God! O, indeed, there are many other terms Scripture uses when it refers to God's counsel. It speaks of the will of God, of the decrees of

God, of the purpose of God, of the foreknowledge of God, etc. But of all the terms none is more beautiful and so full of meaning as the expression: God's good pleasure.

Indeed, it is rooted in the firm, unchangeable re-

solve and expressed determination of God to perform His eternal will; yet it expresses at the same time that that will is motivated by inmost passion of affection and delight. The term "pleasure" as used in the text comes from a word which means "to bend, or curve; to incline toward some one or something in favor." It implies a bending over with the purpose to reach a certain object in order to show grace or favor to that object because of the special delight one has in that object. God's good pleasure, as it is revealed outside of Himself, bends down, delights in a certain designated object, and intends to show to that object His grace and favor.

In the text this good pleasure of God is directed to repentant wicked. "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," — that is negative. "But," (and we may supply: "I have pleasure") "that the wicked turn from his way and live;" — that is the positive aspect of this pleasure of God. Hence, we call it God's good pleasure in respect to repentant wicked.

Not all wicked are the intended objects of this good pleasure of God!

How contrary that would be to many other passages of Scripture which teach us that: "God is angry with the wicked every day," Psalm 7:11; and, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked," Prov. 3:33; and, "The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy," Psalm 145:20.

The wicked as such are never the objects of God's perfect delight, but of His holy wrath. They are vessels to be destroyed.

The context makes this very plain. The watchman must tell the wicked that he is to be destroyed if he walks on in his wickedness. There is no hope for a man who does not turn from his sin; whether that man be a man of the world, or whether he be in the church. No matter how nice one may appear to men; no matter if his name be inscribed on the roll of the church, and he be a partaker of the means of grace, — if he walks in sin, he shall die.

This is plain also from experience. God is not pleased with every wicked man. What the apostle Paul tells us in Romans 1:18 is realized every day: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." The judgment of God does not wait for the second coming of Christ, but it is realized every day as far as the wicked is concerned. God never leaves them alone. He continually surrounds the wicked with retribution. Yea, this is true even when He gives to them many good gifts. It is that they may be destroyed forever. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction," Psalm 73:18.

Only the *repentant wicked* are the objects of God's good pleasure! The wicked who, according to verse 10, admit their transgressions, who see their sin and desire to be delivered from it. Thus these wicked speak: "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?" They acknowledge under the indictment of the Word of God that their case was hopeless, that their sin was so great

that they feared no mercy of God could reach them. And they ask: "How should we then live?"

It is in answer to such wicked that the Lord instructs the prophet to say: "My good pleasure is that you turn from your wicked way and live." Not all wicked, you understand, will ask the question which the Lord here answers. Of themselves the wicked never see their sin, much less do they confess it. But repentant wicked, not of themselves, but by the grace of God, acknowledge their sin and depravity that it is so great that they are hopelessly lost, unless God by His sovereign grace delivers them. In them God is well pleased. He has delight only in them in whom He beholds His grace, the grace of repentance; and to them He gives answer: "I have no pleasure in your death, but in that you turn and live."

God's good pleasure is two-fold. He delights, first of all, not in their death. Surely, if they remain in sin they would die. There is no other alternative. Death must inevitably swallow them up, if their way of wickedness is not forsaken. But God does not delight in their death. Not at any time did He delight in it. Not in His eternal counsel. Not as they groped in their darkness. And therefore He opened the way for their deliverance. That way centers in the redemption of Christ, realized on the accursed tree of Calvary. Experientially that way is through faith in His sacrifice, and godly sorrow which worketh repentance.

Positively, God's good pleasure is that they turn and live. Shall they be pleasing to God, they must turn, to be sure. But just as surely it is that shall they live it must also be God's good pleasure. Of themselves they cannot turn. But if God pleases, He will turn them unto life from death. And He will do that through the way of repentance.

Life, eternal life!

This it is God's good pleasure to give them, instead of the sentence of death!

\* \* \*

God's good pleasure!

Confirmed by an oath!

"As I live, saith the Lord."

Not an offer! Into this many would change the words of our text. They make the wicked *all wicked men*. They make God's good pleasure contingent on the ability of the wicked to turn and accept the offer of life proffered them in the good pleasure of God. They make God sincerely willing on His part to save all men, but it is up to the sinner to do his part, to turn from his wicked way, and accept the offer of life. But how contrary this is to the very thought of the text!

Rather, God confirms His will and purpose with an oath.

"As I live, saith the Lord."

There is no more certain truth than this. That the Lord lives, no one would dare to deny. O, indeed, the Psalmist says: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm 53:1. But this is not because he does not believe God is, but rather that he does not want Him. Strictly speaking, there are no atheists. The reason: God has not left Himself without witness. "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of

the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse," Romans 1:20. "The devils also believe and they tremble," James 2:19. What do they believe? That God is. That God is dead, is the philosophy of the fool, who desires not to reckon with the living God.

O, surely, God lives!

And as surely as He lives, it is His good pleasure that the repentant wicked should also live!

Because God lives, and from everlasting to everlasting He is the fountain of life, therefore can He be relied upon. He will be able to fulfill all His purpose. And all His promises are yea and amen in Him. Therefore also His good pleasure is sure. It will assuredly be realized. He seeks Himself eternally as the good God, and He seeks His people's good eternally and in time. Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God lives, and that He has pleasure in the life of the wicked who turn.

That is God's answer to those who pine away in their sin, but who would hear from the mouth of their God that He will not let them die, but come into the possession of the life that is eternal.

\* \* \*

And what does that good pleasure of God demand?  
Conversion!

"Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

But how shall they turn? Can an Ethiopian change his skin? Can a leopard change his spots? These are the questions the prophet Jeremiah asked when he contemplated the awful depravity of God's people who

were inclined to all evil and incapable of doing any good, Jeremiah 13:23.

Indeed, they cannot turn of themselves! Unless the Lord turn them, they shall not turn. Such is the tone of all the Scriptures, and the acknowledgment of every child of God that is repentant. "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for thou art my praise," Jer. 17:14. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me . . . O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise," Psalm 51:7, 10, 15. "Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned," Lam. 5:21. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned: for thou art the Lord my God," Jer. 31:18.

Conversion is that work of grace in the consciousness of the child of God whereby he responds to the call of God to turn from his evil ways, hating his sin, and fleeing from it; and, positively, whereby he loves the Lord his God once more and desires to walk in all good works which were prepared for him in order that he should walk in them.

That is what God demands of them in whom He has good pleasure that they should not die but live before Him. That demand is urgent: Turn ye, turn ye! It is also efficacious. For when He calls, they come; when He commands, they turn. And in their deepest consciousness they taste forgiveness, justification, and eternal life; and out of gratitude they walk in that way that is also pleasing to the God of their salvation. And with the apostle Paul they believe and say: That which He hath begun in me, He will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

## Editor's Notes

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

With this issue we begin a new volume, the forty-fourth! It is our purpose again to present in the pages of the *Standard Bearer* a well-balanced diet of pertinent comment about today's ecclesiastical scene, particularly in the Reformed community, and of solid Scriptural and Reformed instruction. The new volume will bring no major changes in the format and content of our magazine; but a few minor ones may be noted. For one thing, you may expect to see in the future reports from our Mission Board and from our Theological School Committee concerning their activities. A second change will be the occasional appearance of a new department: Pages From The Past. This department will present articles from early volumes (some of which appeared in the Dutch and which will be translated). Articles will be selected that are perti-

nent, relevant, and valuable for their instruction today. We also will present Rev. D. Engelsma's "Heeding the Doctrine" more often, after having given him a "breather" last year. The Rev. R. Decker will contribute five articles for "The Lord Gave The Word" (our missions rubric), substituting for Rev. C. Hanko, who was granted leave of absence for another year. And finally, — time and space permitting, — your editor will try to continue his series on the Netherland Confession of Faith in the department "The Voice of our Fathers."

\* \* \*

In behalf of our faithful News Editor may I once again plead that news from our Protestant Reformed Churches, schools, leagues, etc., be sent to him promptly and regularly. He cannot manufacture news

though sometimes he is almost driven to attempt it. You will find his address in the masthead.

\* \* \*

The beginning of the new volume serves as a reminder also that it is time to order your bound volumes if you do not have a standing order. This is the best way to preserve your *Standard Bearer* for future reference. Order soon from the Business Office, listed in the masthead.

This is also a good time to order that subscription for a friend who ought to be a reader of our magazine. You can undoubtedly arrange to have his subscription begin with this October 1 issue. And \$5.00 per year for

21 issues of the *Standard Bearer* is a bargain unequalled in the area of religious magazines.

\* \* \*

While I am giving reminders, let me add one for "Reformed Dogmatics." The season for society meetings is here. I and others have heard numerous comments from "laymen" about the value of "Reformed Dogmatics" as a study and reference work for their society studies. If you do not as yet have a copy in your personal library, order one now at the price of \$14.95 from : R.F.P.A., Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501.

## EDITORIALS—

# The Christian Reformed Synod and the "Dekker Case"

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In the brief report given in the September 15 issue I promised to report more fully and to offer a more detailed criticism and evaluation of the tragic decision in the "Dekker Case". That critique I begin to present now.

A word is in order, I think, about the proper approach and basis of this evaluation. At bottom, of course, we are as Reformed people interested in evaluating this decision in the light of Scripture and the confessions. That is, and ought to be, our main concern. But in connection with this main concern there are several factors which enter into the picture. There is, first of all, the factor of the data of the so-called "Dekker Case" itself. The writings of Prof. Dekker, but also the writings of others, either in sympathy with or opposed to Dekker's position, belong to the data, — or at least form part of the background of the case. Past synodical dealings with the case, including the appointment of and the report(s) of the Study Committee, belong to the data. The proceedings of the 1967 Synod, both in June and in August, and inclusive of the four (yes, four!) reports of Synod's advisory committee, belong to the data. In the second place, there is also the factor of the deliberations and discussion which took place at the Synod itself. I realize full well that these do not belong to the official record. But they do belong to the record of history. Moreover, they are recorded, — and is not that something to contemplate? — in the record book of the Judge of heaven and earth. And I deem it important for getting the "feel" of a decision and for analyzing the

trend that one witness the discussion and debate. It was partly for that reason, and not only because I wanted to witness the decision itself, that I attended especially the sessions which dealt with this doctrinal matter. But there is another factor that is also important. I refer to the factor of the broader historical and doctrinal background of the "Dekker Case." Especially do I have in mind the historical and doctrinal background that is represented by the date 1924. I think no one present at the recent Synod, whether sympathetic to or opposed to Prof. Dekker's position, and, for that matter, no one who is at all acquainted with the entire Dekker Case, will deny that 1924 and the First Point played an important part both in the controversy and the decision. This has been too obvious to allow for denial.

All these factors must be taken into consideration in evaluating this tragic decision in the light of Scripture and the confessions.

## THE DECISION

As indicated above, there is considerable data which belongs to the synodical proceedings of this and previous years. It is both impossible and unnecessary to mention or quote all the material at this point. I shall refer to and quote some of this material as occasion requires. Besides, the *Standard Bearer* has, I think, kept its readers well-informed on this score since the inception of the "Dekker Case" a few years ago.

However, I deem it important, — even though I have already reported on the decisions taken both in June

and in August, — that before we proceed with our discussion, we get the complete picture of the decision. When I visited the sessions of the Synod, I was able to obtain copies of the various reports, and thus was able to note the decisions taken. These decisions are embodied in Parts C, D, and E of Report IX-D, the report of the Advisory Committee on Doctrinal Matters. These three sections of this report follow below:

#### Report IX-D (Parts C, D, and E)

##### C. The Report of the Study Committee

###### Recommendations:

1. That Synod receive the report of the Doctrinal Committee as information and express its gratitude to this committee for its faithful and diligent work.

2. That Synod commend the report of the Doctrinal Committee to the churches for guidance and as a valuable contribution, within the Reformed tradition, to the discussion of the matters contained within the report.

3. That Synod refrain from adopting the recommendations contained in the report of the Doctrinal Committee (Agenda, pp. 453-61).

###### Grounds:

a. Although the Doctrinal Committee proposed "that Synod do not make isolated extra-creedal statements," there is danger that adoption of these recommendations would make them just that. (Note: Propositions not initially intended as extra-creedal statements are in fact being used as though they are creedal by the Doctrinal Committee in its present report to Synod (pp. 454-55).

b. Such propositions may be a hindrance to seeking unity with other Reformed Churches, as is evident from the report of the Contact Committee with Canadian Reformed Churches (Report No. 15, Agenda, 1967, pp. 56-57).

c. Such propositions may tend to curtail legitimate discussion in the churches.

d. This course of action is in keeping with that taken by the Synod of 1961 regarding the report on the doctrine of infallibility. (*Acts*, 1961, pp. 78-79). (Note: All of the above recommendations were adopted at the June session of the Synod. The following section was before Synod on August 30. HCH)

##### D. Actions with Respect to Professor Dekker

###### 1. Preliminary Observations:

a. Especially the following statements of Professor Dekker have caused extensive discussion and controversy in the churches:

1) "There is one love of God and this one love is redemptive in nature." "God loves all men with a redemptive love." (Agenda, pp. 390, 391)

2) "The atonement itself is inherently universal" and "there is neither need nor warrant for retaining the concept of limited atonement, as it has been traditionally used among us." (Letter to Study Committee, Nov. 17, 1967, Agenda, 1967, pp. 390, 407-8.)

3) "We may say to every man individually, 'Christ died for you.'" "When I say, 'Christ died for you' to any man, I mean to say that Christ has actually suffered for his sins and has in that sense expiated his guilt. If, however, the word 'expiate' is intended by definition to include the idea of *effectuation*, which to my mind it need not include, I would not want to use the word expiation to describe what Christ has done for all men." (Agenda, p. 409)

b. After long consideration and much discussion with Professor Dekker, members of the Study Committee on Doctrinal Matters, and others, your advisory committee is convinced that Professor Dekker has erred in making ambiguous statements and using them in an abstract way.

###### 2. Recommendations:

That Synod admonish Professor Dekker for the ambiguous and abstract way in which he has expressed himself in his writing on the love of God and the atonement:

###### Grounds:

a. His writings have resulted in considerable misunderstanding and confusion within the churches concerning the doctrine of the atonement.

b. His presentation of his views has resulted in widespread uncertainty concerning his adherence to the creeds.

###### E. Conclusion:

###### Recommendation:

That Synod declare that the decisions taken under "C" and "D" of this report constitute its answer to Overtures 20A-20Z, 20aa and 20bb, and to the appeal letter of Mr. J. Bosman, Sr.

(Note: Only the recommendations, of course, were adopted. I included the "Preliminary Observations" under "D" for background. Various editorial corrections were made in the committee report, especially in the quotations of Prof. Dekker's statements. However, I took careful notes; and I believe that all the corrections are correctly included above. HCH)

#### ECCLESIASTICALLY RIDICULOUS

All will recognize that, though the decision in C-3 is not to be minimized, the substance of the entire decision is embodied in D-2, the few lines which begin, "That Synod admonish Professor Dekker for the ambiguous and abstract way...."

This I characterize as ridiculous!

It is unworthy of any ecclesiastical assembly, let alone the broadest gathering of the denomination!

It is an insult to all concerned!

Consider the situation. Consider that this matter has been before the ecclesiastical public for some four and a half years. Consider that three years ago Synod itself appointed a committee to study the doctrinal expressions of Professor Dekker in the light of Scripture and the confessions. Consider that this committee spent two years in preparing its report and another year in polishing it. Consider that the committee had arrived at the studied conclusion that Professor Dekker's expressions were not warranted by Scripture and the confessions. Consider that many consistories and classes expended time and energy in studying this report and expressing themselves about it. Consider that Synod had on its table several overtures expressing agreement with the Study Committee's propositions, some of which made reference to the Formula of Subscription and asked for the suspension of the professor or for retraction under penalty of suspension. Consider that even those overtures which sought postponement or asked for no binding doctrinal declarations recognized, in a sense, the seriousness of the issues involved. Consider that in June the Synod, though its advisory committee had

met for long hours, had not been able to come to a decision, but had deemed the matter so very serious that the extraordinary measure had been followed of taking a recess and of reconvening Synod in August. Consider that thousands of hours and thousands of dollars have been expended on the matter. Consider that on the floor of the 1967 Synod not a few voices had been raised which at first insisted that the doctrinal expressions of Professor Dekker *must* be declared to be contrary to the confessions. Consider that one delegate (was it not Dr. Rutgers?) had even declared the day before this decision was taken that if Prof. Dekker's position was not declared anti-creedal, he and others would be compelled to go up and down the country speaking. Consider that heretofore no one had fingered this claimed ambiguity and abstractness as the root of the problem, in spite of the long hours spent in study.

And now the Synod comes up with this decision! In a few hours and in a few lines, it says that the sum and substance of the entire Dekker Case is that its own seminary professor has been ambiguous and abstract in expressing himself about the love of God and the atonement!

Imagine!

Synod has in effect decided that there was no serious question of Scripture and the confessions involved whatsoever.

Yes, yes! Our professor was a little foggy in the way he expressed himself. He had some expressions capable of a double meaning. And he engaged in some abstract theoretical considerations. And he was not very discreet: he should have been more careful to make his meaning clear. The result has been "considerable misunderstanding and confusion within the churches concerning the doctrine of the atonement" (not about the love of God?). The result has been, too, that there has been "widespread uncertainty concerning his adherence to the creeds." But really, you have all been nimcompoops! There was no serious problem here about Scripture and the confessions. You only *thought*

there was a problem. And we will assess the chief blame on our professor. We will tick him on the fingers for not being clear and for engaging in abstract speculation.

And now let everyone get back to normal. All the sound and fury were really about nothing. The journalistic discussion may also continue, but let the professor guard against ambiguity and abstractness.

I ask: is this the ecclesiastical manner?

Is it indeed the business of a synod to decide whether one has been clear or ambiguous in his expressions, whether one has been abstract or concrete?

Or is it rather the business of a synod to decide whether one's doctrinal expressions are in harmony with or opposed to Scripture and the confessions?

I ask: was the former matter on Synod's Agenda? Or was Synod confronted by numerous overtures to decide on the latter question and by recommendations from its own Study Committee to do the same?

It would have been at least more honorable if the Synod had faced up to the motion (and this motion was before Synod both in June and in August) to declare Professor Dekker's doctrinal expressions to be unwarranted in the light of Scripture and the confessions. This motion would undoubtedly have been defeated. But the defeat would have been more honorable.

Now they sought to avoid a showdown.

And as we shall see when we enter into the material of the decision, the showdown was not really avoided. Instead, the opponents of Dekker's position conceded. The opposition faded. It collapsed completely, — and dishonorably!

Indeed, Synod came to the birth....and brought forth the wind!

And those who are in earnest about the rank Arminianism taught by their seminary professor and others, which has now been implicitly stamped with Synod's approval, should rise up in holy indignation! This is their solemn duty!

## IN HIS FEAR—

# The People That Sat In Darkness

by Rev. J. A. Heys

In a limited sense you can properly say of these brethren and sisters on the island of Jamaica, to whom the Mission Board and the Synod sent Elder Zwak and undersigned, that they are a people that sat in darkness and now have seen a great light.

You can say that without fear of offending or insulting them. For they have said it themselves and continue to say it.

A tourist promotion pamphlet entitled "Focus on Jamaica" assures you that there are churches of every

faith on the island. Listed for the capital city of Kingston are The Anglican Church, Baptist, Assembly of God, Congregational, Christian Science, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Salvation Army, and Jewish Synagogue. The addresses together with the times of the services are listed. Montego Bay, the city in the heart of the tourist section, and where some fifteen jets bring tourists every day, lists eight of the above churches, omitting the Salvation Army (although we did see one there) and the Jewish Synagogue. Ocho Rios, another resort area to the east of Montego Bay, lists Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Presbyterian. It cannot, therefore, be said in the broadest sense that the peoples of this beautiful island sat in darkness because the knowledge of the truth, the light of God's Word, was never beamed upon the island. But as far as the Reformed Faith is concerned, as far as the Reformed Confessions are concerned, they sat in darkness and now freely acknowledge that they have seen a great light. This they confess to their own people, and this they have confessed to us.

We have a tape recording (which might perhaps be circulated among our churches and their societies to acquaint our people with the sentiments of some of the office bearers in Jamaica.) and letters in which they declare that they now have revealed unto them that which before this time was hidden from their spiritual eyes. We also recall the statement of one of the ministers to his congregation at the morning service of July 16 to the effect that his only regret about learning this Reformed Faith is that he did not hear about it and receive it when he was younger. The truth in the Catechism (Heidelberg) and the Canons they also enjoyed and appreciated. In fact the last week of our sessions of instruction to the three ministers, Revs. Elliott, Frame and Ruddock, with Elder Green and Deacon Binns sitting in, they unanimously pleaded for more instruction from the Canons.

Everywhere in their churches (although in the bigger cities there was a definite Anti-American feeling and calls to us, "White man, go home!") we were well received with spiritual gladness. A hearty welcome was always there. In the Reading Church at Lacovia all the Sunday School children were ready; and as we entered the church building, they sang a song of welcome to us and had bouquets of flowers for our wives. In the Islington church (both the Reading and Islington churches are in Rev. Elliott's district) the congregation was humming a hymn tune (I believe that Rev. Elliott said that it was "Perfect Peace".) while we were yet a few feet from the open door of the church and until we were fully seated. A human organ with rich harmony rather than a mechanical pipe organ greeted us with sweet music and reverent strains. People came from far and wide to worship in the Islington Church on July 23, the same in the Friendship Hill church of Rev. Ruddock on August 13, in Rev. Elliott's churches of Reading and Santa Cruz on August 6, and that last Sunday, August 20, in Rev. Frame's church at Lucea. In fact at this service all three ministers were also there to hear the "Fare-

well Sermon" and a goodly number of elders and deacons from the churches of all three ministers. At the airport the next morning to see us off was a goodly band of brethren and sisters and even their children, a group of some fifteen in all.

These combined meetings or services helped for us to have contact with all the brethren and sisters in these Protestant Reformed Churches in Jamaica, since time and the inaccessibility of some of the churches made it impossible to preach in them all. As it was, we travelled often for an hour and a half to go only 35 miles to church on Sunday morning. The road was over two mountain ranges with winding, twisting, climbing and descending curves, lined with people and often with animals. These drives were hectic combats with new hazards around each blind curve, and we appreciated the driving of Elder Zwak, which left us with a somewhat clear mind and calm nerves for preaching the Word. The Dan Ryan expressway in Chicago and the Los Angeles freeway system afford relaxed driving in comparison. The goats that cluttered the roads two years ago have almost disappeared from the roads, but children play on the roads, a steady stream of humanity walks on either side, the friendly chat is held there, and courting couples meet to talk in the roadway. And all this for a good reason. There are no shoulders to the road as a rule. Either the one side of the road is lined with steep and sharp rock out of which the road has been carved, or lush, tropical vegetation crowds to the very road itself. And on the other side you either find the same tall and thick growth or a sheer drop from 500 to 1,000 feet straight down! Where will the children play, the people walk, the neighbourly conversation be held? Add to this the fact that the bus and truck drivers deliberately and consistently take the middle half of the road — and often at the bridges and at the curves the road is wide enough only for the bus or truck — and you understand a little of the problem. Buses and trucks you try to meet before or after the curve or bridge. A strange thing it is, as far as the other drivers in their cars are concerned, that the Jamaicans are never in a hurry until they get behind the wheel. Then they must get there in nothing flat and must pass on blind curves and hills; and you better slow up and let them in or else you are involved in a three-car collision. We once read in a newspaper report that the "Jamaicans drive like maniacs." It certainly is not overstating it to say that we have observed countless numbers of drivers who throw ALL caution to the wind when they get behind the wheel of a car. More than once we said to each other, "These Jamaican drivers surely like to live dangerously." We have seen the results of many collisions. We saw a dead donkey, the victim of a hit-and-run driver's folly. We had a car speed around us on a blind curve, and then came ourselves around a few more curves to see the car stand there and a cow lying in the road in such poor shape that it had to be shot. That more people were not killed only amazed us.

We witnessed a river baptism of two adults at Islington. At the Reading, Lacovia church, mentioned above, where the Sunday School children sang "Wel-

come" to us, we witnessed the baptism of two infants, Rev. Elliott officiating. We missed a river baptism at Friendship Hill due to the fact that it was scheduled for 6 a.m. and was an hour and a half's drive away from our place of lodging. Let it be pointed out that lodging can be had in only a few selected places on the island. And with the high humidity and oppressive heat preaching twice (We did preach three times with less travel involved on July 16) is sufficient without getting up at 3:30 a.m.

There is one matter which we plan to report to the Mission Board which we also like to give widespread publication here in the hope that something can be done before the 1968 Synod meets. These brethren and sisters are struggling to learn the Psalter songs but have not made much progress. The reasons for this are the following: (1) Many of the older people either have difficulty reading because of lack of opportunity when they were young to attend school; or because of failing eyesight and lack of money to get corrective lenses; or because the lighting in their church buildings is poor. In many a church where electricity is out of the question a kerosene or gasoline lantern is hung over the pulpit, leaving the rest of the building, and the back corners especially, very dark. (2) Even for these — and the children are going to school and learning to read well — who can look at a Psalter, there are far too few to go around. What happens is that while the people are singing the last note of one line, the minister must call out in a loud voice the next line, which is then remembered and sung by the congregation. It might be interesting for our people to hear that on the tape. (3) They have no musical instruments except drum and cymbal. In one or two churches there is a guitar — which does not help to give the melody and is not loud enough to carry the congregation, or a trumpet, but no one to read music. We all have had the experience in our own churches with big, powerful pipe organs that when an unfamiliar tune is called for, the singing is weak and even breaks down. What then when you have no organ or piano or trumpet to carry the melody loud and clear? They try, and many of our Psalter numbers they sing with tunes they know and many of them to the same tune; but it takes time.

One of the elders of Rev. Frame's church at Lucea

suggested, or rather requested us to bring this to the Mission Board's attention and to see whether a trumpet or two could be donated to them and lessons be given to some talented young man or woman to learn to be able to carry the congregation with the tunes of the Psalter. By the way, a sister in Grand Rapids also suggested this. Some of our Sunday Schools might desire to take up such a worthwhile project. (An accordion would also do well.) So, if any have such instruments to donate, and if there are Sunday Schools that are willing to underwrite music lessons for talented young men or women to learn these instruments, they can contact the undersigned, and the hearts of the brethren and sisters in Jamaica will be gladdened and we will help them sing the songs of Zion. Do not be afraid of donating too many instruments. There are over twenty congregations and their children are born with rhythm in their souls, love music and have keen minds and clever hands. Learning is no problem for them.

But let us be thankful to our covenant God that we may have had this opportunity to share with these peoples of another race and color the glorious Reformed heritage which is ours. They have much to learn yet of that truth; and they are eager to learn more. They have seen the light and have expressed their prayers that they may live in this Reformed Faith and die in it. We have no reason to believe that they are not sincere. Elder Green and Deacon Binns expressed the same sentiment that the ministers did. The peoples walked miles and miles or left at 2 a.m. by truck and bus to hear the preaching of a Protestant Reformed sermon and not to be entertained or amused.

In a day and age when countless thousands are eager to discard that Reformed Faith and change it for the babblings of men, our covenant God has given us a people that does not fully understand it, does not see all its implications yet but has tasted it and liked what they tasted. We have double reasons to be thankful. We have seen that great light ourselves for years, from childhood onward. And we have had the opportunity and DO HAVE the opportunity to let that light shine more brightly before others who ask for it. Truly in this respect also it is more blessed to give than to receive. And it is in His fear to do so.

## TRYING THE SPIRITS—

# Dispensationalism and the Two Testaments

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

This writer, while being taught the whole scheme of Dispensationalism, was so instructed as to see great diversity in Scripture, but was never grounded in the underlying unity of Holy Writ. In those days, his teachers did not inculcate the truth that the Bible con-

tains one system of truth, one doctrine, one way of salvation, one standard of righteousness, one rule of faith and conduct, one God, one Mediator, one divine covenant, one divine purpose, one people, one promise, one Gospel, one general assembly and church, one

election of grace, one true Israel, one Zion, one nation, and one kingdom. The Scripture with its different parts is one organic whole. It originated with one controlling Mind. God used many mouthpieces and many pens to produce it (Heb. 1:1; II Pet. 1:21), yet He is its sole Author. The light is manifold in its many constituent colors, yet is one. God is a trinity, which means that He is a tri-unity and a unity that is trinal. Christ has two natures, the humanity and the Deity united in one Person. The Scripture has two testaments forming the one Word of God. Its message is therefore one!

We may then expect the Bible to be self-consistent and its various passages harmonious, not in conflict. When we read that passage which the world invariably misunderstands, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot," (Ex. 21:24) we are not to think that Jesus proposed an actual physical interpretation either of it or of His own words relative to the passage: "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." (Mt. 5:39) The judgments "eye for eye," etc., are to be understood in the sense of fines exacted and compensation paid, as the context shows (vv. 22, 30), i.e., in the sense of "an eye (fine) for an eye (damaged or lost)." Nor are we to suppose that Jesus' words in Matthew do cancel the Exodus passage. That would not be justice to the injured party, especially one being a woman with child. Both fines and compensations in connection with the dictates of justice are even in the Christian dispensation expected to be paid. It is therefore far from what these two passages teach to claim that they can only be reconciled by viewing them as belonging to different ages and different people. That would render most of Scripture no longer "profitable" (II Tim. 3:16f) and the O.T. no more valuable than an out-of-date catalog.

The Scofield Reference Bible on this passage remarks in the margin, "The provision in Exodus is *law*, and righteous; the N.T. passages, *grace*, and merciful." Such a mutually exclusive antithesis do Dispensationalists make between law and grace that the implication is, as in this note, that under the law men were saved *because* of obedience, while under grace they were saved *without* obedience. This makes the gospel clear antinomianism, and the law nothing but a covenant of works, i.e., pure legalism. The note also makes Scofield inconsistent, for there he refers to Matt. 5:38-44 as *grace*, whereas in his introduction to the four gospels he states that "the Sermon on the Mount is *law*, not grace." Which assertion are we to believe, the one on page 97, or the one on page 989? In addition to the latter statement, Scofield writes that "the *doctrines* of grace are to be sought in the epistles, not in the gospels..." This takes the doctrine of Christ away from this present dispensation and assigns it to that of "law," thus making Jesus an O.T. teacher and one of Judaism, not of Christianity.

There certainly is no clash between Ex. 21:24 and Mt. 5:38-44, for the one passage deals with rules of justice administered by judges (cp. Ex. 21:22 with Dt. 19:18-20) and the other with rules of conduct required

of individuals. When Jesus said, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," (Mt. 5:44) He was not teaching some higher ethic than that found in the O.T., but the *same* O.T. virtue. Then, too, it was commanded, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink." (Prov. 25:21) Paul taught nothing different from Jesus. "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath." (Rom. 12:17-19) This is nothing new, for the O.T. teaching is the same. See Lev. 19:18. David was thankful for being kept from taking vengeance. (I Sam. 25:33) The same spirit is found often in Proverbs: "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work." (20:22; 24:17, 29)

It is also maintained by the dispensationalist that the imprecatory Psalms breathe another spirit than that of the gospel of grace. Reference is to, "The enemies of the Lord shall...consume away." (Ps. 37:20) "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered; let them also that hate Him flee before Him." (68:1) "O Lord...Thine enemies shall perish." (92:9) "O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones." (137:8, 9) But the N.T. has its own aspect of severity. Peter in exposing a false prophet in the Church denounced under the sanction of the Head of the Church, "thy money perish *with thee*." (Acts 8:20) Paul, too, pronounced a curse upon every one who does not love Christ. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema..." (I Cor. 16:22) He pronounced a blessing upon all who love Him. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." (Eph. 6:24) Then there is the double curse denounced against any who preach another gospel. (Gal. 1:9, 9) Of the Concision, or Mutilators of the doctrine of sovereign grace, he said, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." (Gal. 5:12) Concerning Alexander the coppersmith who did him much evil, he prayed, "the Lord reward him according to his works." (II Tim. 4:14) As to Babylon, the anti-Christian world-power, the cry is from heaven against her, "Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double!" (Rev. 18:6) The law of retaliation is not only the same in both testaments, but is part of the faith of the saints (13:7, 10)! Dispensationalists hold to such strange contrasts that one wonders whether they ever read their Bibles carefully!

But what we have just shown, especially in the light of the last supporting texts of Scripture, will not be acceptable to the tastes of the natural man, nor the sentimental-minded, who will not be governed by the Word of God. This effeminate age would do away with capital punishment, turn prisons into country clubs, furnish convicts with cells and dining rooms on the hotel order, provide them with radio and television, and grant them conjugal rights. In such we will not

find a holy hatred against anything which happens to be dishonoring to God. Nor will they agree with this: "Surely Thou wilt slay the wicked, O God. (Depart from me, therefore, ye bloody men!) For they speak against Thee wickedly, and Thine enemies take Thy name in vain. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? Am not I grieved with those that rise up against Thee? I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies." (Ps. 139:19, 22)

As we previously showed, the law *of God* and the grace *of God* cannot be opposites, for that would put God in conflict with Himself. It is not merely law, but also grace that "it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us." (Deut. 6:25) However, the "dispensational teaching" is that this is the very opposite of what we read in the N.T., viz., "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." (Rom. 3:20) The Deuteronomy passage is said to teach a salvation dependent upon what we *do*, while the gospel teaches salvation by what God has *done*. Law and grace are then made to be one hundred and eighty degrees to each other. Then if they are opposite statements, what was once true must now be false. But since they are not in any conflict, they are both true! The two passages must not be pitted against one another. It has never been true that salvation depended on what man could or should do. Salvation was never by works. The ground of salvation has never been human merit or creature performance. That goes for the so-called Dispensations of Innocence (Job 25:4,5; 15:15; 4:18), Conscience (Gen. 4:4), of Human Government (6:8), of Promise (15:6), of Law (Ex. 20:1-17, 24), and of the Kingdom (Eph. 1:10). The truth of Deut. 6:25 is also insisted on in Matt. 5:20; James 2:20-26 and I John 2:29. It sets forth the godly conduct and Christian walk of the believer. Romans 3:20 keeps

the matter straight. It affirms that *the rule of conduct* can never become *the ground of acceptance* before God.

Harmony between the two testaments is further evident in, "He believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness," (Gen. 15:6) and "By Him all that believe are justified." (Acts 13:39) There is the same doctrine of justification by faith. Of old God addressed His people, "Ye are strangers and sojourners," (Lev. 25:23) just as He does now, "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims." (I Pet. 2:11) Under law, "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." (Deut. 33:9) Under grace it is no different; we know "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." (Eph. 1:18) Moses knew that "all His saints are in Thy hand," (Dt. 33:3) just as John knew "they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." (Jn. 10:28) The exhortation then was, "Yield yourselves unto the Lord," (II Chron. 30:8) and under the gospel is, "Yield yourselves unto God." (Rom. 6:13) Who is not familiar with "Lydia...whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul?" (Acts 16:14) It was always so! "And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles." (Neh. 7:5) Jesus promised, "the spirit of truth...will guide you into all truth." (John 16:13) Still it was a fact in the old covenant, "Thou gavest also Thy good Spirit to instruct them." (Neh. 9:20) John refers to a future blessing, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (I John 3:2) David had the same outlook, "I will behold Thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." (Ps. 17:15) We are now "strengthened with might in the inner man." (Eph. 3:16) But the O.T. saint had, principally, the same blessing. "Thou answerest me and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." (Ps. 138:3) The Bible knows but one Gospel!

## FROM HOLY WRIT—

# The Book of Hebrews

by Rev. G. Lubbers

Hebrews 3:7-15 (continued)

### COVENANT-BREAKING: DEPARTING FROM THE LIVING GOD (Hebrews 3:12-15)

All unrighteousness is sin, and sin is the breaking of God's commandments, transgressing the law of God. However, there is a sin unto death and there is also a sin not unto death. This is a basic distinction which the Bible itself teaches us and which we should ever keep in mind, both for theological reasons and for the sake of our soul's peace and tranquility. Of this the apostle John writes, "If any man see his brother sin

a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death." (I John 5:16, 17) And our Savior Himself signals a sin which is unforgivable: it is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Thus we read "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speak-

eth a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." (Matthew 12:31, 32)

In the passages which we have just quoted we are clearly taught that we must distinguish, according to Scripture, between sin and sin. Bearing this in mind we shall be in a position to understand the teaching and admonition of the writer to the Hebrews in this section. For, as we have seen, we are partakers of Christ and of the heavenly calling, if we hold fast to the beginning of our confidence and hope firm to the end. He that endureth to the end shall be saved! (Matthew 24:13) We noticed, too, that this did not mean that salvation is based on our persevering, but rather that our persevering shows the genuineness of our faith; it is the infallible proof of true, saving faith.

Since there is true faith which cannot fall away from the living God, and "temporary faith" which must needs fall away from the living God, it is incumbent upon us to beware lest there be an evil heart of unbelief in us. We have noticed in former essays that we must examine and prove ourselves whether we are in the faith, walk in the faith and cling to the living God in Christ crucified. For it is either clinging more and more to Christ crucified as one who "liveth and believeth," or it must needs be an evil heart of unbelief which reveals itself in apostatizing from the living God. This is the implication of the teaching of Jesus to Martha in John 11:26, "And whosoever liveth and believeth shall never die. Believest thou this?" For no man can truly believe unless he is made alive with Christ (Ephesians 2:5, 6) For this reason it is also true that none can say in true and humble confession: "LORD, JESUS," except through the Holy Ghost, and no one, who speaks through the Holy Ghost, calleth Jesus: Anathema! (I Corinthians 12:2,3)

If true faith cannot be lost, why does the writer to the Hebrews admonish the readers to beware lest there should prove to be an evil heart of unbelief in any of them? Why must they beware against falling away from the living God? Is it not simply preposterous to suggest this? Not at all! What does it mean to "fall away from the living God?" As we have suggested above, there are two kinds of sins. There is a sin unto death, and there is a sin not unto death. To fall away from the living God is the sin unto death! It is the sin of an evil heart of unbelief. We must not confuse this sin with the sins of the weakness of the flesh of God's people in this world—as we all stumble and falter in many ways. These were the weaknesses of the people for whom the sacrifices were intended in the Old Testament. Such as came confessing these sins, pleading the covenant mercies of God, exactly did not fall away from the living God, but clung to him in filial love, ardent hope and earnest expectation. To fall away from the living God was Israel's sin at the mount when they made the golden calf with the words "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought you out of Egypt." It was the sin of the denial of God as their covenant God—a denial of the God who said from Horeb's brow "I am the Lord, thy God, which have

brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage." And this is the sin of an "evil heart of unbelief."

What is unbelief? The term in the Greek text is "apistia." It is the very opposite of the faith in Jesus Christ, the certain knowledge and the hearty confidence, that there is for me forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and eternal life, merely for the sake of Christ's merits. Such unbelief is rooted in an evil heart. It indicates that the tree is evil, and, therefore, can only bring forth evil fruit. For out of the fruit the tree is known! Unbelief can only come forth from an evil heart in which the love of God is not shed abroad. It is because of "unbelief" that the Israel of old could not enter into the promised land. (Hebrews 3:19) If faith receives all the benefits of Christ more and more, then unbelief is such that it is ever more rejecting the benefits of the covenant, yea, reveals itself as not sharing in these benefits. It is the peculiar nature of unbelief that it thrives in the very sphere and nurture where faith grows and flourishes. "Unbelief" may not speak in the church! Where unbelief reveals itself there is a hardening of the heart.

The great example of unbelief was that of Israel in the desert, that "generation" with which the Lord was angry for forty years. This generation was hardened through the deceit of sin. That is the key to the understanding of their conduct in the midst of so many manifestations of God's covenant faithfulness. What great wonders did not the Lord perform in their midst and before their very eyes. With His mighty arm God laid the Egyptians low by ten great plagues, and he made a path for them through the Red Sea, destroying the Egyptian host when they assayed to pursue Israel. With manna he fed Israel forty years from heaven, and he gave them to drink water from the rock. His cloud was with them by day, and His fiery pillar guided them and gave them light at night. He planted his tabernacle in their midst, and called Israel to the solemn feasts, and the morning and evening sacrifices. He gave them the priesthood of Aaron, instituting the priesthood and sacrifices. But evil hearts of unbelief only departed from the Lord more and more, as an evil and stiff-necked people.

And it was then that the Lord "said" by himself: always they do err in heart. Seeing they see and do not perceive, hearing they hear and do not understand! Even they provoked God to wrath for forty years, gainsaying the most High! And God therefore swore that they might not enter into the rest. About a million people died in the wilderness! The entire army which was numbered when Moses came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness. (Compare Numbers 1:45, 46) Graves, graves in the desert way where Israel stopped some thirty nine times! (Numbers 33:1-49)

Such was the great lesson of history, written for our example, lest we walk in the same ways of disobedience. (I Corinthians 10:11) It is written for us upon whom the end of the ages has come!

#### *TWO KINDS OF ISRAEL (Hebrews 3:16-19)*

Not all who went out of Egypt by the agency of

Moses were in the provocation. There were "some" who having heard the word of God were embittered. The rest believed and are accounted for the seed. Such was the history of Israel in the desert and such is the lesson which it teaches us according to the Scriptures.

Since the difference between the two seeds is one of faith and unbelief, and those who could not enter into the promised land in the days of Joshua were not able to enter in *because of* unbelief (*dia apistian*), it is the evil heart of unbelief which we must beware of. For unbelief is a sure sign of being reprobate Israel which *cannot* (*eeduneetheesan*) enter into the rest of God. In view of this it is, no doubt, the teaching here of Scripture that this "taking heed lest their be an evil heart of unbelief among you" implies two things.

First of all, as this pertains to the believers themselves, as believers. Ever there is the danger of being drawn away from the living God, by the devil, the world and our own flesh. Wherefore it is necessary that we exhort one another while it is called "today." For God works the grace of perseverance in his elect saints through exhortations and threatenings, as a part of the means of grace, the preaching of the Word as the key-power of the Spirit. Always and again the warning must be sounded against unbelief.

Secondly, should it appear that there are avowed unbelievers that arise in the church and preach the teachings of unbelief, and deny the Christ, and fall away from the living God and cause others to fall away, these must be put out of the church with the ban of God. Thus Moses instructed Israel of old in the book of the

law. For he who leaves the worship of the living God in Christ Jesus surely has turned to serve idols, and falls in the class of those described in the book of Deuteronomy 13:6-11, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers; namely the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, not hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him.....and thou shalt stone him with stones that he die, because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the land of bondage. And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this among you." Now surely heretics are not stoned in the New Testament church, but God does tell us to beware lest there be among us any with an evil heart which reveals itself in unbelief. The church must keep watch over doctrine and life in the church, and in that order.

The writer to the Hebrews thus warns the readers with the warnings of God's word. Thus we see in ourselves, in holding fast to the beginning of the confidence and hope firm to the end, that we are the house of God built upon the foundations of the apostle and prophets of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone!

## CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH—

# The Doctrine of Sin

## The Second Period, 250-730 A.D.

### The Pelagian Controversy

by Rev. H. Veldman

Hagenbach, writing on the opinions of the Latin theologians, during this period, and before Augustine, writes as follows:

During this period, as well as the preceding, the theologians of the Western church were more favorable than those of the Eastern, to the Augustinian doctrine. Even Arnobius speaks of a connatural infirmity, making man prone to sin. Hilary, and Ambrose of Milan, taught the defilement of sin by birth; Ambrose appealed especially to Ps. 51:5, in support of original sin, but without determining to what extent every individual shares in the common guilt. Nevertheless, neither of them excluded the liberty of man from the work of moral reformation. Even Augustine himself, at an earlier period of his life, defended human freedom in opposition to the Manicheans.

Augustine, in opposition to the Manicheans, particularly in disputation with the Manichean, Fortunatus, declares concerning the free will of man (ch. 22) the following:

I recognize and embrace the testimonies of the divine Scriptures, and I will show in a few words, as God may deign to grant, how they are consistent with my faith. I say that there was free exercise of will in that man who was first formed. He was so made that absolutely nothing could resist his will, if he had willed to keep the precepts of God. But after he voluntarily sinned, we who have descended from his stock were plunged into necessity. But each one of us can by a little consideration find that what I say is true. For today in our actions before we are implicated by any habit, we have free choice of doing anything or not

doing it. But when by that liberty we have done something and the pernicious sweetness and pleasure of that deed has taken hold upon the mind, by its own habit the mind is so implicated that afterwards it cannot conquer what by sinning it has fashioned for itself....Let us take two men, a good and a bad. As long as he is good he cannot yield good fruit. But that you may know that those two trees are so placed by the Lord, that free choice may be there signified, that these two trees are not natures but our wills, He Himself says in the gospel: "Either make the tree good, or make the tree evil." Who is it that can make nature? If therefore we are commanded to make a tree either good or evil, it is ours to choose what we will.

Augustine, in this quotation, appears to teach the freedom of the will. Of course, there is surely a certain freedom of the will. The will of the sinner is certainly free in its sinning. The sinner is not compelled, forced to sin. He sins willingly, voluntarily. He sins because he wills to sin. Man is not a stock and block. He is morally free. However, this is not the same as what we read in this quotation. We read, for example, the following: "But each one of us can by a little consideration find that what I say is true. ....If therefore we are commanded to make a tree either good or evil, it is ours to choose what we will." Later, in his controversy with Pelagius, Augustine taught the absolute bondage of the will, that the will of the natural man is wholly in the service of sin.

At this time, we wish to quote from the "History of the Christian Church," by Philip Schaff, in which this author draws a comparison between Pelagius and Augustine. We believe this quotation to be very interesting. In Volume III, 786 f.f., he writes the following:

Pelagius and Augustine, in whom these opposite forms of monergism were embodied are represented men, even more strictly than Arius and Athanasius before them, or Nestorius and Cyril after them. The one, a Briton, more than once convulsed the world by his errors; the other, an African, more than once by his truths. They represented principles and tendencies, which, in various modifications, extend through the whole history of the church, and reappear in its successive epochs. The Gottschalk controversy in the ninth century, the Reformation, the synergistic controversy in the Lutheran church, the Arminian in the Reformed, and the Jansenistic in the Roman Catholic, only reproduce the same great contest in new and specific aspects. Each system reflects the personal character and experience of its author. Pelagius was an upright monk (Of course, one may well wonder how upright a man really is, who taught heresy as Pelagius did. - H.V.) who without inward conflicts won for himself, in the way of tranquil developments, a legal piety which knew neither the depths of sin nor the heights of grace. Augustine, on the other hand, passed through sharp convulsions and bitter conflicts, till he was overtaken by the unmerited grace of God, and created anew to a life of faith and love. Pelagius had a singularly clear, though contracted mind, and the earnest moral purpose, but no enthusiasm for lofty ideals; and hence he found it not hard to realize his lower standard of holiness. Augustine had a bold and soaring intellect, and glowing heart, and only found

peace after he had long been tossed by the waves of passion; he had tasted all the misery of sin, and then all the glory of redemption, and this experience qualified him to understand and set forth these antagonistic powers far better than his opponent, and with a strength and fulness surpassed only by the inspired apostle Paul. Indeed, Augustine, of all the fathers, most resembles, in experience and doctrine, this very apostle, and stands next to him in his influence upon the Reformers.

The Pelagian controversy turns upon the mighty antithesis of sin and grace. It embraces the whole cycle of doctrine respecting the ethical and religious relation of man to God, and included, therefore, the doctrines of human freedom, of the primitive state, of the fall, of regeneration and conversion, of the eternal purpose of redemption, and of the nature and operation of the grace of God. It comes at last to the question, whether redemption is chiefly a work of God or of man; whether man needs to be born anew, or merely improved (And we may add to this that Augustine also championed the cause of God's unchangeable and sovereign counsel of predestination. - H.V.). The soul of the Pelagian system is human freedom; the soul of the Augustinian is divine grace. Pelagius starts from the natural man, and works up, by his own exertions, to righteousness and holiness. Augustine despairs of the moral sufficiency of man, and derives the new life and all power for good from the creative grace of God. The one system proceeds from the liberty of choice to legalistic piety; the other from the bondage of sin to the evangelical liberty of the children of God. To the former Christ is merely a teacher and example, and grace an external auxiliary to the development of the native powers of man; to the latter he is also Priest and King, and grace a creative principle, which begets, nourishes, and consummates a new life. The former makes regeneration and conversion a gradual process of the strengthening and perfecting of human virtue; the latter makes it a complete transformation, in which the old disappears and all becomes new. The one loves to admire the dignity and strength of man; the other loses itself in adoration of the glory and omnipotence of God. The one flatters natural pride, the other is a gospel for penitent publicans and sinners. Pelagianism begins with self-exaltation and ends with the sense of self-deception and impotency. Augustinianism casts man first into the dust of humiliation and despair, in order to lift him on the wings of grace to supernatural strength, and leads him through the hell of self-knowledge up to the heaven of the knowledge of God. The Pelagian system is clear, sober, and intelligible, but superficial; the Augustinian sounds the depths of knowledge and experience, and renders reverential homage to mystery. (Schaff declares here that the Pelagian system is clear and intelligible. This, of course, is true only in a very superficial sense of the word. Really, all Pelagianism and Arminianism is not clear and intelligible. Nothing that detracts from the glory of the alone sovereign God and the absolute hopelessness and impotency of the sinner is clear and intelligible. It is not clear and understandable to teach that the sinner can will both, the good and the evil; and it is certainly not clear and intelligible to teach that the living God, almighty and irresistible, desires to save all men and must be content with the salvation of but a few. This presentation simply does not make sense. - H.V.) The former is grounded upon the philos-

ophy of common sense, which is indispensable for ordinary life, but has not perception of divine things; the latter is grounded upon the philosophy of the regenerate reason, which breaks through the limits of nature, and penetrates the depths of divine revelation. The former starts with the proposition: *Intellectus praeceedit fidem* (intellect precedes faith - H.V.); the latter with the opposite maxim: *Fides praeceedit intellectum*. Both make use of the Scriptures; the one, however, conforming them to reason, the other subjecting reason to them. Pelagianism has an unmistakable affinity with rationalism, and supplies its practical side. To the natural will of the former system corresponds the natural reason of the latter; and as the natural will, according to Pelagianism, is competent to good, so is the natural reason, according to rationalism, competent to the knowledge of the truth. All rationalists are Pelagian in their anthropology (the doctrine of man, - H.V.); but Pelagius and Coelestius (a disciple of Pelagius, who in many ways outshone his teacher, - H.V.) were not consistent, and declared their agreement with the traditional orthodoxy in all other doctrines, though without entering into their deeper meaning and connection. Even divine mysteries may be believed in a purely external mechanical way, by inheritance from the past, as the history of theology, especially in the East, abundantly proves.

The true solution of the difficult question respecting

the relation of divine grace to human freedom in the work of conversion, is not found in the denial of either factor; for this would either elevate man to the dignity of a self-redeemer, or degrade him to an irrational machine, and would ultimately issue either in fatalistic pantheism or in atheism; but it must be sought in such a reconciliation of the two factors as gives full weight both to the sovereignty of God and to the responsibility of man, yet assigns a preeminence to the divine agency corresponding to the infinite exaltation of the Creator and Redeemer above the sinful creature.

To the above we wish to add the following. It is well to lay full emphasis upon both truths, the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. But we must not fail to lay full emphasis upon the sovereignty of God. And we must never explain the responsibility of man in such a way as to detract from the Scriptural truth of God's absolute sovereignty. This responsibility of man can never mean that the sinner is responsible in the sense that he can will the good and the evil. He is surely responsible, accountable for all his actions, but it must always be understood that he is conceived and born dead in sins and in trespasses. A church has never departed from the truth because it had laid full and proper emphasis upon the truth that God is God, and He alone.

## ALL AROUND US—

# A Summer of Violence

## Evidence of Apostasy

by Prof. H. Hanko

For many cities in the United States, the summer was long and hot. Looting, hatred, arson, sniping, and death were the order of the day. Negroes rose in ghetto after ghetto to challenge police and armed troops sent in to restore order. Perhaps the worst of the rioting occurred in Newark and Detroit where at least 68 people were killed, thousands injured and property damage rose to nearly one-half billion dollars. But rioting ranged across the country breaking out in at least fifty cities including Plainfield and Engelwood, Minneapolis, Grand Rapids, Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, Cambridge, New York, Erie, Phoenix, and Cincinnati. It was a strange and frightening experience to see, in this fair city of Grand Rapids, armed patrol cars traveling in groups of three and four race up and down the streets with rifles at ready to bring, if possible, some measure of peace.

Naturally, the country looked around for the cause

of this rioting. Surely, only in the hopes of finding the cause could there be hope of a solution to a most serious problem confronting the nation. Some claimed that the cause was the frustrated hopes of Negroes who had been promised too much and had received too little with too much delay. Others looked at the terrible poverty characteristic of the ghettos and the desperation born of poverty as the chief cause. Yet again the blame was laid to outside agitation by the Stokely Carmichaels and the H. Rap Browns. And some thought they found evidence of organized conspiracy and strategic planning behind the outbreaks of violence.

It is entirely possible, of course, that all these things (and other factors as well) entered in to make this the worst summer of violence in this country since the days of the Civil War. But the fact of the matter is that we have not looked far enough if we are content with these explanations. There is

one factor which deserves chief emphasis but which is scarcely, if at all, mentioned either in the secular or the religious press. This factor is the increasing lawlessness of our times.

There are two facets to this matter, both of which are related to each other. On the one hand, there can be no doubt about it but that lawlessness is rapidly increasing and is becoming a problem of major proportions. Crime is yearly on the upswing. According to *Christianity Today*, United States Court of Appeals Judge Warren E. Burger reported that "people murder others in this country at the rate of more than one for every hour of the day. There are more than 140 crimes of theft every hour; assault and violence and rape grow comparably." The terrible part of it is that a large amount of real crime is committed by persons under twenty years of age — a fact full of ominous implications for the future. The whole civil rights movement also has been written in the language of civil disobedience. The generally accepted theory is that one may refuse to obey any law which he chooses to disobey as long as his reasons for doing so are somehow virtuous — although no one makes clear who is to decide when a man's conduct is virtuous. The whole history of the labor movement is a history written in blood and resounding with threats, boycotts strikes, picketing and coercion.

Yet this is not the chief point that needs to be made. There has always been violence in the world. And, while it is true that violence is increasing, nevertheless an important factor enters in which makes the age we now live in unique. This is that those who are responsible for maintaining the principles of authority and obedience have themselves abdicated and have chosen rather to encourage lawlessness. It is common knowledge that for many years the laws of the land have been stacked in favor of labor, legalizing lawless practices of the labor unions. The same is really true of the civil rights movement. Gradually the governments at national, state and local levels have closed their eyes to civil disobedience and have condoned resistance to law and order as a legitimate means of attaining the goal of equal rights. And, to top it all off, the church has stuck her nose into the matter and openly taken a position favoring civil disobedience as a proper method of gaining a desired end. Many denominations (including even the Reformed Church of America) and ecumenical organizations (such as the National Council of Churches) have gone on record as being on the side of those who resist and violate the law of the land. Breaking the law is preached from the pulpits. Revolution as a legitimate weapon in the social battles of the time is openly advocated by church men. A whole generation is being taught to sneer at authority, to choose for itself what laws it will obey and what laws it will break. In the ghettos a generation, witnessing the riots of their elders, are being driven to the conclusion that it pays to rebel, to burn, to shoot, to steal. For, rather than being punished, the result is a wave of pity and concern brings them not only the many things they have stolen, but freedom from punishment and

monetary and material rewards besides.

Another example comes to mind. There has recently been formed an organization busy with what the members call "Project Equality." To this organization belong leading churchmen, including many Presbyterians, but chiefly under the direction of the National Council of Churches. The aim of this organization is to force various companies to hire what the organization considers a proper proportion of negroes in relation to whites without any consideration of skills and reliability. Last spring Eastman Kodak was picketed, boycotted, and lambasted in the ecclesiastical press because some churchmen were of the considered opinion that this company was not hiring more negroes. A great deal of force and coercion were brought to bear against the company, and the entire project was spearheaded by the church. Laws were violated, violence resulted, but it was all in the name of religion.

When those who are supposed to be upholding the principles of authority and obedience turn their backs upon their responsibilities and openly advocate disobedience, what, pray tell, can this nation expect? Is it strange that race riots result? Is it so difficult to understand destruction of property, looting, arson, sniping and all the other horrors of racial violence breaking out in our cities when lawlessness, as a fog, pervades the very atmosphere of our commonwealth? If the country is staggering in fear at what the next year might bring, it had better face up to the fact that the government and the church itself bear a great measure of responsibility. The church and state must not wring their collective hands in alarm when these institutions themselves have been preaching that which causes such startling outbreaks of violence. Sow the wind, and there is no choice but to reap the whirlwind.

No doubt, in all this, the child of God must see also a clear sign of the return of Christ. Christ, in Matthew 24, speaks of lawlessness as being an indication of His speedy return. We must expect therefore, that in a world under the judgment of God, this will only increase.

#### EVIDENCES OF APOSTASY

There is no one who has any knowledge and love for the truth of Scripture who would dispute the fact that the church is fast departing from the faith. The evidences of it are too numerous to mention, much less keep up with. The *Standard Bearer* has consistently brought to the attention of our readers the apostasy in denominations of Reformed persuasion. But this apostasy goes on wherever one turns. Some unusually striking examples are referred to below — examples taken almost at random.

— In a recent issue of the *Presbyterian Journal* mention was made of a change of attitude towards the conversion of the Jews. Scripture teaches, of course, that the salvation of the Jews as well as the Gentiles is in Christ. But this view is evidently being challenged. At a session of the 1967 annual convention of the International Association of Conservative Rabbis, this question was discussed. A Roman Catholic made the following remark:

I share the view of those Catholic scholars who think that an effort to convert Jews to Christianity is not permissible in the light of sound theology.

A representative of the National Council of Churches said:

How can any Christian have the unutterable gall to invite a Jew to accept what had been the cruelest kind of hell to him and his forebears throughout all these years? When we add to this the fact that conversion itself has brought to the Jew far more misery than joy, how can we possibly be so callous and unthinking?

This is a far cry from Peter's words: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

— The trial of Bishop James Pike is evidently about to come to an end, favorable to the heretical bishop. Last October Pike was accused correctly of denying such fundamental beliefs as the doctrines of the trinity and the virgin birth. The House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church branded Pike's views as irresponsible, and Pike demanded a heresy trial to treat his case. The presiding bishop, fearing a heresy trial and the publicity it would bring to the church appointed a committee of three bishops, five theologians, two social scientists and a journalist to examine whether it was still possible to be a heretic in this modern age. This committee has recently reported. Some quotes from the report:

Any risks the church may run by fostering a climate of genuine freedom are minor in comparison to the dangers it will surely encounter from any attempts at suppression, censorship or thought control. The church should not be, and does not want to be, easily betrayed into dealing with honest exploration and experiment as if they were sins.

The committee made a distinction between "hardened positions which deserve to be called errors" and "adventurous answers which may be mistaken." Pike's views were included in the latter group. But only the former group should warrant heresy trials. Even then, the committee proposed alterations in the machinery of the church which would make it as difficult as possible to call such a trial. Pike has agreed to withdraw his request for a heresy trial if this report which completely exonerates him will be accepted by the General Convention.

— At the assembly of the National Council of Churches meeting in Miami last December a poll was taken of the 223 voting delegates concerning their religious beliefs. The following results (taken from *Christianity Today*) were published.

	Doubts No Doubts No answer		
"I know that God really exists"	33%	66%	1%
"Jesus is the Divine Son of God"	36%	63%	1%
"There is a life beyond death"	31%	66%	3%
"Miracles actually happened just as the Bible says they did"	62%	25%	13%

This organization, of which one-third have doubts about the existence of God and the divinity of Christ and of which almost two-thirds have doubts about the miracles of Scripture, is the leading voice of Protestantism in this country.

— The Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) has, with the possible exception of the Wisconsin Synod, been considered one of the most conservative church bodies in the country — maintaining the infallibility of Scripture, the truth of creation and the other fundamentals of the Christian faith. There has been strong suspicion among some that this is no longer the case. An independent paper, *Lutheran News*, has been pointing out with regularity the liberal inroads that have been made in the church. But always those in positions of leadership have denied the charges. But last summer's convention proved the critics right. We quote, in part, from *Newsweek*.

The old environment was the clannish atmosphere of small Midwestern towns where, until a generation ago, most Missouri Synod Lutherans spoke in the accents of their European ancestors, prayed with the fervor of German Pietists, defended to the comma every jot of the traditional Lutheran confessions and looked upon other Christians — including other Lutherans — as less than full citizens in God's kingdom. Even now, the church remains aloof from the National Council of Churches and maintains only vague relations with its confessional kin in the Lutheran Church of America and the American Lutheran Church.

But in the new religious climate created by the ecumenical and social-action movements, Missouri Synod Lutherans last week found themselves moving with the times. On the convention floor, moderates turned back resolutions from Biblical fundamentalists who sought to have the Synod affirm that "God created the world in six days of 24 hours each" and recognize the story of Jonah's rescue from the belly of a whale as a historical fact. They also gained overwhelming approval of a practical open-housing program under which funds secured from individual members and congregations will be used to support agencies — possibly including secular civil-rights groups — promoting integrated housing . . . .

At the end of the eight-day convention, the delegates found that they had brought their church into closer contact with other faiths — the secular society — than many had imagined. Though they put off till 1969 a decision to interchange pulpits with the American Lutheran Church, they did encourage local pastors to enter into "sincere dialogue" with Roman Catholics. And in discussing the war in Vietnam, the Synod shifted from militant support of Administration policies to a recognition that Vietnam dissenters have an equal right to be heard in the church . . . .

#### ATTENTION: OFFICE BEARERS

There will be an Office Bearers Conference, D.V., October 3, 1967, at 8:00 P.M., to be held at Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. All present and former officer bearers are invited to attend.

Our speaker, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, will speak on the subject "Consistorial Supervision of Catechism Instruction."

Arnold Dykstra, Sec'y.

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES—

## David With The Philistines

by Rev. B. Woudenberg

*And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.*

*And David arose and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath.* I Samuel 27:1, 2

One could wish that the spiritual life of God's children always moved from strength to strength. Sadly, it is not so. In fact, it seems only too often that the great peaks of spiritual attainment are followed by falls into the dark valleys of most wretched sin. It was after Noah had been saved by the flood, not before, that he yielded to the temptations of drunkenness. It was after Peter's great confession, immediately, that Jesus had to turn and rebuke him for advancing the cause of Satan. And so it was with David. Two of the most beautiful moments in his life were when he returned good to Saul for evil by sparing his life when he could have as well have plunged a dagger into his heart. To this day we can only look back and marvel at his restraint and dedication to his God. And yet, those moments too were followed by one of those sad lapses into unbelief.

It was not due to any new and greatly impending danger that threatened David's life; it was rather the gradual wearing of time under the never relenting tension of always having to be on the alert. Saul had changed his tactics. No longer did he go himself out in the hills to try to ensnare David with a large deployment of troops. Three times he had tried that, and the last two times it had only brought him to the extreme embarrassment of having to admit himself wrong and David right. Thus it was that he determined to stay himself at home while sending out small companies of troops to keep the pressure on David and look for an opportunity to take David's life. It was the most effective thing he could have done; for, while David was always quite ready and willing to plunge into the center of a great battle, this unrelenting pressure of constantly having to be on the alert finally began to tell on him. Particularly was this true because of the added responsibilities he had just taken upon himself. Formerly he had been in the field as a single man, his first wife Michal having remained by her father's palace; but now he had taken to himself two more wives who lived with him where he was. It had seemed at first to be a good thing for him to have one wife, and then two, to take care of his needs; but it was not long before he discovered that life in the caves of the

earth and the rigor of hasty mountainous travel were not the things for a woman; and soon he began to search for some alternative.

It was here that the trouble came in. David had made up his mind what he wanted to do. For this reason he avoided the one real answer which he had to all of his problems—consulting with God through the ephod of Abiathar the priest. But David had made up his mind what the best answer to his problem would be, and he knew full well that it would not be acceptable to God. Thus he merely avoided presenting his problem to God, for he had already said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand." Once again David had decided to seek his peace in the land of the enemy.

At first, as is so often the case with human wisdom, it appeared to David that his decision was really quite wise. He came to Achish, king of Gath, one of the smaller centers of life in the land of the Philistines, and was received with a most hearty welcome. Achish after all knew of David's reputation as a warrior, and what could be more enhancing to him than to have this same David living in his city under the care of his protection. And besides, having David's six hundred trained men added to his own force, increased his own power greatly. Willingly he received David into his city giving both him and his men place to stay and provisions.

It all seemed to be quite a comfortable arrangement, except that soon David discovered something he had not anticipated. These Philistines were heathen people, who commonly filled their city and its streets with all kinds of idolatry, adultery, revelry and wickedness. Living there in the midst of it brought out a deep feeling of revulsion within him; he knew it was a vexation of soul to the morally sensitive among his men, while it threatened the moral lives of those who were weaker. But what could he do? He was a guest in the city by his own choice, and surely this gave him no right to rebuke or advise those who were his hosts.

All he could do was stand there in dumb silence while the wickedness of Satan danced its wild dance around him.

It was not long before David knew full well that this situation could not be allowed to continue; and yet, having tasted the ease of this city living, he was not ready to return to the hills of Judah either. But David's mind was agile, and it wasn't long before he came up with what seemed to be a solution to this problem too. He went to Achish and said, "If I have found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?"

Once again this was a plan which seemed to have much to commend itself. Also Achish saw by this time that the present arrangement was not entirely ideal. Having a man of David's reputation with a trained force stronger than his own dwelling in his royal city was apt to leave the impression with many that he was more a forced captive than a willing host. And besides, just feeding a force of this size was almost more than the resources of his people could supply. It clearly would be better if David and his men could dwell in some lesser city of his territory where they would have to provide for their own needs. And there were cities suited to this function available too. There were a number of them on the border between Israel and Philistia whose ownership shifted back and forth between the two nations according to the prevailing balance of power. The people who remained living in them were only of the poorest kind who hardly seemed to belong to either nation and who were quite adaptable to both. Into one of them David and his men could go with a minimum amount of trouble, and still they would be under his dominion.

Thus it was that Ziklag was chosen. David and his men moved into it and very literally took over the town. It left them free to live the kind of life they wanted while remaining safe from Saul under the protection of the prevailing Philistine borders. Only one problem remained, and that was the obtaining of sufficient provisions. Even here, though, the solution was not hard to come by. There was a time honored means in that day by which any strong fighting force might obtain its livelihood—that was, by raiding and plundering nearby communities. Always before David had shied away from this kind of activity. It had seemed to be too much like stealing; and, living as they had in Israelitish territory, he did not feel free to harm his own people. He had always preferred to earn their upkeep by helping his brethren and protecting them from the plundering of others. But now he was living in Philistia. He could not go back to help his own people, and he had no heart for rendering the same service to these heathen. After all, would it really be so bad if his men would go out and obtain their upkeep in the same way every other fighting force did if only they were careful not to harm God's people?

There seemed to be no other answer; and soon David's men were spreading out in daily raids upon the nations just over the southern borders, the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites. It wasn't even

difficult for them to conclude that what they were doing was really a good thing. These nations were the traditional enemies of Israel, and to destroy them was sort of like helping the people of God. The only thing was that they had to be careful, for, although these nations were hostile to Israel, they were considered to be the friends of the Philistines. If ever the word should get around as to what they were doing, it would not look good for him, and it would reflect most unfavorably upon the hospitality of his host Achish. It forced them into the expediency of seeing to it that no one ever learned who was raiding these southern nations; and the only way of doing this was to kill every last person, men, women, and children, of every last city they entered. It was not an easy thing for a man of David's sensitivity—so cold-bloodily cruel—but what else was there to do? And did it matter as long as they were the enemies of the people of God?

Slowly David was slipping deeper and deeper into the morass of spiritual isolation. It began at that moment when he ignored the opportunity and responsibility which was his, to share his problems with his God, and instead went on to follow the way of his own choosing. It only led him farther and farther away from His God and deeper and deeper into situations and practices which he never would have considered before. And it had not stopped yet, for sin ever leads to more sin until it is stopped by the grace of God.

It was the accepted practice of that day that, whenever a raiding party returned with its plunder, a sizable part of what they had taken should be shared with their king. So it was to be expected that David, since he had placed himself under the dominion of Achish, should share his considerable booty with Achish too. Neither was David hesitant to do this, for he was fully appreciative of the kindness Achish had showed him. But always this presented a problem. Each time David came to Achish with his share of the plunder Achish was inclined to ask, "Whither have ye made a road to day?" It was a natural enough question, especially since David's efforts always brought back such sizable returns. The thing was that David simply could not answer the question honestly because those whom he had destroyed were the Philistines' friends. Thus David's answer would be, "Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites." In fact so desirous was David to give his claim a small element of truth that each day before making any attack upon the friends of the Philistines, he would first march his men into, and through one of these territories of Israel or their friends and then turn to the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites to take his plunder. Thus his road did pass where he claimed even though it was beyond this that he did his harm.

With Achish it worked wonderfully. Trusting the truthfulness of David, he was quite happy with the whole situation and said to himself, "He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever." David's life had become a ruse, a pretense, a living lie, for he had departed far from communion with his God.

## THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP—

# Vows and Charges

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

We conclude our discussion of the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons by directing attention yet to the vows which the office-bearers are required to take and the subsequent charge that is given to them and also to the entire congregation.

The speaking of vows is always a very grave and serious matter. This may indeed be emphasized, and we do well to keep it in mind especially with a view to other vows as well. We refer particularly to those spoken in connection with the baptism of children, confession of faith, marriage, etc. There is a danger of doing these things without a conscious realization of their seriousness. Vows thus spoken are soon forgotten and easily broken, resulting in the most tragic spiritual consequences. Examples of this may be found in every congregation, and the relationship between the neglect of vows and the spiritual impoverishment of the church is not difficult to see. We must never do these things out of custom or superstition, but always in the conscious awareness of their most profound significance.

The reason for this lies in the fact that the Word of God itself places a very strong emphasis upon the sacredness of vows. Scripture condemns the rash vow, and God Himself impresses upon us that fact that we cannot break our vows with impunity. In Deuteronomy 23:21 we read, "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee." Again, in Ecclesiastes 5:4 it is said, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay."

The vows which elders and deacons are required to take upon their ordination to office consists of their answering affirmatively to four important questions. (The Form presents a threefold vow, but the third part really contains two separate questions.) These questions we will not quote here in their entirety but offer the following paraphrase.

1. Are you conscious that you are called of God Himself unto your holy office in His church?

2. Do you believe the Bible is the only Word of God, and will you reject everything that is contrary to the Holy Scriptures?

3. Will you, to the best of your ability, carry out the functions of your office as described in the Form of Ordination?

4. Do you promise to lead a godly life, and, if you

should become remiss in your duty, will you submit to the admonition of the church?

Each of these questions contains matters that are worthy of a separate discussion. There are topics here that could be beneficially treated in an office-bearer's conference. For example: What constitutes the "Calling"? What is the "Word of God?" A Circumscription of the Office of Elders! Of Deacons! The Exemplary Life of the Office-bearer of the Church.

Time and space do not allow for a discussion of these here; but it must be understood that before this vow can be intelligently spoken, the candidate for the office must have a clear understanding of that which is involved in these questions. At that moment one will also realize his own inability to fulfill this vow, readily confess this, and look to God for all his help and strength. This vow must be spoken not in pride or on the basis of one's natural ability but in the humble attitude that God, Who calls, also provides the way and the means to realize the calling. For this reason, when the affirmative answer is given, the minister of the Word pronounces the divine benediction: "The Almighty God and Father, replenish you all with His grace, that you may faithfully and fruitfully discharge your respective offices. Amen."

The nature of this benediction is not that it expresses a mere wish or desire of the minister or congregation. It certainly does that, but there is much more. It must be construed in the same manner as we understand the apostolic benedictions that are used in our worship services. They are pronouncements of God Himself upon His Church through which He bestows His grace, mercy and peace. So here, God, through the office of the ministry of His Word in the church, graces the men whom He has chosen to office and endows them with the qualifying gifts of His Spirit. This signifies that God, through them, will perform His own work in and upon His church. In that light we may say with the Psalmist: "The work of our hands, establish Thou it."

The rest of this ordination form is devoted to exhorting those who have been ordained in the offices and also the entire congregation. These exhortations are necessary because as long as the church is in the present world, sin also characterizes her walk and life. She has not yet attained unto the perfection that is promised. The church must strive daily with the infirmities and weaknesses of the flesh. Always the things she would not, she does; and the things she would, she fails to do. There is need constantly to re-

mind her of her calling and enjoin her to more steadfastness. It is as was stated to me recently by one of the members of the church at the conclusion of the worship service. Commenting on the sermon, he said, "It isn't that we do not know these things, nor that we do not experience them; but we tend always to forget. We need to be told over and over again. We have so little of the new obedience." With respect to the matter at hand, we are so inclined to go through the motions of installing elders and deacons and then so quickly forget the significance of this most solemn rite in the church. Exhortations cannot be repeated too often. They constitute an essential part of the life of the church.

Our purpose at present is not to discuss the content of these exhortations in detail. Much of it has already been taken care of in connection with the Form of Ordination itself. These admonitions only direct our attention to our calling of God with respect to the offices of His Church.

Concerning the elders then it is to be noted that they are enjoined to "be diligent in the government of the Church, be watchmen over the house and city of God, be faithful to admonish and to caution everyone against his ruin, take heed that purity of doctrine and godliness of life be maintained in the Church." Did someone say that the elders have nothing to do? Do we hear sometimes that the work of the elders is easy? Those who say such things do not know what they are talking about. Even apart from the tremendous responsibility involved in this work, the labor itself elicits many tears; but they who are graced to be diligent and faithful in it have the confidence that in the harvest time they shall come again with joy. Great is their reward in heaven.

The deacons are also admonished to diligence. This virtue they must exercise both with respect to the collection of the alms and in the distribution of the same. They are called to "assist the oppressed, provide for the true widows and orphans, and show liberality unto all men, but especially to the household of faith." Here, too, the spiritual character of this office is emphasized: for the office of the deacon is a counterpart to that of the elder. The former must reflect His High-priestly function even as the latter emulates His Sovereign Kingship.

Thus both elders and deacons, exercising faithfulness and being good examples unto all the people as they hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, will purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus. Into His joy they enter, not simply in the sense of futuristic promise, but now as they labor in His cause in the consciousness of their high calling.

The congregation too must be exhorted. It is called to "receive these men as servants of God." We may pause momentarily here. Weigh these words carefully! Do you receive the men whom God has appointed in His Church to the offices as His servants? Do you receive from them the message they may have to bring to you as it is God's? Often this is not done, and then tragic consequences result. No, we do not say that when one who purports to be a servant of God seeks to

impose upon you the philosophies of men, you are to receive him. Not at all! Scripture tells us not to receive such in our homes but to reject them. But we are speaking of *faithful* servants who faithfully bring you the Word of God and faithfully minister to you Christ's mercy. Do not rebel against their service! Do not reject them, for in doing so you are rejecting God!

The congregation is further enjoined specifically to count the elders that rule well worthy of double honor and to submit to their inspection and government. This must be done *willingly*, not under coercion. Remember those that have the rule over you that they watch over your souls as those that must give account. Show them always a right spiritual attitude. Don't try to evade them as though their inspection of you is "none of their business." It is! They must make it their business for your sakes!

Likewise the congregation must provide the deacons with good means, so that they may be able to carry out their duties. The rich are to be charitable — not lovers of money but lovers of saints. They are to contribute liberally of the riches God has given them. And the poor must be thankful and respectful toward those that assist them. They must not murmur. They must be poor in spirit, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Altogether Christ must be followed for the food of the soul. Let all sin and iniquity be put away, and let each walk honestly in the calling wherewith God has called him. Doing this we shall receive the reward of righteousness, the crown that fadeth not away.

### THE CONCLUDING PRAYER

The motivation of this prayer is expressed in the statement: "But since we are unable of ourselves, let us call upon the name of the Lord." The prayer itself, therefore, is not a general congregational prayer but is a specific prayer which touches upon the immediate concern of the church in this matter of ordaining men to the offices. It contains various petitions for the elders and their needs, the deacons and their needs, and the congregation and its needs. Realizing that all these needs God alone is able to provide, and confidently trusting that He Who promised never to forsake or to leave His church will also provide, the church is led in prayer to the throne of grace to obtain these things.

Finally, the ultimate purpose of the prayer is not man, the church, our needs. All these things are subordinate to the one glorious objective which is also expressed in the prayer, namely, "that Thy holy name may thereby be magnified, and the kingdom of Thy Son Jesus Christ, enlarged." Of Him, and by Him, and through Him are all things; to Whom be glory forever. In His Name then the prayer is concluded with the well-known words of the prayer Jesus taught us to pray: "Our Father .... etc."

With this we conclude for the present our discussion of the Forms of Ordination. We hope, D.V., to discuss some other facets of our liturgy with which perhaps most of us are not as familiar. May this study enhance the beauty of our worship and enrich our entire life.

## WHAT OTHERS THINK—

It has been several months since "Reformed Dogmatics" came from the press, and various book reviews are beginning to make their appearance in magazines to which review copies were sent. Because the readers of the *Standard Bearer*, we feel, have a special interest in this publication, we thought it would be interesting and perhaps enlightening to publish these reviews in our magazine. Two reviews, one from *Christianity Today* and one from the *Reformed Journal*, appear below. These reviews will appear without comment and purely for the information of our readers. Not only is it usual policy not to editorialize about book reviews, but we also feel that "Reformed Dogmatics" speaks for itself.

The following review appeared in *Christianity Today* (June 23, 1967):

### Depravity That Is Total\*

*Reformed Dogmatics*, by Herman Hoeksema (Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966, 917 pp., \$14.95), is reviewed by M. Eugene Osterhaven, professor of systematic theology, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan.

Herman Hoeksema was undoubtedly one of the most unusual men in the American church. A highly gifted pulpit orator and theologian of the Dutch Reformed tradition, he left the Christian Reformed Church in the mid-twenties over the doctrine of common grace. He describes that doctrine in this way:

There is a grace, an operation of the Holy Spirit, whereby sin was restrained in man's heart and mind, as well as in the community, and in the power of which the natural man could accomplish all these good things. Of himself man could certainly do no good; he was totally depraved. But all men receive a certain grace; and through this grace man is not regenerated; his heart remains always evil. But the evil operation of his heart was restrained. Yes, what is more, he is somewhat changed to the good, so that in temporal, natural, and civil things he could do good before God.

Hoeksema would have none of this weakening of the doctrine of sin, as he saw it, and held for a doctrine of total depravity that was understood vertically (that the natural man is only evil, with no good at all in him) as well as horizontally (that man is depraved in every part of his being). Although this was Hoeksema's lifelong battle, he states his position in this text only where he feels he must do so, in the discussions of the image of God—which, incidentally, he denies in the broad sense—and of Adam's sin.

Only a careful study of Hoeksema's writings will bring out the manner in which he builds everything on the antithesis between elect and reprobate

(he is a thoroughgoing supralapsarian), declaring that reprobation is equally ultimate with election, that God wills both, that God's attitude toward the reprobate has never been anything other than hatred, and that whatever he brings into the life of the reprobate is brought there for the damnation of that person. This involved concatenation of ideas is not the only evidence of speculation in Hoeksema's thinking; one finds considerable amounts of it here and there. This is, of course, inevitable in any work of theological depth. The question concerns the kind of speculation and its limits.

Having pointed out what I see to be the weakness in Hoeksema's system, I will go on to say that there is a great deal of solid theology, and good theology, in this book. The authors he leans upon are almost entirely a few select persons within the Dutch Reformed tradition. Why should a man of his ability quote Anselm via Kuyper, except possibly because of the pressure of time? Hoeksema believes in a "system of truth" that is to be elaborated; rejects the proofs for God along with the idea of the immortality of the soul, the covenant of works, and certain traditional ways of handling topics in Reformed dogmatics; and always argues his own position with ability.

The extensive use of untranslated Latin and Dutch is lamentable, unless the volume is intended for a narrow range of readers. The considerable use of the biblical languages is commendable. Those who knew the author are aware of his linguistic facility, theological acumen, and capacity for work. This work, more than his dozen volumes on the Heidelberg Catechism, represents his system of theology. He wrote it during the thirty years that he taught in his own seminary while also serving as minister of a large congregation.

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The next review appeared in the *Reformed Journal* (May-June, 1967) and is here reprinted by permission:

*Reformed Dogmatics* by Herman Hoeksema. Grand Rapids, Mich.; Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1966. 872 pp., \$14.95. Reviewed by James Daane.

This is Herman Hoeksema's greatest book, and he did not live to see it published.

*Reformed Dogmatics* is the deposit of the mature thinking of an authentic theologian; it displays a breadth of thought and a richness of insight and originality little known to those who knew the author only in terms of that theological controversy which created his public image but overshadowed his theological stature.

Part I is a brief introduction to Dogmatics; in it Hoeksema describes the Name, Definition, Method, System, and Principles of Dogmatics. In Hoeksema's theology, the method is the thing to watch. He rejects the biblical theological method in strong language, asserting that it "despises the work of the church in the past and wholly ignores or damns the guidance of the Holy Spirit." Biblical theology is "really a condemnation of dogmatics as such," and, insofar as it does not want to be dogmatics, "it simply deceives itself." Another objection, according to Hoeksema, is that biblical theology ignores the fact that revelation in Scripture is "woven into the texture of the earthly and historical." Here Hoeksema's theological methodology betrays an element of rationalism; he regards revelation as something that can be separated from the earthly and historical. On his view, the earthly and historical are not an essential ingredient of the revealed truth of Scripture. Revealed truth, therefore, must be removed from the texture of the earthly-historical since "the believer's mind can appropriate the truth of Scripture only in the way of logical contemplation." Here a deep-seated rationalistic motif comes to the surface, one which fails to recognize that Christian truth would not be true if it had not happened. Only an eternal truth that is non-historical can be appropriated by the mind of men "only in the way of logical contemplation."

Hoeksema was a supralapsarian "without reservation." His defense is interesting. He admits that all the Reformed creeds are infra- not supralapsarian, and that the Scripture is also infra, but only from "the historical viewpoint"—a viewpoint about which his methodology is very permissive. He further argues that the "Reformed Fathers"—who remain unnamed—never condemned supralapsarianism, nor regarded it as "inconsistent with Reformed theology." Both theologically and historically this claim is far from the whole truth.

Hoeksema argues against biblical theology because it fails to take ser-

iously the working of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Church. This is a strange contention for one who held that revelation must be taken out of the fabric of the temporal-historical. Nonetheless, it throws light on the stance that Hoeksema took toward his accepted Reformed creeds. These he viewed with an almost blind, uncritical loyalty, accepting them as not-to-be-questioned truth, not as historical documents.

Except at two points. We have already noted his rejection of infralapsarianism. Although supralapsarianism was eventually given official toleration within a sector of the Reformed churches, it is not the teaching of the Reformed creeds, and a theology structured on this basis is quite different from one structured on an infralapsarian position. The other area in which Hoeksema took certain liberties is in the doctrine of election. In Hoeksema's theology election takes priority over reprobation. He does not hold that reprobation is equally primal in the intention and ways of God. God's primary intention is to glorify Himself in Christ and the Church. Reprobation, says Hoeksema, is a necessary means for the realization of election. The first is a means, the second the end. This is hardly the teaching of the Canons of Dort. Nor do the Canons teach the idea that reprobation is a "necessary" means — a view that appears to impinge on the sovereignty and freedom of God, an idea that Professor Berkouwer regards as so ungodly as to bring shame by the mere mention of it. With this I would agree. But I wonder whether there is essentially any difference between saying that reprobation is the necessary presupposition of election and saying that election necessarily *posits* reprobation — an idea inherent in election defined as selection. This whole matter calls for further study.

Although the covenant of works is commonly accepted in many Reformed theological circles (and taught by the Westminster Confession), Hoeksema always his own man, rejected it because (1) the Reformed creeds do not teach it, (2) even a sinless man cannot earn the rewards of grace, and (3) because man's covenantal status is not an additive, but something given in his very humanity. Here Barth echoes Hoeksema, but Hoeksema never struggled with the problem of how one can hold to a supralapsarian view of reprobation and at the same time hold that man's covenant relationship to God is built in his very humanity. How would one define a divine covenant made with men who even apart from sin are reprobated by God to doom?

and clearly revealed in the Cross (p. 165). Reprobation is merely the means for the actualization of election. But having thus defined reprobation, Hoeksema hardly knows what to do with it. He gives Christ a very central place in his doctrine of election. The election of Christ does not, he says, occur for the sake of the elect; the election of the latter exists for the sake of Christ the Elect. But once Hoeksema takes this position, what is he to do with his doctrine of reprobation. If Christ's election requires reprobation, are some men reprobated for the sake of the election of Christ? This comes close to saying that Christ is saved by the damnation of men, for His reality depends on the reality of reprobates. And it is interesting to note that in Hoeksema's outline of the order of predestination, reprobation first appears in relation to the elect (the Church) and then only in parentheses. Hoeksema's struggle with election and reprobation is a warning to those who with an easy facility interpret biblical passages with a direct reference to election and reprobation. To be sure, Hoeksema also engaged in this kind of exegesis, but when he did he violated the complexities of his own theology of election.

Finally, Hoeksema's exposition of the love and the grace of God should be carefully studied by theological minds in the Christian Reformed Church. Appealing to Colossians 3:14, Hoeksema asserts that love can only exist "in the sphere of moral perfection." There can be no love "in the sphere of darkness." Love is that which "unites ethically perfect parties only." "It can exist only between personal beings; and these personal beings must be perfect" (p. 105). With this profoundly unbiblical idea of love, it comes as no surprise that God, according to Hoeksema, can only hate sinners.

In view of this conception of the nature of divine love, it is also not surprising to hear Hoeksema speak of grace as an *ethical attribute* of God and define grace as that delight which God takes in Himself as a perfect being. And with this we have the ground for Hoeksema's vigorous rejection of common grace for all sinners, and his insistence that God loves, and is gracious toward, the elect only, and toward these because they are *righteous* in Christ.

Even God's mercy is declared to be an "attribute of God in the absolute sense of the word." Thus God is merciful, not to sinners, but to Himself. "Mercy is the attribute or virtue of God according to which He is

Here in a nutshell we have Hoeksema's theology: "Love is the bond that unites the ethically perfect. Grace is the objective pleasantness and the subjective attraction of the ethically perfect. Mercy wills and desires the ethically perfect to be blessed." And he applies this theology by asserting, "It should be evident from this that God cannot be merciful to the reprobate wicked, and that His mercy toward His people" is that by which "He beholds them eternally as perfectly righteous in the Beloved" (pp. 115, 116).

This is not only un-Reformed. It is less biblical than Arminianism. Arminianism *distorts* the biblical teaching about God's love, mercy, and grace. Hoeksema loses these biblical teachings. God, of course, does not hate Himself, but the biblical teaching is not that God loves *Himself*, but loves the Son, and in this love loves *sinners*. Where does the Bible teach, not that God is gracious, but that He is gracious to Himself? and where that He is merciful to Himself? Hoeksema defines God's love, grace, mercy by a reference to the *nature* of God (and therefore defines *all* of them as ethical attributes of God in the *absolute* sense) rather than in reference to sinners, and to Christ in His role of saving sinners, and therewith to what God *freely decided* to do in Christ and for sinners. In short, a theology that teaches that God loves Himself, has grace and mercy for Himself because He is ethically perfect, and has none of these for sinners because they are *sinners*, is worse than Arminianism, which distorts, but does not deny these.

Hoeksema the theologian never understood the nature of God's love and mercy for sinners, nor that grace of God by which God freely willed to give Himself in Christ for their sakes. Hoeksema's God loves Himself, "seeks and finds Himself," and is "self-centered." Hoeksema, as a theologian, did not know a God who glorifies Himself precisely by creating and redeeming man for the purpose of sharing Himself with man, therein revealing His glory. For God is not one who can be known "only in the way of logical contemplation." The grace of God is hardly something logical!

Hoeksema's God is so self-contained and self-centered that Hoeksema could not conceive of movements of God toward man which were the results of His free decision, and not merely a necessary shadow cast by God's inner life.

This book is required reading for all who think they endorse Hoeksema's basic theology, and for all who think they hold a traditional Reformed the-

## MEN'S LEAGUE

The Men's League will hold its Fall Meeting, Monday, October 9, at the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church at 8:00 p.m., D.V. Rev. J. Heys will speak on "What is the Function of an Evangelist, and What Has Happened to His Office."

Men, you are invited to meet with us for an evening of Christian Fellowship.

H. Dykstra, Sec'y.

## ATTENTION: OFFICE BEARERS

There will be an Office Bearers Conference, D.V., October 3, 1967, at 8:00 P.M., to be held at Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. All present and former officer bearers are invited to attend.

Our speaker, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, will speak on the subject "Consistorial Supervision of Catechism Instruction."

Arnold Dykstra, Sec'y.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—

Sept. 1, 1967

Rev. C. Hanko is in receipt of a call to labor in the congregation in Hull, Iowa. A later report informs us that this call has also been declined.

Candidate Dale Kuiper has gladdened the hearts of the members of the congregation at Randolph, Wis., by accepting the call they had tendered him. Candidate Kuiper is not a stranger to the congregation, having lived in the manse as a young man while his father, the late Rev. H. Kuiper, was stationed there from 1951 to 1954. The candidate's examination will be held in the regular September meeting of Classis West.

\* \* \*

Southeast's congregation was called to a special congregational meeting Aug. 28 to consider a remodeling project proposed by the consistory.

\* \* \*

To accommodate the vacation-time schedules, Rev. H. Veldman preached twice in his own church and once in Hope Church Sunday Aug. 13, with the morning services set in staggered times; and Rev. Kortering served Holland's congregation in the morning and evening services besides an afternoon service in Southwest Church on the same date.

\* \* \*

Redlands Young People's Society sent delegates to the Convention for the first time this year. In all, nine of their membership enjoyed the privilege of attending all the meetings.

\* \* \*

Our "Missionaries" to Jamaica have returned to Michigan after spending eight weeks in the tropical heat of that Island (an island where sauna baths are not commercialized, but are copiously supplied by nature). They enjoyed a warm welcome by the people during their entire stay, and the weather cooperated with the natives on that score, too; everyday it was a sweltering 100 to 120 degrees, "cooling" to 90 degrees at night. Rev. Heys was busy preaching, and teaching the ministers and elders the basic truths Scripture handed down to us by our Reformed Fathers. The people reveal an ever-increasing appetite for the pure preaching of the Word of God. It must be gratifying, indeed, to witness, as did Paul and Silas, that their hearers, "were glad, and glorified the Word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Elder Zwak was busy in his field of labor holding conferences with the elders and deacons of the various churches instructing them in the rules and regulations of Re-

formed Church Polity under which our churches thrive. Though the missionaries have returned to their homes, our support will continue to supply them in their medical needs and clothing lack through the offerings received in our churches periodically, as requested by Synod, and distributed by the diaconate of Hudsonville.

\* \* \*

Conventionally speaking what were our young people up to from Aug. 17 to 21? They were gathered in annual convention in Hull, Iowa; a time of relaxation and fun, a time of spiritual instruction and upbuilding, a time of fellowship in renewing old friendships and making new ones.

The Michigan contingent drove to South Holland in 16 cars and were served a delicious supper by the South Holland ladies before bussing to downtown Chicago to entrain to Le Mars, Iowa, where they arrived the next morning. In a 12 hour trip the train stopped 36 times to load and unload passengers and goods. Even if the young people had been pre-disposed to sleep (?) this every quarter-hour stopping and starting would have disposed of it.

Thursday was spent in the assignment of lodging and in registration. Friday morning the business of the convention was finished and the afternoon was occupied with a program prepared for it. The evening featured the Rev. G. Vanden Berg, of Oak Lawn, who gave the keynote speech on the theme, "*Soli Deo Gloria*", speaking on, "The Idea" of this theme. Saturday's speaker was Candidate D. Kuiper, who developed the idea of "The Basis" of the title theme, and Monday evening's program and banquet featured Rev. R. Decker, of Doon, who spoke on "The Expression" of ascribing all the glory to God.

The fun and relaxation included contests of various sorts (a greased pig for the boys and an un-cooperative chicken for the girls) with farm tours, hiking, football, volleyball and an East-West softball game rounding out the activities.

Sunday was spent in the usual way, the young people attending the worship services in Hull and in Doon during the day, and a singspiration that was held in the community building in Hull. It was unanimously acclaimed that the host society prepared and carried out a very good convention, one based on the Scripture found in I Peter 5:8-11 from which the theme was taken. That's what our young people were up to.

See you in church.

J.M.F.