

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Asleep In The Storm

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. . . But Dead Wrong!

Critique:

“The Gospels In Current Study” (2)

Pure And Undeified Religion
(see: From Holy Writ)

A Defense Of Calvinism As The Gospel
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Editor-in-Chief: Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema

Department Editors: Rev. Robert D. Decker, Mr. Donald Doezeema, Rev. David J. Engelsma, Rev. Cornelius Hanko, Prof. Herman Hanko, Rev. Robert C. Harbach, Rev. John A. Heys, Rev. Jay Korterling, Rev. Dale H. Kuiper, 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, Mich. 49506

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

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Business Office: The Standard Bearer,
Mr. H. Vander Wal, Bus. Mgr.
P.O. Box 6064
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Business Agent for Australasia: Mr. Wm. van Rij
7 Ryeland Ave.
Christchurch 4, New Zealand

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Meditation

Asleep In The Storm

Rev. M. Schipper

“I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety.”

Psalms 4:8.

“There be many that say, Who will shew us any good?”

Such was the question the psalmist took from the mouths of his contemporaries.

And when the psalmist penned that question it was as much up-to-date as if it were asked yesterday!

This is precisely the question you hear today from many lips. You hear it from the lips of those who are in government. You hear it from those who are in the business of education. Those in industry and in the sphere of labor have been asking this question for a long time already. You hear it from those with

wrinkled faces and thin lips in the homes of the aged and infirm. That question cries to you from the hospital bed, from thousands of mortuaries, from penal institutions, and from the frowzy street of the ghetto area. It is expressed above the din and noise of riotous, modern youth. You hear it even from the mouths of many in the church.

From every sphere of life the disparaging, hopeless cry goes up: Who will shew us any good?

Oh, indeed, they may ask the question using slightly different words. But if you are abreast of the times, you have heard, yea, you may yourself have asked the

questions: What next? What is it all coming to? Who will show us a way out? Who will shew us any good?

In what was once called "the land of the free, and the home of the brave," all the powers of darkness seem to have broken loose. Even the powers that be seem not to be able to contain the violence, and to bring to rest the tumultuous upheavals of our time. No matter where you look, or where you go, everywhere, and in every department of life there appears to be only riot and revolution, war and discontent. Not only in our own country, but round the world, such is the description of the times in which we live.

In the midst of all this, what will be, what should be the attitude of the Christian, of the child of God?

Shall he go along with the rioters and be a party to their upheavals? He knows that this he may never do. Shall he throw up his hands in utter despair? Though he may be inclined to do this according to his flesh, he can never be hopeless. Shall he look for someone to rise out of the tumultuous mass to calm the peoples and restore for a season peace and quiet? Oh, if he is thoroughly acquainted with the Word of God, he knows that such an one will arise who for a short time will be able to quell the noise, and bring peace to the nations. But he knows, too, that as far as himself and his fellow Christians are concerned, this Antichrist can bring peace which is only temporal and earthly and that, too, only to the peoples of the world; but he knows, too, that he and the children of God shall experience reproach, suffering, and even death — a darkness far worse than that already in the world.

Nay, rather, the child of God has but one prayer: "Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us." And he will have but one confession to make: "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." And he will assume but one attitude: With calmness he will say: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Jehovah, only makest me to dwell in safety."

Asleep in the storm!

Difficult for one to do, you say?

Indeed it is!

Sometimes it is even difficult to fall asleep when the night is still. When the care-worn soul seeks in restful slumber to find the refreshment it needs after a day of toil and struggle, fraught with many fears, belabored with many cares, then the weariness may be so great and the cares so many that in the mysterious depths of subconsciousness the soul may twist and turn, robbing him of the peace and rest he desires. Hundreds of flitting spirits, carrying a message of trouble and anxiety to the weary soul, may rob it of the rest it longs for, but cannot find, when the night is still.

How much more is it difficult to find peace and rest in sleep when there is storm!

Take, for instance, the electrical storms which God in His providence sends upon the earth with their ear-piercing claps of thunder and fearful streaks of

lightning. Awesome as it is in the middle of the day, how much more so when it comes in the middle of the night. We remember when we were youngsters how frightening these storms were, how, if we were awakened by them, we would pull down the shades to blot out the flashes of lightning, and place our pillows firmly over our ears to deaden the noise of the thunder. And if we were so weary of the busyness of the day and succeeded to sleep on in the storm, often we were awakened by our parents and called down stairs. Why? We never did really find out, unless it was that they, too, were afraid and needed our company. We remember that most of the time we were so weary that we would fall asleep in their laps, and after the storm was over, we were carried back again to our beds.

And when we grow older we often experience storms of a much more serious nature which descend upon our anxious souls. The devil and his angels pestering us with their unholy accusations, purposely endeavoring to disturb our sleep. The poverty stricken will lie awake, wondering where his next slice of bread will come from. The wealthy will fret that thieves will come in the blackness of the night to break in to steal. The day-laborer will lie awake pondering the bread-question, and trying to determine whether or not he should join with others in an unholy, materialistic alliance to resolve his problems. Then there are the storms of sickness, pestilence, war, and death. And not by any means the least, the storms that rock his soul because of the knowledge of his sins, or because the cause of God's kingdom and of the church seriously affect him.

All these and many more are the storms of life that often make it most difficult for him to say: "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep."

These storms of life are not merely a figment of our imagination — they are very real!

Such was also the experience of the poet.

David was oppressed and besieged by mighty foes. Of this he speaks in the context when he says: "O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah." And be sure when he said this he did not refer to men in general, but to men of honor and power — the mighty of the land, who were seeking to hurt him and to destroy him.

There is reason to believe that the circumstances affecting the psalmist were occasioned by the uprising of Israel during the revolt led by Absalom, his son. You know the history.

Absalom had killed Ammon, and had to flee to a Syrian city. After three years Joab, David's general in the army, had interceded for him, and persuaded David to allow him to return. Absalom, however, on returning, instead of meekly repenting of his sin, and retiring to some obscure portion of Judah, began to

steal the hearts of the people, and conspired against king David, his father. He gathered to himself a great following, including such leaders of the people as Ahithophel, David's advisor, and had himself proclaimed king. Consequently David was advised to flee, taking with him several of his valiant men. The situation was so bad that it was evidently these valiant companions of David who asked the question: "Who will show us any good?" They were so completely upset that all looked hopeless. And in this frame of mind they must have reminded David that, though he was *king*, to all intents and purposes he was now only a vagabond. They must have pointed out to him that the majority was on the side of the rebel, and that the end could be only destruction. It must have appeared to them that there was no way to escape and to erase the shame which appeared to be on David and his handful of friends. Who will bring to us the former glory, and restore thee to the throne? Who will help us to prove Absalom is in the wrong, and that the right is on your side? Such undoubtedly were the questions that arose in their souls and which they placed before their king.

David could have answered: "Yes, my faithful ones, we have certainly known better days, and hard times have fallen upon us; yet, though the horizon is dark, you had better keep your chin up, for there is a silver lining in every cloud." Or, he could have wept on their shoulders, lamenting the trying circumstances that had befallen them. But he resorts to neither of these attitudes.

Rather, his is the serene consciousness of perfect safety!

Not, you understand, because his was a carefree spirit who knew nothing or would know nothing of the troubles and afflictions of this present time. Nor was his one of these superficial natures that appears never to be affected by troubles, who, like dumb dogs lay themselves down to sleep, never troubled with the question whether the dawn will find them alive and well.

But he speaks the language of faith, of quiet confidence, and calm assurance!

Oh, indeed, his afflictions, his burdens were there all right; but somehow he had gotten rid of them. He feels, yea, knows that he is perfectly safe. He is assured all things are well with him. So he will lay him down in peace and sleep.

But how does this man of God possess such a tranquil spirit? How may anyone of us possess such a calm assurance when the storms of our life descend upon us?

The answer is to be found in the fact that the Lord his God makes him to dwell securely!

And the Lord is Jehovah, the I AM THAT I AM, the

eternal, unchangeable God, the God of the everlasting covenant. In that name He does not appear or approach unto strangers, but only unto His chosen people. With that people Jehovah God has established a permanent relation of friendship and love in Christ Jesus.

Moreover, Jehovah is also the Almighty, the God of the storm. Yea, in His hands are all the deep places of the earth. By His power all creatures, including the devils, subsist. They have no power of their own. They receive all their power and their ability to use it only from Him.

And this Almighty God, Jehovah, is the All-Wise God. There is no foolishness with Him. He knows the end from the beginning. He ordains the end from the beginning. And He determines in what manner and by what means the end from the beginning shall be reached. He knows how to accomplish His own glory, as well as the glory of His people by the very best possible means. He knows of no opposition. He experiences no contrary winds. He is never frustrated in His plans. All things coordinate and cooperate to do His will.

Jehovah alone makes him to dwell securely!

Not mixed is the poet's assurance of safety! Not partly is his prospect of deliverance in Jehovah and partly in the world or an arm of flesh.

His eyes are fixed on Jehovah, his God, alone!

Many there are who will say: Who will show us any good? while all the time their eyes are fixed on horses and chariots, and looking to many objects for safety and security.

But the man of God says: Jehovah alone makes me to dwell safely. He is the sole object of my trust. In the light of His countenance there is gladness for the lonely heart.

What a blessed experience!

Asleep in the storm!

Peace the poet had with all things, because, first of all, the poet was at peace with Jehovah, his God! A peace which surpasses all understanding!

Never could he lie down in peace and sleep were his confidence divided. Through the cross of Christ Jehovah has established a peace relation with the children of God. God's justice has been satisfied for all their sins. They have a righteousness of God which of grace has freely been imputed unto them. And by faith they appropriate that righteousness, and know that they are right with God. In the Lamb of atonement they have confidence that all things are for them, never against them.

So they may unhesitatingly lay themselves down in peace and sleep!

Even in the storm!

Editorials

Right . . .

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

To whom could these words refer but to Dr. James Daane? It has become, it seems, a bad habit with him to be right . . . but dead wrong.

This time he pontificates in the *Banner* (Sept. 1, 1972) about the faults of the Christian Reformed pulpit and the reasons thereof.

And one hardly knows which of the two proverbs about answering a fool should be applied in his case — whether to answer, or not to answer him according to his folly. Possibly it should be the latter: for it seems utterly hopeless to turn him from his foolishness.

Yet for the sake of the truth, and for the sake of those who will receive instruction, and also so that Daane himself may be left without excuse, I will try to set the record straight.

From the viewpoint of a man who for twelve years has shuttled between Christian Reformed pulpit and pew (Dr. Daane is professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, but also holds ministerial status in the Christian Reformed Church), he writes about “Things I Didn’t Hear.” Writes he:

I did not hear a sermon on the Covenant, nor on Grace, and only one on Election — and that was more lecture than sermon (and there is a difference!). Yet these truths, Covenant, Grace, and Election, bespeak the distinctively Reformed understanding of the biblical faith, truths that should be always implicit and often explicit in the Reformed pulpit.

On this Dr. Daane is right, I think.

He is certainly right on the second statement. The truths of the Covenant, of Grace, and of Election (and Reprobation!) bespeak the distinctively Reformed understanding of the Biblical faith. And these are truths that should always be implicit and frequently explicit in the Reformed pulpit.

Presumably he is also correct in reporting on what he did not hear. At least, I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of his report. Moreover, I can readily believe that Daane’s sampling of Christian Reformed preaching is an indication of what is characteristic of *most* Christian Reformed preaching. It would be strange indeed if Daane would have heard only the bad Christian Reformed preaching as, over a period of twelve years, he sat in CRC pews from coast to coast. I can, in fact, go Daane one better — or should I say “worse?” Personally, I do not sample Christian Reformed preaching very often. But I have done so twice in the past few years. Both times I was bitterly disappointed. But in the course of those two samples I learned that it is possible to sit under Christian

Reformed preaching *without hearing any gospel whatsoever!* On a Florida vacation I heard the “gospel” that today is the day of opportunity to do all kinds of good works — but no sin, no cross, no atonement, no grace, and surely no covenant and no election! So I can readily believe that Daane’s assessment of Christian Reformed preaching, based on a rather large sampling, is true.

And when the doctor says that this is “a cause for concern,” he is also right. In fact, he should have changed that “concern” to “great alarm.”

Dr. Daane is also correct on a third item in his article. He writes as follows:

For twelve years I have also moved in and out of the evangelical church world, on occasion sat in its pews and more frequently stood in its pulpits. In this church world I have never felt altogether at home theologically. Yet the difference between the theological atmosphere of these churches and that of our churches seems, to me at least, a diminishing difference. This diminishing difference, I believe, stems from a growing Christian Reformed pulpit-silence on Covenant, Grace, Election. Since these three truths distinguish the Reformed from the Evangelical Faith, the Reformed pulpit that mutes these truths becomes indistinguishable from the evangelical pulpit. I suspect that it is this state of affairs that enables many Christian Reformed people to leave the CRC and join an evangelical church in good conscience.

On this Dr. Daane is also correct, though rather mild. He might have pointed to the fact that this fundamental flaw in Christian Reformed preaching is the root of many, many other ills. But let that be; the main thrust of his comparison is, I believe, right.

Dr. Daane is even right on a fourth item, when he writes:

What my ear did not hear in the pew, has been almost invisible in our religious journalism. With some exceptions, the religious press of the Christian Reformed community has shown scant interest in these distinctive ingredients of the Reformed Faith.

I can testify to the truth of this statement. For I read the *Banner*, the *Outlook*, the *Reformed Journal*, *Calvinist Contact*; and one looks almost in vain for *any* writings on the Covenant, Grace, or Election in these magazines, let alone any sound writings.

So. Dr. Daane is quite right.

He is even right on one element in his diagnosis of the reasons for this evil. He writes, “I fault not so much the man in the pulpit as the theologian who

stands behind the pulpit and largely shapes and determines what the pulpit does and does not preach.” That is correct, too! It is especially correct with respect to the theologians who occupy the seats of learning in the seminaries. They are the men who largely shape and determine what the pulpit does and does not preach.

On all these matters Dr. Daane is right. Up to this point his article is one of the most significant contributions to the *Banner* that has appeared in a long time. The readers of the *Banner*, both pew-sitters and preachers, — and especially theologians! — may well pay attention to what Dr. Daane writes. He has 20/20 vision on these matters!

. . . But Dead Wrong!

But for the rest, Dr. Daane is dead wrong!

He is wrong, in the first place, because he surely ought to begin with a confession of his own failure. For either he himself did not preach these truths in these twelve years of shuttling, or he did not listen to his own preaching. In either case he is wrong — dead wrong! In the former case, I would quote him the proverb, “Physician, heal thyself!” In the latter case, I would remind him that a preacher must preach to himself and must heed his own preaching: otherwise he cannot even be a good preacher. But part of the explanation of the fact that Daane did not hear these truths preached must lie in one of these two factors: for Daane himself tells us that he preached as well as sat in the pew.

The same is true with respect to Christian Reformed journalism. Daane is right in his serious criticism on this score. But he is dead wrong when he sets himself up as judge. He should have come with the confession, “I am the chief of sinners.” For he is one of the editors of the *Reformed Journal*, a magazine which surely is not famous for its sound theologizing on the very truths which Daane rightly claims should have a large Reformed emphasis. And when very occasionally Daane himself attempted some theologizing on these very subjects, it was surely always of such a kind as to theologize the truths of the Covenant and Grace and Election — especially the latter — right out of the pulpit, and, in fact, out of anyone’s thinking.

But Daane is dead wrong, too, in his diagnosis of the reasons for this grave illness in Christian Reformed preaching.

In the first place, Daane makes the diagnosis that these three characteristically Reformed and closely related truths of the Covenant, Grace, and Election were “put through the grid of the theologians” in the course of theological controversies. And the result, according to Daane, was that they were “theologized out of the pulpit and out of the vital religious interest of the membership of our churches.” He applies this, first of all, to the Covenant:

The Covenant was long a matter of theological controversy — the names of W. Heyns, H. Hoeksema, A. Kuyper, and K. Schilder come to mind. The Covenant was dissected, atomized, anatomized, and analyzed in terms of elect and reprobate, particular

grace and common grace, internal and external covenant, and in terms of legal instrument and instrument of life.

And Daane then goes on to claim that the Covenant “came out of the controversy so encumbered by abstractions and qualifications that the pulpit said less and less about it.”

And on this Daane is wrong, dead wrong.

First of all, of the four men named there were only two that had anything directly to do with covenant theology in the Christian Reformed Church, namely, Hoeksema and Heyns. Dr. Schilder was twice boycotted and shunned by the CRC; and besides, when, after World War II his views of the covenant became known in this country, it was discovered that they were largely the views of Heyns. A. Kuyper’s covenant view never found much acceptance in the CRC. Hoeksema, although from his student days he opposed Heyns, never fully developed his covenant view until after the Christian Reformed Church cast him out. It was the covenant view of Prof. Heyns that won the day in the Christian Reformed Church — the very purely soteriological view which Daane later in his article says is so essential for the preaching of the covenant! Heyns, the theologian, and Heyns, the professor of homiletics, probably influenced more preachers in the Christian Reformed Church in yesteryear than any other man! Daane could hardly be more wrong on his facts of history!

But worse than this, Daane is dead wrong on the subject of theological controversy and on the matter of the truth being “put through the grid of the theologians.” The simple fact of history is that it has always been through this process that the truth has been refined and developed and brought to clarity of confession in the consciousness of the church. It is not controversy that has silenced the precious truths of God’s Word in the preaching of the church. It never has been thus. But when, in the process of theological controversy, a church — any church — forsakes the truth and embraces the lie, then it is inevitable that the truth will more and more be muted in the pulpit! And this is what has happened in the pulpits of the CRC. And it is traceable directly to theological error that has been taught by Christian Reformed theologians at

Calvin College and Seminary! If Daane had written this, he might have done his church a service.

Daane applies this same theory to the truth of God's grace. And there, if anything, he is even more wrong. Writes he:

This was followed by a controversy about Grace — the names of H. Hoeksema, K. Schilder, C. Van Til, H. J. Kuiper, and L. Berkhof come to mind. For the first time in the history of the church, common grace was officially and creedally posited alongside particular grace as orthodox doctrine. Out of this controversy came the Protestant Reformed Churches, and a CRC commitment to a view of grace its pulpits rarely, if ever, preach.

In the PRC the awareness eventually surfaced in the pulpit that even particular grace as they defined it, cannot be preached. At this point the PRC divided. After the CRC posited a divine grace for all men, decades followed in which a divine love for all men was regarded as heretical. Given such confusion, the pulpit said less and less about Grace. Explicit sermons on Grace were theologized out of the pulpit.

It is hard to imagine, even from an intellectual point of view, how Daane could be more wrong more often than in these two brief paragraphs.

First of all, he is wrong on his history again. K. Schilder and C. Van Til had nothing to do with the common grace controversy in the Christian Reformed Church, i.e., until long after "common grace was officially and creedally posited alongside particular grace as orthodox doctrine." Again, K. Schilder was boycotted in 1939, mainly because the CRC leadership was afraid he might lend some support to the views of the PRC. And though I was only a high schooler, I can still hear him in his peculiar Dutch accent growl his complete disgust at the refusal of the Christian Reformed leaders at the Pantlind Conference even to *discuss* the issues. And of course, against Dr. Van Til, Daane also has long held objections; perhaps that explains his mention here. But surely, Van Til had no effect as such upon the controversy of 1924. And why did not Daane think in this connection of C. Bouma and E. van Halsema — yes, and also of Heyns, whose "soteriological" covenant view is so closely similar to the well-meant offer of the First Point of 1924?

Wrong Daane is, secondly, about the preaching of common grace. It was preached and taught so much — if not explicitly, then implicitly — that the antithesis, which is inseparable from sovereign, particular grace, was virtually preached right out of the pulpit and out of the vital religious interest of the membership of the CRC.

Dead wrong Daane is, thirdly, with respect to the general grace theory of the First Point. Does he not know this? Does he not know that H. J. Kuiper began to preach the Three Points already in 1925? Does he not know that H. J. Kuiper spoke of a divine love for all men, all sinners — and was never regarded as

heretical? Does he not know that in pulpit and journal and radio broadcast the well-meant offer, (*het puntje van het eerste punt!*), was often preached?

And more wrong he could not be than in his analysis of the reasons why the De Wolf group left us and returned to the Christian Reformed Church! Such unadulterated hogwash I have rarely read! Imagine! The awareness eventually surfaced in the pulpit that even particular grace as they defined it, cannot be preached! Does not Daane remember that De Wolf was disciplined for preaching a general, conditional promise and conditional salvation? Does not Daane know that this is the very doctrine of Heyns? Does not Daane know that this is essentially the teaching of the Christian Reformed First Point? Does he not know that long before they returned to the CRC, we *predicted* that they would do so because of a doctrine of particular grace that could not be preached, but because of a doctrine of grace which was principally Arminian that De Wolf was disciplined and his group left the PRC.

Nor was it due to confusion that "the pulpit said less and less about Grace." Grace was indeed theologized out of the CRC pulpits, but by the *false theology* of the Three Points! For it stands to reason that according as salvation becomes a matter of man and his free will, and according as grace and salvation are made dependent upon man, so grace is not and cannot be preached. For under such theology, grace is no more grace!

Nor is it true that decades followed 1924 in which a divine love for all men was regarded as heretical. Daane could not be more wrong. On the contrary, the development of doctrine and of the pulpit was such that finally it became completely impossible in the concrete case of Prof. Harold Dekker to declare heretical the teaching that God loves all men and that Christ died for all men. Indeed, there were those who publicly vowed that Dekker's doctrine had to be declared anti-confessional. I recall that one even openly declared that if this were not done, he would be compelled to go up and down the country speaking against it. But when it came to a show-down, all the opposition dissipated like the morning mist. And all the infamous Synod of 1967 was able to agree on was a non-doctrinal and non-ecclesiastical statement that Dekker's statements were "ambiguous and abstract!"

Traceable merely to theologizing? No. To theological controversy? Not at all.

But traceable directly to the First Point of 1924. Since that black day in the history of the Christian Reformed Church, truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

Dead wrong Daane is, too, in his diagnosis of the silencing of Election. He writes:

And much the same is true about Election. How many CRC pulpits preach Election these days? How

many preach reprobation? After Election went through the grid of the controversies over Covenant and Grace, the pulpit reacted to it with increasing silence. After the theologians had wrought their work on Election, the pulpit did not know what to do with what it was left with. Hence the current state of affairs in which a man can be removed from his pulpit for denying what in his pulpit he never mentions. This surely points to something profoundly wrong.

I confess that I do not know to what Daane refers in the last part of this paragraph.

But for the rest, Daane is dead wrong again in his analysis. For the reason for pulpit-silence on this doctrine is not the mere fact that it passed through the grid of the controversies over Covenant and Grace. The reason is that once the universalism of grace was established in 1924 as official church doctrine, it became utterly inconsistent to speak of *particularism*, that is, of election and reprobation. The reason lies in the fact that once it became established, a la Heyns, that the promise is for *all*, it became impossible

consistently to speak of the sovereign distinction of election and reprobation. Ultimately, you see, it is impossible for a church to run on two theological tracks. As you try to follow them, they become more and more divergent; and a choice has to be made. Faced by such a choice in its pulpits, the CRC chose the Arminian track.

Herein lies the reason why the CRC is less and less distinguishable from so-called evangelical churches. Herein lies the reason why the CRC can cooperate with and support such movements as Campus Crusade and the Billy Graham campaigns and Key '73. They have indeed abandoned their distinctiveness. They abandoned it in their theology; and inevitably they abandoned it, and continue more and more to abandon it, in their pulpits. And I make bold to say that no one can stem the tide, and no one will be able to stem the tide — UNLESS he goes back to the root issues of 1924 and undoes the horrible sins perpetrated against the Reformed faith at that time. It is spiritually and ethically impossible!

Amazing Hocus-Pocus!

Perhaps the main thrust of Daane's article is in the last column. There, so to speak, the cat comes out of the bag. After all, he is disturbed — as so often before — by Hoeksema's theology. And he wants somehow to blame that hated theology of Hoeksema for the ills of Christian Reformed preaching.

One can only shake his head in amazement at such strange meanderings of Daane's thinking.

I will quote Daane in full at this point, so that the reader may judge for himself that I do Daane no injustice. His faulty reasoning is so transparent that anyone can see through it. He writes:

The kind of theologizing I refer to is illustrated in Herman Hoeksema's book *Believers and Their Seed*, recently translated into English (1971). Since Hoeksema was not deposed for his theology of the Covenant (there is no official Reformed doctrine of the Covenant), it provides a good illustration of the kind of theologizing that occurred within the Reformed community and drove the Covenant out of the pulpit.

Hoeksema took issue with W. Heyns, a professor at Calvin Seminary, because "for him [Heyns] the salvation of the Covenant-members is the one and only thing in God's Covenant. The Covenant is really a promise of salvation." Heyns, said Hoeksema, "views God's Covenant purely soteriologically," that is, Heyns failed to define the Covenant in terms of damnation as well as salvation.

Here lies the clue to the kind of theologizing that muted the sound of Covenant, Grace, and Election in our pulpits. When the doctrine of the Covenant is put

through the grid of a theology that rejects the Covenant as "purely soteriological" and defines it in terms of damnation as well as salvation, what the theologians bequeath to the man of the pulpit is something he does not know how to preach. Inheriting a bramble of confusion which he cannot preach and usually dares not challenge, the man of the pulpit simply retreats into silence.

Heyns was not without his errors, but one of them was not his insistence that the Covenant is purely soteriological. If indeed the Covenant is not purely soteriological in nature and purpose, it cannot be preached. For preaching is a positive and unqualified proclamation of salvation. When it is less than this, what is heard in the pulpit is not preaching.

Now I will pass by the fact that Daane furnishes a very poor description of preaching here.

I will also pass by the fact that at best Daane gives only a partial description of Hoeksema's criticism of Heyns. I will only remind him that Hoeksema's *main* criticism of Heyns was that he introduced Arminianism into the covenant, though it is certainly true that Hoeksema criticized *many* theologians for a soteriological view of the covenant and was himself thoroughly theological and theocentric in his covenant theology.

But let us follow Daane's reasonings, based upon his own premise.

Let us do that, first of all, from the viewpoint of Hoeksema's theologizing, as follows:

Proposition 1: A purely soteriological view of the

covenant is essential to preaching of the covenant.

Proposition 2: Hoeksema, an outsider, criticized Heyns, a teacher of theology and of homiletics at Calvin, for the latter's soteriological view of the covenant.

Proposition 3: Hoeksema's covenant view and his criticism of Heyns never found any appreciable acceptance among the Christian Reformed clergy.

Proposition 4: Yet the truth of the covenant is largely muted in Christian Reformed pulpits today.

Proposition 5: It is Hoeksema's kind of theologizing that must be blamed for the fact that the sound of Covenant, Grace, and Election is muted in Christian Reformed pulpits.

Daane himself, being a rational being, cannot believe this!

He is playing *hocus pocus*!

And now let us do the same thing from the point of view of Heyns's theologizing, as follows:

Proposition 1: A purely soteriological view of the covenant is essential to preaching of the covenant.

Proposition 2: Prof. Heyns taught such a purely soteriological view of the Covenant. He refused to

define the covenant in terms of damnation as well as salvation.

Proposition 3: Prof. Heyns bequeathed his view to the man of the pulpit in his writings and in his class-room instruction at Calvin College and Seminary for many years. He was in a position to influence many future Christian Reformed preachers. He was even a teacher who is reported to have brooked no opposition in his classes.

Proposition 4: For the most part Prof. Heyns's views were accepted uncritically. Herman Hoeksema was one of the few who disagreed with Heyns; but Herman Hoeksema did not fully develop his own covenant theology until he was outside of the Christian Reformed Church.

Proposition 5: The sound of the Covenant is largely muted in Christian Reformed pulpits today.

Proposition 6: Daane's conclusion: This is the fault not of Heyns, but of Hoeksema's theologizing.

My conclusion: This can only be largely the fault of the man who largely influenced Christian Reformed preaching, namely, Heyns.

Let the reader judge.

Things I Did Hear

There is almost a note of nostalgia in Daane's concluding wish that the rich and sweet sounds of Covenant, Grace, and Election may again be heard in Christian Reformed pulpits.

Well, when was the last time that these sounds were heard unspoiled by the sour notes of Arminianism and universalism?

It has been a long time ago!

But let me conclude with a testimony. It is directed not only to Dr. Daane. But it is directed to all who miss the rich and sweet sounds of Covenant, Grace, and Election. And it is directed to all our people who are privileged to enjoy them, that they may be thankful for what they have.

I have shuttled between pulpit and pew for thirteen years. Admittedly, I still enjoy the pulpit more than the pew; but rather often I also occupy the pew.

During those thirteen years I have heard a good many Protestant Reformed preachers. I have listened to veterans of the pulpit, to young ministers, to candidates, to students. I have listened to men who had all their training under H. Hoeksema and G. M. Ophoff. I have listened to men who had their training under H. Hanko and myself. These men are not all the same. There are among them men of great talent, but also men of more limited ability. There are among them men of polished and interesting style, but also

men who are less capable pulpiteers.

But they all speak the same language. Without exception, in all their preaching I have heard the sweet and rich sounds of Covenant, Grace, and Election — always implicit, but very frequently explicit. And let me make one thing crystal clear: these were not lectures, but sermons, preaching of the Word of God according to the Scriptures!

Not very often have I sat in the pews of other denominations. But I have done so a few times. I have sat in Christian Reformed pews, in Presbyterian pews, in Methodist pews. In my youth I visited other churches more frequently; they were churches ranging from Orthodox Presbyterian to the most rabid, Arminianistic, dispensationalist camp meetings at Old Orchard Beach to modernistic Congregational and Baptist churches. I also listen occasionally to the preaching of others via radio. Moreover, I hear from members of our churches who sit in other pews while on vacation.

And let me assure you: there is a difference! And it is an easily discernible difference!

In these days one has to look long and far in order to find preaching characterized by the sweet and rich sounds of Covenant, Grace, and Election such as is heard in our Protestant Reformed pulpits.

That is my testimony — based on experience.

I make this testimony without boasting in men.

I make it with humility and with thankfulness to God.

But I make it without hesitation and without fear of contradiction.

And to such as are truly longing to hear the sweet and rich sounds of Covenant, Grace, and Election, I say: Come home!

Critique

"The Gospels In Current Study" (2)

Prof. H. Hanko

[Editor's Note. In the previous issue Prof. Hanko began this critique. The final statement of the first installment was: "We must never forget that the battle is between faith and unbelief." The opening statement of the present installment is a reference to this.]

But just because Kistemaker fails to deal with this, he concedes to the critics certain very precious truths.

For one thing, Kistemaker is very emphatically of the position that the gospel writers were dependent upon each other and perhaps even dependent upon other documents which no longer exist. Now it is not our intention to enter into the rather complicated problem of dependence in this review; and Kistemaker himself does not offer a definite solution. But we do want to point out that the whole so-called "synoptic problem" which deals with the question of dependence is a problem which arises out of higher criticism. There has never been the slightest iota of proof for other documents which no longer exist but which were used by the gospel writers. And, it simply is a fact that the parallel passages in the gospels are easily explained both with respect to their similarities and differences within the context of inspiration. We need not, as Kistemaker does, end a discussion on this point with a series of unanswered questions:

Though the redaction critic has devoted his attention to the theology of Matthew and has said little about the gospel tradition which the evangelist received, sooner or later he must face the question concerning the origin of this tradition. Should he say that the evangelist used the Gospel of Mark as a source, he would have to explain how Matthew adopted Mark's text but not his theology. And if the three Synoptic evangelists have received a common tradition, which brought about interdependence among the evangelists, would they have been able to present three separate theologies? In short, the question arises: what, if any, is the relationship between the theology of Matthew, of Mark, and of Luke? (p. 103.)

In the second place, Kistemaker makes a concession to the whole dangerous "Sitz-im-leben" idea. This theory teaches that the gospel writers (and all the men whom God used to write the Scriptures) were influenced also in their writings of the Scriptures by

the views held in their day, views which were often erroneous. He speaks of the apostle John as being influenced by the Qumran settlement and writes: "How is it possible that of the four Gospels that of John reveals close affinity in language and thought to the literature of the Dead Sea settlement?" (p. 123.) Or again,

Third, we need to consider the life-setting of the early Christian community and of the writer of the Gospel. Everett F. Harrison makes this observation: "Any writer, however objective, finds it difficult, if not impossible, to avoid reflecting his own situation to some extent. He cannot write in a vacuum." (pp. 83, 84.)

We do not mean to deny, and to our knowledge, no child of God has ever denied, that God used men in their own times and circumstances to write the Scriptures. What we object to is the fact that remarks such as the one above are made outside the context of and without any reference to, divine inspiration. The result is certainly that any reader naturally concludes that the writers reflected also their erroneous conceptions of things. The suggestion is at least implied that God did not preserve the men whom He used to write the Scriptures from any conceivable kind of error. And the result is the position which men like Kuitert take who deny huge sections of Scripture in the name of such a "Sitz-im-leben" theory.

Of course, the gospel writers knew each other. Of course, they talked together about the events and teachings of Christ. Of course, the whole Church talked about these things. No one in his right mind would ever deny this. And we do not need pages of proof to assure us that this is so. But when the gospel writers were moved by the Holy Spirit, they were so directed that they wrote what God wanted them to write in every detail. This does not preclude the account of eyewitnesses and does not shut the door to a certain oral tradition. But it does answer all the

questions which arise in such a way that the gospel narratives are God's Word, not man's in any respect.

In the third place, Kistemaker makes a big point of oral tradition. He asks the question (p. 86): "The point is whether the book of Acts and the various Epistles furnish any evidence that the tradition of Jesus' teaching was available to the early Christians. The question, in other words, is whether the early church was in possession of the words of Jesus before the written Gospels began to circulate."

I do not understand why this is such a big question. The answer, quite obviously, is, of course. Who in the world ever denied this? It would be silly to deny that this was precisely the case.

But Kistemaker goes to great lengths to prove that this was surely the case. He has a whole line of argumentation which you may find on pp. 86-93. I suppose if one wants to go to great pains to prove the obvious, this is all right. But it does seem just a bit unnecessary.

But, soon the real reason behind this long train of argument comes out. Already as one reads the proof, one becomes somewhat suspicious. For, although the point being proved is perfectly plain and the proof an extensive belaboring of the obvious, nevertheless, the proof is, in the final analysis, thoroughly inadequate. It is, admittedly, a bit ironic. A point which does not need proving is extensively proved with proof which does no proving at all. One begins to wonder.

Part of the proof is Luke's "Prologue." This is found in Luke 1:1-4. Kistemaker argues, among other things, that, because this passage gives evidence of other gospel narratives, there is proof that Luke used these narratives as a source of tradition. The implication is that Luke added his narrative to many others; and, that, from the viewpoint of their accuracy, Luke's stood on a par with the others. There is no question that Luke used sources in the writing of his gospel. But his claim is precisely different. He insists that he is adding to the narratives which have already been written just because his will stand in a class by itself and be an authoritative account — and that, in distinction from the others. He claims "perfect understanding" (vs. 3), something which the others did not have. He writes his gospel so that Theophilus may "know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed." (vs. 4). Now Luke could make these claims and set his gospel apart only because he was conscious that he was infallibly led by the Spirit. Why does not Kistemaker enter into these emphatic assertions of the text?

Kistemaker also quotes a number of passages from I & II Thessalonians to prove his point that the apostles used an oral tradition. But these passages do no such thing. A few of them are:

2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God

which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

Kistemaker has underscored the words "received" and "heard" and finds in them proof for the use of oral tradition. I do not see this.

II Thess. 2:5: "Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?"

II Thess. 3:10: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

Proof for the use of oral tradition here? I can't find it.

One is a bit puzzled by all this. Why belabor a point so obvious and muster proof which is not really proof?

But the reason soon becomes apparent. Once again, there is no mention made in all this of inspiration. And the result is that Kistemaker evidently takes the position that the writings of the apostles both in the epistles and in the gospel narratives were theological developments of oral tradition. This is apparently why he stresses so strongly that the gospel narratives are theological treatises: "The modern trend of looking at the evangelist as a theologian has much in its favor." (p. 58). (There are also other places where this is discussed.)

But this position is clearly set forth.

Teaching for Paul and the church at Thessalonica was a matter of receiving and delivering; it was the transmission of a tradition. . . . (p. 89).

We wish to draw the conclusion that the whole body of Jesus' teaching was available to the apostles and, through them, to the early Christians before the canonical Gospels were written. The apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42) consisted of a pattern which comprised the facts about the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 28:31). That is, the apostles proclaimed the good news by teaching the people the life, words, and doctrine of Jesus. They developed this teaching, they gave it form and shape, they standardized it. One of the reasons why the apostles remained such a long time in Jerusalem after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was to formulate the so-called apostles' teaching. (p. 93).

There you have it. Without any mention made of divine inspiration, the assertion is made that the gospel narratives and the apostolic writings were the development of oral tradition.

There are many passages of Scripture with which this can be disproved. But one especially striking passage is Galatians 1. Paul's apostleship was under attack in the Galatian Churches. Paul, therefore, spends a great deal of time proving that he is an apostle along with the other eleven. And in order to prove this, he offers, in chapters 1 and 2, a sort of autobiography of his conversion and of the events in his life following upon his conversion. In this section he is intent on proving one point in defense of his apostleship. That point is that the gospel which he received, he did not

receive from men, but from God. He writes this in so many words in 1:11, 12: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." And, again, in 1:15, 16: "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." What could be clearer? And his autobiography is intended precisely to prove this point. This is even true of his mention of his fifteen day stay with Peter in Jerusalem. (vs. 18). Kistemaker exactly twists this around: "At that time he stayed with Peter for a fortnight, and we may presume they did not spend all the time talking about the weather." (p. 93).

Paul insists, in unequivocal language, that the gospel which he preached he received by means of the revelation of Jesus Christ; he did not receive it in any sense from men.

Finally, in the last chapter, Kistemaker deals with three questions. He describes them himself in these words:

We begin with the topic of the Son of Man debate and listen to the answers given to the questions raised. Next, we attend the "trial" of Jesus and learn from the evidence presented whether Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. And last, we examine the Easter events which describe the resurrection of Jesus. (p. 132).

Now it is true that in dealing with and answering all these questions, Kistemaker finally comes to the conclusion that Christ did indeed call Himself "The Son of Man"; that he surely was "The Son of God"; and that His physical resurrection is an historical fact.

What bothers us is that the questions are dealt with on the grounds of textual and higher criticism. Kistemaker examines the evidence. He finds the evidence satisfactory. The trouble is that dozens of others, scholars as great as Kistemaker, have also examined the evidence. They have found it inconclusive at best and unsatisfactory in many cases. Whom are we to believe? Is it merely a question of examining the evidence, such as it may be? Do we decide the issue on the grounds of who has the best arguments? who debates with clearest and most precise logic? who is honest with the evidence?

There is one part of the evidence which no one (not even Kistemaker) brings into court. And that evidence is the fact that the Scriptures are God's Word. It is true that Jesus called Himself "The Son of God." But this is true, not because a careful examination of the documents forces one into that conclusion; but because it is the infallible Word of God which says that this is true. God says so. We believe that Jesus is the Son of God. But we receive this truth, not because we

have sufficient historical evidence of this fact. God's Word asserts it. We bow before that. We believe that Christ rose from the dead. But the "proofs" of the resurrection are not what convince us. God's Word asserts that this is so. We listen to God.

To do anything else is fraught with danger. If the Scriptures are mere historical documents which must be critically examined and which must be treated in ways similar to the "Dialogues" of Plato, then I for one cast my vote with the higher critics. Without fail, they have the best of the argument. And anyone who treats Scripture in this way is bound, sooner or later, to come to the same conclusion.

But if Scripture is received as the infallible record given by the inspiration of the Spirit and containing the revelation of God in Christ, then the only calling of the child of God is to bow before that holy Word of God.

This does not mean that he cannot give answer to all the vain and empty philosophies and wildly speculative theories of the higher critics. Indeed, he has a solemn obligation to do precisely this. But he does so, not on the grounds of the critics themselves, but on the grounds of the Word of God alone.

And then the issue is between faith and unbelief, light and darkness, the truth and the lie. Unbelief cannot and will not accept Scripture as God's Word. The work of faith is necessary for this. And faith is the gift of God.

We do not mean to imply by all this that Kistemaker denies the inspiration of Scripture. I do not know what his views are on this matter. I am sure he would accept the doctrine of inspiration; but whether his views extend to verbal inspiration, I do not know. He writes, for example, on p. 32: "The sacredness of the words of Jesus is not inherent in the words as such, but in the message conveyed." But when he fails to deal with all the problems of the higher critics in his book from the viewpoint of an infallible Bible, he goes astray and concedes such fundamental points to the critics that he will, if he is not careful, presently lose the whole of the Scriptures. History has proved this; especially has recent history in the Netherlands shown this to be the case.

Does the book then have no value?

Indeed, it does.

It is a valuable and clear description of recent trends in the field of gospel studies. Anyone interested in more recent developments can find much in this book that is of worth.

Kistemaker does make, at times, some very pointed criticism of the higher critics. Particularly striking is his criticism of the new hermeneutics that it makes man, instead of God, the center of its studies. (p. 76) In fact, this point could very well have received much more extensive development in the book than it has.

But we are sorry and dismayed that the book does

not proceed from the principle of inspiration. This is its weakness. One must, therefore, read it with caution.

From Holy Writ

Pure and Undeclared Religion

An Exposition of the Epistle of James

Rev. Robert D. Decker

The theme or central thought of this Letter is to be found in verses 26 and 27 of Chapter 1. Here the "holy man of God, James, as moved by the Holy Spirit" (II Peter 1:21) draws a basic distinction. He writes: "If any man among you seem to be religious . . ."; literally, if any man among you thinks or imagines himself to be religious; "and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion and undeclared before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." What James is saying in these verses is that the most fundamental distinction is not first of all between "hearing and doing the Word," 1:22 ff., nor between "saying and doing," 2:14-26; but between "thinking and being," that is: what we imagine ourselves to be as over against what we actually ought to be. James' point is that life, all of life, is religious. And one's life is either false religion or it's true religion. In his heart man either loves the one true God, and his neighbor as himself; or he hates God and the neighbor. His life gives expression to his heart commitment. There are three characteristics of true religion, "pure and undeclared," in these verses. One who is truly religious bridles his tongue. It's that little member, the tongue, by which one expresses the boasting of his heart of pride (3:5). Controlling the tongue is the key to the humility of obedience to the perfect Law of Liberty (1:25). The second characteristic of true religion is "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." This is the highest expression of obedience to the second table of the law, "love thy neighbor as thyself." The third characteristic of pure and undeclared religion is: "and to keep himself unspotted from the world." This is to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength, having no other gods before Him.

The entire Epistle is built upon that foundation and is a development of that theme: "pure and undeclared religion." Chapter 2 has to do with the "visiting of the fatherless and widows," chapter 3 with bridling the tongue, and chapters 4 and 5 with keeping ourselves unspotted from the world.

Noting some of the outstanding characteristics of the Epistle in general we find a marked similarity to

the teaching of Jesus, especially His Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matt. 5-7. These similarities we will note in more detail as we encounter them in our verse-by-verse exposition.

The Letter is eminently practical. This is not to say, as one New Testament scholar put it: "There is a paucity of doctrine" in James. It is true we do not find the logical and detailed development of the great themes of predestination, the Covenant of Grace, justification, sanctification, etc. which we find in the other Epistles, notably Paul's. There is, however, plenty of doctrine, or at least doctrinal presupposition pervading these chapters. John Calvin is careful to say in his introductory remarks to his commentary on James: "It seems that he is more sparing in proclaiming the grace of Christ than it behooves an Apostle to be . . ." Then Calvin goes on to explain that James has his own unique place in the Canon of the Scriptures. James is concerned with the practical working out of the doctrines of God in the everyday life of the child of God. This means that we shall have to take care in our exposition not to tear James loose from the context of the entire New Testament.

Closely related to the second characteristic of the book, is the fact that James is authoritative in tone. Almost every other verse contains an imperative. Often these are put in the sharpest of terms. Yet, at the same time, these cutting, almost shocking admonitions are spoken out of the tenderness of the love of God. In the very next breath James will say: "My brethren." The fact is, however, that James "pulls no punches," he strikes hard and right to the point.

Bearing these thoughts in mind we turn to verse one: "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting." It strikes one that James offers no further identification of himself. No doubt this is because he was rather prominent in the New Testament Church, so that the mere mention of his name sufficed to introduce him to his readers. The Bible mentions four different men by this name. There are the two apostles: James the Son of Zebedee (Matt. 4:21), James the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10:3). Neither of these is likely to be the author simply because there is

no claim anywhere in this letter on the part of its author to being an apostle. Neither of these is very prominent in the New Testament. And, finally, the fact that James of the son of Zebedee was beheaded by Herod no later than A.D. 44 precludes the possibility of his being the author. Scripture speaks of James the father of Judas the Apostle (not Iscariot) in Luke 6:16, but this is all we ever read of him.

This evidence points to James the half-brother of Jesus cited in Matt. 13:55. This brother of the Lord is certainly well-known in the early church. We find him waiting for the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 1:14), a leader in Jerusalem (Acts 12), presiding at the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15), mentioned by the Apostle Paul as among the "pillars of the church" (Gal. 2:9). There is a similarity of the language of the Epistle and that of James in his speech recorded in Acts 15. The address, "greeting" (1:1 — Acts 15:23) found in both is used by no other New Testament writer; the term "visit" (1:27 — Acts 15:14) is the same in both; both passages reveal a similar use of the term indicating the turning of sinners to God (5:19, 20 — Acts 15:19); and the use of the name of the Lord is similar in both (2:7 — Acts 15:17). While all this may not be conclusive, it certainly leads us to believe that James, the half-brother of the Savior, is the human instrument used by the Spirit to write this part of the Scriptures.

What is of much greater significance is his identity as a "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." This does not mean that James is a servant of God and also a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rather the idea is that James is a servant of God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, the Mediator. "Through Him I have been made a servant of God," is what James is saying. He is Jesus, Jehovah salvation. The Son of God to Whose image we have been conformed by sovereign, gracious, eternal election. He is Jesus Who reveals in all His Word and work Jehovah as the God of our salvation. He is the Christ, God's anointed, our Prophet, Priest, and King. And having paid the price for our sins, having satisfied the justice of God He is raised from the dead, set down at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honor, given all authority on heaven and earth, the Lord of lords.

This is really a confession of James, a personal testimony to the church. That's remarkable, too: for we know from the gospel records (John 7:6ff) that at first James did not believe in Christ. Only later was he brought to conversion, perhaps by the personal appearance of the risen Christ to him (I Cor. 15:7). Now, he confesses to be a servant of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word "servant" in the King James has a passive force. It comes from a root verb which means to bind

or capture. Hence, the word is better translated "bond-servant," or "slave." James was a slave of God in a very special sense as a writer of Holy Scripture. This is undoubtedly what he is saying to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. He is reminding them that what he writes is not his own word but the very Word of God, God breathed! As a slave of God He means to emphasize exactly this, that his will is totally subject to the will of God Who is using him to reveal His good and perfect will to the church. The truth of infallible inspiration does not depend on a few isolated texts or passages in the Bible but runs as a current throughout the Scriptures. Think in this connection of the "thus saith the Lord's" or "the word of the Lord came unto me saying . . ." of the Old Testament.

In a broader sense all God's children are His slaves through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is a Word here we ought not miss. A slave in Bible times was completely at the mercy of his Master. He had no property, no rights or privileges of any kind, not even his children were considered his. He was utterly bound to his Master. So it is with the redeemed in Christ. They are in total subjection to God. They confess with the Heidelberg Catechism, "I am not my own, but belong in life and in death to my faithful Saviour." Everything they have and everything they are belongs to the Lord. They own nothing: homes, automobiles, jobs, farms, husbands, wives, children, money — it's all the Lord's! Their wills must be subject to the Lord's will. And with everything they have and are they are obligated to love the Lord their God. This is what pure and undefiled religion is all about!

And there is the freedom of the child of God. The ungodly consumed by the lusts of sin, rejoicing in iniquity, are in most horrible bondage. They are driven by their lord and master sin into the pit of hell under the righteous judgment of God (cf. Romans 1). God is not mocked. The wages of sin is death, and those wages are paid. But the children of God are free: free to love the Lord, to enjoy the peace of forgiveness, the joy of salvation, and the hope of everlasting life. They are really free, these slaves of God, as paradoxical as that may sound.

That is, too, the comfort of the child of God. His Master is His heavenly Father, the Almighty Creator-Sustainer of the whole universe. And his heavenly Father clothes the grass of the field, adorns the lilies with a glory greater than Solomon's, and feeds the little sparrows. He will surely care for His slaves who are of more value than many sparrows (Matt. 6).

Our comments on the "twelve tribes scattered abroad" and the greeting will have to wait until the next issue.

Taking Heed To The Doctrine

A Defense Of Calvinism As The Gospel

Rev. David Engelsma

The term, "Calvinism," is not the name by which we Calvinists prefer to have our faith called; nor do we ourselves prefer to call ourselves "Calvinists." This was also true of most of the Calvinists of the past. Calvin was the name of a man, a great servant of God, John Calvin. He was one of the Reformers by whom the Holy Spirit reformed the Church in the 16th century. He ranks with Martin Luther as one of the two outstanding Reformers. To call ourselves "Calvinists," and our faith "Calvinism," leaves the impression that we follow a man and that these beliefs are the invention of a man. In fact, these terms originally were terms of derision used by our enemies, as were also the names "Christian" and "Protestant." Therefore, from the very beginning, Calvinists called themselves "Reformed" or "Presbyterian." Thus, they deliberately distinguished themselves from the other great branch of the Protestant Reformation, the Lutheran Church, which did call itself by the name of a man.

Nevertheless, "Calvinism" and "Calvinist" are useful terms, today. They are widely known, even though that be, in part, through the disparaging efforts of the enemies of Calvinism. The name "Calvinist" applies also to persons and churches who are not Reformed and Presbyterian, but who embrace the tenets of Calvinism, which they call "the doctrines of grace." "Calvinism" has come to stand for certain doctrines, a certain system of truth. We have no objection to calling these doctrines "Calvinism" as long as two things are clearly understood. First, it must be understood that not the man John Calvin, but Holy Scripture is the source of them. Secondly, it must be understood that we who embrace these truths are not disciples of a man, Calvin, but are concerned exclusively to follow God's eternal Son in our flesh, Jesus Christ, exactly by confessing these doctrines.

There are many ways of looking at and applying Calvinism. Men have viewed it politically. Others have viewed it economically. We could examine it as a total world-and-life-view of a man. Calvinism is more, much more, than a set of doctrines and, certainly, much more than five points of doctrine. It is a world-and-life-view, even as humanism or Marxism, with which a man takes a stand in every area of human life. Calvinism involves one with the Church, the instituted Church, and is not only the personal beliefs of the individual; it is, through and through, ecclesiastical. At its heart, however, Calvinism is

theology, true religion, and that means doctrine. This is how we will be viewing Calvinism, here. We limit ourselves to a consideration of Calvinism as the gospel.

It is our conviction that Calvinism is the gospel. Its outstanding doctrines are simply the truths that make up the gospel. Departure from Calvinism, therefore, is apostasy from the gospel of God's grace in Christ. Our defense, then, will proceed as follows. First, we will show that Calvinism is the gospel. This is necessary because of its detractors, who criticize it as a perversion of the gospel. Secondly, we will defend it as the gospel. In doing this, we carry out the calling that every believer has from God. Paul wrote that he was "set for the defense of the gospel" (Philippians 1:17). I Peter 3:15 calls every believer to give an answer, an "apology," or defense, to everyone who asks him a reason for the hope that is in him.

Calvinism, as the name indicates, is a certain teaching associated with John Calvin; it refers to doctrines that he propounded. John Calvin was a Frenchman, born in 1509 and died at 55 in 1564. He lived during the Reformation, a contemporary of Luther. He was converted from Roman Catholicism early in his life and labored on behalf of the Reformation all the rest of his life. He lived and worked in Geneva, Switzerland as a Reformed pastor and theologian. His labor was prodigious. He preached almost daily; did an immense pastoral work; carried on a massive correspondence; and wrote commentaries, tracts, and other theological works. He is remembered, especially, for his great work on Christian theology, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and for his commentaries on almost every book of the Bible. All of his Protestant contemporaries recognized his outstanding gifts, especially, in theology and exposition of Scripture. They referred to him simply as "The Theologian." Calvin's influence in all the world, already during his lifetime and ever afterwards, was tremendous. Luther, of course, stands alone, as the founder of the Protestant Reformation. Calvin, benefiting from Luther, outstripped even Luther in influencing the Church of Christ in all the world. Even from this historical viewpoint, Calvinism is something of a misnomer. On the doctrines of Calvinism, there was no difference between Luther and Calvin. They were in agreement in their teaching of the doctrines of predestination, the depravity of the fallen man, and justification by faith alone. Almost without exception,

all of the Reformers embraced what we now call "Calvinism." But Calvin did develop these truths systematically and fully, and, therefore, they came to be called by his name.

In history, Calvinism is the name for the faith of the Reformed and Presbyterian branch of the Protestant Reformation. These Churches were called "Reformed" in Germany, France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. In England and Scotland, they were called "Presbyterian." This faith was early expressed in written confessions, or creeds. Among the confessions of the Reformed Churches are the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession of Faith, and the Canons of Dordt. The great Presbyterian creeds are the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Catechisms. All of these confessions are in essential agreement.

The Reformed and Presbyterian Churches insisted that the teaching embodied in these creeds, that which now is called Calvinism, was the revelation of God in Holy Scripture. Calvinism bases itself on Scripture. It holds fully the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*, Scripture alone. The doctrine of Scripture is the very foundation of Calvinism. It is, therefore, a mistake to define Calvinism apart from its belief concerning Scripture. The Bible is the only authority in and over the Church. It is this because it is the inspired Word of God, as II Timothy 3:16 declares. As such, it is reliable, questioned, or subjected to criticism, but it must be received, believed, and obeyed. This is vital for Calvinism because Calvinism teaches many things about which man complains, "These are hard sayings, who can hear them?" For Calvinism, the question is not: "Will men in the 20th century like these things?" But the question is: "Does the Word of God say so?" Calvinism is concerned to proclaim the Scriptures. The preaching of Scripture, both within the Church and outside the Church, is the central interest of Calvinism. It is totally wrong to conceive of Calvinism as a theoretical, abstruse science carried on by heady intellectuals in the study. With the entire Reformation, it wanted, and wants today, to preach the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes.

Calvinism, then, can rightly be viewed as certain basic doctrines, the so-called five points of Calvinism.

But even here, a word of caution is in order. The five points of Calvinism, as five particular doctrines that distinguish Calvinism, originated after Calvin's death. They were formulated by a Synod of Reformed Churches in 1618-1619, the Synod of Dordt, in response to an attack on these five doctrines by a group within the Reformed Churches that were known as the Remonstrants, or Arminians. The Synod set forth, confessed, explained and defended these five truths in the Canons of the Synod of Dordt. But these five points of doctrine had been Calvin's own teachings and the faith of the Reformed Churches. What is more, they are the teachings of the Bible and essential elements of the gospel.

Total depravity is one of the five points of Calvinism. This doctrine teaches that man, every man, is by nature sinful and evil, only and completely sinful. There is in man, apart from God's grace in Christ, no good and no ability for good. By "good" is meant that which is in harmony with the righteousness of God and that which pleases Him. From conception and birth, every man is guilty before God and worthy of everlasting damnation. This is man's plight because of the fall of the entire human race in Adam. Romans 5:12-21 teaches this. Verse 12 states: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Not only is every man guilty from conception and birth, but he is also corrupt, or depraved. This depravity is total. One aspect of this misery of man is the bondage, or slavery, of man's will. The will of every man, apart from the grace of the Spirit of Christ, is enslaved to the Devil and to sin. It is *willingly* enslaved, but *enslaved*. It is unable to will, desire, or choose God, Christ, salvation, or the good. It is not free to choose good. It is not Calvinism, that God forces men to sin or that men sin unwillingly, but that the natural man's spiritual condition is such that he cannot think, will, or do anything good. On this doctrine, Luther and Calvin were in perfect agreement. Luther, in fact, wrote a book called *The Bondage of the Will*. In it, he wrote that the fundamental issue of the Reformation was this issue, whether the will of the natural man was bound or free.

(to be continued)

Friendship With God

A Garden Of Friendship And Peace

Rev. B. Woudenberg

After God had created the world and the creatures that dwell within it and "saw that it was good,"

Genesis 1:25, we read next, vss. 26, 27, "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness:

and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he him." Man was made to be an image-bearer of God.

This whole matter of the image of God in man is important for any real understanding of human life. This is the design according to which man was made and the function which he was designed to fulfill. In doing this man's life has meaning and harmony with the rest of creation; in not doing so he is a misfit and an irritation in the structure of the whole. The matter warrants serious consideration.

The words 'likeness' and 'image' indicate clearly that man was made to be a reflection of God to provide a revelation of His greatness and glory. In a sense, of course, all of creation is a revelation of the greatness of God; but the creation of man was something special. Only of him could it be said, Genesis 2:7, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Only to man was given a spiritual nature breathed in by a special impartation of the Holy Spirit.

In a sense what this might be taken to mean is that man was made with a rational, moral nature. Certainly even the materialistic evolutionist cannot escape the fact that man is uniquely different from all of the other creatures which inhabit this earth. He alone is able to think with his mind and to order his life according to moral choice. And yet this alone cannot constitute the image of God in man. Over and over again the sad history of this world has demonstrated how often man with all of his thinking and choosing has only ended up a pathetic caricature, a destroyer of repulsive ability, a reflection of the horror which is Satan rather than of the beauty which is God. Moral rationality may constitute a framework of potentiality; but it is not the image of God as such.

If we go further into the Scriptures, however, we do find more specifics about the nature of God's image in man.

In II Corinthians 3:18 we have a beautiful statement by Paul, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Without trying to expound the text completely, there are a few things we may note. 1) To be in the image of God one must be reflecting like a glass or mirror the glory which comes forth from God. 2) In order to do this one must be beholding and open to the revelation of glory which comes from God. 3) It is a function which is possible only by the working of the Spirit of God.

Two other texts mentioning the image of God bring

forth another element concerning the image of God. In Ephesians 4:24 we read, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And in Colossians 3:10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." In these texts knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness are designated as constituent parts of the image of God in man. These are moral virtues, the kind which have their source and only beginning in the Triune fellowship of God's own covenant life. Within the divine Godhead Father, Son and Holy Spirit dwell together in a fellowship of personal life out of which proceed all righteousness, holiness, and knowledge, not only, but love, mercy, justice and all of the moral virtues which shine forth in glory from the presence of Almighty God. And it is the function of man as His imagebearer to reflect them to His glory.

All of this came out quite wonderfully in the life which man was made to live in Paradise.

"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food. . . . And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. . . . And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it," Genesis 2:8-16.

Concerning the geographic shape of the world before the flood, we know very little. Certainly the face of this globe must have been so greatly affected by the abating waters of the flood that we can hardly even identify the primordial beds of those four great rivers which flowed from their sources in Paradise. But what the account does tell us is that this garden which God made for man was literally as well as figuratively the heart of creation from which the life of the whole world did flow. It was like a garden for earth's king, in which he could dwell, and from which he could rule the ends of the world. From the garden the four great rivers brought life-giving waters to the four corners of the earth. In it in turn were represented every kind of tree (:9) and every kind of animal (:19). Within the limits of his own immediate environment man stood in direct contact with the whole expanse of God's great and glorious creation.

In this man had his first and original occupation. We read, Genesis 2:15, "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." To be sure it was not the kind of dressing and keeping of a garden as we might imagine in our day. Our world staggers under the burden of its curse in which all kinds of warring factions rage against each other and man can only strive to survive in the midst of them. But that world was different. In it was to be found a perfect natural balance testifying on

every side of harmony and peace. And yet the creation needed a head, it needed a leader and a king to keep it and direct it as a chorus of glory to the praise of its Maker. Man was the interpreter of the creation and its spokesman through whom the praise of the whole world was brought to the Creator.

We have a small glimpse into this work of Adam in Genesis 2:19, "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

This was the wonder of Adam in his original state of perfection. He possessed the grace of perfect perception. He could look upon each of the creatures with his eyes, he could listen to it with his ears, he could touch it with his hands, and with his mind he could perceive the word of God in it, that is to say, he was able to see and understand what was the place and function of that individual creature in the design and plan of God's glorious creation. It thrilled him and filled his heart with joyful wonderment to watch as one after one all of these amazing expressions of God's creative power were made to pass before him that he might see it all. Each complemented the other so that in the end they formed together one united whole, a cosmos, a universe which was in fact 'very good.'

And this was not all. Not only could Adam perceive, he was also able to express the wonder which he saw before him. He was God's imagebearer which means that he was created with the ability to reflect or express the glory of God wherever he met it. For each of the animals he was able to find within his own mind a word that ferreted out and expressed the essential purpose of God in that particular creature. They were words which could serve as names which would give glory to God in each of His creatures. From Adam's lips they poured forth one upon the other without effort or hesitation rising strain upon strain in an aria of joyful praise to the glory of God the Creator.

This was the place and function of man; for this God had made him; for this God had brought forth all the animals to pass before him; God would 'see what he would call them' that through man's lips, His own glory which He had possessed within Himself from eternity might go forth in a chorus of rich praise and adoration, 'O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.'

And yet, in spite of the beauty and perfection of it all, something was not right. Adam could feel it. He could see the wonder of God's Word in creation and rejoice for it; he could lift up his voice in a song of praise before his Maker; but there was no one of his own kind and on his own level with whom he could share it. The animals passed two by two before him,

male and female, in pairs together. God Himself existed in His tri-unity of persons with the resultant communion together. But Adam was alone.

Certainly it was with purpose that God created man in this way. He would impress upon man the importance and sanctity of marriage by first allowing him to taste life without it. Then God made for him the woman.

"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: who shall be called, Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed," Genesis 2:21-25.

Clearly the thing that impressed Adam most of all was the unique oneness between him and his wife. They were of one bone and one flesh. As did none of the other creatures, they belonged together.

And the Scriptures also at this point take their opportunity to observe this as the institution of marriage in a way which emphasizes it to be a relationship stronger and more enduring than any other relationship among men, even than the relationship between parents and child. In fact, Jesus later takes up this same thing as an occasion for His conclusion, Matthew 19:6, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Moreover, this was the way in which it was realized in practice also, at least as long as sin did not interfere. We are told, "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." The thought has none of the erotic overtones which we in our Freudian age are apt to place in this text. It simply recognizes the fact that the need for covering the body reflects the inner need which man has to hide within his own soul. It reflects the shame which prevents man from being truly open and honest with his fellow. But Adam and his wife had none of this. Their thoughts were pure and good, thoughts received from reading God's Word written throughout the creation. There was no fear lest something thought should not be said because of the harm or offense it might inflict. Every thought could freely and fully be expressed; indeed, it was their joy to share their inmost lives completely together. The marriage of Adam and Eve was a covenant of fellowship and friendship reflecting the communion of God within His own triune being. It was the joy of perfect communion made complete.

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine Of Atonement (Reformation Period)

H. Veldman

We now continue our discussion of the first error of the Arminians as stated by the fathers of Dordt in Art. I of their rejection of errors in connection with the Arminian presentation of the atonement of Christ. The Arminians set forth the heresy of the universal atonement of the death of Christ. We concluded our previous article by calling attention to the fact that the fathers of Dordt declare that the Arminian position despises the merits of Christ's death and also that the Arminians, in their conception of the cross of Calvary, are wiser than God.

In addition to the above, the fathers also declare that the death of Christ has significance and meaning only if He shed His blood for definite persons, who are also actually delivered and saved. The Arminians contended that the death of Christ would lose nothing of its significance even if no one actually would be saved. This, according to the fathers of Dordt, is nonsense. Of course! Only then would the death of Christ have significance and meaning if He shed His blood for definite persons. We have already called attention to the fact that Christ, dying for all men, head for head, would actually be dying for nobody. Only viewed as a dying for definite persons can the death of Christ be viewed as an atoning death. Only when viewed as dying for definite persons can this death be understood as the actual blotting out of sins and guilt. And only when the death of Christ is atoning, blotting out all the sins and guilt of the elect throughout all the ages, is this suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ significant. Only then does it have meaning. Only then does it actually accomplish anything. Christ did not merely merit the possibility of salvation for men, but He actually accomplished their redemption and salvation.

The fathers of Dordt, however, also hurl another charge against the Arminians. They also contradict the Scriptures, which teach that Christ laid down His life for the sheep and that He knew them, that He would surely see His seed, and that the good pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in His hand. We read in John 10: 11, 15, 26-28: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep . . . As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. . . . But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them

out of my hand." And in Isaiah 53:10 we read: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

Finally, also according to the fathers of Dordt, the Arminians contradict the article of the confession (Article 27 of our Belgic Confession), wherein the Reformed confess that there will always be a church of Christ. In this article we read: "We believe and profess, one catholic or universal Church, which is an holy congregation, of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by His blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Ghost. This Church hath been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal King, which, without subjects, cannot be." Notice, please, that this article connects this church with the blood of Christ. We read that this church has been washed by His blood. The Arminians contradict this article. They envision no church at all. They declare that the death of Christ would have significance and meaning even if none would actually be saved. They present the efficacy of the blood of Calvary as dependent upon the will of a sinner. They, therefore, really envision the possibility of no church at all. They surely contradict Article 27 of our Belgic Confession.

Article II of the Rejection of Errors of Head II of the Canons reads as follows:

"Who teach: That it was not the purpose of the death of Christ that He should confirm the new covenant of grace through His blood, but only that He should acquire for the Father the mere right to establish with man such a covenant as He might please, whether of grace or of works. For this is repugnant to Scripture which teaches that Christ has become the Surety and Mediator of a better, that is, the new covenant, and that a testament is of force where death has occurred. Heb. 7:22; 9:15, 17."

The fathers of Dordt taught that Christ died as the Head of the covenant and of the covenant people. This presents the sufferings and death of Christ as very particular. This, of course, establishes the truth that Christ died only for the elect, for those given Him of the Father. Then it was the purpose of the death of Christ that He should confirm the new covenant of grace through His blood. Then the Lamb of God and

of Calvary suffers and dies upon the cross of Golgotha exactly as representing only His sheep, and then it is surely true that He by His obedience actually merits all the blessings of the covenant for them, only for them, but also surely for them. And from this it also follows that all these blessings of salvation will also surely be bestowed upon them. This is the Reformed position.

The Arminians, however, wanted nothing of this. Their conception of what happened upon the cross was directly opposed to this. According to them, the death of the Son of God merely made salvation again possible for men, and for all men. Of course, as we know, this is not true. Their conception of the death of Christ does not make salvation possible for men, but it makes salvation impossible for men. According to them, this Son of Man did not merit the possibility of salvation for anyone, inasmuch as He did not die in the atoning sense of the word. We mean, of course, as far as their conception is concerned. And there is no church that can possibly ultimately survive that preaches a universal love of God and atonement of the cross. But, according to the view of the Arminian, the death of the Son of God only made salvation again possible for all men. Now the Father could again enter into a reconciled relationship with men in whatever way He willed, whether of grace or of works. He could enter with men into a relationship based upon works. He could once more confront man with the demand of His law, as in the Old Dispensation, and say to the sinner: "Do this, and thou shalt live." Or, He could also choose another way. He could also choose the way of grace, or of faith. He, then, could confront the sinner with the so-called message of the gospel, say to the sinner: "I know you can never fulfill My law, merit your way into My fellowship and salvation: hence, all I ask of you is that you acknowledge your sin and iniquity, believe in the Christ of the cross, and open your heart to the operation of My Spirit and grace." This is the Arminian position, at the time of the Synod of Dordt and also in our present day and age.

Now we do well to bear in mind that the issue at stake here is the *purpose* of the death of Christ. In this second article of the Rejection of Errors, the fathers speak of this purpose of the death of Christ. This is important. In a certain sense, the Arminian would also maintain that Christ died only for some. He knew very well that all men are not saved, and that the saving efficacy of the cross applied only to those who were saved. But the issue is this: what is the purpose of the death of Christ? What did God intend when He sent His own Son into our flesh and blood? For whom did the Man of Sorrows die? What was His intention as He hung upon the accursed tree? Did God love all men and did that Lamb of God shed His blood in order that all men, head for head, should be saved? Did Christ die for everybody? Or, is it possible that He did not know

for whom He was suffering and dying, did not know who would be saved through His blood? Did the Christ of God die ignorantly upon the cross of Calvary? Did He not know whether some would be saved, or whether many would be redeemed, or, perhaps, whether nobody would actually be saved through His suffering and death?

What happened, then, upon the cross of Calvary?

The Arminian, we have already observed, knows very well that all men are not saved. But he must say something about the cross. What is his solution? He wants a gospel, we understand, that is palatable to the sinner. He would proclaim a gospel that the sinner likes. This is also true in our present day and age, as, for example, in the case of Billy Graham. He wants to tell the sinner, all sinners, that salvation is possible for them, that the way is opened to all, and that he can do something toward his own salvation. So, what does he (the Arminian) teach? He teaches that Christ by His suffering and death made salvation possible for man. Christ, by His suffering and death, made it possible for the living God to enter once more into negotiations with the sinner. Now the Father could again enter into a reconciled relationship with men in whatever way He willed, whether of grace or of works. This is the heresy of Arminianism. This is the heresy that was exposed and condemned by the fathers of Dordt. And this is also the heresy that is once more condoned by the Christian Reformed Church today, inasmuch as that church has refused to oust from its seminary a professor who openly teaches the heresy that Christ died for all men, head for head.

The fathers of Dordt also respond to this position of the Arminians with an appeal to the infallible Scriptures. The fathers, in this second article, refer to two passages from the Book of Hebrews. In Hebrews 7:22 we read: "By so much (the words "so much" refer to the oath whereof we read in the preceding verse, verse 21) was Jesus made a Surety of a better covenant." And in Hebrews 9:15, 17 we read: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. . . . For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." Christ has become the Surety and Mediator of a better covenant. And we do well to remember that that covenant is a testament. And the contents of that new testament, or will, is the sworn promise of the Lord, the promise of the eternal inheritance for those who are called, for the heirs of the promise who are the elect. This is the content of this testament or will. However, before the terms of a testament or will can go into effect, the testator must die. A testament is of force only after men are dead.

Now Christ, the Surety and Mediator of this new testament, dies upon the cross of Calvary. Now the provisions of that testament are of force, and executed. Oh, it is not true that Christ died merely to obtain the possibility of salvation for all men. He died

only for the heirs! And the blessings of salvation are surely true and certain for all those who have been given Him by the Father. How wrong is the position of the Arminians! How true and Scriptural is the stand of the Reformed!

The Day of Shadows

The Apostasy Begins

Rev. John A. Heys

In his second epistle to the Thessalonians Paul told the church at Thessalonica that Christ would not return with glory and victory for the church until there first came a falling away that would reveal the man of sin, the son of perdition, whom we have learned to know as the Anti-christ. However, in the Greek Paul speaks in II Thessalonians 2:3 of *the* falling away. He has in mind the fact that all the fallings away that have been in the world shall reach their climax, and, to use a current expression, "This is it!" The rest were only forerunners and steps to this great apostasy.

Yes, we said, "This great apostasy"; and we did so because that is the word that Paul uses in this verse. What we find in our King James Version translated as "falling away" in the writing of Paul is "apostasy." And by apostasy we usually think only of departure from the truth, embracing doctrinal heresy, and false teachings. This, however, is only part of the picture.

The word apostasy means a "standing apart," or a "standing away from." It can and often does mean standing apart from a certain doctrine of Scripture. But in the broader sense it means separation also from the walk of life of the church, from her worship, from her walk of sanctification and of love to God. Ultimately this standing apart and away from those who hold the truth leads to standing in physical opposition to them in the form of persecution and attacks of ridicule and violence. It may be a standing apart from a certain denomination to stand with another. It may be a stand completely apart from the church world to stand in the world of confessed unbelievers.

Such apostasy has been going on throughout the history of this world. But Paul speaks of a time when the gap has become as wide as it possibly can become, when the doctrines of Scripture are discarded in their entirety, and when the number of defectors has grown so numerically that the church literally stands alone as a little flock. Elijah will be there with his seven thousand who have not bowed the knee before Baal,

but they will be standing over against an innumerable horde of Baal worshippers. Few there will be who will be found faithful in that day. The apostates may still call themselves church and brand the believers as the false church. But in actuality it is they who have come to stand apart from what is right and true.

All this began in paradise when man began to stand apart from God. But God in His mercy brought both of these apostates back into the fold and filled their hearts with enmity against Satan and his whole kingdom. It broke forth again and out into the open, however, in the first son that was born to them; and this is presented in such simple language that, if we do not read it carefully and thoughtfully, we will miss it. God says in Genesis 4:16, "And Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden."

Here, plainly, is an act of apostasy, and one from which there was no return. Adam and Eve, having been driven out of paradise, lived as close to the way leading into it as they could. There stood those cherubim with that flaming sword. They, Adam and Eve, knew that they could not pass safely between the cherubim to the joys of the garden. But they believed God's promise and hoped to see the cherubim and the flaming sword removed, so that they could live in covenant fellowship with God again by His tree of life. That spot was precious to them because of the rebirth which they received. And to them paradise, that garden with this tree, was still the symbol of God's presence. And they stayed there before His face.

When the Israelites were in Canaan and had the temple with the Holy of Holies where God dwelt symbolically between the cherubim that sat upon the ark of the covenant in that holy precinct, Canaan was the place of God's presence, and the temple particularly was the symbol of His face to them. That is why in II Kings 13:23 God declares that He will not drive Israel from His presence by casting them into the Babylonian captivity and away from Jerusalem and the

temple. That is also why in II Kings 24:20 He is said to have cast them out from His presence when Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

So it was for Adam and Eve, and for the whole world before the flood. That garden still symbolized God's presence. It still was the place where man *had* lived before God's very face. And that is why Adam and Eve stayed right there, as close to the way into the garden as they could.

But Cain went forth from the presence of the Lord. He went to stand apart from those who wanted to be before the face of God. For in his heart he had been standing apart from God from birth, even though he went through the motions of worshipping Him. Now he separates, never to bring another sacrifice to God. All this he throws behind him; in fact, he gladly goes away from that presence of God, not wanting to be reminded of Him any more. He would do his thing without having to see those cherubim there with that flaming sword.

He *went* forth from the presence of God. We do not read that God drove him away. It is not stated that he fled in fear for his life. And although he was no believer, he had God's word for it that no man would kill him. There was yet no man to try to do that. Surely Adam would not do so. And Seth was not yet born. He *walked* away. He willfully took a stand apart from the believers who wanted to be there before God's face. He did not even want to be reminded of God.

His children and their spiritual wellbeing is no concern of Cain. He wants no instruction for them from the mouth of their grandfather about the God Who rebuked him for his evil sacrifice, and for the murder of his brother. He is through, completely through with God. A God Who will not accept his works, a God Who will not allow him to do what seems right in his own sight is not for Cain. He wants no part in having his children taught to fear that God!

What a man, this Cain! But be careful lest you walk with him. Many a parent for a higher paying job will move away from the church that holds to the truth and take his children to stand apart from that truth and to stand with those who have left it behind. Nod looks like a pretty nice place to live for many church members. Or else it may be a case of being rebuked by the church for a walk of sin, or for a propagation of the lie. Perhaps discipline is begun. And so a stand is taken apart from the admonition of Christ. One asks for one's membership papers, intending to separate and stand apart from the truth and from the servants of God who seek that one's wellbeing. Cain has his disciples today because Satan has his victories.

And what men fail so often to see when they take such a stand apart from the truth, apart from the church and the officebearers who stand for the truth is that they begin to stand apart from Christ, Who is THE

face of God. We, as Cain, go away from the Christ, when we go out from the presence or face of God. And we, even as Cain, begin to build a city in our place where we intend to stand apart from God and His Christ.

Cain's city was not a city as we now know one to be. At this early stage men were not able to build houses, pave roads, and set up a governing body to make the rules and regulations. There were not even enough men to make what could actually be called a city. But he settled in an area with his tents. He established a place to which he would return, a place where he had left his wife and children when he went hunting for food. But the point not to be overlooked is that he *established* himself in a place apart from the presence of God. He had no intention of going back. He felt no loneliness, no missing of what could be had there outside of the garden of Eden. He went away to stay.

And this is the beginning of the kingdom of the Antichrist from a political point of view. Moving away from Christ, it is only a matter of time before he will come up against Christ. Moving away from the church, as it was represented in his father's family, it is only a matter of time before he in his descendants begins to seek Enoch to kill him, because he spoke of God and witnessed as one of those who desire to continue to stand for the truth and in the hope of a return to God's fellowship.

He went away.

What a sad thing to have to say. He left the church, and did so with no regrets. But regrets — not true sorrow for sin — he now has in a place that is away from God's presence. Cain began to walk to hell! Let all who to any degree want to go away from the presence of God — and that means to go away from His worship on the Sabbath, as well as severing all connection with His church — understand that the falling away, the apostasy, the standing apart from God ends in a place that indeed is apart from His love and grace and the blessings of His fellowship.

The child of God with David says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in *His temple*" (Psalm 27:4). Cain said, "*One thing I detest, and it will I avoid as completely as I can, that I should be anywhere near God.*" Well, he has his wish today. But he is not building a city there and naming it after his son. He is not prospering there; and neither will we, if we go away from God and from His Christ.

Rather let us seek to stand where we are with God. Let us make our stand at the cross of Christ. For there is the hope of the removal of the cherubim and the flaming sword of God's holy wrath against sin. There we will be in God's presence. There is the face of God; and it is His face lit up with a loving smile of

forgiveness, of intent to bless us with those beauties of His house.

And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sin and take a stand apart from the truth and apart from the narrow way, let us go to that cross and find pardon and assurance of living and enquiring in God's temple in the everlasting glory of His coming kingdom. Let us not build our city in sin and name it after our sons, and keep them in those fields of sin. But let us seek Him where (not while) He may be found, and call upon Him where (not while) He is near. And He is to be found and is near in that cross of Christ. Then we have the reassuring word that He will abundantly pardon

and have mercy upon us.

Genesis 4:16 speaks of the beginning of apostasy after the gospel promise was given. If there should be a beginning of such apostasy in your life, if you find yourself inclined to take a stand apart from and against the truth and the way of righteousness, by all means do not dwell there and build a city for your children. Forsake your wicked way and unrighteous thoughts, and seek the face of God. He promises you that if you seek, you will find; if you knock it will be opened to you; if you call upon Him and ask for forgiveness, you will receive it.

Book Reviews

The Book of Isaiah

THE BOOK OF ISAIAH, Vol. 3, by Edward J. Young; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan; 579 pages, \$9.95. (Reviewed by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema)

This third volume of the late Dr. Young's commentary on the prophecy of Isaiah covers chapters forty to sixty-six. This work was completed shortly before Dr. Young's death, and is posthumously published. One can only be thankful that the Lord gave Dr. Young sufficient days to complete this commentary and to leave it as a heritage to all those who love the Scriptures.

What better thing can be said of a commentary than that it is scholarly, careful, and faithful to the Scriptures? This is what I say without hesitation

concerning Dr. Young's commentary on chapters forty to sixty-six of the prophecy of Isaiah. Anyone wishing to study this prophecy will do well to obtain this entire three-volume commentary by Dr. Young.

These are the first three volumes to be published in "The New International Commentary on the Old Testament" which the Eerdmans Company proposes to publish. The late Dr. Young was originally the editor for this series. The new editor is Dr. R. K. Harrison. It is to be hoped that all the commentaries in this Old Testament series will be of a quality equal to that of this commentary on Isaiah. If this should be the case, this series of commentaries will become a standard work for conservative, Bible-believing studies of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Extremism, Left and Right

EXTREMISM, LEFT AND RIGHT, by Elmer West Jr., Editor; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 152 pp., \$2.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

This book contains a series of papers delivered by eight different seminary professors on the subject of extremism, both left and right. It is interesting and important reading for those who want a wealth of

material on this question, but, although the authors attempt to put the matter in some kind of Christian perspective, they fail, perhaps chiefly because they, as well as almost all extremists, confuse politics and religion and hence operate on the assumption that democracy is especially Scriptural.

Pray: A Study of Distinctive Christian Praying

PRAY: A STUDY OF DISTINCTIVE CHRISTIAN PRAYING, by Charles Whiston; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972; 154 pp., \$2.95 (paper). [Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko]

The author, concerned that people in the Church have never been instructed in prayer, has prepared a book in which he discusses the theology and the

spiritual art of prayer. Although not by any means always Scripturally sound, the book makes for some fine devotional reading, and can be helpful in aiding the child of God to heed the admonition of Scripture: Pray without ceasing. Recommended if read in such a way that its contents are judged in the light of God's Word.

News From Our Churches

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THE STANDARD BEARER

The convocation program, marking the beginning of a new year of instruction in our seminary, was held on September 6, in Southwest Church. Prof. Hanko, the speaker for the evening, began by noting some of the many evidences of God's favor, as far as our seminary is concerned. Among such evidences was the fact that God has given a constituency which supports the seminary, as is plain, Prof. Hanko remarked, from the wonderful crowd present at the program. ("You can't imagine how gratifying that is, to professors and students.") Indeed, the professor continued, the tokens of His favor are so numerous that "we cannot help but believe that God's blessing will rest on us during this year."

Rev. Van Baren, the chairman for the evening, was no doubt speaking for that constituency when he stated, in his introductory remarks, that our prayers will be with the seminary. We understand, he said, to a certain degree the work involved for the professors; and he took advantage of the opportunity to express our appreciation to them for their intense labor during the past years.

After Professor Hanko's speech, Rev. Van Baren presented each of the six new students. In doing so, he noted that Ron Hanko, son of the professor, marked the 3rd generation of ministers from that family in our churches. He announced, also, that, as of that date, the building fund (cash and pledges) for the seminary building was only \$263 short of the 65% total required, by the decision of Synod, before construction could begin. Rev. Van Baren also informed the audience that Rev. Kortering had declined the call to serve as third professor in the seminary. In harmony with the decision of Synod, the call was then extended to Rev. R. Harbach.

Bulletins were a little slow in coming for this writing of the news column. We have one from Isabel, though, and it includes a couple of items which are, we think, of more than simply local interest. "This week at 8:00 A.M. over KOLY radio the pastor will speak on the program 'Foundations of Faith.' The theme for the broadcast is the five points of Calvinism." In that same bulletin Rev. Miersma included a welcome for several out-of-state visitors — one couple from Loveland, Colorado, and another from Lynden, Washington. We understand, also, that on that particular Sunday, the entire congregation had supper together in the church.

From Hull's bulletin we learn that the Reformed Witness Committee of the three churches in that area have published another pamphlet. This one is entitled "A Defense of Calvinism as the Gospel," written by Rev. D. Engelsma. The announcement concluded, "Enjoy them for your personal reading and distribute them to anyone interested."

Further along in that same bulletin, we read the following: "Today we have the privilege of worshipping in our newly remodeled auditorium. Many hours of work have been donated by members of the church for this improvement and in painting the church and parsonage It is good for us to be reminded that the building does not make the church, rather it is an earthly means to sustain the true spiritual life of the people of God. It must be the prayer and intent of each one of us that our worship of God may be enhanced through the atmosphere of reverence and devotion created by these improvements. Let us strive together to ascend unto the hill of the Lord in holy fear that we may have ears to hear and hearts to understand what God has to say unto us. Then we will not only be hearers, but also doers of the Word and God will receive all the glory."

The monthly Sunday evening discussion groups have begun again in First Church. Some of last year's interesting topics included, "Singing as Part of our Worship," "The Unbreakable Bond of Marriage" (based on the Sunday School pamphlet of that title), "Neo-Pentecostalism," and "Discipline in the Christian Home and School" (Based on the two *Standard Bearer* articles written by Mr. Tom De Vries). The September topic was, "Our Calling to Witness." For each such topic, the committee prepared a set of questions or a detailed outline to aid in the preparation for, and the conduct of, the discussions. "We would desire to see more of our people participate," the bulletin announcement read, "for spiritual fellowship and to enlarge our acquaintances among fellow members of the church."

Late news concerning calls: Rev. R. Harbach has declined the call to our seminary. Candidate R. van Overloop has accepted the call to Hope Church, Grand Rapids, which implies, of course, that he has declined the call to our congregation in Forbes, North Dakota. Both Classis East and Classis West, therefore, will have examinations of candidates on their agenda — something which has not happened for several years.

From among the many well-chosen quotations from Loveland's "Thoughts for Contemplation" comes this verse by Toplady:

"My name from the palms of His hands
Eternity will not erase.
Impressed on His heart it remains,
In marks of indelible grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is giv'n;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heav'n."

D.D.