

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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***Meditation—***

**Encouragement for the Distressed**

**A Campus Movement**

**Jonah's Preaching To Nineveh**

**The Fervency of Faith**

**"The Dutch Meet Dixie"**

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION

## Encouragement For The Distressed

*Rev. M. Schipper*

*"But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God."*  
I Samuel 30: 6b.

Like a precious jewel found in the quagmire of distresses is this instructive notation of God's Word in the context which describes perhaps the darkest hour in David's earthly experience!

Set as a beautiful contrast!

"And David was greatly distressed," so we read in the first part of the verse. "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God," so the verse concludes.



To see the beauty of this contrast, we would do well, first of all, to take note of the perplexing circumstances surrounding this child of God. Observe why David was so greatly distressed.

In his flight from king Saul, David with six hundred rough men sought refuge in the country of the Philistines. David had concluded that if it were known to Saul that he had abandoned his own country Saul would no longer pursue him. Consequently David and his men and all that he had came to Achish, the son of the king of Gath. And Achish gave to David the city of Ziklag to dwell in. Here for a year and four months David and those with him found grace in the eyes of Achish. This favorable attitude of Achish was especially confirmed when David, under the pretense that he was fighting against his own countrymen in the south of Judah, actually invaded the camp of the Amalekites to destroy them and others who dwelt in the land given to Judah by lot. David smote the land, leaving none to live, and carried away a great spoil. Returning from this raid, Achish inquired of David where he had been and what he had done. The answer that David gave left no doubt in the mind of Achish that David had made himself to be abhorred by his own people, and that, therefore, David would become servant to Achish forever.

Then we learn that the Philistines planned to make war against Israel. Achish informed David and his men that they would have to accompany him into battle. However, when the Philistines had gathered their armies at Aphek, the lords of the Philistines discovered that David and his men were with Achish in the rear. Therefore did they inquire of Achish how these Hebrews were here in the army of the Philistines. Achish sought to defend the presence of David and his men on the grounds that they had defected from the Israelites, and proved their allegiance to the Philistines when David and his men had conducted a raid in the land of Judah. But the princes of the Philistines would hear none of it, believing that David and his company could be their adversary in battle. They therefore demanded that Achish send David and his men back to Ziklag. Achish, having failed to persuade them concerning David, could only acquiesce and bow to the wishes of the lords of the Philistines. David, therefore, was told to retreat to Ziklag.

Then the calamities began to fall on David!

Coming to Ziklag he and his men discovered that in the meantime the Amalekites had invaded the land of the Philistines in the south and completely destroyed Ziklag, burning the city and carrying off the women and children as captives, including David's two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail. It was a raid no doubt intended to be in retaliation for what David had done to the Amalekites as described above.

Then was David greatly distressed!

For not only were his dear ones missing and those of the men with him, but David's distress became ex-

ceeding great when his own men rose up against him threatening to stone him because they considered him responsible for the grief they suffered at the hands of the Amalekites in the loss of their families. Mutiny broke loose — a dangerous situation among such a company of ruffians — and they had made up their mind to do away with David. The translation: "And David was greatly distressed," hardly expresses the thought of the original Hebrew text, which uses a word which much more dramatically describes David's plight. It means that David was so pressed in as it were in a vise that he could hardly breathe. His distress was so great that he hardly knew where to turn. The walls of his predicament were about to collapse upon him.

But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God!

Indeed, a beautiful contrast!

Here is one of the many eloquent "buts" of the Bible. On the one hand are the calamitous walls of loss, treachery, and apparently cruel death about to smash down upon him; and opposed to all this, the brief, contrasting, and spiritual clause: "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God."

O, how awfully black and dismal, how hopelessly despairing the situation would have been were it to be viewed only with the eyes of carnal flesh. Viewing it from this prospect, would it not have been reasonable for him to have drawn his wits together, and to have called to his men to hear him out? Would we not, having been placed in a similar situation, have pleaded with these ruffians not to lose their senses, and to see that they as well as David were guilty of arousing the dander of the Amalekites? for they as well as David found delight in sacking their cities. Would it not defy all decency and order for these men to assess only their own loss and not see that David's loss was as great? None of these questions seem to have been raised. No discussion whatever followed the mean threat of David's men. David, so we are informed, simply laid his case before the Lord his God, and left it there.

God, dear reader, has a way of bringing his child into such a place of utter despair that there is only one way of escape — that is, into His loving arms!

Notice — David encouraged himself! The word translated "encouraged" in our English version comes from a word which means originally: to tie fast, to bind bonds strongly, to hold fast, and thence: to strengthen, to confirm. And in the peculiar tense in which it is used here it means to establish oneself, to shew oneself strong. In one word David made himself consciously to be tied to his God so that he was able to stand firmly, unmoveably in the present situation. Now that is exactly what faith does. We have said it often, and have heard it said again and again, that faith is a certain spiritual knowledge and a hearty confidence. These are faith's chief elements. Faith knows its object with an assured spiritual knowledge, and ties itself to that object with hearty confidence and trust. And faith is a gracious



gift of God. David did not possess it of himself, it was given to him of grace. But God gives this grace and causes it to become operative in his child in such a way that His child actively loses himself in his God. It expresses itself in the same way the Heidelberg Catechism answers the question: What is thy only comfort in life and death? I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, in life and death to my faithful Saviour. When the child of God is so convinced that he is so perfectly possessed by his Saviour, he no longer needs to fret what will happen to him. It is his Saviour's business to care for His own. And He does!

Encouraged himself in the Lord, that is, Jehovah his God! Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM, the Eternal, Independent, Unchangeable, Covenant God. Jehovah is God's name in which He revealed Himself to His people as to none other. In that name He ties Himself to His covenant friends in an inseparable bond of friendship. And the bonds of this covenant relation wherewith He ties Himself to His people He draws them to Himself in such a way that they also consciously cleave unto Him. So that both in the words "encouraged" and "Jehovah" we see realistically tightened the bands of living friendship between God and His friend David. David may to all intents and purposes have lost all his friends, but there was for him in his God a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Jehovah his God!

The Almighty One Who had redeemed him from the devil and the power of eternal death. By whose power and providential direction even the present evils that threatened His servant were so controlled that the only refuge this child of God knew was his God. Thus taking inventory of the situation in quiet meditation, submitting it to his God in humble reliance, and laying hold on Jehovah's precious promises, David could stand firmly, unmoved, in bold confidence while the shades of sudden cruel death appeared to be drawn about him. It would be one thing to dogmatically speak of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which is an indubitable, gospel truth, of course. But it is a wholly different thing to say: Jehovah, my God! It is one thing to repeat the words of the Saviour: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, etc." But it is something else to say with Paul: "Who loved me and gave Himself for me." Or, again, "Whose I am, and Whom I serve." The reference, therefore, in the expression: Jehovah his God, is not some dogmatic, divine object of worship peculiar to the children of Israel, though indeed Jehovah was the God of Israel. But the expression sets before us the personal, spiritual, experiential, worshipful, loving relation between God and His beloved child, and that between that loved one and his God. While David lost all his possessions, his wives, his children, his home, so that all that was left to him was the clothes that covered his

body; he was rich in his God. While death stared him in the face, he could confidently exclaim; I will fear no evil, for I am hidden in Thee, the Lord my God.

Here, then, O child of God, who is faced with poverty, the loss of all things, the blasting of all earthly hopes, lying on the extremity of danger, caught as it were in the shades of death, is encouragement for the distressed: The Lord Jehovah is my God!

But David would not, nor would any child of God for that matter, encourage himself in Jehovah his God, were it not that God had first given him reason to believe that those confiding in Him shall not be put to shame.

Jehovah, a faithful God!

He is the God of our salvation!

He proved His faithfulness to His people by the giving of His only begotten unto death for them. In the Person of His Son in our nature, He delivered His own from eternal death and misery. He stood under the outpouring of His own wrath which was due to us until the vials of that wrath were emptied, until there was no more wrath remaining, and in its place beamed the holy sunlight of our justification. He received the Spirit without measure, and was enabled to apply unto us the benefits of His saving work, and that in such a way that we can taste His saving grace, and everlasting mercy. Also He received power to direct all things according to the counsel of the living God that all things work together for our good. And again and again in the experience of the child of God He makes the way so heavy for His child that he must roll it on Him. (Psalm 37:5).

Indeed, David would not have encouraged himself now in Jehovah his God if this had been the only time Jehovah had proved Himself a worthy object of trust. Witness the times when this child of God is distraught because of the knowledge of his sin, and how Jehovah comes to him through the prophet to call him to repentance. Witness when he is confronted with the giant, while Saul and the armies of Israel cower in fear, how God was his salvation. See him in the desert fleeing from his son Absalom, and his companions fearfully asking the question: Who shall show us any good? and David says: I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for Thou Jehovah makest me to lie down in safety. Surely Jehovah, the God of his salvation had proved Himself to be a sun and shield, his defense in the day of trouble.

In this light we can understand the calmness, the fearless spirit of this child of God in his darkest hour.

And the Holy Spirit Who saw to it that the words of our text should forever be preserved in the annals of Holy Writ, exhorts you and me whose way so often becomes exceeding dark to find our encouragement in an implicit trust in Him Who is the God of our salvation.

A lie is like a snowball: the longer you roll it the bigger it grows.



## Editorials

### EDITOR'S NOTES

The reader will notice that some of our regular departments are missing from time to time. This is intentional. We are trying to furnish a greater variety of material by two means: occasionally including special features, and introducing some new departments. This also gives the various department editors a "breather" now and then. In this issue we have another new department: Rev. Harbach's *Studies in Depth*. This will replace his *Trying The Spirits*. In this rubric he will furnish us with the results of his research into various movements and organizations in the ecclesiastical and religious world, some of them familiar, some of them less familiar, and will also favor us with his critical evaluations.

\* \* \*

In this issue you will also find the annual reports of the Secretary and the Treasurer of the Reformed Free Publishing Association. Encouraging in the secretary's report is the information that we have again had a net increase in subscribers during the past volume-year. In

the treasurer's report one cannot fail to note the faithful financial support from our various congregations. But did you also notice the large amount of individual gifts? I happen to know that among these were two gifts of appreciation of \$100 each from a faithful reader in New Jersey. An example to emulate!

\* \* \*

I have been asked to forward to our readers the Board's sincere thanks for the 40 gift subscriptions which were sent in recently in response to the little campaign carried in the summer issues. The Board is already making use of these gifts in an effort to extend our witness. It is hoped that ways and means can be found to do more, much more, of this kind of thing.

\* \* \*

In this issue you will also find Rev. Kortering's address to the annual meeting of the R.F.P.A., "The Fervency of Faith." Be sure to read it, and be inspired as we who were present at the meeting were!

## The Erring Views of Dr. H.M. Kuitert (6)

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

### *Evaluation of Kuitert's View of Scripture (continued)*

In my last article on this subject I suggested that the answer to Dr. Kuitert's argument concerning the so-called "human element" in Scripture and in the production of Holy Scripture lies in a proper understanding of what is known as "organic inspiration." And I promised to develop this suggestion. To the fulfillment of this promise I now address myself.

A few preliminary remarks are necessary, first of all.

In the first place, there is the matter of terminology that has grown up around the wonder of inspiration. There are terms like "the human element" and "the divine element" in Scripture; or "the human factor" and "the divine factor" in the writing of Scripture; or again, "the Primary author" and "the secondary authors" of Scripture. I have already suggested my own displeasure with such terminology, and have also pointed out that it

is terminology like the above which has made it extremely difficult for some to cope with Kuitert's position. But there are other items which should be kept in mind in this connection. First of all, we may recognize the fact that in some instances this language has been used with every good intention. It was not used with the purpose in view of attacking the truths of inspiration, infallibility, and authority, but to defend them and to find some kind of dogmatical approach to a proper and legitimate formulation and expression of these truths. It was recognized that inspiration was not mechanical and that those holy men whom the Holy Spirit employed to speak and write the Word of God were not mere stenographers or tape recorders, who had no personal part or interest in that which they spoke or wrote. Not only do revelation and inspiration imply in general that the Word of God is spoken and written in



human, finite, earthly language; but they also include the wide variety of individual differences of time and place and circumstances and personality and background and style which anyone can recognize when he reads the Bible. Isaiah is different than Moses; John is different than Peter; Luke is different than Matthew; Solomon is different than David. And historically, some of the terminology mentioned above was employed in order to give due recognition and expression to these differences.

Now what shall we say about this?

For one thing, we may recognize the fact that this terminology has not always been used with evil intentions, as well as the fact that in so far as this is the sole meaning of this terminology it is perfectly innocent and legitimate. I have no doubt that one could quote more than one Reformed writer who has used such terminology and who held one hundred per cent to the truth concerning Scripture, who with every fiber of his being denied that the Bible is anything but the Word of God.

For another, we ought to recognize the fact that the danger of a theory of mechanical inspiration is largely, if not altogether, imaginary. Even though there have been theologians who have upon occasion used language which sounded a bit mechanistic, historically there has been no theologian of repute in the main-line of theology who held to mechanical inspiration. This danger is about like the danger of anyone making of man a stock and block in salvation. The danger itself is imaginary; it arises only in the minds of the adversaries of sovereign grace. It is a far greater danger that some will attempt to adjust and accommodate the doctrine of sovereign grace in order to avoid the charge. But, for this very reason, it is also rather unnecessary to devise and adopt terminology which will supposedly protect us from the charge of believing in mechanical inspiration; and it is certainly, from a positive point of view, unnecessary to adopt this terminology in order to give expression to the fact that the Lord employed men with all their individual characteristics to write His Word.

Thirdly, we should note that, in spite of whatever good intentions lie behind it, and however sincere may be the effort in this terminology to approach certain truths involved in inspiration, the terminology is very seriously defective. It is not accurate. It does not express what ought to be expressed. And it leaves impressions which ought not to be left. Take the term "human element," for example. The good intention is undoubtedly to give expression to the idea that the Lord employed the words and style and circumstances of men to produce the Scriptures. The defect of the term is that it leaves the impression that there is a part of Scripture which is human, rather than divine. The same is true of the expression "human factor." It is an expression which leaves the definite impression that God and men cooperated, constituted two factors, in the writing of Scripture. The result of such terminology

is that you definitely begin to look in Scripture for the divine part, or element, which must be separated from and distilled out of the human part or element. The same is true of the expressions "Primary Author" and "secondary authors." One of the difficulties is that a secondary author is nevertheless an author; and if he is an author, then you may again distinguish in the Bible between the Word of God, the "Primary Author," and the word of man, the "secondary author." But what becomes, then, of the confession that the Bible is solely the Word of God? It is compromised, willy-nilly. Another difficulty connected with such terminology is that no matter how great you make the capital "P" and no matter how small you make the lower case "s," the difference is only relative, and the authors remain authors. This is the kind of difficulty that Dr. Kuitert and others capitalize upon, so that they claim that they may and do legitimately and within the framework of a belief in inspiration "do justice to" the so-called "human element" in Scripture.

Hence, with respect to all of these expressions we must be very careful. As soon as you in any sense make Scripture an admixture, rather than solely the Word of God, you are in fundamental trouble. It is far safer to discard all these terms. And not only is it safer, — because, after all, the mere consideration of safety may not constitute a decisive argument, — but it is Scriptural. We must remember that the Bible never presents itself as anything other than the Word of God, even when it recognizes that this revelation of God came to us through men and in the course of the history of men and of mankind. Always Scripture comes with the simple, unargued assumption that it is the Word of God, that therefore it is to be believed without reservation or condition, leaving no room for challenge or question whether it is true or in how far it is true. Mind you, this is the position of Scripture itself *even though and even when Scripture itself recognizes that as the Word-of-God-written it has come into existence through men and in the course of human history, with all that this implies*. Whatever, therefore, you may try to say dogmatically about the "is" in the proposition "Holy Scripture is the Word of God," it must be kept within these confines. That "is" may not be so tampered with and "interpreted" that the proposition itself is destroyed or made to read, "Holy Scripture is partly the Word of God, but partly the word of man."

In this connection, in the fourth place, let me call attention to the fact that while our Belgic Confession employs none of this terminology, it nevertheless makes a very significant and adequate statement on this subject, and does so with reference to a very striking statement of Scripture itself. I refer to Article 3 and its reference to II Peter 1:19-21:

We confess that this Word of God was not sent, nor delivered by the will of man, but that holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, as



the apostle Peter saith. And that afterwards God, from a special care, which he has for us and our salvation, commanded his servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit his revealed word to writing; and he himself wrote with his own finger, the two tables of the law. Therefore we call such writings holy and divine Scriptures.

The entire Scripture passage referred to in the above article is as follows: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Now it is not my intention to enter into this article of our Confession in all its details. I wrote about this rather extensively a few years ago in my commentary on this article in the *Standard Bearer*. But let me point out the following:

1) Not only does the Confession not employ any of the terminology cited earlier, but there is not even the slightest hint at such terms. It speaks only of "this Word of God" and of "holy and divine Scriptures," even though it is obviously cognizant of the fact that God used "his servants, the prophets and apostles, to commit his revealed word to writing."

2) The Confession speaks not only of inspiration from the positive point of view, but, following Scripture, makes a most amazing negative statement: "... this Word of God was not sent, nor delivered by the will of man..." The Bible's literal statement here is: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man."

On the one hand, this statement is very simple and clear, almost to the point that you would overlook its simplicity of meaning: would we not be inclined to say, "Why, of course not! how could *God's Word* be sent or delivered by the will of man?" Here is the *essence* of simplicity. God's Word is *God's Word*, not man's; and if it is to be God's Word, then it cannot possibly be sent or delivered by the will of man: it must be by the will of God. If it originates with man and is sent and delivered by man's will, then it can no more be the Word of God. Moreover, certainly the will is a fundamental factor in any question of authorship. Could you imagine an author whose will was not a factor in the book of which he was the author? How, then, if the Word of God was not sent or delivered by the will of man, if the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, — how is it possible to speak of any man as an author of Scripture?

On the other hand, consider the boldness of this statement. Men spoke. Men wrote. They spoke and

wrote with all of their individual characteristics and circumstances coming into action when they spoke and wrote, and that too, in such a way that these individual characteristics and circumstances become a part of the fabric of Scripture and so that we cannot fail to distinguish the writings of Paul from those of John, for example. And yet the Bible itself says: "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man." What an amazing statement! And it becomes still more amazing in the light of the fact that in one breath the same Scripture asserts that holy men of God *spake*. Mind you, they were not mere microphones and amplifiers of the Holy Spirit. They *spake*. Or again: *they* spake. But nevertheless prophecy came not by the will of man!

Obviously we stand face to face here with a most marvelous and mysterious wonder! And whatever we may attempt to say about this wonder, we must be careful that we do not sully and besmirch and cover up, or even theologically destroy, this wonder by contradicting one term of it.

It is in this context that we speak of *organic inspiration*.

What is implied in this organic inspiration I will briefly set forth in the following propositions, further comment on which will have to wait until the next issue.

1) God conceived sovereignly and from eternity of the whole of Scripture, in all its parts and its inter-relationships, as the written revelation of Himself, with Christ as the heart and center of that entire revelation.

2) God from eternity and sovereignly conceived of and determined upon special organs of Christ's body, organs of inspiration, and ordained all the details of their personality, character, talents, education, mode of thinking, style of writing, personal experiences, and historical circumstances in such a way that they were from eternity prepared to be fit instruments of divine inspiration, each in his own place in the organism of Scripture.

3) The Holy Spirit, and that too, as the Spirit of Christ, called these divinely ordained organs of inspiration into existence in time, forming them and preparing them, both naturally and spiritually, for their divinely ordained place and task in committing God's revealed Word to writing.

4) The same Spirit also inspired, moved, illumined, guided, and actually caused these human instruments, thus ordained, prepared, and called, to speak and to write infallibly God's own Word.

Thus the Scriptures and the human instruments were all of God, a wonderwork of divine grace, ordaining, preparing, moving, guiding, so that His people might have the complete and rich revelation of Christ, the Eternal Word of God.



## Kuitert Like Barth?

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

In connection with the current discussion about the views of Dr. Kuitert and other theologians in the Netherlands, now and then someone will talk about the influence of contemporary German theology and theologians upon these theologians of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. This is, of course, a legitimate aspect of the discussion. And it is always proper to trace such connections and similarities, and to judge and condemn a certain theology or theological position on the ground of its likeness to and connection with a theology which is commonly recognized as being bad. In other words, if one can make Kuitert out to be a bed-fellow of Barth, this is not exactly a recommendation for Kuitert.

One must, however, be careful about this. Such theological classifications must not be made on the basis of some totally incidental emphasis or some merely apparent and wholly imaginary likeness. Such a procedure can result in some very strange bed-fellows. For example, once upon a time someone attempted to put Herman Hoeksema and Karl Barth in the same theological bed, quite mistakenly: they certainly belong in altogether separate chambers in any theological dormitory.

But what about Kuitert and German neo-modernist (I do not like the term "neo-orthodox") theology?

It is not my purpose to enter into detail about this question. This would take us too far afield in our discussion.

However, while I was looking for something else in

Volume 38 of the *Standard Bearer*, my eye fell on an editorial about Barth's view of election and reprobation which was written in connection with Barth's visit to this country and his appearance at the University of Chicago. At that time there was a panel discussion at Rockefeller Chapel in which Barth participated; and in the course of this discussion, the subject of Holy Scripture also came under consideration. As I read what Barth was reported to have said at that time, I was immediately struck by the similarity – to my mind, not an incidental, but a basic similarity – between the views of Barth and Kuitert.

Here is the paragraph in which Barth's statement appears (Vol. 38, p. 388):

"In a panel discussion at the Rockefeller chapel as it was reported in one of the Chicago papers, the question was asked Barth how he would justify his 'appeal to Scripture as the objective Word of God with his admission that Scripture is sullied by errors, theological as well as historical.' Barth answered: 'The Bible has proven and will continue to prove itself as the true and fitting instrument to point men to God. The Bible, being a human instrument, is bound by the temporal use of nature, history and ideas. Just so far, the Bible is not sinless, like Jesus Christ himself, and not infallible like God. No wonder that even from the viewpoint of world views and concepts of other ages the question may arise whether or not we have problems of certain tensions, contradictions, and, if you prefer the term, *errors*.' "

## Special Feature

### The Fervency of Faith

*Rev. J. Kortering*

Familiarity breeds contempt.

That's an old adage which has been handed down from generation to generation. It also is a truism. Sometimes we experience this in relation to our work: we just get sick and tired of the same old thing. If we eat the same food all the time, it nauseates us. This accounts for our changing world.

It is a sad fact that this same attitude sometimes drives members of the church to cry out for the "new," the different; they grow contemptuous with that with which they are the most familiar. These kind of people go to church and leave the house of God muttering,

"It's the same old stuff." In this attitude one of two things happens, they either become active in changing the old into something new, or they repudiate the Word of God altogether.

Such a one is at the bottom of the spiritual ladder. He is on the last rung before jumping off.

The other extreme is the child of God who is fervent in faith. He stands at the top of the spiritual ladder; the love of God pulsates through his heart. He is filled with holy awe as he contemplates the wonder of the revelation of God. He is thrilled with the knowledge of the Word of God. His life becomes an expression of



gratitude to God for His tender mercy.

In between these two extremes is a third position. It is labelled lethargy. Such a one is spiritually lazy; often times he just drifts along with the people of God, not really knowing why it is so. The danger of this spiritual condition is that such a person is slipping down the spiritual ladder. He is headed in the direction of contempt.

I would like to consider this spiritual condition with you. The purpose is not to berate or to bemoan the fact that we often find ourselves in this spiritual lethargy. Such an approach would only hasten the process of decline. Rather, let's try to diagnose the ailment, consider the cure, and with the help of God realize that if we find ourselves slipping to the bottom of the spiritual ladder, we direct our attention to the top and seek the fervency of faith.

The first step in the cure of any disease is to recognize that we are sick. To achieve this end, we must spend a moment in trying to understand the symptoms of the disease called lethargy. This disease is peculiar to children of God. The world of unbelievers cannot contact it for they are spiritually dead. In no sense of the word can we say that the reprobate have a spiritual *disease*, they are spiritually *dead*. Their hearts are hardened against God and they hate all that God says and does.

The child of God however, possesses a new heart. Being regenerated by the Spirit, he receives a heart of flesh. God fills this heart with His love and by the impulse of heart-beats filled with the love of God the child of God exercises faith. The love of God affects his mind and will by influencing it, governing it, and directing it back to God. In this love of God, the child of God rejoices in the Word of God, loves his spiritual brethren, seeks unity in the bond of truth.

Lethargy is a disease of the heart. It suffers an arrest, its spiritual muscles become stiff, it ceases to beat with warmth and vigor. Consequently the child of God's entire religious outlook is affected. He loses the "first love." His religious life becomes a mere formality, his prayer life seems cold and God seems far away. The communion of the saints loses its appeal, the Word of God seems irrelevant.

What causes this disease?

Applying the analogy of the physical heart, we can adduce three causes.

First, the heart may suffer an attack due to lack of oxygen. Oxygen is nutrition for the heart; it keeps the tissues and muscles alive and functioning. A lack of it brings heart damage and eventual death. Similarly, our spiritual heart needs nutrition. We need the only oxygen which God in love provides, viz, the preaching of the Word and sacraments. God communicates His love to us through the means of grace. If we grow indifferent to these means and neglect them, we will surely suffer an attack of lethargy. The same thing holds true if we try

to find a different "diet." God has provided one food which is all sufficient. If we grow dissatisfied with that food and eat at the table of unbelieving philosophy or science and find that more delectable than the Word of God, we will surely suffer a heart attack. We will soon discover that the truths of the Word are easily disposable. Our hearts will weaken and not beat with the love of God and love for His Word; rather we will try to tear it apart, spend our time finding "errors" and changing His message entirely. The inevitable result will be lethargy and then contempt.

The second cause for this spiritual disease is that a foreign material is introduced into our spiritual blood stream. In the case of our physical heart, this is caused by thrombosis; a blood clot will bring an attack. It is no different spiritually. Christ expressed it this way, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." If we place greater value on the perishable things of life, e.g. our material possessions, our place of honor among men, our seeking after pleasures, the inevitable end will also be lethargy toward God and His Word and this leads to contempt.

The third cause is that of increased pressure. We know that it is absolutely essential that the pressure in our circulatory system be maintained at the right level, an increase will also bring an "attack." This we experience spiritually as well. Often times our calling as children of God brings us into opposition with the world. We realize that we cannot love God *and* love the world. When we encounter opposition, sometimes in the form of mockery, other times in the form of harassment and ostracism, our blood pressure rises. We become spiritually afraid and rebellious and in the midst of our battle weary life we begin to grow cold toward God. We ask, why must the battle be so long and intense. Sometimes we even say that it is futile. We question our Captain and His strategy and imagine that we could do better if only He would turn it over to us. When this pride presses upon our hearts, we grow indifferent to the cause of the church; sometimes we become bitter, and lethargy leads to contempt.

What then is the cure?

Since this disease is of a spiritual nature, the cure can and must come only from God who holds the hearts of His people in His own hand. Only too often we realize we cannot change the spiritual condition of ourselves or our brothers and sisters. The only cure for lethargy is a transfusion of the love of God into our hearts. This He gives by means of His Word and Spirit. The more our hearts are filled with the love of God the more fervent our faith becomes. When the love of God is in our hearts they pant after the living God.

This fervency of faith is expressed in three distinct ways.

First, we rejoice in the God of our salvation. When the heart of the child of God is infused with the love of God he personally rejoices in the wonder that God has



saved him. He never wearies of crying out with praise to God acknowledging that salvation is His work from beginning to end. In the depth of humility He gladly accords to God the honor due to His name. Hence His life's motto is: *Soli Deo Gloria*.

Secondly, a heart that beats with the love of God acknowledges by faith that the Word of God is indeed the Word of God and not man's word concerning God. It is in this light that we must understand all present day attacks upon the Bible. Today, men protest to the high heavens how much they love God and how they understand properly the concept of the love of God while they militate against the Word of God. No one can truly say he loves God while taking the Word of God and trampling it into the dust and subjecting it to the bar of human reason and science. One who truly loves God will love the Word God has given us. It is childlike faith that is fervent faith. We bow before no other authority than that of the Word of God. As we search the Scriptures, we come to a deeper understanding of the truth. We are grateful that we may join the church of all ages and confess the truth of God's absolute sovereignty, man's total depravity, of unconditional election, of a definite atonement by the blood of Jesus Christ, of grace that is powerful to save, and the sure destiny of all God's elect in the blessedness of life everlasting. The fervency of faith does not try to undermine these truths; it rejoices in propagating them. One filled with the love of God does not try to separate himself from the heritage God has given to the church by the Spirit, rather He loves the reformed confessions and holds them heavenward as a banner under which all the children of God who share like faith may gather.

This leads us to the third expression of this fervency, viz., a recognition that God has blessed us with these gifts for a purpose. We may not be satisfied that we and our children are recipients of this faith. The love of God in our hearts causes us to reach out to our spiritual brethren. If we truly love God, the fervency of faith will also cause us to love our brethren. There is no more intimate way to express our love to our neighbor than

by communicating to him the Word of God. It is through this means that those who have not the love of God will find occasion to hate us by despising the Word we bring. We must expect to encounter them both outside the church and within the church. The fervency of faith must not be deterred by opposition, it must be quickened. In the love of God we cannot keep silence, we must needs speak. Through this means God gathers His church unto Himself.

This is why we are enthused about the Standard Bearer. Out of the fervency of faith, quickened by the love of God in our hearts, we find it a joy to be busy in writing, publishing, distributing, and reading this periodical.

In our generation, the Word of God is subtly attacked. This attack is not only coming our way from the unbelieving world, it is coming from what calls itself the church, even the reformed church. Are we going to sit back and let men undermine the Word of God? Are we going to sit back and let our spiritual brethren be deceived?

Not if we love God.

Not if we have the love of God in our hearts and have the gift of fervent faith.

When God's name is taken in vain, and that is what is being done when the Word is called a myth and a lot of other things, we may not sit idly by, we must needs speak out. We must expose the lie. We must call our spiritual brethren to stand with us upon the only sure foundation, the Word of God.

This is a wonderful task. It takes a great deal of work, it takes time and patience, it requires a deep faith in God that He guide the word that is printed, directing it so that it may strike at the inmost heart of His people and bring the response of fervent faith. Even the mockers must be left without excuse.

May our God bless us as we work to this end, that His name be glorified in the salvation of His church.

May He cure us of our lethargy and by His love provide us with fervent faith.

## Annual Reports of the R.F.P.A.

### ANNUAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

It is again true that we as members of the R.F.P.A. must say "Ebenezer," for hitherto has the Lord helped us in completing the 44th year of publishing the *Standard Bearer*.

Consideration should be given to our editors who have been on schedule, and who have kept us well informed of the present activities and doctrinal truths and errors in the church-world of today. Their articles strengthen and confirm in that battle of faith which is

closing in on so many sides today.

Shortly after our annual meeting last year, we were notified by our printer that the cost of material and labor made it necessary for him to increase the cost of printing and mailing the *Standard Bearer* by \$75 per issue beginning Jan. 1, 1968. This increase caused concern among the board members, who, after sending our letters to our consistories for financial assistance, finally notified our subscribers that it was necessary to



increase the subscription price from \$5 to \$7 per year. We should remember that the additional \$2 per subscription will only cover the increased cost, and that 50% of our total income must come from gifts and collections.

This past year our distribution has increased from 1284 to 1323. There were 90 new subscribers and 62 cancellations. It may be well to note that the new subscribers in the past year were from outside our denomination.

The breakdown on the distribution is as follows: address plates, 1093; mission and Jamaica, 80; stock and bound volumes, 110; and mailing margin, 50.

The M.I.E. committee is at present working with the Mission Committee, who have submitted some 125 names of prospective subscribers who will be sent sample copies and gift subscriptions. The Book Committee had 85 volumes, plus 3 partial sets, bound and

distributed. We have also been notified that the first 19 volumes are available from one of our former members.

The revised constitution, which was brought up to date at our last meeting, is now available to our members.

Mr. James Dykstra, who has faithfully served as business manager the past eight and a half years, notified the board that he did not intend to continue as manager. After some discussion, the board has decided to ask Mr. Henry Vander Wal to become business manager, and he is already acting in this capacity.

A final item is that more than 35 gift subscriptions were sent in by our people who responded to the notice printed in the *Standard Bearer*.

May our God strengthen us in this calling, that His wondrous works may be declared abroad and His kingdom may come, to the glory of His name.

G. Pipe, Sec'y

### ANNUAL TREASURER'S REPORT RFPA

Sept. 1, 1967 – Sept. 1, 1968

Balance on Hand September 1, 1967	1,536.64	Oaklawn P.R. Church	43.87
Receipts		Randolph P.R. Church	42.95
Subscriptions	4,682.40	Redlands P.R. Church	133.30
Membership Dues	134.00	Southeast P.R. Church	212.30
Gifts	5,206.90	So. Holland P.R. Church	266.59
Announcements	136.00	S.W. Prot. Ref. Church	140.39
Bound Volumes	<u>755.00</u>	Eastern Ladies League	82.05
Total Receipts For Year	10,914.30	First Ch. Sr. Mr. & Mrs.	30.00
Total Receipts	<u>12,450.94</u>	First Ch. Priscilla Soc.	65.00
Disbursements		First Ch. Ladies Aid Soc.	100.00
Wobbema Printing Co.	9,691.38	Hope-Jr. Mr. & Mrs. Soc.	25.00
Holland Bookbinding	399.75	Hope Ch. Men's Soc.	10.00
James Dykstra – Token Gift	300.00	Hudsonville Men's Soc.	13.77
Miscellaneous	<u>163.41</u>	South Holland Ladies Aid	25.00
Total Disbursements	10,554.54	Individuals	<u>1,066.75</u>
		Total	5,206.90
Balance on Hand Sept. 1, 1968	1,896.40		
Gifts			
Doon P.R. Church	107.05		
Edgerton P.R. Church	34.14		
First P.R. Church G.R.	1,201.31		
Forbes P.R. Church	27.00		
Holland P.R. Church	78.00		
Hope P.R. Church	368.81		
Hudsonville P.R. Church	877.85		
Hull P.R. Church	101.89		
Isabel P.R. Church	39.27		
Kalamazoo P.R. Church	53.20		
Loveland P.R. Church	18.90		
Lynden P.R. Church	42.51		

Rich Bos – Treas.

### Annual Treasurer's Report: Permanent Committee for Publication of Protestant Reformed Literature:

\$2,717.42	Balance on Deposit Sept. 1, 1967
119.20	Interest on Money in bank
2,836.62	
1,406.79	Received from sale of books
4,243.41	
24.00	Paid out for P.O. Box rental
\$4,219.41	Balance on Deposit in bank
	Sept. 5, 1968
1000 Books were printed	
625 Books have been sold	
375 Books left to be sold	

Tom Newhof – Treas.



## From Holy Writ

# The Book of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

*Hebrews 7:1-3 (continued)*

*MADE LIKE UNTO THE SON OF GOD (Verse 3b)*

Only the Son of God has a priesthood which is not dependent on father, mother, genealogy and limited to a certain tribe in Israel. The Son of God is the eternal Son, the only begotten Son of God, co-equal with the Father and with the Holy Ghost. He is very God of God, uncreated, before all worlds. He was in the beginning, and all things were made by Him. (Hebrews 1:2, 3) He is above angels and men. He alone, after He had brought about the purification of our sins by Himself, could sit down on the right hand of the majesty of God on high. Often this truth that the High Priest, who we have, is the Son of God is emphasized here in the book of Hebrews. (Hebrews 1:2, 5, 8; 2:6, 10; 3:6; 4:14, etc.)

Melchizedek was made like unto this Son of God. The entire likeness of his priesthood was fashioned after Christ. The likeness was taken *from* the Son! The Greek participle "*aphoomoioomenos*" emphasizes that the Son is the original type and that the very likeness, the very *essence* of Melchizedek's priesthood was taken from and corresponded exactly to that of the priesthood of the eternal Son of God! Christ is the original priesthood and Melchizedek is a copy. He is a copy in a far greater sense than was the priesthood after the order of Aaron. Is it not a wonderful work and design of God that some five hundred years before Aaron's priesthood at Sinai God had already given a clear example of Christ's abiding priesthood in Melchizedek? To emphasize this the entire Bible does not tell us one thing about this man's father, mother, nor about his genealogical background, but simply shows us his priesthood as a earthy copy of the heavenly original.

Since Melchizedek's priesthood is not dependent upon parenthood, but is a copy of the priesthood of Christ, it is a priesthood which abides forever. The term here in the Greek for "abideth forever" really emphasizes that it carries through — from age to age. It is not one which is terminated by the death of the priest. Since we read nothing of Melchizedek's death in Scripture the writer to the Hebrews can point out that in Scripture we do not read that this priesthood of Melchizedek ceased in any sense. The form of the expression here in the Greek is found again in Hebrews 10:1, 12, 14. The phrase simply marks the fact that there was no interruption of Melchizedek's priesthood.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it points to the higher reality of the

archetype which is in the Son of God in the flesh. As such this priesthood had no "beginning of days nor end of life."

It ought to be noticed by us that the phrase just mentioned is a very significant one. The not having beginning of days refers to the pre-existence of the Son and of His priesthood in the counsel of peace; His goings forth are from of old, from eternity. (Micah 5:2) He is the Lamb that is slain from the foundations of the earth. (Revelation 13:8) In that sense the priesthood had no beginning of days. And it has no end of life, that is, it continues forever into the ages to come. It is the true priesthood, which will fully come to manifestation in the heavens. Surely, this priesthood reaches back into the eternity of God's plan and forward unto the ceaseless unfolding of the same in this age and in the ages to come! (Ephesians 2:7)

Indeed, the priesthood according to Melchizedek gives us a strong consolation and hope within the veil! *THE GREATNESS OF MELCHIZEDEK VERSUS LEVI'S PRIESTHOOD (Hebrews 7:4-10. Read from own Bible)*

We are to "consider" how great this man was. How are we to do this? Surely, not by some vain speculation and theorization. The "theory" of which the writer speaks is that of comparing Scripture with Scripture according to sound principles of interpretation. This means take your Bible in hand and follow the teacher here. To do this we must remind ourselves that we are not to be mental and spiritual dullards, but to have our senses exercised by the use of them. (Hebrews 5:14) Perhaps we shall then more meaningfully be engaged in beholding a few more of the glories of the sanctuary of heaven, and catch its light-beams as they shine upon our inquisitive and interested eye from the sacred pages!

The writer says "Now consider how great this man was . . ." The writer has reference to this Melchizedek, particularly to his majesty as king-priest as this appears from the Sacred record in Genesis 14:18-20. There we read, "*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was a priest of the most high God. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he gave him tithes of all . . .*"

This is the passage of the Scriptures which the writer

no limit is marked negatively or positively, and the phrase simply excludes interruption in Melchizedek's tenure of office. No man takes it from Him . . ." Westcott, page 174.

(1) *eis to dieenekes* "the phrase does not describe absolute perpetuity, duration without end, but duration continued under the conditions implied or expressed in a particular case . . . Here



would have us consider. We must continually gaze on this passage, contemplate its meaning, and thus consider the sense of the Holy Spirit as set forth by the writer to the Hebrews. Not to do this we let these things slip through our fingers. For the Word is here, too, profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. And there are certain cardinal points in the Genesis record which must be considered, which all indicate the "greatness" of "this man."

First of all, we ought to notice the blessing which Melchizedek utters upon Abram. He utters this blessing as a priest of the Most High. Yes, it was a blessing at a very crucial and historic moment. Abram is returning from the slaughter of the kings. He had slaughtered them in the name of the Most High. And he had lifted up his hand unto Jehovah, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth. (Genesis 14:22) He had sworn by Jehovah and slaughtered the kings. And now he is himself blessed by Melchizedek. He, Abraham, heir of the world, is blessed of this man, a king in Salem. For the Most High is He who divided the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, and set the bounds of the people according to the children of Israel. (Deut. 32:8; Acts 17:26)

From this the writer draws an inference. He infers the greatness by an implied syllogism or form of reasoning and proof. This proof is as follows; 1. The lesser is ever blessed by the greater. 2. Melchizedek is said to have blessed Abraham who had the promises 3. Hence: Melchizedek is clearly indicated to be superior even to Abraham in his official capacity. This latter indicates that Melchizedek's priesthood is made like unto the Son of God, for only he can bless Abraham and give him the promises. This is cogent proof for any Bible-believer. He that does not believe the Scriptures will needs pervert all of the Word of God to his own destruction.

The second matter to duly consider concerning the greatness of Melchizedek is that he received tithes from Abraham. (Verse 8) Now, what is so remarkable about this? In this we see that this Melchizedek is so much greater in his priesthood than is the priesthood of Levi according to the order of Aaron. O, to be sure, Levi was not yet born at this time when Abram returned from the slaughter of the kings. Fact is, that Isaac too was still in his father's loins. There was not yet any: Isaac — Jacob — Levi — Aaron. That would be five hundred years later. However, the writer would have us observe a fine point of this superior priesthood of Christ-Melchizedek. It is that Levi is *under* Melchizedek, inferior in rank, while according to the law they are above the people, from whom they receive tithes. In the heirarchy of Israel they are near the top of the pyramid, but the entire pyramid of the law and the shadows is far inferior to the priesthood of Christ-Melchizedek. For Levi gives tithes to Melchizedek, the chief of the spoils at that. And this tenth which Abraham gave really

indicated that *all* belonged to Melchizedek. It was all laid at his feet. So it is with Levi; Levi-Aaron laid all at the feet of the King-Priest, Christ. He is Lord of lords and King of kings!

The third matter, which we must duly consider in the greatness of this man is that in the one case tithes are received *by men who die*, while on the other hand the tithes are received by him concerning whom it is testified that *he lives!* Yes, "there" in the Old Testament dispensation the character of the priest was that they were but mortal men. They died! And "here" in the New Testament we have a priest who says: I AM the resurrection and the life. I live, therefore, ye shall live. What a difference!

This is a point which the writer will delineate upon in the succeeding verses. For the present we do well to consider this greatness as revealed to us in the Genesis record and as interpreted for us by the Spirit in the writer to the Hebrews. Such is not mere theory, but it is interpreting Scripture in the light of Scripture, and as the logical Word made flesh!

#### *THE NECESSITY OF A DIFFERENT PRIESTHOOD* (Hebrews 7:11-14)

The writer to the Hebrews continues this theme of the greatness of the priesthood of Melchizedek in this section (read from your own Bible). He now takes up his point of departure from the position that the true priesthood must bring about "perfection." Obviously the priesthood of Aaron had not brought about the perfection for which a priesthood is intended. Writes our text: "If perfection were by the levitical priesthood — what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron?"

This is a significant question, indeed. It is a question with an implied answer. The answer is "none." If perfection were by that priesthood which continued up till the rending of the vail in the temple, then surely the coming of another priesthood would forever be unnecessary.

The conditional sentence here is "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood . . ." It is a conditional sentence expressing something contrary to fact. The Levitical priesthood could not and did not perfect anything. It did not bring about the purification from sin, and it did not write the law in the hearts of God's people. Fact is, it was inherently of such a nature that it called for a different kind of priesthood to rise in its stead. This was not accidental; it belonged to the very nature and genius of the Levitical priesthood. God never intended that this priesthood should bring the church to perfection and to the glory of the heavenly tabernacle. But the very purpose of the Levitical priesthood was that another priesthood should rise, which even historically had been revealed before, on earth, in the days already of Abraham. It is the priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek.



## *A Cloud of Witnesses*

### **David's Adultery**

*B. Woudenberg*

*And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon . . .*

*And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.*

*And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.*

*II Samuel 11:2, 4, 5*

To the accusers of the woman taken in adultery Jesus answered, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Thereupon we read that the accusers left her "beginning at the eldest, even unto the last." In former years Rev. Gerrit Vos used to reflect upon this passage by observing that the reason why the eldest left first was that older men are more sinful than are young. It is a proposition against which young men, aware of their own impulsive sinfulness, are inclined to argue, but one against which old men in their depth of experience are silent. Surely, when we examine the life of King David, it would appear to bear this out.

David undoubtedly stands upon the pages of Scripture as one of the most impressive and appealing men in the history of the church of God, a wonderful mixture of gentleness and courage, humility and authority, joined together in the power of a firm and unwavering faith. One can not help but be drawn to him even in spite of the centuries and centuries of time that have intervened. The thing is though, that when one thinks of him in this way, it is of him in his youth and not in his adulthood, of him as a courageous young shepherd and warrior, not as the great king. The reason is, perhaps, because across the face of his adulthood life there rests a great scar, an event one wishes could be forgotten, a great and terrible sin. The atheist loves to reflect upon it and throw it in the believer's face. Here is the proof that the children of God are no better than anyone else. And they think that they have gained a point because what they say is really true. And because of this we can be thankful for the complete honesty with which the Scriptures record the lives of the saints. There is no effort to gloss them over and make them appear better than they really are. The fact is that the people of God are not better than others, the Scriptures leave this without question. It is just that we in God's grace are brought to see

our sin and confess it, just as David did. It is that which makes the difference.

Of this we may be sure, the fall of David into sin is not something that came about in a moment. Outwardly it might appear that way. There was after all that moment when he thought to lust after her in sinful desire, that moment when he gave way to his carnal desire to have her in adultery. The thing is though that there were many other times in David's life when these same inclinations would have been adamantly resisted and the very thought would have aroused him to shame. But the time had come when the spiritual strength of David's life was no longer increasing; rather it had fallen into a serious decline until he no longer retained the strength to resist even his basest desire. It was a spiritual decline so great that only one thing would be able to stir him, and that was to be led into temptation so that at his own fall he might come to see how truly helpless he was without the sustaining grace of God. That was how it happened.

In a way, perhaps, it was a natural result of coming into the position of king over Israel. David found himself eventually the victim of his own success and prosperity. As long as he had been young, alone, and oppressed by forces greater than his own, his complete dependence upon God had been a day by day reality with his obligations to God always before his mind. Even after he first became king, the vast numbers and power of his enemies brought him in prayer before God again and again while the weight of his new and heavy responsibilities reminded him always of his own weakness in life. But at last the time came when his armies had proved themselves to be the indisputable rulers of the world as they knew it. Wherever they went they conquered, and no one was able to resist their power. It made of David the acclaimed hero of the world that no



one dared to speak against. To him there poured in from all corners of the world a new wealth such as the world had never seen before, some of it the booty of battle, some of it tribute forced by his armies, some of it willing bribes from those who thought to win his favor — but a wealth beyond measure nonetheless. For David, however, it was more of a temptation than a blessing, and a temptation which he was incapable of resisting. The time came when it appeared that his army was well enough trained that it seemed quite capable of functioning without him. With a man like Joab to lead it, David saw no reason why he should not allow the army to go out by itself while he remained behind to rest, relax, and enjoy some of the prosperity which he had brought to his country. So it was that when once again that season came about in which kings were accustomed to go out to battle, David sent his army without him to lead it while he remained in Jerusalem to enjoy himself and seek some leisure.

This, however, was not the only aspect entering into David's fall. His was a day in which rulers and kings commonly demonstrated their greatness, power and wealth by the number of wives which they kept. The greater the number of such wives, the more beautiful their appearance, and the higher their birth, the more highly respected the king was supposed to be. It was a very evil tendency with many serious implications. It was a danger against which the law of God had warned those who were to be kings in Israel, Deuteronomy 17:17, "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away." But it was a warning to which neither David nor his son gave heed, and for both of them it was their downfall.

The weakness of David had appeared already at his first marriage to Michal the daughter of Saul. It was a marriage of expediency by which David was joined to the royal family; but it was not in the end a happy marriage and brought into the home of David a great deal of grief. Michal did not follow David into his banishment, with the result that when Abigail, the widow of Nabal, struck his fancy he married her also. Not long after this he married another wife also, and as time went on he married still more. David fell into the evil habit which was customary to all the great men of his age, whenever a young woman would strike his fancy, he would use his power and authority to take her and make her his wife. It only meant in the end, though, that David had no true wife, no woman with whom he could share his life and love completely as a reflection of God's love and faithfulness to His church. David, by wilfully following his every inclination and using his authority to satisfy his carnal desires, was depriving himself of the greatest means of human support and encouragement that a man can have. Having many, David in effect had no wife with whom he could truly share his life, so that he was left in loneliness.

It was perhaps this loneliness that overwhelmed David

in those days after his army had departed. His usual companions were gone, and those who remained behind were not such as could fill his life. Accustomed to having him gone on the battlefield, the government of the land somehow went on without needing his attention. David had little more to do than to sleep and follow his passing whims. So it was that one evening David arose from a long afternoon nap and went up to the roof of the palace overlooking the city. It was by far the most delightful part of the day with the cool evening breezes passing over the city and particularly across the roof of the palace that rose in dominance above everything else. From his vantage point David looked down upon and about the city, when suddenly his eyes fell upon a neighbor woman he had never seen before. Thinking herself safely hidden behind the walls of her garden, she was washing herself and had undressed partially or wholly to do so. She was a beautiful woman and in these unusual circumstances quickly aroused the feelings and intreats of the king in her. All through the night the king could not forget this attractive woman he had looked upon, and the next morning he sent out an inquiry as to who she might be.

The answer was no doubt disappointing, for the woman was not, as he had hoped, a single woman who could be taken into his harem, but a married woman, the wife of one Uriah a Hittite and member of the royal army. Still David could not forget the woman whose name he now knew to be Bathsheba. Possibly she was lonely as he was, her husband being away with the army; and what harm could come from offering a few hours of entertainment, a meal and some quiet conversation. David may well have thought his purposes quite pure when he sent out the invitation to Bathsheba to come to him in the palace, a mere matter of kindness and hospitality to the wife of one of his faithful soldiers.

As far as Bathsheba was concerned, the invitation from David must have come totally unexpected. Neither was it one, coming as it did from the king himself, that could lightly be refused. Only after she had come to the palace, perhaps, did she discover that the purposes were purely social and not legal. Left as she was alone with another man, she must have felt her first feelings of guilt and uneasiness. It was not a place for her, a married woman, to be; and it would have been better to have excused herself. But this was the king; and besides, David was by every measure a gracious host and an attractive person. To be sure such close association between people of the opposite sex and not married to each other was quite contrary to the customs of the day; and both must have felt the precariousness of what they were doing. But both were interesting and gracious people so that very soon they found themselves completely engrossed in each other. But the course of nature had been set in motion, and before long their intimacies had become greater than either could resist. What



followed was not any longer what could be explained away as innocent and both knew it. What had appeared a pleasure for a moment left them at their departure overshadowed with a deep and dismaying cloud of guilt resting upon their souls. Theirs was the anguish of guilt and of shame which only those who have followed adultery can ever know.

Neither was God, who alone with David and Bathsheba knew the darkness of that hour, about to let it be forgotten. First there were those hours and days in which each, both the man and the woman, struggled in loneliness with their own minds trying to explain away what they had done, trying to relieve that terrible

oppression of guilt. Then came the weeks of fear and dawning awareness, and that secret message to David. There was to be no forgetting, no escape; Bathsheba had conceived. Their sin, the sin of David the great king was about to be exposed for all to see.

David was indeed the favored of the Lord. He had lived before the face of his God and had been blessed. But to him it must also become evident as well as to everyone else, and to us too; David's greatness was not because he was better, not because he was in any way free from the power of sin; but only a matter of sovereign good-pleasure and grace.

## *Contending for the Faith*

# THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

The Second Period— 250-730 A.D.

The Pelagian Controversy

Semi – Pelagianism

*Rev. H. Veldman*

We remarked at the close of our preceding article that the Augustinian and Scriptural doctrine of sin and grace is never popular. We may recall that Cassian, the founder and abbot of the monastery of Massilia, stood at the head of the Semi-Pelagian party. A certain Prosper Aquitanus, an Augustinian divine and poet, wrote a book against this Cassian, and he also composed a long poem in defence of Augustine and his system. But, the Semi-Pelagian doctrine was the more popular and made great progress in France. We were to call attention to this development in this article.

Of interest is what Philip Schaff writes about this in his *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, 862 f.f:

"But the Semi-Pelagian doctrine was the more popular, and made great progress in France. Its principal advocates after Cassian are the following: the presbyter-monk Vincentius of Lerinum, author of the *Commonitorium*, in which he developed the true catholic test of doctrine, the threefold consensus, in covert antagonism to the novel doctrines of Augustinianism (about 434); Faustus, bishop of Rhegium (Riez), who at the council of Arles (475) refuted the hyper-Augustinian presbyter Lucidus, and was commissioned by the council to write a work upon the grace of God and human freedom (notice how soon after Augustine's death, relatively speaking, a hyper Augustinian was already refuted at a church council — H.V.); Gennadius, presbyter at Marseilles (died after 495), who continued the biographical work of Jerome,

down to 495, and attributed Augustine's doctrine of predestination to his itch for writing (so, Augustine's doctrine as emphasizing the truth of predestination was attributed simply to Augustine's desire for writing — H.V.); Arnobius the younger; and the much discussed anonymous tract *Praedestinatus* (about 460), which, by gross exaggeration, and by an unwarranted imputation of logical results which Augustine had expressly forestalled, placed the doctrine of predestination in an odious light, and then refuted it (how often this is done today: first make a caricature of the doctrine of predestination, and then refute it — H.V.).

The author of the *Praedestinatus* says, that a treatise had fallen into his hands, which fraudulently bore upon its face the name of the orthodox teacher Augustine, in order to smuggle in, under a Catholic name, a blasphemous dogma, pernicious to the faith. On this account he had undertaken to transcribe and to refute this work. The treatise itself consists of three books; the first, following Augustine's book, *De haeresibus*, gives a description of ninety heresies from Simon Magus down to the time of the author, and brings up, as the last of them, the doctrine of a double predestination, as a doctrine which makes God the author of evil, and renders all the moral endeavors of men fruitless; the second book is the pseudo-Augustinian treatise upon this ninetieth heresy, but is apparently merely a Semi-Pelagian caricature by the same author; the third book contains the refutation of the thus travestied pseudo-Augustinian doctrine of



predestination, employing the usual Semi-Pelagian arguments.

A counterpart to this treatise is found in an also anonymous work, which endeavors to commend Augustinianism by mitigation, in the same degree that the *Prædestinatus* endeavors to stultify it by exaggeration. It has been ascribed to Pope Leo I (dies 461), of whom it would not be unworthy; but it cannot be supposed that the work of so distinguished a man could have remained anonymous. The author avoids even the term *prædestinatio*, and teaches expressly, that Christ died for all men and would have all to be saved; thus rejecting the Augustinian particularism. But, on the other hand, he also rejects the Semi-Pelagian principles, and asserts the utter inability of the natural man to do good. He unhesitatingly sets grace above the human will, and represents the whole life of faith, from beginning to end, as a work of unmerited grace. He develops the three thoughts, that God desires the salvation of all men; that no one is saved by his own merits, but by grace; and that the human understanding cannot fathom the depths of divine wisdom. We must trust in the righteousness of God. Every one of the damned suffers only the righteous punishment of his sins; while no saint can boast himself in his merits, since it is only of pure grace that he is saved. But how is it with the great multitude of infants that die every year without baptism, and without opportunity of coming to the knowledge of salvation? The author feels this difficulty, without, however, being able to solve it. He calls to his help the representative character of parents, and dilutes the Augustinian doctrine of original sin to the negative conception of a mere defect of good, which, of course, also reduces the idea of hereditary guilt and the damnation of unbaptized children. He distinguishes between a *general* grace which comes to man through the external revelation in nature, law, and gospel, and a *special* grace, which effects conversion and regeneration by an inward impartation of saving power, and which is only bestowed on those that are saved.

Semi-Pelagianism prevailed in Gaul for several decades. Under the head of Faustus of Rhegium it gained the victory in two synods, at Arles in 472 and at Lyons in 475, where Augustine's doctrine of predestination was condemned, though without mention of his name.

And so the groundwork is laid for the Council of Orange in A.D. 529. We may note the following. The doctrine of Augustine, setting forth the Scriptural truths of man's being saved solely by grace and the absolutely sovereign character of Divine predestination was subjected to severe criticism almost immediately upon the death of this church father. A caricature is drawn of the doctrine of predestination in which that doctrine is presented as making God the author of evil and rendering all moral endeavors of men fruitless. The teaching was set forth that Christ died for all men and that He would have all men be saved. It is true that they would hold to the teaching that man is utterly incapable

of doing any good, but it is also stated that the human understanding cannot fathom the depths of the wisdom of the Lord. The teaching is developed and set forth that God desires the salvation of all men. And as far as the problem is concerned concerning infants who die every year without being baptized and without the opportunity of coming to the knowledge of salvation, this presented a problem which could not be solved. It is also striking that it was also during this period that men spoke of a general and a special grace of God. The general grace of God came to man through the external revelation in nature, the law and the gospel. So, already in this period they spoke of the gospel as a proof for the general grace of God. This, of course, can mean only one thing, and that is that God would save all men through the preaching of the gospel. And then they spoke of a particular or special grace of God which effects conversion and regeneration by an inward impartation of saving power, and which is only bestowed upon those who are saved. And we do well to note that this distinction between a general and a special grace of God was the presentation of the Semi-Pelagians and of those who opposed the Augustinian system. It is certainly true that the groundwork had been laid for the Council of Orange in 529 which sealed the victory of Semi-Augustinianism.

#### VICTORY OF SEMI-AUGUSTINIANISM. COUNCIL OF ORANGE, A.D. 529

Concerning this Synod of Orange, Schaff writes as follows, Vol. III, 865 f.f.:

But these synods (at Arles in 472 and at Lyons in 475) were only provincial, and were the cause of a schism. In North Africa and in Rome the Augustinian system of doctrine, though in a somewhat softened form attained the ascendancy. In the decree by Pope Gelasius in 496 the writings of Augustine and Prosper Aquitanus are placed among books ecclesiastically sanctioned, those of Cassian and Faustus of Rhegium among the apocryphal or forbidden. Even in Gaul it found in the beginning of the sixth century very capable and distinguished advocates, especially in Avitus, archbishop of Vienne (490-523), and Caesarius, archbishop of Arles (502-542). Associated with these was Fulgentius of Ruspe (died 533), in the name of the sixty African bishops banished by the Vandals and then living in Sardinia.

The controversy was stirred up anew by the Scythian monks, who in their zeal for the Monophysite theopaschitism, abhorred everything connected with Nestorianism, and urged first pope Hormisdas, and then with better success the exiled African bishops, to procure the condemnation of Semi-Pelagianism.

These transactions terminated at length in the triumph of a moderate Augustinianism, or of what might be called Semi-Augustinianism, in distinction from Semi-Pelagianism. At the synod of Orange (Arausio) in the year 529, at which Caesarius of Arles was leader, the Semi-Pelagian system, yet *without*



*mention of its adherents*, was condemned in twenty-five chapters or canons, and the Augustinian doctrine of sin and grace was approved, without the doctrine of absolute or particularistic predestination. A similar result was reached at a synod of Valence (Valencia), held the same year, but otherwise unknown.

The synod of Orange, for its Augustinian decisions in anthropology and soteriology, is of great importance. But as the chapters contain many repetitions (mostly from the Bible and the works of Augustine, and his followers, it will suffice to give extracts containing in a positive form the most important propositions.

To this synod we hope to call attention in a subsequent article. However, of this synod the Rev. H. Hoeksema writes as follows:

The synod is especially known because of its consistent condemnation of Semi-Pelagianism. For this

reason many historians have the impression, and leave the impression, that this synod represents a last victory for the Augustinian conception of predestination and sovereign grace. This last, however, is not the case. The synod left much rather the impression that it was afraid of the strict Augustinian principles. His doctrine certainly was not maintained by the synod. On the one hand, and indeed rather inconsistently, the synod maintained the total incapability of man to do any good, over against the Semi-Pelagians. But, on the other hand, it denied the infallible and irresistible operation of sovereign grace. In fact, as far as predestination is concerned, the synod was satisfied simply to express that a predestination unto evil is to be condemned; in other words, it must have nothing of sovereign reprobation.

However, the Lord willing, we will call attention to this synod and its decisions in a later article.

## *The Lord Gave The Word . . . Ps. 68:11*

# Jonah's Preaching To Nineveh

*Rev. C. Hanko*

When we speak of mission labors in the old dispensation, or the spread of the Gospel beyond the pale of Israel, we quite naturally think of Jonah and his message to Nineveh, upon which Nineveh repented. Therefore we pause a moment to consider this unique missionary venture of the Old Testament.

Let us just briefly call to mind some of the detail of Jonah's preaching and Nineveh's repentance upon that preaching.

Nineveh was a large city of about sixty miles in circumference with a total population of six or seven thousand people. Jonah 1:2; 3:3; 4:11. This was the capital of Assyria, the arch-enemy of the Kingdom of Israel at that time. It was the world power of that day, only to be compared to Babylon, the Medo-Persian kingdom, the Macedonian empire, and the Roman empire. It was, so to speak, the world that threatened to overthrow the church.

Jonah was called to be a prophet among the people of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II. (II Kings 14:25). This was, therefore, the time of Israel's decline, when idolatry and all its accompanying evils were prevalent in Israel. The Lord was angry with the ten tribes and was about to give them over into the hands of Assyria, their arch-enemy, to be scattered among the nations of the world.

At this particular time the word of the Lord came to Jonah, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up

before me." This call to go to Nineveh struck Jonah with all its implications. Jonah realized at once that what the Lord said was true; Nineveh was a very wicked city. In chapter 3:8 even the king of Nineveh speaks of the fact that every one is guilty of "an evil way," and that "violence is in their hands." This can only mean that Nineveh was guilty of base idolatry, lawlessness, oppression, and bloodshed. Stealing and plunder, whoredoms and witchcrafts, cunning deceit and treachery were among their sins, as is mentioned in Nahum 3:1. Yet the Lord sends Jonah to preach to that wicked city, whose wickedness arose before Him even to heaven. It is true that the prophet must preach against the wickedness there and announce the judgments of the living God from heaven against them. He is told to say: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." Nothing more. But even Jonah realizes that it is not God's purpose merely to announce that God's judgment will soon fall upon that city. Jehovah has a positive purpose in sending His word of judgment to them, because His mercy will be revealed even there. (Jonah 4:2) The Lord intended that there should be repentance and salvation as fruit upon the preaching of the prophet of Israel.

And the Lord did bring repentance to Nineveh. We read in Jonah 3:5: "So the people believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them." This can only mean that there was a genuine repentance in this heathen capital. Many of the inhabitants from the



mighty princes down to the lowly servants became aware of their sins as guilt before the living God, were deeply sorry for their sins, and turned to the Lord in heart-felt repentance. They believed that God was just in destroying them and pleaded for His mercy. 3:10. Jesus confirms this in Matthew 12:41, where He warns the Jews of His day, "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas." Surely the men of Nineveh would never sit with Christ and His saints to judge the world if their repentance were not sincere.

The result was that Nineveh was not destroyed after forty days. The Lord gathered His elect remnant out of that city and gave them time to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Later Nahum once more announces the judgment of God upon this bloody city, which gives us reason to believe that the entire city did not repent and that the people once more became corrupted, so that not long after it was destroyed. We can also mention that during that time Assyria turned against the Kingdom of Israel and scattered them to the ends of the earth. II Kings 17:5, 6.

Jesus tells the evil and adulterous generation of His day, which demands of Him a sign to prove that He is indeed the Christ, that no sign will be given them but the sign of the prophet Jonah. "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matthew 12:39, 40. From this we may conclude that Nineveh was a picture of the ingathering of the Gentiles in the new dispensation. After Christ's rejection by the Jews, which resulted in His death and resurrection, Israel as a nation would be destroyed, but God would turn to the Gentiles to gather His own unto Himself. This is entirely in harmony with the prophecies of the Old Testament and of Jesus Himself. Therefore Nineveh with its little children and much cattle (see chapter 4) is a sign of the complete renewal of all things by the ingathering of the church. When God brings His elect into glory *all* things are made new. The *world* is saved; only the reprobate chaff is cast out. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

What can hardly pass unnoticed in this prophecy of Jonah is the message which the Lord gives him to proclaim to the Ninevites. Jonah is told only to proclaim to them that in forty days the city will be destroyed. He is not told to call the people to repentance. He is not instructed to warn them that unless they repent they will be destroyed. He is merely told to announce the impending judgment of God upon them. No, he is not even instructed to inform them of Israel's God as the only true and living God Who has the power to destroy. He must come in the name of his God to this heathen people and tell them that in forty days

his God will bring His judgment upon them. And we can be sure that Jonah in his state of mind added nothing more to his proclamation than the simple and concise statement: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

And yet "the men of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonas." If what we read in the Book of Jonah is not sufficient to convince us that this was a genuine repentance, we do have the words of Jesus to confirm it. The objection would certainly be raised in our day that Jonah was a very poor missionary, entirely devoid of real missionary zeal. But the objection would also be raised that his message was certainly a poor psychological approach, upon which no one could expect any positive fruit. Nothing whatever was said about God's love, much less about a love of God for all men. No effort was made to try to show that God indeed wants all men to be saved and extends His invitation to all. Here was no "altar-call," no plea for a decision for Christ. Simply nothing that is considered so essential for proper mission work upon which we may expect fruits of repentance and salvation.

Now it must be granted at once that Jonah certainly did not say all that might have been said. The Gospel is more than a mere announcement of impending judgment or of God's wrath against the guilty sinner. The Gospel is also a call to repentance with the assurance that God receives contrite sinners and forgives their sins, bestowing on them all the blessings of salvation. Jesus, for example, says: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

But before we criticize the message of Jonah let us beware lest we criticize God. God, after all, laid the words on Jonah's lips. And even Jonah realized when he went to Nineveh that these words were to be proclaimed because God is a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repents of evil. (4:2). But also the people of Nineveh realized that this message might well have come as a word of warning and a call to repentance. GOD, after all, was working in the hearts of His elect in that great world city. GOD had His own in that city and was calling them out before the city itself would be destroyed. And God knows the best approach, knows also how to use His own word to serve His eternal purpose. So that the conversion of the men of Nineveh is a strong evidence of the fact that *salvation is always only of the Lord*. There is nothing of man in it. We are saved by grace alone.

But what impresses us most of all in this prophecy is the attitude of the unwilling prophet toward his calling to preach the Gospel to the Ninevites. He is not at all pleased with his commission to go out as missionary to this heathen land. He even struggles to get away, and when he preaches he does so with the hope that the people will not repent. He waits to see whether they will be destroyed, and is angry when the Lord shows them mercy. It is only after a bitter struggle that he finally is



silent. The book of Jonah ends with the word of the Lord on which Jonah makes no further comment. He bows before the sovereign will and purpose of the Most High.

But it took quite a bit to bring Jonah to that point. At first he ran away, as if he could run away from God. He meets God in the storm and realizes that the Lord is indeed following him. He experiences divine mercy when God miraculously prepares a fish that swallows him up. He is rescued from the depths of hell to go to Nineveh and fulfill His calling. Even then He cannot understand the ways of the Lord. We may well consider him a prophet with a serious problem. He had hoped for Nineveh's overthrow and he sees their repentance.

For all this Jonah had been severely maligned and criticized. Nor may we ignore the fact that he was such an unwilling instrument in God's hand. Much less may we condone his actions and complaints. But we must remember that the Almighty was angry with Jonah and yet showed amazing patience with him. We also must certainly attempt to understand his problem as best we can.

And then we must immediately consider that Jonah did love God and did love God's cause upon the earth. He was not impelled by a mere patriotism for Israel as a nation, but was motivated by His love for the people of God. It is especially for that reason that Jonah could not understand why he should be drawn away from the Kingdom of Israel to preach to Israel's arch-enemy Assyria. He sees Nineveh spared only to destroy the Kingdom of Israel. Even though the prophet should grant that Israel deserved God's righteous judgment

because they had forsaken the living God, how could the Christ be born if the "church" perishes. And although he might grant that God could very well have his elect in Nineveh, which must be saved, how could God's promise to Abraham be realized as long as the Christ had not yet come. For Christ must be born of Abraham.

We must certainly consider Jonah in the light of his times. For many centuries God had gathered His church from the natural descendants of Abraham, that is, the Jews. God's covenant had been confined within the narrow limits of national Israel. The few who were gathered from without, such as Rahab and Ruth, were engrafted into Israel. But now the Lord shows His promise of future things to come; the ingathering of the Gentiles after Israel as nation has become fully apostate by rejecting the Christ. But Jonah was born, as it were, before his time. He could not understand his own prophecy. But then we must also remember that Peter could not understand the vision of the unclean beasts until it was interpreted for him. And that was after Pentecost and the cross and the outpouring of the Spirit. Let us not be too severe in criticizing Jonah.

But above all, let us see the wonder of God's grace. For salvation is of the Lord. That is evident from the Book of Jonah. And it is by that same wonder of grace that we also are brought into the covenant.

When the Lord shall count the nations,

Sons and daughters He shall see.

Born to endless life in Zion,

And their joyful song shall be,

"Blessed Zion, all our fountains are in thee."

## Studies in Depth

# A CAMPUS MOVEMENT

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

A rather recent religious movement is the *Campus Crusade for Christ, International*, with headquarters in San Bernardino, California. To draw a comparison, the organization is somewhat in the line of Child Evangelism, Youth for Christ or the Billy Graham Crusade. Therefore, while neither in the modernist nor the liberal side of the ecclesiastical field, its proper sphere is not within the Reformed perimeter, much less in that of Fundamentalist circles. It is a branch of Neo-evangelicalism. Its official magazine quarterly, "Collegiate Challenge," may carry an occasional abridged article from that neo-evangelical publication, *Christianity Today*. The advisory board of the crusade boasts such names as Harold John Ockenga, said to be "the father of neo-evangelicalism,"<sup>1</sup> and inventor of the

term itself, and Billy Graham, the neo-evangelical evangelist. Other supporting names appear, such as, Bob Pierce, Oswald J. Smith, Wilbur M. Smith, Clyde Narramore, Mark O. Hatfield and Walter H. Judd.

Advertized as "a student Christian movement designed to present the message of Jesus Christ to collegians throughout the United States and the world," it aims "to mold the destiny of tomorrow's world" or to "help change the world" by introducing men to Christ. "Changed lives equal a changed world." This line of thought is especially intended to be appealing to the ecclesiastically liberal side of society which has always been more or less "post-millennial" in outlook, that is, the progress of the "gospel" will gradually permeate and conquer every area of life, until the kingdom of God



becomes visibly apparent and so readied for the coming of its King. It would appear from "Crusade" literature that "the world" in general means whatever the individual connected with the movement wants it to mean, and in particular refers to the world of mankind. According to Scripture, the term "world" is rather complex, having about nine different shades of meaning, three of which appear within the compass of one verse, John 1:10. There it is said that "the world was made by Him." But that world since the Fall has been subjected to vanity, imprisoned in the bondage of corruption, and so groans and travails in pain under the burden of that enslavement without deliverance until the Lord Jesus Christ visibly and bodily appears in our atmosphere to bring about the redemption of our bodies and the glorious liberty of the sons of God (Rom. 8:18-23). The world will not be changed for the better until He comes (II Pet. 3:10-13). It is regrettable to tears that the Billy Graham set does not see this.

The philosophy of Campus Crusade, if indeed it may be called that, lies in the emplacement of "a strong wholesome emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures, the living Christ, the importance of the church and the adventure of discipleship." One may read all the brochures and descriptive literature of this movement in examination of that "philosophy" and find it to have no more depth than this trite, frothy "backcover" language. In connection with this "wholesome emphasis on the authority of Scripture," one does not find any such emphasis as "that they are from God," hence "divine Scriptures," thus distinguished from all apocryphal books (which have neither "power," "efficacy" nor "authority"), nor the wholesome statement that the written Word of God is the only infallible rule of faith. (Belgic Confession, II-VII). Nor is "the living Christ" or "the church" any where near defined or delineated with even an approach to the Scriptural beauty and clarity of a Guido de Bres (BC, X, XXVII-XXIX).

The strategy of this collegiate salvation army is to present "the message of Christ" (a term in preference to "the gospel" which makes the offence of the cross to cease) on campus "through team meetings and Bible studies in fraternities, sororities, dormitories and other living groups . . . through films . . . records, athletic teams, breakfasts and literature." The results of this crusade are that "many thousands of students . . . have committed their lives to" Christ, and "hundreds of these are engaged in taking Christ to the world." The crusade goal is "to present the message of Christ to the collegians of the world in order to bring each student to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ and commitment to Him as Saviour and Lord." This strategy consists of hammering away at "the Four Spiritual Laws" and "the Ten Basic Steps," which sound like Buddhism's "Four Noble Truths" and its "Noble Eightfold Path." Constant reference is made to "sharing", sharing a testimony, an

experience, a verse of Scripture, etc., which sounds like Buchmanism's (Moral Re-Armament) "sharing" ritual.<sup>2</sup> Other strange terminology of this collegian cult includes such frequent expressions as "the witnessing experience," "testimony" (a term used over against "preachimony"), "action group," "yielded Christian," "spiritual Christian," "carnal Christian," "helping to change the world," and "man is continually trying to reach God." New converts are taught to confess in prayer, "I have been in control of my own life." (This in the face of Acts 17:28!) Such is a sample of the working jargon of these crusaders, who, by the way, advise their membership, "don't use Christian jargon. Words such as 'saved,' 'convicted,' 'converted' and 'sin' do not communicate truth to the average non-Christian . . ." Why then, under the crusade's Law Number Two, is Romans 6:23 carried before the world, "the wages of *sin* is death!" Why advise, "Share the message of Christ," only to add, "Don't use Christian jargon!" One also comes across such *a la* Graham expressions as, "Man has the power of free will, the power to say 'Yes' or 'No' to God." God then waits upon man, the deciding factor as to whether His or the devil's will be done. God "waits to sit upon the throne of your life, but you must invite Him in to your life. No one can be a Christian without surrender of the [RCH: would-be autonomous] will to Christ."

This language, exotic to the older generation, to a biblical vocabulary, and probably deemed "relevant" by the collegiate caste, is intended to convey basically two ideas, that of "conversion" (to use Christian jargon) and that of "Christian living." Not close, however, does this come to what the Reformed know as "the true conversion of man to God and the manner thereof." For conversion "is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will . . . but it must be wholly ascribed to God who has chosen His own from eternity in Christ, so he confers on them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into His marvelous light; (they therefore) may glory not in themselves, but in the Lord" (Canons III, IV, 10). Conversion is experienced by the elect, because God "works in them true conversion." This He does by causing the *gospel* (Christian jargon) to be preached to them, by powerfully illuminating their minds by His Holy Spirit. In fact, prior to this efficacious act of God, He regenerates by pervading the inmost recesses of the man, opening his closed and softening his hardened heart, so infusing new qualities into his will, which heretofore dead, He quickens, actuates and strengthens, so that the man then may come to Him and believe in Him (*ibid.*, 9).

Then the movement teaches that each new convert won through personal witnessing to the truth of Christ must be brought to the possession of Christian assurance. This is done through the following rationalization process. He is asked, "Have you invited Christ



into your life?" The necessity of doing this must be impressed on the seeker with some such advice as, "He will not force himself upon us; we must invite Him in to our life to be Saviour and Lord." Then, "Were you sincere about your accepting the Lord's invitation to you?" referring to, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man . . . open the door, I will come in . . ." So, "where is Christ right now? He said He would come into your life. Would He mislead you? Then where is He at this moment?" After the answer desired is extorted: "in my heart," the inquisition continues, "On what authority do you know this?" The answer here fished for and hoped shall be forthcoming is, "Why, I know it because God has promised it in His Word, and I have met the conditions demanded by Him." Then the counsellor points out to the new convert just what has happened to him since he "decided to accept Christ." The Lord has saved him and come into his heart. He is now a child of God. At this moment he begins the great "adventure" of the Christian life. The next step is to have a word of prayer together where the convert may pray a prayer prescribed, or one of his own, thanking God for what he has done. Thanksgiving is an act of faith. Faith pleases God. It is good to do this because it is pleasing to God. Assurance may also follow from the confidence which flows from this act. This is a sample, literally, of Campus Crusade "evangelism." In another installment, the Lord willing, it must be shown how superficial and dangerous this invitation system is. Pity the person who cannot see it is all the most sickening Arminianism from beginning to end!

All this rigmarole amounts to a kind of "Protestant" Roman Catholicism, if such a thing can be imagined! The Christian witness or counsellor becomes a sacerdotal functionary, a "priest" who extracts an "auricular confession" and imposes a prescribed course the subject must meekly follow to be a recipient of

grace. The priest will instruct you in exactly all the ritual, custom, ceremony, penance, *et cetera*, that must be performed for salvation. When you have performed all that, the priest will then inform you that you (and *he* must so inform you, or you cannot) now possess true grace. Here assurance is not something which comes as a free gift of grace from the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures opened to the opened heart. No, assurance is, as the literature noted above reveals, something one man gives to another. *You*, as a "personal worker" or Christian who "witnesses for Christ," can "give assurance" to any convert to Christ who has met His "conditions." This is certainly a far cry from the Christian doctrine of assurance<sup>3</sup> as outlined in the Westminster Confession and its beautiful chapter XVIII. Even more beautiful, and more comprehensively developed, is the doctrine of assurance as set down in the Canons of Dort, V, articles I-XV, especially articles IX-XIV, and in the immediately following Rejections of Errors, I-IX, especially articles V and VI.<sup>4</sup> What a "crusader," who wields but a spike of straw, finding too "heavy" that right good Westminster blade or the Jerusalem steel of Dort!

<sup>1</sup> See *The Standard Bearer*, Vol. 41, No. 12, March 15, 1965, p. 271, article: *Neo-Evangelicalism*.

<sup>2</sup> *The Standard Bearer*, Vol. 42, No. 8, Jan. 15, 1966, p. 178, article: *Buchmanism*.

<sup>3</sup> See *Beacon Lights*, Feb., Apr., May, Jun.-Jul., Aug.-Sept., Oct., 1967, series on *Assurance*.

<sup>4</sup> *The Three Forms of Unity*: The Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession, The Canons of Dort Together With the Athanasian Creed, Nicene Creed (paper, 53 pp., 35c ea. Order from R.C. Harbach, 1226 Pinehurst Blvd., Kalamazoo, Mich. 49007).

## Examining Ecumenicalism

### "THE DUTCH MEET DIXIE"(III)

Rev. G. Van Baren

We have been considering the proposed union of the Reformed Church in America with the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern Presbyterian). Last time we pointed out one feature of the proposed union which is greatly feared by conservative men in the Reformed Church: its obvious hierarchy. This in itself would be sufficient reason for rejecting the entire plan.

But other reasons for rejecting the proposed union have also been offered. Several of these I would consider

with you in this article.

#### *The office within the new church*

The plan for proposed union eliminates the office of deacon completely. The plan, evidently, is that the ministers and elders, with some assistance from compassionate people of the congregation, will perform this function of the diaconate. We read:

14-17. The Consistory may select and appoint other compassionate persons of the congregation to assist



the Elders in ministering to the sick, to the aged, to widows, to orphans, to prisoners, and to others in any distress or need.

Rather obviously the authors of the plan of union did not regard Acts 6 as the beginning of the office of the deacon. The office itself is considered as optional – and for the new church unnecessary. Possibly, too, this action reflects the obvious fact that the government to a large degree has assumed responsibility for the care of the poor and needy – hence, the church does not need the diaconate anymore. The elders can take care of those few instances where the church must provide for the poor.

However, this omission is very serious. When the Word of God so obviously has pointed us to the institution of the office of deacon, the church may not simply eliminate that position. The calling of the church ought rather to be to examine itself carefully to find out where it has failed if it is true that the office of deacon is superfluous today.

A second feature of the proposed plan of union is the approval of women officebearers. The Southern Presbyterian Church has earlier approved the idea of women functioning in the office. And although the Reformed Church does not presently allow women to serve in the ministry of the Word, repeated and continuing attempts have been made in that denomination to allow for this. Now the new plan of union does specifically permit women to serve in any of the offices within the church.

9-2. The whole polity of the Church consists of (1) doctrine, including worship and the administration of the Sacraments, (2) government, including discipline, and (3) the Church's ministry of witness and service. For ordering the life of his Church, Christ, according to the New Testament, has given his Church certain offices, among which are the office of the Minister of the Word and Sacraments, and the office of the Elder. These are the ordinary offices, to be continued perpetually in the Church. Church officers shall be chosen from the members of the church in full communion who have attained the age of twenty-one years, but no congregation or court shall be required to elect or ordain women as Church officers.

The above paragraph, without specifically mentioning it, allows for the ordination of women into office too. It does allow the final decision to rest with the local congregation or court. Repeatedly in the past the error of having women serve as officebearers within the church has been shown. Scripture does not allow this. The eagerness to change what Scripture teaches on this score is one of the marks of an apostatizing church of our day.

#### *The confessions of the church*

In any church union it is important to know what the confessions of the new church will be. There is in the adopted confessions some indication whether the merged church intends to maintain its doctrinal in-

tegrity. Of interest in this case is not only the proposal, but the amendment which was made. The original reads:

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in America consists of: (1) its doctrinal Standards which are in the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (which has grown out of the Westminster Confession) with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism with its Compendium, the Canons of the Synod of Dort, the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed; together with (2) the Book of Church Order, which comprises the Form of Government, the Rules of Discipline, and the Directory for the Worship of God and for the Work of the Church.

The above was amended and approved as follows:

Delete "Larger and" line four (in original document).

Delete "the Canons of the Synod of Dort" line five (original document).

Add following sentence at conclusion of paragraph: "The Larger Catechism and the Canons of the Synod of Dort are respected parts of our historical inheritance but are not parts of our doctrinal standards."

It does not take one long to determine why there was approval of omitting the Canons of Dort. In fact, in the *Presbyterian Journal* of June 26, 1968 presents the following explanation given by the Rev. Marion A. Boggs of Asheville, N.C.:

Explaining to the Assembly, as a member of the Committee of 24, why the Larger Catechism has been dropped from the Plan of Union with the Reformed Church in America: "Some of our best and most respected theologians strongly objected to the extreme Calvinism in the Canons of Dort (also removed from the constitution of the proposed Church). Similarly, some of the theologians in the R.C.A. protested the Larger Catechism. The request on which we acted in this matter came from the Classis of South Grand Rapids."

It is obvious that the new denomination, if it should materialize, will not be founded upon the "extreme Calvinism in the Canons of Dort." In fact, the new denomination would likely be a mixture of modernism and the old Arminianism which is condemned by the Canons.

*(to be continued)*

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#### IN MEMORIAM

Early Sunday morning, Sept. 23, our Heavenly Father called home unto Himself, into His blessed and heavenly fellowship, my beloved wife,

MRS. HENDRIKA VAN DER MOLEN.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

2 Cor. 5:1



## News From Our Churches

### REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST

October 2, 1968  
at Hope Church

Rev. M. Schipper presided over the opening devotions. After the credentials were read and accepted, he pronounced the Classis properly constituted. All the churches were represented by two delegates each.

Rev. G.C. Lubbers then took the chair, while Rev. Schipper recorded the minutes. This was a delightfully brief meeting of Classis, our work being finished by 11:45 A.M. in time to enjoy a deliciously prepared dinner by the ladies of our Hope Church. The routine reports of the Stated Clerk and the Classical Committee were read and filed for information.

Classis West requested help in supplying their pulpits, and Classis adopted the following schedule for the next six months:

**SOUTH HOLLAND:** Oct. 6 - R.C. Harbach Oct. 13 - G. Van Baren Oct. 20 - M. Schipper Oct. 27 - G. Lubbers Nov. 3 - J. Kortering Nov. 10 - R.C. Harbach Nov. 17 - M. Schipper Nov. 24 - G. Van Baren Dec. 1 - J. Kortering Dec. 8 - M. Schipper Dec. 15 - G. Lubbers Dec. 22 - J. Heys Dec. 29 - H. Veldman Jan. 5 - J. Kortering Jan. 12 - G. Lubbers Jan. 19 - M. Schipper Jan. 26 - G. Van Baren Feb. 2 - J. Kortering Feb. 9 - G. Lubbers Feb. 16 - M. Schipper Feb. 23 - G. Van Baren Mar. 2 - J. Kortering Mar. 9 - G. Lubbers Mar. 16 - J. Heys Mar. 23 - G. Van Baren Mar. 30 - H. Veldman.

**HULL:** Oct. 27 and Nov. 3 - J. Heys Jan. 26 and Feb. 2 - R.C. Harbach.

In regard to a request from Classis West that one of their churches be granted the privilege of requesting collections in the churches of Classis East, Classis decided to inform the Stated Clerk of Classis West that the normal procedure for seeking collections is through the Synod.

Two letters were read reflecting on past decisions of Classis on which Classis took action accordingly.

Classis decided to meet next time on the second Wednesday of January in Southeast Church.

Questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily. After Classis decided to adjourn, brother T. Engelsma closed the meeting with thanks to God.

M. Schipper, S.C.

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At a September congregational meeting Hull chose Rev. C. Hanko to receive their call to come over to help them. The trio also included the Revs. R.C. Harbach and B. Woudenberg.

\* \* \*

Usually our news items are gleaned from bulletins received through the mails, but we found the September 22 bulletins of Hull and of Doon in the racks while visiting there. Hull's pulpit was supplied by classical

appointment, with Rev. G. Vanden Berg the appointee. They are scheduling special collections for the building fund which will provide the means to give the auditorium a new, clean look. Doon's congregation witnessed the public confession of faith of two men in the morning service, and the sacrament of Baptism was administered to three infants in the afternoon service. The next Sunday we were privileged to join the congregation at Loveland in their worship services morning and evening. It was a genuine pleasure to see them in (their) church.

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The Western Ladies League Fall meeting was scheduled to be held Oct. 3 in Edgerton, Minn. with Rev. R. Decker as speaker. His topic was "Scriptural Ecumenicity," based on Ephesians 4.

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Another Western activity announced in Hull's bulletin was the Annual Meeting of The Reformed Action Society Sept. 30 in Edgerton. Rev. G. Vanden Berg, of Oak Lawn, was slated to give a lecture at that time.

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Loveland's School "Ledger" for September carried an editorial by Prof. H. Hanko, which was a condensation of a lecture given at an earlier date. A visit to the school revealed some penmanship specimens pinned on the wall *upside down*. One of the sixth graders, Laurel Buitter, explained in the *Ledger* that this was designed to "see if the slant were even." Miss Beverly Hoekstra is the new teacher, and a few minutes in her presence is enough to be infected by her vibrant enthusiasm for her work.

\* \* \*

From the first bulletin to arrive at our desk from Isabel we learn that their parsonage has been lowered to a more stable foundation; a fence has been erected that neatly sets off the church property; seven trees have been planted, and fill-dirt has been hauled in to level the foundation for the addition to the parsonage. Evidently the men of the congregation are endeavoring to match the ardor that their pastor displays. Rev. C. Hanko, in his report of his combined church visiting-lecturing-installation-trip wrote that "the exuberant joy of Isabel was invigorating".

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The Office Bearers' Conference held in Hope Church Oct. 1 featured a talk by Rev. J.A. Heys on, "The Problems and Potential of our Jamaican Mission Field." Those in attendance were overheard to say that this was one of the best conferences they could remember. Rev. Heys is planning an illustrated (200 pictures) lecture on Thanksgiving Day dealing with our friends in Jamaica. Watch for the Mission Committee's announcement regarding this program.

... see you in church

J.M.F.