

**The
Standard
Bearer**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Meditation:

Holy In Our Conversation

Editorial:

Dr. K. Runia on Reprobation

Something About Weddings

(see: Come Ye Apart...)

A Precious Jewel

(see: In His Fear)

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THE STANDARD BEARER

Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August.

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, Inc.

Second Class Postage Paid at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Editor-in-Chief: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Mr. Donald Doezeema, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Korterling, Rev. George C. Lubbers, Rev. Marinus Schipper, Rev. Gise J. Van Baren, Rev. Herman Veldman, Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

Editorial Office: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema
1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Church News Editor: Mr. Donald Doezeema
1904 Plymouth Terrace, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Editorial Policy: Every editor is solely responsible for the contents of his own articles. Contributions of general interest from our readers and questions for the Question-Box Department are welcome. Contributions will be limited to approximately 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten. Copy deadlines are the first and the fifteenth of the month. All communications relative to the contents should be sent to the editorial office.

Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

Subscription Policy: Subscription price, \$7.00 per year. Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received, it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order and he will be billed for renewal. If you have a change of address, please notify the Business Office as early as possible in order to avoid the inconvenience of delayed delivery. Include your Zip Code.

Advertising Policy: The *Standard Bearer* does not accept commercial advertising of any kind. Announcements of church and school events, anniversaries, obituaries, and sympathy resolutions will be placed for a \$3.00 fee. These should be sent to the Business Office and should be accompanied by the \$3.00 fee. Deadline for announcements is the 1st or the 15th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively.

Bound Volumes: The Business Office will accept standing orders for bound copies of the current volume; such orders are filled as soon as possible after completion of a volume. A limited number of past volumes may be obtained through the Business Office.

Meditation**Holy In Our Conversation**

Rev. M. Schipper

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conservation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

I Peter 1:14-16

Hope and sanctification are mutually inclusive concepts!

This we discovered in our last Meditation, relative to the verse preceding our text. Our text is a continuation and development of the thought expressed in the preceding verse: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your

mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Proceeding from the supposition that our hope — which hopes to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ — will

also manifest itself in a walk of sanctification, the apostle encourages us to be holy in all manner of conversation. This is, indeed, the main thrust of the Word of God mentioned above.

So become holy!

As He which has called you is holy!

That we may become holy as God is holy — this is, indeed, the substance of our hope. And unto this we are exhorted in the text.

As God is holy!

That God is holy, there can be no doubt, for this is abundantly attested to in all Scripture. Listen to the psalmist! "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." And again, "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works." Allow Isaiah to take you into the presence of God, and hear with him what the seraphim constantly call out as they stand before His face: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." And Isaiah says again, "God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness." And Peter, quoting in our text from the Book of Leviticus, has in mind those passages which declare: "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy." Jesus Himself, while in the flesh, prayed: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou has given me." And John in the Revelation, describing the activity of the four beasts before the throne, ascribes to them this saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

That God is holy means, negatively, that there is no sin or corruption in Him. He is light, and there is no darkness in Him. Positively, it means that He is absolutely consecrated to Himself as the only Good. It is His prerogative to be Self-centered because He is God. He is the exalted One Who dwells in unapproachable light. He has no communion or fellowship with sin or sinners, and is a consuming fire over against all the workers of iniquity. Shall anyone approach unto Him, he must be like unto Him — holy as He is holy.

He Who is holy has called you to be holy!

This calling is the efficacious calling whereby the Holy One transforms those who were children of darkness into children of light. Though this calling comes to us through the preaching of the Gospel, it is never to be identified with the mere word of man; but it is the irresistible, almighty calling of Him Who makes the dead to live, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. He causes the light of His holiness to penetrate into our sin-darkened hearts, casting out the darkness, and causing the grace of His holiness to dwell there. Shining the light of His holiness into the innermost recesses of our hearts, He gives by the grace of His Spirit light to our eyes, so that we see; opening of our ears, so that we hear His divine calling. And when you hear His calling, and behold Him, the Holy

One, Who calls you, you also see the blackness of your sinful heart; and the corruption of your nature becomes a thing so repulsive that you hate it as God hates it. Then you are also attracted to Him Who is the effulgence of beauty, and purity, and goodness.

Be holy as He is holy!

And holiness in us is that grace of God whereby we also are in principle delivered from sin and corruption, and consecrated unto God.

Be holy in all manner of conversation!

Our conversation is our life in all its manifestations, in all its departments. Our conversation is not merely the words we speak, but it includes also the thoughts behind that speech. Our conversation is our whole life, personally, inwardly and outwardly, as we live it in relation to those in our homes, in the church, in society, in the state, in the world. And undoubtedly the apostle has in mind especially our outward life, which of course, is always motivated from within, by the inward man, the man of the heart. For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

That walk is to be consistently holy!

Not fashioning ourselves according to the former lusts!

Those former lusts were the carnal desires and passions that characterized our thinking, willing, and acting as we lived out of the old nature, and before the holiness of God penetrated into our hearts. Accordingly we sought the things which are below. We had pleasure in sin and corruption. We walked in darkness, in spiritual ignorance. O, indeed, not so was it, that we did not know the difference between good and bad. Even the heathen have the work of the law written in their hearts, so that they can distinguish between good and evil. But spiritually we were ignorant. That is, we had no correct knowledge of God, of sin, of the blessedness of God's fellowship, of the calling of the gospel whereby we are now called to walk in holiness.

But from all this, in principle, we have been delivered!

O, make no mistake about it! The holiness we now possess, we carry in an old nature which is still inclined to all evil. Here is precisely where the spiritual battle comes in. We have in our hearts the desire to serve God, to be devoted to Him in love; but corruption, but the old man of sin in us loves to do evil. If we were already holy as God is holy, there would be no need for the exhortation of our text.

And how necessary is this exhortation today! Is it not your and my complaint, dear reader, that this hatred of sin and this consecration to God are so meager? Is it not so with us that, with better knowledge, with the saving knowledge of faith in our hearts, we nevertheless find great delight in satisfying the lusts of our flesh? Do we not find ourselves humming the tunes which the wicked sing as they proceed on their way to destruction? Do you not catch yourselves finding de-

light in the vanity the world has to offer? And when you observe all this, do you not feel in your hearts that you are very disobedient to your heavenly calling as children of God?

As He which hath called you is holy!

So be ye holy in all manner of conversation!

As obedient children!

Remember, God, Who is holy, is your Father!

And obedience to Him is to be subjected, to be in submission to His command. Literally the term "obedient" means: to hear under. Being under Him, under His Fatherly care, under His Fatherly Word, under His loving command, you are submitted, you hear and listen, and therefore obey.

Father has begotten you through the power of the resurrected Mediator unto a living hope. He has begotten you unto an incorruptible, undefilable, unfadeable inheritance which is reserved in heaven for you; and unto which He preserves you through the power of faith.

And remember that as Jesus once prayed, so He continues to pray: Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me!

Should we then not hear and obey, as obedient children, His command to walk in holiness, to be holy as He is holy?

Indeed, he who is truly the child of God will respond to his Father's calling to be holy as He is holy in all manner of conversation. Because he is a child of God, which he is only by sovereign grace, he will be obedient.

And when he is naughty and disobedient, he will run to his Father with bitter tears streaming down his face,

and cry out his humble confession of transgression, and plead for Father's mercy, and pray for more grace to withstand the lusting urge of his flesh to walk in the way of sin, and to put on the new man, which in Christ Jesus is created unto righteousness and holiness.

And the more will this be true of him because he knows that he is living in those days in which the prophetic Word of God informs him that it will become increasingly difficult for the children of God to live in this world because the days are evil – the more I say, will he walk carefully, in the way of sanctification. Not in his own strength will he walk, nor ever imagining that sanctification is his work which he contributes unto his salvation; but believing with all his heart that the good work which Father has begun in his heart, He is also able to perfect. Consciously and obediently responding to the divine call to holiness, he will strive earnestly to emulate His Father with a godly walk.

And Father, Who will never allow anyone to pluck us out of His hand, will continue to call us, and never cease to remind us that it is His eternal desire that we be like unto Him.

Holy as He is holy!

And presently all His dear children shall appear before Him clothed in His righteousness, and shining with His grace of holiness.

Then shall He say unto them, "Come, ye blessed, enter into the tabernacle of My holiness, yea, in the inner sanctuary where I dwell."

And we shall never go out!

World without end!

Amen!

Editorial

Doctrinal Tensions "Down Under" (4)

Dr. K. Runia on Reprobation

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In our previous editorial on this subject we dealt with Dr. Runia's summary and evaluation of Dr. G. C. Berkouwer's views on reprobation and the latter's criticisms of the Canons of Dordrecht. And we found that Runia expressed substantial agreement with Dr. Berkouwer.

There is one more section in Dr. Runia's essay in which he presents and summarizes the criticisms of others. In this section he refers chiefly to another Dutch theologian, Dr. A. D. R. Polman, who was for many years professor of systematic theology at

Kampen, the seminary of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. Permit me to quote what Runia writes about the views of Dr. Polman:

In his earlier publications he fully upheld the views of the *Canons*, but gradually, mainly under the influence of Barth and Berkouwer, he has changed his mind. He summarizes his own view as follows. There are *two dangers* that continually threaten the biblical doctrine of God's election and rejection: *casual determinism* and (often as a reaction against the first) *synthetic synergism*. Causal determinism is the result

of taking one's starting point in an abstract, sovereign decree, based on the concept of 'absolute power'. The consequence of this starting point is that election and rejection become two parallel, symmetrical lines, which both proceed from the absolute decree. But this is nothing else than causal determinism. In reaction, synthetic synergism overemphasizes man's responsibility and then projects this back into God's decree in the form of *praescientia* or *praevisio*. According to Polman the Bible does not know about a pre-temporal decree that in (a) causal way determines all things, but it only speaks of a gracious election in Christ before the foundation of the world. When it mentions rejection, it is always a rejection in history, in which God's reaction against man's rebellion becomes manifest. This does not mean that man's sinful activity becomes autonomous over against God's counsel. The Bible sets the two aspects side by side, and leaves it at that. We have to respect these limits of our reflection. But it is quite clear that every one who objectivizes the elect and the reprobate in two fixed groups, can no longer do full justice to the serious call of the Gospel, which also comes to the reprobate.

We may remark here that in this summary of Dr. Polman's ideas we meet with the same errors which we have noted in the views of those theologians previously treated by Dr. Runia in his essay. Basically, there is nothing new here. We find also in Polman the same criticism of so-called "causality," the same attempt to get rid of sovereign and eternal reprobation, and the same tossing about of such scare-terms as "causal determinism." We may take note of one element in the above summary which has not occurred previously, at least not in this definite form. I refer to the last sentence: "But it is quite clear that every one who objectivizes the elect and the reprobate in two fixed groups, can no longer do full justice to the serious call of the Gospel, which also comes to the reprobate." But we may also note that the position stated in this sentence is not really new. We as Protestant Reformed have heard this charge over and over again. In fact, the charge is even much older: it is a charge which was registered by the Arminians against the Reformed already at the time of the Arminian controversy. It was, in fact, just because of charges like this that the fathers of Dordrecht found it necessary to emphasize that they held to the promiscuous preaching of the gospel and to the seriousness (not to be confused with well-meant-ness) of the call of the gospel which comes to the reprobate as well as to the elect in the promiscuous preaching.

But let us go on with Runia's summary:

Polman is well aware of the fact that he deviates from the *Canons*. Somewhere he writes that the real problem is not God's free, sovereign good pleasure in the life of the believers, but the *partial symmetry* between the *decree* of election and rejection, in which from all eternity God has elected and rejected

certain persons. "The latter is confessed in the *Canons* (1, 6 and 15) and this is *not* accepted by us." The fathers of Dort never produced scriptural evidence for this view, but based it on a mere logical conclusion. If some people call this a valid and necessary conclusion, then they should realize that the Bible itself never draws this conclusion.

It should be noted, first of all, that Dr. Polman here clearly expresses disagreement with the *Canons* of Dordrecht and that he accuses the *Canons* of drawing a conclusion which the Bible itself never draws. Polman, therefore, is in express disagreement with the *Canons* of Dordrecht. And according to the language of the Formula of Subscription — which, of course, has become a dead letter in the Netherlands — this is very plainly a disagreement which undoubtedly would require a gravamen.

Now what does Dr. Runia say about all this? He passes it by without a word of evaluation.

Is this failure to express either approval or disapproval, this complete silence, a serious matter for a Reformed man? Or would it be unfair to argue from Dr. Runia's silence? In my opinion, it would not be unfair, but perfectly justified to criticize Dr. Runia on this score. And here are my reasons. In the first place, Dr. Runia himself states that Dr. Polman changed his mind *under the influence of Barth and Berkouwer*. Berkouwer is evaluated favorably by Dr. Runia. Moreover, throughout this chapter shows a consistent inclination to agree with all those who criticize the notion of so-called "causality" in the *Canons*, particularly with respect to the doctrine of reprobation. In fact and in truth, therefore, while Runia does not express approval specifically of Polman, he has already expressed approval of similar ideas in other theologians. This, can only mean by implication that Dr. Runia also disagrees with and opposes the teachings of the *Canons* of Dordrecht, and, is in violation of the Formula of Subscription, and should have felt himself in duty bound to file a gravamen instead of airing his disagreements. In the second place, it is inconceivable to me that a Reformed man — let alone a Reformed professor of theology — can be confronted with such flagrant heresy as that of Polman and pass it by in silence. Yes, I am referring to the fact, first, that this ought to be contrary to the Reformed sensibilities of any soundly Reformed man. I simply cannot conceive of it that a Reformed man can be confronted by such error and that he does not cry out against it with all that is in him and warn his readers against it. This Runia fails completely to do. Do not forget, moreover, that this is not merely my personal opinion concerning what a Reformed man should do. In the first place, according to the Church Order of Dordrecht, Article 18, this is the calling of professors of theology: "The office of the professors of theology is to expound the Holy Scriptures and to vindicate sound doctrine

against heresies and errors.” (emphasis added) The language of the Formula of Subscription is still more explicit. Notice:

We promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same, by our public preaching or writing.

We declare, moreover, that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, and particularly those which were condemned by the above-mentioned synod, but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these, and to exert ourselves in keeping the Church free from such errors. And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, classis and synod, that the same may be there examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the consistory, classis and synod, under the penalty in case of refusal to be, by that very fact, suspended from our office.

With respect to the duties stated in the two clear quotations just made, Dr. Runia is plainly derelict.

Runia's summary of recent criticisms of the Canons is concluded by a brief paragraph concerning voices raised in the Christian Reformed Church of this country. He makes mention of articles by H. Pietersma and H. R. Boer in *The Reformed Journal*. Some of our readers will undoubtedly recall references in *The Standard Bearer* to these same writings. The articles by Pietersma Dr. Runia does not even summarize. They were written in connection with the Dekker Case. My single recollection of those articles is that one could recognize in them whatsoever the Reformed doctrine of election and reprobation; any similarity was strictly coincidental. The articles by Dr. Boer are summarized very briefly by Runia. And then he adds this conclusion: “Boer does not openly attack the *Canons*. Neither does he speak of a ‘causal’ way of thinking, but it is quite obvious that this criticism is along the same lines as that of Berkouwer and Polman.”

Also, here Runia utters not a word of criticism although, again, in view of his opinion that Boer stands in the line of Berkouwer, and in view of Runia's agreement with Berkouwer, we may assume that Runia is likewise not critical of Boer and Pietersma.

* * * * *

At this point Dr. Runia presents a concluding evaluation of these criticisms, in addition to whatever elements of evaluation he has already presented in the earlier parts of his essay.

First of all, he points out that these criticisms all center about the doctrine of an eternal decree of reprobation. He presents three considerations which, according to him, are necessary in order to see this “problem” in its proper perspective. First, he claims

that none of these theologians wants to limit God's power and sovereignty, that they are not motivated by the desire to give some place to even a partial autonomy of the human will when they question or reject an eternal decree of reprobation, but that “On the contrary, they all agree with the *Canons* when the latter teach that we have been chosen by God in Christ before the foundation of the world. Or to put it in the formulation of 1, 5: ‘Faith in Jesus Christ and salvation through Him is the free gift of God.’” His second consideration is “that most Reformed confessions of the Reformation period are either silent on reprobation or speak of it in very cautious terms.” And this third consideration is that at the conference of Arminians and Calvinists at the Hague in 1611 the Dutch Calvinists stated more than once that their controversy with the Arminians did not concern the latter's view of reprobation. According to Runia, these three considerations will help one to see the problem in its real proportions.

Now I have my serious doubts about the correctness of all three of these considerations, though it is not my purpose to enter into these items in detail at this time. As to the first, I have two remarks: 1) It is not a question of what these theologians *want* to do, but a question of what they actually *do*. And no one can escape the fact that by their rejection of an eternal decree of reprobation they create a void which can only somehow be filled by the false doctrine of the autonomy of the human will. 2) The fact that one subscribes to the quoted statement of Canons I, 5 — without anything more — and especially in the context of a denial of reprobation, is of absolutely no significance and of no value as a guarantee of a man's Reformed character. Any Arminian will also subscribe without reservation to the bare statement, “Faith in Jesus Christ and salvation through him is the free gift of God.” This is not the issue. The issue is that of the Reformed or the Arminian interpretation of this bare statement. And a Reformed interpretation of it cannot be made without reference to an eternal decree of reprobation as well as an eternal decree of sovereign election.

As to the second consideration, the mere silence of other Reformed confessions on this subject is of no importance whatsoever, especially when we take under consideration the fact that the Canons of Dordrecht are of a later date, and that they represent an advance in the history of dogma, and an advance and refinement of the Reformed faith which arose out of the throes of severe controversy and struggle, through which the Lord our God was pleased — as so often in the history of the church — to bring the faith to clearer and more precise expression. Nor can it be denied that the Canons of Dordrecht stand very clearly in the line of Calvin himself, so that the same theologians who criticize the Canons also find themselves necessarily

differing with the great Reformer.

As to the third consideration, that concerning the Hague Conference in 1611, even apart from the question whether this is the whole story of the Hague Conference, the fact is, in the first place, that there was development and sharpening and clarification of the controversy between 1611 and the time of the Synod of Dordt, 1618. In the second place, the fact remains, regardless of this Hague Conference, that the Canons must and do speak for themselves. They, not the proceedings of the Hague Conference, are the official expression of the Reformed faith. And these Canons speak of eternal reprobation in opposition to the heresy of the Arminians. The question is not whether one agrees or disagrees with what the Hague Conference may have said, but it is whether one agrees or disagrees with the Canons. And that the Canons express themselves on eternal reprobation is no wonder! For there is no one who can escape the conclusion, no matter how he may attempt to deny this or to avoid it, that the doctrine of eternal reprobation is inseparably bound up in the doctrine of eternal election, so that it is fundamentally impossible to express one's self on the latter and to maintain silence on the former.

In the light of the above, one must also conclude that the three considerations advanced by Dr. Runia do not help whatsoever in gaining the proper perspective with respect to what he calls a "problem." Instead of furnishing the proper perspective, Dr. Runia accomplishes the opposite. He puts this matter in the wrong perspective. And he does so by attempting to minimize, through these three considerations, the seriousness of this criticism and denial of sovereign reprobation.

At this point Dr. Runia turns to a brief discussion of the Canons themselves. And he begins by making the claim that "we must admit that there are indeed two lines of thought" in the Canons. On our part, we will not make this admission, and especially not in the sense in which Dr. Runia insists on it. But let us allow Dr. Runia to speak for himself:

On the one hand, the *Canons* take their starting point in the Gospel. Here all emphasis is laid on the *ekloge*. Salvation is wholly and fully God's work. It is God who has chosen those who believe in the Gospel. He has chosen them in Christ before the foundation of the world "out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will" (1, 7). Their faith is not their good work, but it is the "free gift of God" (1, 5). At this very point we find the real controversy with the Arminians, who in their defense of man's free will, made election conditional upon foreseen faith.

In addition to the above the *Canons* equally emphasize that unbelief is man's fault. "The cause or guilt of this unbelief as well as of all other sins is no wise in God, but in man himself" (1, 5). This too is

part of the clear teaching of Scripture. Man is always seen as responsible for his own sin and the blame for his unbelief is always put squarely upon the sinner himself. In no respect can God ever be held responsible for it, not even in an indirect sense. God is holy. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). But (Note this "but," HCH) there is also a second line of thought in the *Canons*, namely, the line of 'causality.' We find this in particular in 1, 6, which opens with the following words: "That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree." Reading this, one cannot help wondering whether there were some traces of the idea of 'absolute power' in the minds of the author. At any rate it was at this point the Arminians always concentrated their attack. Time and again they repeated the accusation: you make God responsible for unbelief. At the conference of The Hague in 1611 they described the views of the Calvinists as follows: "those who are predestinated unto perdition (being by far the majority) must be damned necessarily and unavoidably, and they cannot be saved." The Calvinists, on the other hand, always rejected this view as a caricature. They were firmly convinced that this was unbiblical and repudiated it as a statement of their own position. Yet the question may be asked whether the conclusion of the Arminians was not valid, if one takes 1, 6 and 1, 15 seriously. Is it really possible to avoid this conclusion? Of course, we gratefully notice that the fathers of Dordt rejected it, but was it not a valid implication of their second line of thought?

We must caution the reader that the above quotation presents the Canons through Dr. Runia's eyes. And the Doctor's vision here is far from being 20/20. The above quotation represents a gross misrepresentation of the Canons and of the position of the fathers of Dordt. In the first place, if there are to be distinguished two lines of thoughts in the Canons, then they are not the disjunctive and contrasting lines which Dr. Runia thinks to find. But the First Head of Doctrine is to be outlined, in general, as follows. In the first five articles of Canons I, the fathers of Dordt follow the historical order with respect to the fallenness of mankind, the gift of God's only begotten Son, the promiscuous preaching of the gospel, everlasting woe and everlasting life, unbelief and faith. Up to this point, we may say, in general, that the historical facts with respect to salvation and the preaching of the gospel are presented. And, in general, up to this point Arminians would agree. Beginning with Article 6, however, the Canons face the question: how are these historical events to be explained? And then they present the truth which is so severely criticized by Runia and others, namely, "That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree." This is no new line, no second, divergent line, which stands in contrast with the so-called line of the gospel. To assert this is not Reformed. It is Reformed to maintain that the gospel

exactly proclaims "the whole counsel of God." When the Canons, beginning with Article 6, expound this truth of God's counsel of predestination, they do not go off on a tangent. But they explain in the light of and on the basis of Scripture the only way in which the facts set forth in Articles 1-5 can possibly be explained in their true light and significance in the context of sovereign grace which is really *sovereign*. They explain the heart of the truth that salvation by faith is indeed a *free gift of grace*. Thereupon, the Canons first set forth the truth of sovereign election, Artt. 7-14. And then they are confronted by the fact that not all believe and not all are saved and not all are chosen; and they further explicate the truth already mentioned in Article 6 (that some do not receive the gift of faith, and that this also proceeds from God's eternal decree). And thus it is that in Articles 15 and 16 the doctrine of eternal reprobation is set forth.

There are, therefore, no two lines in the Canons, but one line, the line of divine predestination.

The trouble is that Dr. Runia does not want this clear line, and that he simply reiterates the criticisms of those whom he has reviewed in this essay, especially with respect to that bug-bear of causality. It is only on this basis, further, that Dr. Runia principally takes the side of the Arminians when, for example, he writes, "Reading this, one cannot help wondering whether there were some traces of the idea of 'absolute power' in the minds of the author. At any rate it was at this point the Arminians always concentrated their attack. Time and again they repeated the accusation: you make God responsible for unbelief." Instead of accepting the position of Dordt, instead of accepting Dordt's repeated repudiation of this false charge of the Arminians, he really joins the Arminians in their argument when he writes: "Is it really possible to avoid this conclusion? Of course, we gratefully notice that the fathers of Dordt rejected it, *but was it not a valid implication of their second line of thought?*" (emphasis added) This rhetorical question constitutes a vicious attack upon the Canons: a charge that the fathers of Dordt are really inconsistent, and an essential agreement that the Arminian false charge against Canons I, 6 and 15 is a valid charge.

Next Dr. Runia treats what he calls the main question: "The main question, however, is whether Scripture itself speaks of an eternal decree of reprobation." And again he assumes a critical stance. Runia claims, in the first place, that the main proof in Reformed theology has always been the logic of the situation. And while he first concedes that logic does play an important role in theology, and that Reformed theology has always freely acknowledged its good right, and while he even quotes the Westminster Confession on this score ("the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture

or *by good and necessary consequence*, may be deduced from Scripture"), nevertheless he virtually cancels this concession by adding: "In general we must say that especially at the point of an eternal decree of reprobation we have to be most careful. And one should ask oneself: why does Scripture itself not draw this conclusion, if it is so natural and so logical?" And then, in the second place, he goes on to say that Canons I, 15 does not mention any Scripture proof, and that in other articles the Scripture proof given is very weak, "to say the least." And finally, he adds that this is true of Reformed theology in general and that "The texts that are usually mentioned are all ambiguous and they all allow a different and better interpretation."

This section is nothing short of amazing in its boldness, coming from the pen of one who is supposed to be a Reformed man and to subscribe to the Reformed creeds.

In the first place, how is it possible that a Reformed man states that it is a QUESTION whether Scripture itself speaks of an eternal decree of reprobation. This again is plainly contrary to the Formula of Subscription and to a Reformed man's subscription to the creeds as the expression of the truth of Scripture.

In the second place, would that Dr. Runia had heeded his own warning that at the point of an eternal decree of reprobation we have to be "most careful," instead of recklessly claiming without any evidence, without even an attempt at proof, that Scripture itself does not draw this logical conclusion. All of this betrays a wrong attitude toward our confessions as well as a wrong attitude toward the doctrine of eternal reprobation. It is due, of course, to the fact that Dr. Runia has swallowed hook-line-and-sinker the teachings of Berkouwer.

In the third place, I stand amazed that a Reformed man can say that texts of Scripture are "ambiguous." This betrays a wrong attitude toward Scripture as well.

And, in the fourth place, I stand amazed that a Reformed man can say in such an off-hand manner, without even an attempt at proof, that all the texts that are usually mentioned in our confessions and in Reformed theology in support of eternal reprobation "allow a different and better interpretation."

Why, I ask, does Dr. Runia not openly say farewell to our Reformed confessions? This, at least, would be honest.

In the concluding section of his essay Dr. Runia states a few things concerning the criticism of the Canons by some Reformed theologians in recent years. First, he claims that these criticisms do not mean that these theologians wish to derogate from the sovereignty of God or that they deny God's eternal counsel. This is a statement without proof; and I point out again that it is beside the point. The question is not what these theologians *wish* to do (a question of mo-

tive and intent), but it is a question of what they *do*, objectively. And it seems to me that the conclusion is inescapable that they deny God's eternal counsel, in spite of any assertions to the contrary.

Secondly, Runia explains once more that these theologians cannot accept a causal connection between God's decree and that which happens in history. Here he brings up the old argument of a disjunction between the causality of God's decree and human responsibility — a favorite of Arminians. And he brings the similar argument that history would lose all its significance and would only be a mechanical, pre-determined out-working of a divine decree. Moreover, he once more repeats, in a slightly different form, his charge that the Canons are inconsistent and his agreement with Berkouwer that the "real intention of the synod is found in this rejection of the *eodem modo* and not in the causal framework which we find in 1, 6 and 15." Berkouwer, he says, is "undoubtedly right."

Dr. Runia concludes by conceding that there are many unsolved problems left. And he goes on to state that to him the only correct starting point for all our thinking about election and rejection lies in the gospel itself, and that it is unfortunate that the Synod of Dordrecht has not adhered to this, but added another line which starts from the counsel of God. He hedges a

bit on this, almost leaving the impression that he has said too much. But the fact remains that he has said it! Finally, he suggests that Reformed theology over-emphasized the "pre-temporal nature of the divine counsel" and that it perhaps "too simply identifies the eternal nature of the counsel with the eternal nature of God Himself." And he leaves the reader with the thought that there are many questions and that "the depth of these problems remains a tremendous challenge for the future."

But the total effect is that Dr. Runia criticizes and contradicts the Canons of Dordrecht at their most crucial point, that of the First Head of Doctrine, and that he covers this up in the end by the old Arminian tactic of leaving things in question.

It seems to me that anyone who reads this essay must see that Dr. Runia is a man who is fundamentally out of sympathy with the Reformed faith set forth in the Canons of Dordrecht.

Geelong should have called its professor to clear account on this score.

And the churches "down under" should not allow their future ministers to be instructed by Dr. Runia *unless and until* he gives full satisfaction with respect to his agreement with the Canons.

All Around Us

An Infallible Pope? Discord At Concordia Satan Worship Woman's Liberation

Prof. H. Hanko

AN INFALLIBLE POPE?

Since the days when Pope John XXIII called into session Vatican II the Roman Catholic Church has been swept by calls for reform that have grown increasingly loud and strident. There have been changes suggested and made in various practices and in the liturgy of the Romish Church. There have been many theologians who have attached some very important doctrines of Roman Catholicism and questioned many others. There have been voices raised which have openly denied the fundamental doctrines of Scripture to which the Romish Church has always remained committed. People in the Church have openly questioned the Church's ethics on various points as, e.g., on

the question of birth control. Various elements in the Church have moved in the direction of closer union with Protestant.

While on occasion conservative officials in the Church and the pope himself have tried to put a brake on these sweeping changes in doctrine and practice, not much from a very practical point of view has been done to stem the tide of new thoughts.

But apparently it is possible to go too far; and when one goes too far, the hand of the Church can be heavy indeed.

One leader in Roman Catholicism who strongly advocates change is the German theologian Hans Kung. He has been one of the most consistent critics of the

Church and one of the most articulate advocates of reform. He has stirred the Church deeply and was, in fact, called to Rome in 1968 to give answer to Church officials concerning his views. In 1968 he refused to go, however, on the grounds that no specific charges had been brought against him. And the Church did not press the matter.

But recently, in a new book, the 42-year-old Kung attacked one very sacred cow of the Church: the doctrine of the infallibility of the Church. In this book, entitled "Infallible? An Inquiry," Kung claims that there is no basis either in Scripture or in Christian tradition for the view that either the pope, or the Church, or any Church Council is infallible in its declarations on dogma.

This it seems, was going a bit too far. The attack against Kung has begun. For one thing, several other Roman theologians, in some cases personal friends of Kung, some of whom are considered as liberal as he in their views, have attacked his book and have warned him that he is on a collision course with the Church. The German Conference of Catholic bishops called him to appear before them for an "intense but friendly exchange of information" about his book. These bishops have the power to decide that Kung is teaching heresy, and this would bring quickly into the picture Vatican authorities who could and probably would summon him to appear in Rome to defend his position.

What the outcome will be has yet to be seen. It is significant that this question of papal infallibility is central to Roman Catholicism and is one point on which the Church has refused to budge even the slightest in all her contacts with Protestantism.

DISCORD AT CONCORDIA

Concordia Theological Seminary is the largest Seminary in the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. It has also been in the center of bitter controversy in this denomination between liberals and conservatives. There are many in the Missouri Synod-Lutheran Church who have gone the way of so many other denominations in denying the infallible inspiration of the Scriptures, in teaching evolutionary hypotheses concerning the religion of the nation of Israel, in denying the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and in denying the literal interpretation of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. But there is also in the Missouri Synod Church a large number of conservatives who wish to remain faithful to the Scriptures in these key areas and who have fought long and vigorously in the defense of the faith. Their chief voice is the newspaper size periodical "Christian News," in which they have in a very calm and searching fashion joined battle with the liberals and exposed a great deal of false doctrine in the Church. Their attacks have focused chiefly on Concordia Seminary since many of the heretical teachings of

liberal churchmen seem to originate there.

The conservatives succeeded at the last General Synod in electing a fellow conservative to the office of president of the Synod. Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus had promised, after being elected, to investigate Concordia Seminary to see if the charges were true. This investigation is now under way.

The liberals are apparently very afraid of such an investigation. Their attacks against the conservatives in the Church and against "Christian News" have become increasingly bitter. They have made good use even of the secular Press to discredit their investigators. And they are not very cooperative thus far in the investigation. Characteristically of heretics, they have concentrated their attention on irrelevant matters and have failed to state clearly their own positions on the fundamental questions at issue. They have spoken loudly about heresy-hunts. They have attempted to make conservatism and fundamentalism onerous terms to be applied to those who refuse to be "scholarly" in their study of Scripture. They have made appeals to procedural matters and attempted to stop or derail the investigations with these types of tactics. But thus far it seems as if Preus is determined to push ahead with the investigations.

There is overwhelming evidence which has already appeared in the public Press and in countless books and magazine articles which points to the correctness of the charges. It seems completely obvious that heresy abounds in Concordia. From this point of view the investigation is bound to substantiate the charges.

The one real question is whether the Church as a whole will have the spiritual strength to cope with this matter. Already there are many in the Church who apparently do not think so. Several congregations throughout the country have already severed their relationships with the denomination, convinced that reform and repentance is hopeless.

While surely there are important doctrinal differences between Lutheranism and the Reformed faith, we hope and pray that this denomination will still have the spiritual strength to purge itself of those who deny the Scriptures. And if this is not the case, we hope that there are many who will have the courage to leave this once staunch Church which is now on the verge of going the sad way of so many denominations in our day.

SATAN WORSHIP

The secular and ecclesiastical Press has recently reported a startling growth in Satan worship. Especially in this country, although also abroad, many new groups are being formed which openly adopt as their religion the worship of Satan. In some instances such Satan worship has been associated with terrible sexual aberrations, with a revival of witchcraft and the black mass and with oaths and ceremonies which make the

blood run cold. But this is not true in every instance. In many instances the sole purpose is to deny all religion, to desecrate all that is holy and to mock the most sacred truths of God. Besides, there seems to be a very real but unutterably terrible desire on the part of those who follow this path to sell their souls to Satan so that they may become complete instruments of his power and complete slaves of his will. As one leader of all this put it: "I'd rather rule in hell (on earth) than be a servant in heaven. . . . Everyone likes to have a certain amount of power and with the help of Satan, you can do anything."

There is something frightening about all this. It is true, of course, that the wicked in the world are completely depraved. They are, in a very real sense, slaves of sin. They are servants of the devil, allied with him to accomplish his wicked goals of destroying God. Basically and fundamentally this is true of all who are not saved by the power of grace. Jesus called the Pharisees of his day children of their father the devil whose works they do.

But in this kind of thing there is something different. Perhaps not anything essentially different, but different nonetheless. Something more terrible, more depraved, more frightening than the current wickedness of the world in which we live. It seems to be possible, and the Scriptures seem to suggest this in various places, for a man deliberately and wilfully to go beyond the "normal" depravity of the human race and give himself over in a special way to the power of Satan. He can, if so he chooses, sell his soul to Satan; put himself with his heart and mind and will and body in the service of the devil and his hosts; become deliberately a special kind of instrument of the fallen angels of hell, so that the terrible powers of darkness conquer him so completely and utterly that Satan's power is unleashed in the world in a special kind of way. These people have Satan looking through their eyes and the smell of hell about them. But they become in some special and awful way instruments of Satan's terrible power in this world. In His letter to the Church of Smyrna Jesus speaks of those who "say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." Rev. 2:9.

As history draws to its close we may expect that the powers of darkness grow stronger under God's direction, and forces of evil are unleashed in the world such as history has never seen. These things too speak of the coming of the Lord.

WOMAN'S LIBERATION

The women's liberation movement is growing rapidly. There is something very silly about it, which even the world recognizes; and it is the butt of innumerable jokes. But there is also something very serious about it — and surely those who are taking the lead in the movement are in deadly earnest in their efforts.

In a way this whole movement is the natural result

of tendencies which have long been present in this country. For many years there have been increasingly strong pressures to give to women a place which is equal to that of men. It began presumably with woman suffrage. It continued as women occupied a position in life which had, for centuries, been reserved for men. Women went to work in the shop. Women became independent as wage earners. Women demanded a voice in every area of life. Women chafed at the monotony of household chores. Women became office-bearers in the Church. And now we have a movement dedicated to the principle that women must be equal in all respects to men.

There is something wicked about this. It runs contrary to all that Scripture says about the role of women in life. It is a denial that the man is head of the home and that the position of authority in every area of life belongs to men. It is against the ordinance of creation. It is a violation of what God intended women to be.

When the ordinances of God are violated, this can have (and will inevitably have) serious consequences. In a way it is, I suppose, understandable. Sin disrupts all the relationships of life. Sin also disrupts the relationship between man and woman. Sin so corrupts these relationships that, in the world of wickedness, man who is supposed to be head and king becomes dictator and tyrant. He rules, not in love, but in selfishness. He rules cruelly, abusing women and seeking only his own pleasure. That women rebel against this at last is not strange. But such rebellion simply creates worse problems. For one sin cannot be corrected by another. The result is that the home disintegrates, and society at large goes to pieces.

But what is so extremely distasteful about all this is that when women step out of their God-given role and try to occupy a role that is not their's according to the ordinance of God, they lose their own femininity and become monstrosities. If anyone has ever looked only at the photographs of the leaders in the women's liberation movement, one cannot help but be struck with the fact that these women have lost all their femininity, all their attractiveness, all their beauty sacrificed on the altar of equality. They are not what God created them to be; and when they become something God has not intended them to be, they become something ugly and repulsive.

It is all rooted in some sort of wicked notion that the God-ordained role of women is undesirable and distasteful. How terribly wrong. How often Scripture exalts the role of women who occupy their God-given place. How often have not these women been the strength of the home, the strength of the Church, the strength of the nation when Israel occupied a central place in the drama of history. To despise this is to despise all that is beautiful.

It is by grace that the proper role of women can be

fulfilled. It is beneath the cross that women are the attractive and beautiful creatures God intended them to be. It is in a home, in the Church, in life when the spirit of God rules that women occupy a place in life which is so important that without it life disintegrates.

Perhaps the world cannot understand this. But surely the Church can. May God give the daughters of Sarah grace to occupy their rightful place according to the ordinance of grace in Christ.

Come Ye Apart . . . And Rest A While

Something About Weddings

Rev. C. Hanko

Before long we again have our June weddings. True, there are also weddings throughout the year; but June seems to be the time when most wedding bells ring.

Did you know that our Church Order has an article about weddings? In Article 70 we read: "Since it is proper that the matrimonial state be confirmed in the presence of Christ's Church, according to the Form for that purpose, the Consistory shall attend to it."

This article does raise a few eyebrows. For example, is it correct to say that the matrimonial state shall be *confirmed* in the presence of Christ's Church? Should that not be: That the matrimonial state shall be *solemnized* in the presence of Christ's Church? It should. Those who know about the historical background of this article also know how this word 'confirmed' crept in. But it still is not correct. We may also ask: Why is this proper? and: What is meant by "the presence of Christ's Church?" And even: To what must the consistory attend?

It is not my purpose to discuss these questions this time. Since I hope to write about marriage in the near future, I'll save some of these matters for a later date.

Right now we all understand, I think, that a private wedding in a church auditorium is not a church wedding. A church wedding, according to this article of the Church Order, is a wedding in a regular worship service, with the entire congregation present, under the supervision of the consistory, and with an appropriate sermon for the occasion. Although the ideal time for this would be on Sunday, there is no serious objection to holding service during the week, properly announced on the church bulletin, approved by the consistory, and with the entire congregation present. This our Church Order recommends.

Without going into the *why* and the *wherefore*, I simply present you with the fact.

What I had in mind at the outset of this article was to comment on some of the practices at weddings which should be discussed by all of our young people and also by their parents. You understand, of course, I like weddings. That is, I enjoy weddings of young couples who marry *in the Lord*. I have attended weddings

that were more painful to me than many funerals. And I mean that. But those were weddings of young people who made themselves guilty of a mixed marriage. I don't like that. But we all enjoy sharing the happiness of those who are united in the bond of *holy* matrimony, in the Lord.

But our weddings are open for improvement. There is, for example, the music that is sung and played at weddings. I do think that the choice of music has undergone some improvement in recent years, but that does not mean that we cannot improve that still more. Well do I remember the time when it was rather common for the soloist to sing, "O Promise Me," "I Love You Truly," and the like. We are well rid of those. But we must remember that the music sung and played at weddings must give expression to the real, spiritual significance of our marriages and must add the necessary solemnity to the occasion. Also the wedding marches must be stately, solemn, entirely in harmony with the entire service. The music that is often used, along with "Here Comes The Bride", hardly does justice to the occasion and often detracts from the reverence that should pervade it. And the fast, loud recessional that sends the bridal party scampering out of the church is entirely improper. I had occasion once to attend a wedding in a Congregational Church where the church organist was the accompanist. He played nothing but the most solemn music throughout the service, even in the recessional. Maybe he was not even aware of it, but some of the music he played was the same tune as a few well known Dutch Psalms. I thought it was very impressive. That does not mean that we have to copy that, but suitable music adds much to a proper atmosphere for solemnizing the holy marriage state of believing young people.

But even that I want to mention only in passing. I have in mind something quite different. This has bothered me for many years, especially because it is something so obviously adopted from the world. We did it without realizing what we were doing. Actually we have robbed our weddings of the beautiful, rich, spiritual significance by a seemingly innocent, yet very

wrong practice.

By this time you may be wondering what this is all about. Well, I'm talking about the strong emphasis upon the bride instead of upon the bridegroom.

You understand I am not jealous. I also know that the bride should have her day. This is a big event in her young life, which she has been looking forward to for a long time. It is usually the bride who has the whole wedding planned before the happy occasion arrives. She is the one who gives the orders during rehearsal. She is the one who is so deeply concerned that things are not going to run smoothly. Yet when the big moment arrives, she is as cool as a cucumber, while the groom is so jittery that he hardly remembers his lines. No, I would not want to deprive her of the joy of the occasion.

But why must the groom be the forgotten man? Why must her name be mentioned first? Why is she on the foreground throughout the entire ceremony, and even at the reception, while, as so often happens, the groom seems but to trail along?

You say, "But what is so serious about that? The groom can be the head of the family long enough after they are married."

But then we certainly must remember that marriage is a symbol of Christ and His Church. The wedding ceremony is used in Scripture to symbolize Christ as He takes His Bride unto Himself in everlasting communion of covenant love and fellowship. The world wants nothing of that. She prefers to corrupt that holy marriage state into a legalized fornication. She mocks with the very idea of joining in marriage. But as church of Jesus Christ we want our covenant youth to be a

picture of Christ and His Church also at their weddings. The virgin bride adorned in white as representing the church which is presented to Christ without spot or wrinkle. The groom must realize that in him Christ expresses His love for His Church, even as He lays upon the groom the responsibility of caring for His wife as flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone. The groom becomes the head of a family, a friend-servant of Christ in the home as husband and father. Isn't that calling high enough to be respected at our weddings? And should not the bride gladly assume the position of being a help to her husband; For Adam was first made, and then Eve.

You say, it is not easy to change customs. I grant you that, especially because we are often bound to traditions which are hard to break. We hesitate to be different. And we should not want to be different just for the sake of being different, as so many in the world do today. But Rome was not built in a day. A drastic change of this kind probably cannot be introduced without some discussions, and especially without some advanced planning. But will you think about it? Will you strive in your weddings to emphasize the spiritual and the heavenly, as we should?

Someone told me a short time ago that a wedding was "solemnized" with only the bridegroom and the bride with their attendants standing before the assembly. There was no minister to be seen. The groom and the bride spoke their vows to each other, and only after that did someone arise to declare them husband and wife. That is a far cry from what the fathers were talking about in the Church Order, isn't it?

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

THIRD PERIOD – 730-1517 A.D.

ANSELM

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article we were quoting from Rev. Hoeksema's notes in which he presents the views of Aquinas in the atonement of Christ. And Rev. Hoeksema's first observation was that Aquinas denied that atonement was absolutely necessary, as Anselm had strenuously argued. We now continue with these quotations from Rev. Hoeksema's notes.

2) Aquinas emphasizes the mystical union of Christ and the church as an explanation of the fact that the merits of Christ can be imputed to the believers. This is an element which Anselm failed to emphasize. At

the same time we must not overlook the fact that it is not quite clear what Aquinas means by mystical union. The imputation of the merits of Christ certainly does not rest upon the mystical union as we understand it, but rather upon the Headship of Christ in the juridical sense. (To this the undersigned would add the following: the imputation of the merits of Christ certainly does not rest upon this mystical union, that we are spiritually united with Christ, but this mystical union with Christ, that we spiritually are one plant with Him certainly rests upon the imputation of the merits of Christ, that as our Head in the

juridical sense He suffered and died for us and therefore merited for us this union with Christ.)

3) Aquinas made a distinction between the mere satisfaction of Christ and His merit. He emphasized that the Lord not merely made satisfaction for our sins, but also merited eternal life for us. In this way he originated the distinction between the active and passive obedience of Christ.

4) He taught that the merit of Christ is superabundant in value. This must not be confused with the view of Anselm that the sufferings of Christ have infinite value. Anselm taught that there is an infinite demerit in sin, because it is the rejection of the infinite majesty of God and of the highest good. Therefore the merit must also be infinite. There is, therefore, according to Anselm no superabundance, but an infinity of value in the satisfaction of Christ. Aquinas, while denying the infinite demerit of sin, taught that there was a superabundance of merit in the work of Christ. This laid the foundation for the Catholic doctrine of supererogation, that is, of the store of good works, of superabundant good works, which the church dispenses.

5) Finally, Aquinas taught that forgiveness depends to a degree upon the merit of the person as the procuring cause. Atonement alone is not sufficient unto justification. The individual must first be conformed to Christ; then he procures forgiveness. This is done first in baptism, then in good works and penal suffering for sins committed after baptism, either here or in purgatory.

I am sure that we all recognize in this last view of Aquinas the teaching as set forth today in the Roman Catholic Church. And this, we also understand, is flatly in contradiction with the Scriptures, as we shall presently see as we set forth the Reformed view of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are saved purely by grace, only because of the merits of Jesus Christ, and never because of any good work we might do. The merits of our Lord Jesus Christ are surely quite sufficient unto the forgiveness of all our sins and unto our everlasting life.

Concluding our discussion of the doctrine of the atonement of Christ as set forth in the third period, 730 - 1517 A.D., we would quote from Hagenbach's *History of Doctrines*, Vol. II, 46 - 47:

The contemporaries and immediate successors of Anselm were far from adopting his theory in all its strictness. On the contrary, Abelard, taking in this case, as well as in many others, the opposite side of the question, attached principal importance to the moral aspect of the doctrine, and declared the love of Christ the redeeming principle, inasmuch as it calls forth love on our part. Bernard of Clairval, on the other hand, insisted upon the mystical idea of the vicarious death of Christ. Hugo of St. Victor adhered more nearly to the doctrine of Anselm, but modified it so far as to return to the earlier notion of a legal transaction and struggle with the devil; at the same time he asserted (with Abelard) the moral significance

of Christ's death. The opinions of Robert Pulleyn and Peter Lombard were still more closely allied with those of Abelard, though the latter combined with it other aspects of the atonement. The later scholastics returned to the doctrine of Anselm, and developed it more fully. Thus Thomas Aquinas brought the priestly office of Christ prominently forward, and laid great stress upon the superabounding merit of his death. Duns Scotus went to the other extreme, denying its sufficiency; but he supposed a voluntary acceptance on the part of God. Wycliffe and Wessel attached importance to the theory of satisfaction in its practical bearing upon evangelical piety, and thus introduced the period of the Reformation. The mystics either renounced all claims to doctrinal precision, and, abandoning themselves to the impulses of feeling and imagination, endeavored to sink into the depth of the love dying on the cross; or they thought to find the true principle of redemption in the repetition in themselves of the sacrifice once made by Christ, i.e., in literally crucifying their own flesh. Those of a pantheistic tendency annulled all that was peculiar in the merits of Christ. The external and mythical interpretation of the doctrine, as a legal transaction, led to offensive poetical exaggerations and distortions of the truth.

THE REFORMATION PERIOD

We prefer to speak of this period of the development of the doctrine of the atonement as the "Reformation Period." We thought of designating this phase of the history of this doctrine as the "Reformed View." However, the Reformed view of the atonement stands over against other views of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, such as, e.g., the Arminian presentation of it. And we would rather speak of the "Reformation Period" because it gives us the opportunity to show that the Reformed view of the atonement is indeed the view as set forth by the Reformation. The Reformed conception certainly is in line with the principles as proclaimed and set forth by the Reformation.

When we set forth the doctrine of the atonement as set forth by the Reformation, we instinctively turn to Calvin. Calvinism is certainly more Scriptural in its view of the atonement than Lutheranism. The Lutheran Augsburg Confession does not devote an article to the doctrine of the atonement. The same is true of the Lutheran Formula of Concord, drawn up in 1577, some sixty years after Luther nailed the ninety-five theses to the church door of Wittenberg. However, the Formula of Concord does have an article on the subject of predestination. Now we must bear in mind that the formulation of this doctrine of predestination in the Formula of Concord was under the influence of the teachings of Melancthon, Luther's co-worker in the Reformation. And Melancthon was certainly not as pure as Luther. Concerning this Schaff, in his *History of the Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. I, 308-309, writes: "Next to him, and at a later period, Martin

Chemnitz (1522-1586), the greatest pupil of Melancthon and the prince among the Lutheran divines of his age, and Nicholas Selnecker (1530-1592), originally likewise a Melancthonian, took the most important part in the movement, and formed with Andreae the theological 'triumvirate,' which finally completed the Form of Concord."

Now we would call attention to Articles VII and XI of this Formula of Concord. Art. VII reads (where the Formula of Concord treats Redestination):

But Christ calls all sinners to Him, and promises to give them rest. And He earnestly wishes that all men may come to Him, and suffer themselves to be cared for and succored. To these He offers Himself in the Word as a Redeemer, and wishes that the Word may be heard, and that their ears may not be hardened, nor the Word be neglected and contemned. And He promises that He will bestow the virtue and operation of the Holy Spirit and Divine aid, to the end that we may abide steadfastly in the faith and attain eternal life.

We certainly would not ascribe to this. In this article it is declared that the Lord wishes that all men may come to Him, and suffer themselves to be cared for and succored. This certainly speaks of a general and well-meaning offer of salvation.

And Article XI reads as follows:

But as to the declaration (Matt. 22:14), 'Many are called, but few are chosen,' it is not to be so understood as if God were unwilling that all should be saved, but the cause of the damnation of the ungodly is that they either do not hear the Word of God at all, but contumaciously contemn it, stop their ears, and harden their hearts, and in this way foreclose to the Spirit of God His ordinary way, so that He can not accomplish His work in them, or at least when they

have heard the Word, make it of no account, and cast it away. Neither God nor His election, but their own wickedness, is to blame if they perish (2 Pet. 2:1 sqq.; Luke 2:49, 52; Heb. 12:25 sqq.).

This eleventh article is a subtle article. Now it is certainly true that the cause of the condemnation of the ungodly is that they either do not hear the Word of God at all, but contumaciously contemn it, stop their ears, and harden their hearts. The fathers of Dort also declare that the blame must not be ascribed to the gospel or to the cross of Christ but to the wickedness of the sinner. And it is certainly true that the wicked make the Word of no account and cast it away, and that neither God nor His election must be blamed by the sinner for his wickedness and perishing. The sinner must never shift the blame for his wickedness and sinning from himself to the living God and His Christ and gospel. However, this article also states that Matt. 22:14 must not be understood as if God were unwilling that all should be saved, and it also states that the wicked foreclose to the Spirit of God His ordinary way, so that He can not accomplish His work in them. This certainly means that the sinner makes it impossible for the Spirit of God to work His ordinary way, makes it impossible for Him to accomplish His work in them, and this Spirit of God, according to this article, is not unwilling that all should be saved. This means that, whereas the Holy Spirit would work in the hearts of all men unto their salvation, these sinners make it impossible to accomplish this work in them. And, of course, we do not ascribe to this doctrine of Art. XI either. The Lord willing, we wish to call attention in our following article to certain glaring contradictions in this Formula of Concord.

In His Fear

A Precious Jewel

Rev. John A. Heys

They were neighbours.

In fact, they had lived next door to each other for over forty years.

It could in truth be said that they got along quite well, even during those years when the children did the usual damage to lawns and gardens — and to an occasional window. They settled the quarrels of their children without becoming personally involved. Their respective pets, a dog and a cat, had various exciting confrontations; yet this did not spill over to build the barrier between them. In fact, neither one of them at any time even thought of building some kind of fence

between their yards.

They did, however, carry on all these years a verbal battle — let us call it a controversy — in which neither one would budge an inch, and in which neither one could be said to have bested the other and to have run away with the victory.

You see, Mr. Noel was a science teacher in the local high school. He had a keen mind, was well educated, and was wholly dedicated to his work. He lived in the fifteen-room house which his father had built; and he was living there as a college student when Mr. Adams bought the smaller house next door and moved in with

his blushing bride. This being a university city, Mr. Noel was at home all through his years of education. And though his father died the year before Mr. Adams moved in next door, there was plenty of money for the full education of this only child. Upon finishing his education and upon obtaining this teaching position, Mr. Noel moved in with his attractive bride into the home where he had been living all these years with his mother. After all, a fifteen-room house of this type could accommodate three conveniently and give privacy. Mrs. Noel, Sr. died shortly after the second birthday of the first grandchild. And now Noel and Adams were family men living next door to each other.

Mr. Adams was a certified public accountant, a man quick with numbers, but a man also quick with his mind in other matters, possessing a clear and logical mind. He had always wanted to go to law school; and his ambition had been that of a trial lawyer. But there never were funds to make this possible; and he settled for his present position. He did delight in debate and did not hesitate to vie with his educated neighbour in this verbal battle, or contest, whatever you want to call it. In fact, they both seemed to enjoy these sessions of controversy, which they kept on a high level, never parting with any harsh words or ridicule of each other.

We must point out, however, that there was a tremendously important difference between these two men. Mr. Adams was a believer, and for years he served in an office in the church across the street and half way up the block on the corner. He was not just a member. He was a very active and zealous member, never ashamed of defending the position of his church. Mr. Noel was an unbeliever and had never in his life entered a church to hear as much as a Sunday School lesson. His god was science; and he worshipped his god with a fervent devotion. His Sundays were spent out in the field, on some scientific research, or in sports. He was not a lazy man who would use that day to lie around and waste time. He was far too energetic for that.

Their verbal battlefield almost always was Darwinism, evolution, the origin of this world, and its development. But there was no victor in this "battle", and really could not be because they could not agree on a common set of rules. Mr. Noel would not accept the Word of God; and Mr. Adams would not put stock in the "findings" of men who contradicted anything in Scripture. Mr. Adams often would appeal to the flood for his proof; but Mr. Noel would remind him that the Bible was nothing more than a beautiful piece of human literature. His "proof" was the words of men whose breath was in their nostrils, and who so often contradicted each other.

Mr. Adams, wishing to continue the debate that carried on through all these years, sought to undermine Mr. Noel's claims by scientific reasoning. He did much research also to find scientists whose "findings" varied

with those which Mr. Noel held to and defended with all his ability. He tried in every way apart from quoting the Scriptures to show the impossibility of Mr. Noel's position and theories about the universe and the origin of the creatures.

When Mr. Noel spoke so freely of the billions of years it took for this to form and that to happen, Mr. Adams would insist that a half-billion-year period of darkness would with its freezing, sub-zero cold kill off all life that had begun to form in the half-billion-year period of the lighted part of that day. But Mr. Noel would remind him that he was going back to Scripture which spoke of six days, and of an evening and a morning for each of these days. He, Mr. Noel, claimed no such one-day and one-evening period in that billion year stretch of time when things began to evolve. He preferred a gradual warming up or cooling off through all the billions of years.

One argument that Mr. Adams kept bringing up did irk Mr. Noel and gave him trouble, even though he did not want to admit it. It was the question as to where that first cell, or that first gaseous vapour came from. From what did it evolve? Mr. Adams did note, though, a bit of hesitation, no matter how slight it was, in Mr. Noel's defence and counter-question as to where his, Mr. Adams', God came from.

Mr. Adams pressed his point at a later friendly session on the edge of their lawns and asked Mr. Noel whether it was really scientific to maintain that dead matter can produce life. Living matter dies. But what has science to show that dead matter can produce life? And that first cell, or gaseous vapour, that was there, how could it change without something else being there to feed it or to exert influence upon it? There must have been something more to feed that cell. There must have been something more to cool off or heat up that gaseous vapour.

Mr. Noel boasted of the latest achievements of science to create life in a test tube. But Mr. Adams pointed out that this was not a case of dead matter bringing forth life and that he, Mr. Noel, was overlooking the fact that *living men* were combining chemicals to produce what seemed to have life. And so the controversy went on from year to year, assuming different forms, but always about this difference of beliefs of the two men.

Shortly after one of the most heated discussions on this subject of dead matter moving toward life – and Mr. Noel did not like the way the matter was going – the funeral of Mrs. Adams was held in the corner church. Out of courtesy and sincere sympathy Mr. Noel went to the funeral service. The text was those words of Jesus to Martha in John 11:25, 26, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" The pastor explained that the dead believer

will rise again to glory. But he also took time to emphasize that there is a worse death than this physical death. He quoted Ephesians 2:1 to point out that there is also a spiritual death wherein people who are physically alive may be. He pointed out that God told Adam that the *day* he ate, he would die, and that this did happen. Adam died spiritually that day. And when Jesus says, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," He is not giving a promise to the believer that he will never die physically, but that the spiritually alive will never experience the eternal death of hell. The man who dies physically while spiritually dead dies hopelessly. The man who is spiritually alive when he dies physically shall never lose his spiritual life, nor enter the lake of fire.

Seeing Mr. Noel in his audience the pastor "pulled out a couple of extra stops," and, looking right at him, stated, "The spiritually dead are not without hope as long as they still live physically. You still have a chance. Let God have His way with you. Tell Him right now that you want to become spiritually alive; and He will give that life to you. He will make you spiritually alive. Just ask Him. He is waiting."

Even in the midst of his deep sorrow Mr. Adams was grateful for those words of the pastor to his neighbour and hoped that they were well received.

Days later, knowing that Mr. Adams was lonely, Mr. Noel went one evening to visit him, not intending to introduce their controversy. But Mr. Adams brought up the matter without really intending to do so. He began by thanking Mr. Noel for his presence and concern to take off from his teaching to attend the service. He added that he hoped that the message was well received by Mr. Noel.

Mr. Noel's answer startled him so much that he jumped right out of his chair. "Adams", he said, "I did not know that your pastor was an evolutionist, or I might have visited him long ago." "He is not", almost shouted the shocked Mr. Adams, "he and I both hold to the infallibility of the Bible, and believe the first eleven chapters of Genesis to be fact, undeniable fact.

We both believe that God created all things in six successive days of twenty-four hours each."

"O", replied, Mr. Noel, "I did not mean that he believes that the earth and the universe came into being by the process of evolution. I never heard him speak anything about that in the sermon. But I have my answer now to your question about dead matter producing life; and your pastor gave it to me. He told us that men are born spiritually dead but that they can become spiritually alive by an act of their own. He also spoke of a change of species: the sinner can change himself into a saint by an act of his dead will. The dead have in themselves the power to reach out for life."

"Adams", he said, "either admit that the Bible is fallible and that the *man* who wrote Genesis chose the wrong word and should have said, 'God said, In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt become very weak and sick'; and that the man — I believe it was Paul — who wrote that man is '*dead* in trespasses and sins' should have been more careful and written that man is spiritually weak and sickly, and therefore, he trespasses and sins; or tell your pastor to preach that dead matter cannot desire life and cannot make the movement unto life. Otherwise you are not consistent. You speak of creation by an almighty God; but in the realm of salvation you hold on to an evolutionistic process whereby the dead initiate the act toward life. You speak of a sovereign creator, but you also hold to a sovereign sinner who can hold off your sovereign saviour. You teach that God *calls* all the creatures into being, but you also teach that spiritually dead creatures *call* God into the act of saving. I find it hard to follow, and very unscientific."

Indeed, we must be consistent in our defence of the truth of creation. But consistency is also a precious jewel in our defence of the truth of salvation by grace, and as the work of a sovereign God Who *creates* us in Christ Jesus as HIS workmanship (Eph. 2:10), and does not wait for the spiritually dead sinner to step forward to obtain life. There is no more evolution in salvation than there is in creation.

Feature

The Concern of the Reformation for Christian Education

Rev. David Engelsma

We have been considering the immediate and strong concern of the Reformation for Christian schools. In this article, we will take note of the curriculum of

these schools, as proposed by the leading Reformers, Luther and Philip Melancthon.

First among the subjects to be taught in the Chris-

tian Schools was Scripture itself, according to Luther. This would include instructing the students in the gospel, in Biblical history, in doctrines, in the law, and in prayer. Luther demanded this teaching of "Bible" in the schools in his *An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* (A.D. 1520): "Above all, the foremost and most general subject of study, both in the higher and the lower schools, should be the Holy Scriptures, and for the young boys the Gospel. And would to God that every town had a girls' school also, in which the girls were taught the Gospel for an hour each day. . . ." The Christian schools which the Reformation established did include "Bible" as one of the subjects. The man mainly responsible for directing the Christian schools in Germany was Luther's colleague, Philip Melancthon, who is for that reason called the "Preceptor of Germany." He set up the Christian schools in such a way that the first class studied, among other things, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and other prayers. The second class of older students was required to learn "the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and to commit (to memory) a number of psalms. They must study the Gospel of Matthew, the two Pauline Epistles to Timothy, the First Epistle of John, and the Proverbs of Solomon." (Melancthon, *Saxon Visitation Articles* of 1528).

This partially explains the concern of the Reformation for the establishment of Christian schools. These schools had to perform the task of teaching the children of believers the knowledge of God, as it is revealed in Scripture.

We believe that this was a mistaken view of the function of the Christian school. It is the duty of the Church, not the school, to give instruction in the Bible itself. The Church carries out this duty, through the minister or elders, in the catechism classes. It is even questionable whether "Bible" should be included in the curriculum of the Christian school as an academic course. Scripture must, of course, be present in the Christian school. If Scripture is not present, a school is not and cannot be Christian. But its place in the Christian school is not that of a subject alongside the other subjects in the curriculum.

What then is the place of the Bible in the Christian school? The Bible should be present in two ways. First, its presence should be a devotional one. That is, the teacher should begin each day's work in the school by reading the Bible and making a few applicatory remarks to the children. This shows the children, and reminds the teacher, that the work of the day must be done to God's glory and in harmony with His Word. In addition, the Holy Spirit will use this devotional reading of the Bible to stir up teacher and children alike to seek God's honor by faithful work throughout the day.

Secondly, the Bible must be present in the Christian school as the light, the foundation, and the rule for

every subject that is taught. The Bible is not a subject alongside the other subjects, but it must be at the center of the instruction of every subject in the curriculum, so that they all are taught in the light of the Word of God. This does not merely mean that nothing is taught which contradicts the Scriptures, although it does mean this also. It means that the truth of Scripture sets forth the truth of every subject, the real, full truth of history, of geography, of science, of arithmetic, of literature. To attempt to teach any subject apart from Scripture and apart from what the Word of God says about that subject is to preclude the possibility of teaching the truth about that subject and is to engage in teaching the lie about that subject. This is the wickedness and the folly of the public schools in the United States. Teaching every subject in the light of Scripture and in its connection with the Word of God is the essence of the Christian school. This makes a Christian school Christian, and not the fact that "Bible" is one of the subjects taught. It betrays a wrong understanding of the Christian school, therefore, when a parent says that he does not care what marks his child gets in the other subjects as long as he gets an "A" in "Bible."

If the Bible occupies this rightful place in the Christian school, there will be in the school the living awareness that the whole creation, and every marvellous facet of it, is the handiwork of God the Creator, Who is revealed in the Bible. This awareness will include the understanding that the whole creation reveals the praises of its Creator, that its chief end is the praise of God by His people, and that the main purpose for learning about the creation is that we may better know and praise that God.

In this concrete and vital way, the Bible is present in the Christian school. It is the foundation of the instruction. Therefore, the Christian school is not guilty of the basic sin of fallen mankind: Going about its business, leaving God out.

Let us see how this will affect the actual instruction. Because the Bible is at the center of every subject, the Christian school teacher will quote, explain, and apply to the present subject passages of the Bible. He will do this often. He will do this at crucial points in the teaching of a subject. He will read and explain Genesis 1-3, not only at the beginning of the science course, but also at the beginning of the history course. This and other Biblical passages on the origin of all things in Divine creation will be fundamental for the whole development of the courses. Time and time again, the teacher will come back to them, overtly. In connection with the American Revolution and in connection with the revolutionaries now destroying our country, the history teacher will have the students read Romans 13, so that the teacher can explain, and all can discuss, that revolution by citizens against the authority of their rulers is rebellion against the authority of God. Refer-

ence to Ephesians 1 will make clear that such revolution is rebellion against the authority of the exalted Christ. The teacher will let the light of the Scriptures shine on all the subjects that have to do with reading, writing, and speaking, such subjects as spelling, phonics, grammar, and literature. He will point out that all these fascinating, wonderful subjects are grounded in the fact that the God of the creation is a personal God Who knows, Who speaks, and Who has communication with Himself in the Trinity by speech (in the Word).

Although we may disagree with the early Reformers when they make the Bible a subject in the curriculum

of the Christian school, we do not disagree with their underlying concern. We lay the duty of teaching the Bible upon the Church and, of course, upon the parents in the home. But we fully agree with the Reformers' insistence that the Word of God reign in the Christian school.

It was not the case, however, that the Reformers limited the curriculum of the Christian school to the Bible, and thus conceived of the Christian school as a Bible school, a Sunday School, or a catechism class. They required many other subjects to be taught in the Christian school for the welfare of the children of believers. *(to be continued)*

From Holy Writ

Exposition of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE CALLING TO REMEMBRANCE OF THE DAYS OF A FORMER TIME (Hebrews 10:32-34)

The elect of God shall never perish; nothing can take them out of the hand of the heavenly Father. The truth stands, "My Father is greater than all," (John 10:29). Those whom the Father has predestinated to eternal life shall surely be saved. For this is the will of the Father, that all which He gave to Christ should be saved, and that Christ should raise them up again in the last day! (John 6:39,40)

In view of bringing about that salvation the Lord comes in the preaching with His threatenings, exhortations, and commands. He comes to Israel with His law (Exodus 20). And here in the book of Hebrews we have the exhortations. The writer has held before the eyes of the Hebrew Christians the dire consequences of unbelief and of total back-sliding from the confession of the hope. He pointed out what happens to reprobate, unbelieving Israel. He referred to the judgments of the Lord whereby He makes a separation between the two seeds, to wit, the Israel after the flesh and the Israel after the promise. And thus he would spur them on to greater effort and fidelity in running the race which is set before them.

Perhaps there is no greater incentive unto further patience and faithfulness than to remember past mercies of the Lord. For, let it be remembered, the past fight of afflictions which the Hebrews endured was pure grace. It was given unto them in the behalf of Christ not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for Him, (Phil. 1:29). For to the church at Philippi too it is enjoined that they walk worthily of the gospel of Christ; that they stand in one faith, in one spirit and one soul, striving for the faith of the gospel. Thus also

here this same battle, this intense contest is enjoined by reminding them of the one great, supreme contest which they waged in the past, the days when they were first enlightened. These were days when the grace of God was manifested very signally in them; they were days when God placed the seal of grace upon them, that they were counted worthy to suffer in the behalf of Christ, yea, as those of whom the world was not worthy, (Hebrews 11:38). Thus the writer calls the Hebrews to spiritual sobriety to press on to the obtaining of the salvation of their souls, walking in faith and patience as did Abraham the father of believers!

Truly, these former days were remarkable days. The Hebrews were then "first enlightened." This does not merely refer to their seeing that Jesus is the Christ, the "MESSIAH" of the Old Testament Scriptures; but it refers to their fundamental, basic rebirth. They who had walked in the darkness of sin and unbelief, who had been children of darkness, are now become light in the Lord. The light of the glory of Christ as revealed in the gospel had shined upon them. Now they have fellowship with God and walk as children of light. Once they were blind, but now they see! Yes, they had also seen that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. This enlightenment had been once and for all: it could not be repeated. A man is reborn but once. This is evident from the tense employed in the Greek. Immediately following upon this enlightenment and their confession of the Name of Jesus, a great fight of afflictions had fallen upon them. They were now of the party of the living God in the world. Because God and Christ are hated of the world, these are hated for their Name's sake.

This suffering in those days must have been very trying. Satan makes his fires hot; he hath short time and hath great wrath. And the instruments which Satan used were evil men who hated the cross of Christ, evil men who clung to the shadows but denied the very content which these shadows portrayed. Clinging to the shadows, they denied the Son of God Who came to fulfill the shadows and to perfect all things. Thus it became a "contest" between God and Satan, a "contest" of which the outcome could not be uncertain. In this contest the contestants of faith could only be more than conquerors; nothing could separate them from the love of God in Christ.

Being upheld by the power of God, through faith, unto the grace to be revealed in the last day, they had stood. They had gone through a two-fold test. In the first place, it had meant for these Christians that they had been made a public reproach and gazing-stock in the world, before God and angels (I Cor. 4:9). They had been made a theatre spectacle here on earth; earth was the stage, and the spectators were, on the one hand, evil men, and, on the other hand, God and the holy angels. All had watched the outcome! The contest was real! Faith is the victory that overcometh the world! The two-fold means were reproaches and afflictions. Scorn and contempt were heaped upon the head of these chosen saints for Christ's sake. And they had also been afflicted. The road for them had been made very narrow. They had a very small circle in which to live. And had God not protected them, they would surely have been utterly destroyed! Such had been the great contest of afflictions; it had entailed for them cruel sufferings, the sufferings of Christ, filling up the measure of the sufferings of the Son of God, (Col. 1:24). In the second place, the contest included their proven loyalty to those who were thus cruelly entreated. Not all were directly thus despised. But the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace had asserted itself powerfully in them. They had not been ashamed to ally themselves with those who were thus shamefully made a theatre before God and angels. They claimed these as their fellow partakers of the grace of life.

Those were the glorious days of faith!

And of this wonder-work of the power of God these Hebrews are reminded. They must call this all vividly to remembrance and must, as it were, recount the mighty power of the grace of God in them. The Lord had done great things for them!

The memory of these great deeds of God must spur them on to persevere unto the end, that no one take their crown. The same God can still break prison bars and set the captives free in the future! They must remember the great strength of faith and hope which was theirs in those former days. At that time they "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods." This must not be understood as though the Christians did not suffer pain

in this. They were a theatre-spectacle at best from a natural point of view. They shed tears which the Lord caught in His bottle. But they saw the end. They saw that they had a better and more abiding substance to themselves. Yes, this would be the promised inheritance in heaven. And seeing this, they rejoiced in hope; they smiled through their tears. In the aching pain of imprisonment, confiscation of goods, they had the sweet solace that their better and abiding inheritance could not be taken from them. That possession thieves could not steal, and moth and rust could not corrupt it. They possessed their souls in patience and obtained life! It is the boldness which has great recompence of reward!

THE HOLDING FAST THE BOLDNESS WHICH HAS GREAT RECOMPENCE OF REWARD (Hebrews 10:35-39)

The Hebrews must not "cast away" their boldness, their utter other-worldliness. The term in the Greek for "cast away" is *apobaleete*. It is the aorist subjunctive with the negative particle. The meaning is that the Hebrews must not ever begin to throw away this confidence as a worthless thing. Here is the highest value. It is losing one's life to gain it. It is thus in the eyes of the Judge of heaven and earth. The *boldness* here spoken of is the sufferings which they endured by faith and hope in the former days, when they were first enlightened. The inference here is the one which the Hebrews also must draw from their former glorious experience of the grace of God in their sufferings.

For this boldness of the sufferings of faith has a great recompence of reward. And it ought to be underscored that the one who recompences here is the Lord. It is a recompence from Him in this life and in the life to come.

The recompence is inseparably connected with the boldness revealed in the sufferings of Christ: they are connected as cross and crown. If we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified together with Him. Such is the blessedness of this suffering. It has a reward, a recompence in it for this life. It is the reward of the day of Christ as this is now experience in hope of a conscience cleansed from sin to serve the living God. Wherefore we have need of patience. Patience is not weakness, but power. It is the power which endures suffering in hope while the final reward is not yet in sight, (Rom. 8:24).

This teaching concerning the need of patience is bolstered by an appeal to the sacred Scriptures of the great prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk. Both are written as comfort for the Israel of God in their sufferings when they shall be removed from their land of inheritance to a far and foreign land, Babylon.

God will bring the invader from afar. He will be very cruel and relentless and will conquer the land. It is then that God's people need to be comforted and need

a place of refuge, a shelter in the time of storm. Then they must know that this calamity is "for a little moment." It will not be long, although it will last for seventy years. Yet, even so, it is true that "soon the indignation will be overpast." For the Lord will recompense His people. For the Lord cometh forth from His holy habitation. The Lord is in His temple; let all the earth keep silence. For the Lord will punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity of robbing the saints of their land. Such is the burden of the passage from Isaiah 26:20, 21 as quoted here in Hebrews 10:37. And it is a very apt and proper quotation, applicable in every instance also here for the Hebrews. The Hebrews are here given to compare themselves not only with their former days, but also

most emphatically with conduct which was enjoined upon the Israel of God in the darkest night of her history.

And likewise is also the case with the prophet Habakkuk. It seemed to him that it was time that the Lord purified the land. Yet, when the Lord will use a cruel and evil nation as the Chaldeans to execute this judgment upon the land, then Habakkuk complains that now the Lord is using those who are more evil than Judah to chastise her. It is then that the Lord gives the solution to this problem. Habakkuk receives a vision; he climbs in the watchtower to await the divine reply. He is told to write it upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it. The vision has the revelation: *my just one shall live by faith!*

Studies in Baptism

Various Baptisms

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

Writing to the Hebrews, many of whom lived through that transitional period between the end of the Old and the beginning of the New Testament, it would come to them as no surprise to read the author's words to the effect that "the first tabernacle . . . stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings," (Heb. 9:10, KJV) i.e., in various washings, or more literally, "various baptisms." No surprise was it to them that the Old Testament dispensation was milestoned with "various baptisms." No surprise, because they, from the time of Moses, were quite conversant and familiar with the tabernacle and its many baptisms. Therefore, when on the day of Pentecost, three thousand Jews from sixteen different nations were converted, it was not the proclamation of some strange, new thing to hear Peter exhort them, "Repent and be *baptized*, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins . . . for the promise is to you and to your children." They knew very well what baptism was, namely, a cleansing, and who were to be baptized, namely, a people who were priests unto God and their seed. Nor did they fear that now in the New Dispensation the change would be such that their infant children would have nothing to do with baptism. From both the Old Testament and Peter's words they knew better. This we intend to prove from the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.

Baptism, like the gospel, is intended for God's people in every region, whether of polar or tropical zone, whether for arctic or Saharan peoples. Baptism, just as the gospel, exactly suits the one region as much as the other. For in baptism the Lord has appointed a

very simple and easy symbolism for the church in every clime. Neither the Lord, nor His Word, makes it any more difficult to administer baptism in Baffin Land, or in Death Valley, than it is to do so in our moderate climes, or lands of perpetual summer, or comfortably and conveniently, as we do, throughout all of our churches. The Word of God speaks of baptism in terms of "various washings." Paul testified, in keeping with this, that he was commanded, "having arisen (Gk.), be baptized, and *wash* away thy sins. . . ." Then occurred another of the "various baptisms" recorded in Scripture. Washing is a simple and easy matter. Even in countries where water is scarce, the body is washed, cleansed and mollified with olive oil. In fact, oil had been a proper and suitable element used in baptism, particularly in the anointing of the priests.

This is not difficult to prove. Some, who would make the subject a controversial one, question that statement, the more knowing of them dropping the challenge to prove our point from our own confessions and liturgical standards, as though confident that faced with them we shall run into difficulty. First of all, they point to our baptism form, where "the doctrine of holy baptism" is described in its sacramental action as "This, the dipping in, *or* sprinkling with water." (Ital. added). Here the charge is that we Reformed cannot make up our minds whether baptism is dipping or sprinkling, or perhaps we even imagine it is, or could be, both. The fact and truth of the matter are, that when such a disjunction is made, with dipping set over against sprinkling, you do not have two contemporaneous or almost equally ancient methods of baptism.

What you have is rather an instance of custom subtly blending with biblical institution.

In the printing of our Reformed standards certain typographical errors became evident. Some, not all of these, have been corrected. One such error appears in a place containing the Apostolic Confession, omitting the word "begotten" from "and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord." Also, there are certain expressions in the Confessions that we prefer not to use, such as in Canons V, 7, where reference is made to "a reconciled God." We prefer to think that God never needed any reconciling, that man, the sinner, is alone the reconciled, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself"; that Israel's love was estranged from God, never God's love from Israel. Also the Canons speak of God's "permission" of falling into evil, whereas we rather agree with Calvin that the idea of a divine permission is a denial of divine providence and is a heathen dualism. At these points in our standards we make mental corrections (not mental reservations), still having throughout their extent the most perfect expression and declaration of the truth as humanly can be. These minor points in no wise mar the perfect doctrine of salvation there so indisputably declared with the utmost perspicuity. So, too, the phrase, "This, the dipping in, or sprinkling with water," this writer prefers to read (however it may read in the original), "This, the dipping in *and* sprinkling with water." For the latter alone accords with its context in the baptism form, with the Belgic Confession, and with the abundant, constant and repetitive emphasis of Scripture.

First, look at Exod. 12:22, where the command is "take a bunch of hyssop, and *dip* it in the blood . . . and strike (or sprinkle, according to Heb. 11:28) the lintel and the two side posts." Notice: infallible Scripture has it, "dip *and* sprinkle." Second, you have Exod. 24:6-8, the passage referred to in the "various baptisms" of Heb. 9, where Moses "took the blood . . . with water . . . and sprinkled both the book and all the people." "Moreover, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels," which baptisms (9:10) or sprinklings (9:13,19,21) signified purging and purifying (9:13,14,22). Moses effected all these baptisms by the *dipping* of hyssop in the blood *and* the following sprinkling action. Third, in Lev. 4:6, "the priest shall *dip* his finger in the blood *and* sprinkle" it. The dipping action of the finger was not the baptism. The priest so doing did not baptize his finger! The dipping was merely preparatory to the baptism which was effected by the sprinkling. Fourth, in the 17th verse of this chapter the same idea is expressed, "dip *and* sprinkle." Fifth, in Lev. 9:9, Aaron "*dipped* his finger in the blood *and* put (smeared) it upon the horns of the altar." Sixth, in Lev. 14:6-7, it is "*dip* them . . . in the blood . . . *and* sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed." Seventh, in v. 16, "the priest shall

dip his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, *and* sprinkle of the oil." Eighth, in vv. 26 and 27 it is, "the priest shall *pour* of the oil . . . *and* . . . sprinkle" it. Ninth, in v. 51, there is the baptism of a house where it is again "*dip and* sprinkle." Tenth, in Num. 19:18-21, "a clean person shall take hyssop and *dip* it in the water *and* sprinkle it" on the tent of an Israelite, his household articles, and the persons with him, so baptizing and thus purifying them. Underscore also in this chapter the words "sprinkle" (6 times), "wash" (5 times), "bathe" (3 times), "purify" (4 times) and "be clean," all of which point directly to the central meaning of baptism, which is purification.

From these ten passages, it is abundantly evident that *Scripture* Does not allow for two methods of baptism, providing for either a dipping *in* water, or a sprinkling *with* water. Nor does Scripture use its prepositions in such an indifferent manner with respect to baptism. Further, if the word "or" must be understood in the referred to liturgical phrase in our baptism form, then so must the word "either." This makes it, "either the dipping in water, or sprinkling with water teaches us. . . ." But the phrase in the baptism form is not a combination of either early or gradually adopted custom *and* plainly evident biblical practice as divinely commanded. The biblical weight of evidence is heavy for "This, the dipping in *and* sprinkling with water."

"Various baptisms" are also on record as not only performed by washing with water, as in Exod. 29:4, but also with oil poured on the head, (v. 7) and by sprinkling the oil and the blood upon Aaron's sons (20, 21). Here, too, baptism was performed by merely smearing the blood on the lobe of the right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of the right foot. The priests were regarded as covered from head to foot with blood, without any necessity of dipping or plunging their entire body into it. So they were viewed as covered with the blood of the cross. The blood on the ear signified the consecration of all the believer's intellectual, mental and spiritual faculties. The blood on the thumb reminded him of the dedication of all his works to God, while the blood on his toe denoted the sanctification of his walk. It is to be noted, in v. 12, that there is a baptism of the brazen altar by pouring of the blood. This same washing, pouring and sprinkling is treated again in Lev. 8. Take note also of Lev. 16, and such expressions as "sprinkle the blood . . . because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel," as "wash," "bathe" and "atonement for the holy sanctuary . . . for the altar, for the priests and for all the people." All these persons and things mentioned were baptized. To cleanse them the water of purifying was ordered to be sprinkled upon them (Num. 8:7). When any dipping is mentioned, it is not of the person or thing baptized, but an act performed by the baptizer to administer his baptism.

It must be now quite clear that all these "various

baptisms," so familiar to the Jews, really of both testaments, are but types of the true and real baptism accomplished with the sprinkling of Christ's blood and the pouring of His Spirit. Who does not realize that Jesus taught that His death on the cross was a baptism? In fact, it is *the* baptism, (Mark 10:38f) of which water baptism is but the sign. Who does not realize that the pouring out of the Holy Spirit was a baptism? In fact, it is an aspect of the one true baptism. (cp. Acts 2 and I Cor. 12). Our Heidelberg Catechism comports with this, teaching that the ideal and real baptism is in "the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross," and that bap-

tism with water is a sign of it, signifying our having been "washed by His blood and Spirit." So we are taught that baptism is a figure of regeneration, as we were washed in Christ's blood, which He shed (poured out) for us by His sacrifice on the cross and renewed us by the Holy Spirit (HC, Lord's Day 26). So the "various baptisms" were the Old Testament's adumbrations of the New Testament's "one baptism." Eph. 4:5. Therefore, the New Testament, with its baptismal record, we may be confident, will be found in perfect harmony with the Old Testament as just examined.

BOOK REVIEW

Prof. H. Hanko

CRITICAL QUESTS OF JESUS, by Charles C. Anderson; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969; 208 pp., \$4.95.

In many respects, this is a very valuable book and a worthwhile addition to one's reference library. The author surveys the whole field of modern higher criticism from Samuel Reimarus (1694-1768) to the present. He reviews the teachings of the Nineteenth Century critics, discusses the liberals who in this century discussed the problems of the history of Jesus, treats Bultmann and his ideas of form criticism along with critics of Bultmann on the "left," the "right," and within the circle of Bultmann. Hence, it is an excellent survey of the Hermeneutics of higher criticism.

The author treats all the higher critics from the viewpoint of six questions the answers to which give the teachings of these men in crucial areas of Biblical interpretation. These six questions are: 1) Is it possible to write a biography of Jesus? 2) What is the place of miracle in the life of Jesus? 3) How should the resurrection of Jesus be interpreted? Literally or in some other way? 4) What is the nature and place of mythology in the New Testament? 5) What is the historical value of John as compared with the Synoptics? 6) What is the central significance of Jesus?

It stands to reason that such a broad survey in such a vast field suffers from brevity and oversimplification. Nevertheless, for a student who is just beginning his work in this area, the book is a welcome and needed guide. The author does not offer his own evaluation of the views of the men he treats; he promises to give this in another volume to be published later. One looks forward to this volume with anticipation.

The book is well written, easy to understand and can be read with enjoyment and profit by anyone with an interest in this field. Without attempting to do so, the author clearly demonstrates how utterly destruc-

tive higher criticism is of Scripture and the faith of the Church and shows how liberal hermeneutics has deeply influenced many even within Reformed circles.

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News From Our Churches

Rev. D. Engelsma, pastor of the Loveland congregation has declined the call from Doon, Iowa; and shortly thereafter he received another call — this time from our church in Randolph, Wisconsin.

The congregations of Hudsonville and Holland, Michigan, have decided to jointly assume the financial support of the Reformed Witness Hour broadcasts over WJBL on both Sunday and Tuesday. Since that time we've been treated to some news "From Our Radio Listeners" in Hudsonville's Sunday bulletins. Here's one from New York: "Dear Sirs, I heard the Reformed Witness Hour on KLTR about 14-15 years ago. I have almost every sermon except for '67-'68 in notebooks. Then you went off the air, but I kept getting the sermons. We moved two years ago — and while I cannot hear you, I can keep the sermons, which are better because you can always go back and review. It was because of your sermons that I came to value and understand my salvation and could understand the fine line of know and know-about; and realize how little we men have to do with salvation — or even wanting it. Knowing how much depends on God, and how little depends on me, is a great source for peace of mind. I know how strong He is and how weak I am."

A couple of our churches have undergone, or will soon undergo, some remodeling and repair. The congregation at Hull has decided to completely rebuild the pulpit area of the auditorium. And our Holland church no longer has the problem of "nylon-snagging" — "all the seats have been reupholstered along the leading edge."

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of Hudsonville had what must have been an interesting after-recess program a few weeks ago. Two Grand Rapids police officers were asked to speak to them concerning what it means to be a Christian police officer.

Weather was a factor in Michigan news during the month of January. There were, in fact, two blizzards in one week — the second of which made it necessary for Rev. Veldman to cancel his Saturday catechism classes in Hudsonville.

If you happen to be in or near Grand Rapids on the 15th of April, you might be interested in knowing that there's a public lecture, by Rev. G. Van Baren, scheduled for that evening in First Church.

Rev. Van Baren, as secretary of the Mission Committee, has received several letters of thanks from the

Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica. He has made a couple of these available for the *Standard Bearer* news column. We'll quote a little from two of them. "We, the brethren of the Protestant Reformed Church of Jamaica by the hand of Rev. George C. Lubbers, through our covenant God which provides for us, the poor in Jamaica. May we give thanks to all the brethren in U.S.A., and more than all for the three forms of unity. Likewise we thank God for our teacher, Rev. G. C. Lubbers."

The other letter read, in part: "We are grateful to the Mission Committee for the help which has been granted to us for the building project." Those were from Elder T. Wright of Belmont and Elder A. Wright of Reading, respectively. Though our quotations were not word for word, we trust that we've done justice to the intent of the authors.

The Mission Committee also received an informational letter from Rev. Lubbers, a summary of which has appeared in some church bulletins. He writes that he and his wife are doing well, though he, himself, is still troubled with a persistent cough.

Rev. Lubbers spends two days each week giving instruction at Lacovia to four young men who are preparing for the ministry. His instruction ranges from a course in Old Testament history (for which he makes occasional use of tapes made by Rev. Heys) to a course in English composition and grammar (for which he makes use of a few textbooks on loan from our school in South Holland). Rev. Lubbers noted that one of his copies of the English texts was a Teacher's Edition; and he added, parenthetically, "I now know why my teachers knew all the answers in English!"

Our missionary also recounted the "considerable work and frustration" involved in gaining possession of the clothing from the last clothing drive made in the states. Now that he has it, he writes that his wife "unpacks it, sorts it, arranges it tidily in boxes, and we deliver it to the various churches, attempting to make the delivery coincide with preaching, and the routes taken for school, etc." He testifies to the very real gratitude of the Jamaican brethren.

Rev. D. Kuiper and Mr. C. Vander Molen from Pella, Iowa, have recently visited the island, during which visit Rev. Kuiper preached the Word in both Shrewbury and Ft. Williams.

Rev. Lubbers concludes by requesting, "Remember us in your prayers before the Throne of God that boldness may be given us to preach the Word in the opening of our mouth as we ought."

Mitte Nuntium.

D.D.