

# The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

... every work, however splendid and excellent in appearance, is counted as sin, except it be founded on a right conscience; for God regards not the outward display, but the inward obedience of the heart; by this alone is an estimate made of our works. Besides, how can that be obedience, when any one undertakes what he is not persuaded is approved by God? Where then such a doubt exists, the individual is justly charged with prevarication; for he proceeds in opposition to the testimony of his own conscience. (John Calvin)

See "Do ALL Things  
to God's Glory?" — page 786

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## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## MEDITATION

## Caiaphas' Rending of his High Priestly Garment

Rev. H. Veldman

*"Then the high priest rent his clothes."*

Matt. 26: 65a

It was the peculiar lot of Caiaphas, in connection with the Christ, to act prophetically, not once but twice. His first prophetic act occurred when Jesus had performed His greatest miracle, the resurrection of Lazarus out of the grave. Many of the Jews had thereupon believed in Him and the godless and unbelieving leaders of the Jews had become desperate. Caiaphas, however, had remained calm. It was then that the level-headed, cold-blooded high priest uttered the now famous words: "It is expedient for us, that one

man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not." Of course, what Caiaphas meant is plain: Jesus must be destroyed. Yet, we read that he speaks this not of himself; he is compelled to prophesy of the fact that Jesus must die in order that His people may live. And his second prophetic act occurs in the text to which we now call attention. Indeed, he rends his garments in mock holy horror because of the Lord's confirmation of the truth that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. However, it is sure-

ly a symbolic act, symbolizing the fact that he is at this very moment busily engaged in bringing to an end the high priestly office of the Old Dispensation.

It is Jesus who forces Caiaphas unto this act. How the high priest had attempted to avoid this dilemma! He employs godless subtlety to condemn Jesus upon any other ground. All his efforts, however, are to no avail. And, through it all, Jesus continues to hold His peace. Pilate therefore must ask the Saviour this question. After all, the cross is God's cross. And God is executing the Christ exactly because He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And then the high priest rends his garment.

\* \* \* \* \*

What a shameless hypocrisy!

Indeed, how strange and contradictory it is that the high priest should express his indignation upon *this* testimony of the Saviour! Did not the Old Testament Scripture speak exactly of such a Messiah as this Jesus claimed Himself to be! It is certainly true that He, Who was the object of Israel's expectation and hope, would be the Christ, the Messiah. Besides, would this Christ not also claim to be the Son of God? When Caiaphas asks the Saviour whether He be the Son of God, he does not mean this in the modern sense of the word, but in the sense that Jesus is the Son of God, essentially, God Himself. Would not a virgin conceive and bear a Son whose name would be called Immanuel? Would not His name be Joshua, and does Joshua not mean "Jehovah is Salvation"? Did not Malachi speak of Jehovah Himself as coming to purify His temple? How strange and amazing, therefore, that it is exactly upon the basis of this confession of the Christ that Caiaphas should have been so profoundly provoked! Indeed, instead of condemning Him immediately upon this confession, the high priest should have investigated the credentials of this Jesus of Nazareth.

Hypocritical was this act of the high priest especially in the light of a comparison between him and the High Priest Who stood before him. Caiaphas was the high priest. He was the son-in-law of Annas. There was no figure better known in contemporary Jewish history than Annas. None was deemed more fortunate or successful. But it is also true that none was more cursed and detested than he. Much can be said of him. He was not in office. Yet, he was the power behind that office.

And Caiaphas? He is the high priest and, therefore, the president of the Sanhedrin. He alone could enter the Holy of Holies to sacrifice for the sins of himself and of all the people. He is a Sadducee, a Jewish modernist. He did not believe in the resurrection of the dead or in the spirit world. Moreover, he is a man of a very low, degraded character, a man of carnal lusts and passions. His very countenance showed the

effects of a life spent in the satisfying of his carnal flesh. Thus he is presented in the Word of God. He did not hesitate to resort to cunning and trickery to capture Jesus of Nazareth and to devise a plan with traitors. And to this we may add that he loved filthy lucre with all the passion of his evil heart. We should understand this godless high priest. He was the high priest of the shadows, but to this we will return presently. He loved the world, believed not in God, surely not in Christ, and did not long for the fulfillment of the promise.

Before him stands Jesus, the Servant of Jehovah. He came to speak and to do the will of God. He not only testified that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God, but He also fulfilled all that was written concerning Him. . . .

Consequently, what a hypocritical act we have here! He purposes to show holy horror and righteous indignation because Jesus must have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel. But this is Caiaphas. How he hated Jesus! He is darkness, loves sin and corruption, hates the truth and the covenant of Jehovah. And Christ is the light. He is the holy Child, Jesus, the perfect Servant of Jehovah. From Him only light radiates, no darkness at all. From Caiaphas only darkness radiates, no light at all. So, how hypocritical he is! Really, blasphemy never offended this high priest. He himself lives in blasphemy. He uses God's office to seek and enrich himself. And now, without examining the Lord's credentials, he promptly rends his garments because of his intense hatred of this Jesus of Nazareth.

We have here also a terrible prophecy. It is thus throughout the ages. Darkness, in its attitude toward the light, does not proceed from the principle of reason, cannot be explained merely intellectually. The darkness always recognizes the light and it spontaneously rejects it. This will culminate at the end of the ages. At the time of Jesus' condemnation Israel was controlled entirely by a godless Caiaphas and his godless Sanhedrin. And at the end of the ages the church shall have become wholly corrupt. And then a final and supreme effort will be made to destroy the cause of God from the face of the earth.

\* \* \* \* \*

How wantonly wicked was the act of Caiaphas, that he rent his clothes! He had no right to do this.

It was a wicked act even if as high priest he were allowed to rend his clothes in the presence of blasphemy. Some contend that a high priest was permitted to rend his clothes when confronted by blasphemy. We cannot discuss this now in detail. We are aware of what we read in Lev. 21: 10. It is claimed that this passage was only generally true and that a later law prescribed that it should be done. It is true

that Scripture speaks of several instances where the people of God rend their garments. But we do not know a single passage in Scripture where we read of a high priest who rends his clothes.

However, even if a high priest were permitted to rend his clothes because of blasphemy, this would emphasize rather than minimize the godlessness of Caiaphas. As the high priest, he was Israel's highest judge, the president of Israel's highest tribunal. What right did he have to declare that Jesus had uttered blasphemy? Had he not asked the Christ whether He be the Christ, the Son of the living God? Did he examine the Lord's testimony? Was he not fully aware of the Saviour's innocence and his own wickedness? This Word of God, however, presents us with a more profoundly wicked act than this.

Fact is, in this instance Caiaphas was surely not allowed to rend his garments. We must bear in mind that he was high priest under the shadows. This means that he was high priest in the typical sense of the word. And being the high priest under the shadows it was his calling to serve as a type of the Christ. All the shadows of the Old Dispensation pointed to the Christ. And it was surely the high priest's calling to serve as that type of the Christ, to direct the people of God to the Christ and to be Christ's substitute for God's people. Consequently, in this instance he was strictly forbidden to tear his high priestly raiment. If he loved God and also the Christ he would not care to be high priest anymore when Christ came because then his priestly office would be without significance. Caiaphas was compelled to recognize this fact. What Caiaphas was, therefore, called to do, and this lies in the very nature of the case, was not to tear his high priestly robe, but to remove it and deliver it unto Him who stood before him. He must at this time

abdicate willingly and voluntarily. He must say to the Christ: "My work is finished; my task is done."

Hence, what a wantonly wicked assumption of power we have here on the part of Caiaphas! How eager he should have been to "hand over" his high priestly raiment? How he should have longed for the fulfillment of Israel's hope! How his heart should have burned with intense longing to see his Christ and his High Priest! How eager he should have inquired into the credentials of this Jesus of Nazareth! But, how wicked he is! Abdicate for the sake of the Christ of God? He will kill this Jesus of Nazareth, have Israel go to hell and perish forevermore, and deprive the people of the Lord of their Messiah!

\* \* \* \* \*

Also now, in spite of himself, the shadow must serve the reality. Once before he had done this — see John 11: 48-52. And now he prophesies again. For now he rends his high priestly mantle. And he means to emphasize that this blasphemer has merited death and that, therefore, there is no reason for him, Caiaphas, to abdicate in his favor. Really, however, without understanding it, he prophesies again. He may now tear his garment. It will never be worn again. The shadow must make way for the reality.

What a beautiful symbol! Not only of the fact that his high priestly office is about to vanish. But even as he is now tearing his mantle, so Caiaphas at this very moment is actually bringing his office to an end. He is condemning Jesus to death. He, the shadow, leads the Reality, Priest and Sacrifice, unto the altar.

The Anointed must shed His life's blood before the face of His Father, and thereby enter into His glory.

And the office of typical high priest is ended forevermore.

## EDITORIALS

### Our Australasian Tour (10)

*Prof. H.C. Hoeksema*

In the previous installment of our report (February 15 issue) we told of our departure from Melbourne for Sydney on Saturday morning, July 12.

We arrived at the Sydney airport late Saturday morning, where we were met by the Rev. John Stafford, pastor of the little independent Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ryde, a suburb of Sydney. The congregation there is small, but not lacking in devotion and enthusiasm. Rev. Stafford is not a full time minister, but teaches school during the week.

Mrs. Stafford is in charge of all the music instruction in the school system of Sydney. We all had lunch Saturday noon at the Stafford home, and spent the afternoon in conversation there, becoming better acquainted with one another and discussing plans for our stay in the Sydney area. Although we had been forewarned by the Rev. Stafford about the horrible weather which we should expect in Sydney at that time of the year, the fact of the matter is that during our stay there we had beautifully sunny days and the

warmest temperatures we had encountered thus far on our trip. In fact, one afternoon I was almost tempted to take a swim. The air temperature was in the upper 60's; and if it had not been for the chill breeze, I would have taken a dip in the waters of the Tasman Sea, which the thermometer showed to be around 60 degrees. At any rate, during the day we no longer needed our topcoats. While we were at Sydney, Rev. Hanko made his home with the Staffords; Mrs. Hoeksema and I stayed at the home of Miss Marjorie Martin, a retired college lecturer in Botany. Miss Martin's home is on a hill overlooking the ocean, and only a busy highway separated us from the beautiful, sandy beach. Rev. Stafford and his congregation did everything possible to make our stay enjoyable, and overwhelmed us with their kindness, generosity, and hospitality. We shall not soon forget our stay at Sydney.

Due to the cancellation of some meetings with representatives of the Presbyterian Reformed Churches, our schedule in the Sydney area originally had some openings in it. But while it was not quite as busy as our previous schedule had been, nevertheless it was sufficiently full. We did, however, have one day open for a sightseeing tour. On Saturday evening I lectured at the meeting place of Rev. Stafford's congregation, the Willoughby Congregational Church. There was a small, but attentive audience of 19 present to hear my lecture on "The Reformed Faith in Crisis." On Sunday, July 13, we had to wait until the afternoon for our first church service, due to the fact that the meeting place is not available in the morning. At that afternoon service Rev. Hanko preached, taking as his text Psalm 91:1,2. There were 25 present, including some visitors from the Free Presbyterian Church and from one of the local Reformed churches.

After supper ("tea") at the Staffords, I had another of the many new experiences which characterized our tour. For the first time in my career I preached in a Baptist Church. This was the Macquarie Reformed Baptist Church. If you are wondering how it was possible that we could preach in all these different kinds of churches with which we had no official ecclesiastical relation, let me explain that before we accepted any of these invitations to preach, we made it plain that we were not to be restricted in our preaching, but were to be accepted as we were and allowed to speak freely. The service at this church was very different. In Rev. Stafford's congregation they observe purity of worship, which involves singing of Psalms without instrumental accompaniment. As you might expect, there was very spirited singing of hymns at this Reformed Baptist Church. I preached to a very attentive and receptive congregation of between 50 and 60 on Isaiah 45:22-25. We

had a very hearty reception from the people of the congregation, and we lingered a good while for conversation after the service.

Monday, July 14, was a more leisurely day. In the afternoon Rev. Hanko and I visited an FM broadcasting station which is not yet in operation, but which is engaged in considerable recording and distributing of various religious programs which are aired on other radio stations. We had originally been scheduled for an interview; but due to the sickness of the interviewer, our interview had to be cancelled. We did, however, make some inquiries concerning radio broadcasting in Australia. We were rather surprised to learn that FM broadcasting is only about to begin in that country, and that the station which we visited was waiting to obtain one of the first licenses to be granted. In that light, we concluded that at present it would certainly not be very fruitful even to attempt an FM broadcast.

On Monday evening, July 14, there was an advertised open house, or cottage meeting, at the home of Rev. and Mrs. Stafford. At this meeting there were some 15 people present, mostly from Mr. Stafford's congregation. I must make mention of the fact that one who was present at all of our meetings in the Sydney area and who was a very interested participant was Mr. Alec Neil, a member of the Free Church, but vitally interested in the Reformed faith. We enjoyed our fellowship with him, also on our later train-trip to Wauchope.

You will notice that in the Sydney area, a large metropolitan area, our meetings were very small, even as in many other places which we visited. This was not due, however, to a lack of extensive publicity and advertising. Our readers must remember — in order to keep a balanced picture of our tour — that while we made many wonderful contacts with like-minded people of God who love the Reformed faith, the ecclesiastical situation in countries like New Zealand and Australia is very much similar to the situation in our own country. The level of spiritual life is low. The apostate churches are large. There are, of course, as also in this country, various evangelical, or fundamentalist, groups which are thoroughly Arminian and dispensationalist. But the remnant which desires to adhere to the pure truth of our Reformed faith is very small. I mention this, as I say, so that you may have an accurate picture of what we encountered on our tour. We certainly encountered great things, but we did not find *big* things. If we had been expecting big things, we certainly would have been disappointed.

Tuesday, July 15, was a day of relaxation. It had been set aside by our hosts in Sydney for the purpose of sight-seeing. Mr. John Steele and Miss Martin took

us on a tour of downtown Sydney, where the world-famous Opera House, among other places, was visited by us. Then we went to the observation deck of one of Sydney's skyscrapers, in order to get a bird's-eye view of the city and of Sydney's large, busy harbor area. Sydney, by the way, has one of the most beautiful natural harbors in the world. We had our noon lunch aboard a sight-seeing launch which took us for a long tour of the Sydney harbor area. After this enjoyable day, we spent the evening with the Stafford family, but retired early, in order to be ready for the next day's early morning train-trip to the little village of Wauchope, some 250 miles north of Sydney.

We made a party of our trip to Wauchope on Wednesday, July 16. Accompanying us on the trip north were Rev. Stafford, Mr. John Steele, Mr. Alec Neil, and Mr. Neil's elderly mother. Our purpose was to visit Rev. and Mrs. Alan Tripovich and to lecture at the Free Presbyterian Church in that village. This was our only contact with the Free Church. Originally, Wauchope had not been on our schedule; but when we found that we had an extra day in the schedule, due to the cancellation of our meetings with the Presbyterian Reformed Church, the Rev. Stafford (who coordinated this part of our tour) made efforts to arrange for other meetings. If I remember correctly, Rev. Tripovich and Rev. Stafford became reacquainted with one another through a mutual acquaintance who was a former member of Rev. Stafford's church. At any rate, through correspondence the Rev. Stafford learned that Pastor Tripovich was in agreement with our position concerning God's attitude toward the reprobate and concerning the free offer, and that Mr. Tripovich was interested in having us visit Wauchope.

Hence, after almost missing the train early in the morning, we found ourselves enjoying both the fellowship of our Australian traveling companions and the opportunity to view the Australian countryside as we traveled north. When one travels by air, of course, he gets little opportunity to see a country; it was a welcome change, therefore, when we could take this rather leisurely trip by rail which brought us to Wauchope and to another new experience about mid-afternoon of that day.

Our brief stay with Rev. and Mrs. Tripovich was very enjoyable. Our hosts showed themselves to be intensely interested in the Reformed truth, and our time was busily occupied with conversation concerning the truth and the things of the church — so busily, in fact, that the time almost got away from us, and we had to go right from our evening meal to the church's Fellowship Hall, where I lectured on "God's Sovereign Love of the World" to an attentive audience of about 50. After the lecture there was much informal discussion while refreshments were served.

As soon as we arose the next morning, our conversations began again, and they continued until we boarded our plane at nearby Port McQuarie. We only regretted that our visit had to be a brief one. Meanwhile, our travel companions from Sydney had returned on the night train, while we were scheduled to travel northward to Brisbane.

That was another new experience. It was necessary to reach Brisbane on Thursday, July 17 for our scheduled meeting there. Hence, our hosts had arranged an unusual plane flight for us. We made use of the services of the North Coast Airline, a small commuter line. We flew in a twin-engine, propellor-driven, eight-seater plane — quite different from the large airliners in which we had been flying. There were a few intermediate stops before Brisbane, and some of these were at little airports with unpaved runways. However, this method of travel enabled us to get a beautiful bird's-eye view of the countryside, and especially of the coastal area all the way north to Brisbane.

Brisbane, a large metropolitan area, is one of the centers of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. At present this congregation has no pastor, but the Rev. Philip Burley had made the long trip from Rockhampton, to the north, to be present at our meeting in Brisbane. Here, too, we made the acquaintance of one of the students for the ministry of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Mr. Chris Coleborn. Rev. Hanko had as his hosts the Peter Torlach family; and during our stay in Brisbane, Rev. Hanko had extensive opportunity to visit with Mr. Coleborn, who was very eager to learn all that he could about our churches during the half day of our stay at Brisbane. Mrs. Hoeksema and I had as our hostess Mrs. Ann Walker, a young widow lady with four children. During the late afternoon Rev. Burley took us on a brief sight-seeing tour of Brisbane which (if there are any GI's who were stationed at Brisbane during WW II and who might remember this) included the site of the former American military installations there. In fact, Rev. Burley might have been among the youngsters who begged chewing gum from you at that time! This sight-seeing tour also gave us the opportunity to become better acquainted with Pastor Burley, as well as to become briefed on plans for the evening meeting. That meeting was in downtown Brisbane at the Temperance Hall. By request, I spoke on the same subject as in Launceston to a very attentive audience of about 60. After the lecture there was a question hour, and thereafter we had more than an hour of informal discussion over refreshments. This was the last meeting of our Australian tour, and also our last contact with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. We had been invited to visit Rockhampton also; however, the invitation came too late for us to fit Rock-

hampton into our schedule, to our deep regret. We shall not soon forget the warm reception which we received from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and especially from the people of the Brisbane congregation and from Pastor Burley.

On Friday morning, July 18, we left Brisbane for Sydney, arriving in late morning. We spent the rest of that day attending to various details in preparation

for our departure from Australia and in packing and shipping home some of our winter clothing, which we would not need for the remainder of our trip. We had our evening meal with Rev. and Mrs. Stafford, and visited until late at night at their home; and after an early breakfast, we departed from Sydney for Jakarta, Indonesia by Air Garuda at 9:45 A.M. on Saturday, July 19.

Thus ended our all too brief stay in Australia.

## Announcing Our New Australia Office

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

During last year's tour we also put forth efforts to improve the distribution of our *Standard Bearer* and our other literature in New Zealand and Australia. While we were in Australia, we came to the conclusion that it would be much better to have, if possible, an Australian outlet for our *Standard Bearer* and RFPA publications, as well as an office in New Zealand. We are now happy to announce that arrangements have been completed for such an office in Australia. In Rockhampton, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church operates a Reformed Literature Centre. And that Reformed Literature Centre has kindly agreed to act as the Australian distributor of our *Standard Bearer* and our other publications. Beginning with this issue of our *Standard Bearer*, all copies will be sent by air to the Reformed Literature Centre in Rockhampton, and from Rockhampton they will be mailed in Australia to our various readers there. Hence, all correspondence in Australia concerning *Standard Bearer* subscriptions and concerning all our RFPA publications should be directed to:

Reformed Literature Centre,  
P.O. Box 849,  
Rockhampton 4700,  
Queensland

In the very near future this Reformed Literature

Centre will also have a small stock of the various books published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association, and residents of Australia will be able to get much faster service in obtaining our books from this new distributor. We greatly appreciate the cooperation of Pastor Burley and others connected with the Reformed Literature Centre; and we hope that this will result in improved and enlarged distribution of our literature, and in more efficient service for our readers down under.

At the same time we will continue to maintain an office in New Zealand for the convenience of readers and subscribers there. I take this opportunity to call attention to a change of address for our New Zealand office also. The address of our office there is:

The Standard Bearer,  
c/o OPC Bookshop,  
P.O. Box 2289,  
Christchurch, New Zealand

In case you lose these addresses, from now on they will also appear in our masthead on the inside of the front cover page.

All overseas subscriptions, other than from Australia and New Zealand, will be taken care of by our main office in Grand Rapids.

## An Unfair Indictment

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

Elsewhere in this issue there appears a contribution from brother "N. D." under the title "Compromising." Not only do I wish to call attention to the fact that placement of a contribution does not imply editorial agreement, but I also wish to express my

strong disagreement.

The thrust of that contribution is that we who send our children to Christian Schools are guilty of compromise and of avoiding persecution when we pay

taxes with which the State maintains the public school system.

Let me make the issue very clear. The issue is not whether public education is wrong; indeed, the public school system is nothing less than antichristian.

Nor is the issue whether it is wrong for the State to engage in education and to use government funds for this purpose. I believe that that, too, is wrong — even apart from the fact that the education offered in the public school system is wrong. I do not believe that it is the business of the State to educate children.

Nor is the issue whether or not it is unfair that Christian parents must pay taxes which go for the support of the public school system and also pay tuition to support their parental schools. I certainly believe that this is unfair, even though I do not believe that the solution lies in the direction of State funds for private schools.

But the issue is whether it is compromise on the part of Christians to pay property taxes which the State uses for public education.

I find it difficult to understand the reasoning process which arrives at such a conclusion. And I believe it is a grossly unfair indictment of our people.

There have been many of our people in the past and there are today many of our people who sacrifice greatly, to the extent of thousands of dollars, in order to provide their children with a covenantal education, while they pay property taxes toward public education for which they receive no value in return. To me, it is very strange reasoning to call this compromise.

On the contrary, I believe that this is not compromise, but living the antithesis.

But let me also point out the fallacy of the reasoning in the contribution referred to. That fallacy is that you and I are personally responsible for the use which the government makes of our tax monies after we have paid our taxes. This is simply not true. I am not responsible for the use which Caesar makes of the taxes which he collects from me. I am only responsible to pay what is required. The Biblical principal is: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." The fact is, therefore, that it would be wrong for a Christian not to pay his due taxes. And if he would refuse to pay those taxes, he would be punished, not for well-doing, but as an evildoer.

Finally, if we follow the line of reasoning of this contribution, then the solution that is suggested is also wrong. The contribution suggests that we will have to lose our property and rent housing for our families. It should not be overlooked, however, that anyone who pays rent for housing is also indirectly contributing toward the property taxes of the landlord. To be consistent, N.D. should propose that we get out of the world — something that is impossible.

There is one element in this contribution with which I agree. That is that the time will come when it will be impossible for us to have our own schools. It may even be that such a time is not far distant. When such a time comes, then God's people may not compromise! But as long as it is still possible to have truly Christian schools, let us maintain them and keep them strong and pure — even though it involves sacrifice.

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## THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

# Original Sin

*Prof. Robert D. Decker*

"We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof; and therefore is so vile, and abominable in the sight of God, that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism; since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain; notwithstanding it is not imputed to the children of God unto condemnation, but by his grace and mercy is forgiven them. Not that they should rest securely in sin, but that a sense of this corruption should make believers often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death. Wherefore we reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation."

*Article XV, The Belgic Confession*

Anyone who wishes an answer to the "why" of sin can do no better than consult this statement of our *Confession*. Why the abounding lawlessness, the immorality, the filth, the murder, war, crime, the lying and cheating, the blasphemy and cursing, the drunkenness and drug abuse, the hatred of God and neighbor? The answer is: "...through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary disease ... which produceth in man all sorts of sin..." This article of the *Creed* succinctly states the sobering, humiliating truth of Scripture concerning the reason for the universal phenomenon of sin. Sin must be traced to Adam and his fall. In Adam the whole race of mankind was plunged into sin and death. This is also the relationship between this article and the preceding. Article fourteen speaks of the creation and fall of man and his incapacity to perform what is truly good. Adam through his fall into sin lost all his excellent gifts and became a slave to sin. These same dire consequences have passed to all men "through the disobedience of Adam." All are totally depraved, which is to say, incapable of any good.

The crucial significance of this truth of original sin can hardly be overly stressed. A denial of it leads inevitably to a denial of salvation through the satisfaction of Jesus' death and resurrection by the sovereign grace of God. No doubt it is for this reason that Augustine stoutly defended the doctrine of original sin in his polemic with Pelagius. Luther and Calvin followed in Augustine's steps in their battles with Erasmus and Pighius. The fathers of Dordt recognized this significance and did not hesitate to call Arminianism "the Pelagian error out of hell." (Cf. *Canons of Dordrecht*, Second Head, Rejection of Errors, III) At this critical juncture there must be no compromise. Either we deny this truth and then we must look within man himself for salvation; or we take our stand with our *Confession* and heed the voice of our fathers and then we rejoice in salvation by grace alone.

It should be noted that the article stresses the doctrine of original sin only from the viewpoint of the organic and spiritual, ethical character of sin. It does not speak of original sin from the legal point of view. This truth is important and for that reason we shall make a few comments concerning it. The entire human race was created as a legal corporation in Adam. Adam, therefore, was the legal representative of the race, the representative head of mankind. In a judicial or legal sense Adam represented all of mankind before the face of God. Adam stood in this capacity in the state of righteousness so that his first act of sin could be imputed to all of mankind. Adam's sin of eating of the tree of knowledge of good

and evil, therefore, was a representative sin. And, the guilt of this original sin God imputed to all of mankind. All men very really became guilty for this one transgression which Adam, the legal head of the race, committed.

Because Adam stood as the legal representative of the race he was also the organic head of mankind and the father of the human race. The whole human race, in other words, was not only juridically in him, but also organically. Every human nature was principally found in Adam. Adam was the root out of which the tree of the human race sprang. He was the seed whence proceeded all men. This means that there is a living and organic connection between Adam and all men. All are born in his generations and are the "sons of Adam." (Cf. Deuteronomy 32:8) The Scriptures make this very clear:

"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 ... Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

(Romans 5:12-19, Cf. I Cor. 15:21, 22)

This passage teaches that sin entered into the world and as a consequence death passed upon all men "by one man." That one man was Adam, the organic head and father of the human race. The Apostle concludes that by the offence of one (Adam) the judgment came upon all men to condemnation. This is because Adam was the legal head, the representative of the corporation of the human race.

This is the explanation for the universal phenomenon of sin. When Adam fell, as we saw in connection with the previous article, his entire nature became corrupt and depraved. Sin ruled his entire nature, subjecting it to sin's service. Adam died spiritually and became a spiritual and moral corpse. This meant that he was incapable of doing any good at all. According to his fallen, depraved "mind of the flesh" he was not and could not be subject to the will of God. (cf. Romans 8:6-8) Besides, even physically Adam died. The moment he fell into sin death began to move in his members. He began the descent to the grave. Because he stood as the legal and organic head and father of the race all this is passed to all men. In Adam the whole race died.

This original corruption the article describes as: "a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof."

This simply means that because Adam's corruption involved his entire nature, that nature brings forth other natures equally involved in corruption. Even infants and that too in their mothers' wombs are conceived and born in this corruption. David, when inspired by the Holy Spirit to write Psalm 51, understood this very well. When confronted with his sins of murder and adultery with Bathsheba by Nathan the prophet, David laments: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps. 51:6) And David realizes that what he needs is nothing less than that God create in him a clean heart and renew a right spirit within him. (Verse 10) This corruption is compared to a "hereditary disease" which affects all who are born and to a root which in each individual produces the full tree of his sin. In another sense too Adam's original sin was a root sin. It is the sin out of which grows every sin evidenced in the entire history of the human race. Each sin of each person is only a further development and another manifestation of Adam's sin. Thus it is that sin develops in the line of generations and in harmony with each man's place in creation and history. Gradually the hereditary disease of sin grows and develops, spreads and permeates until it culminates in the Man of Sin, the Antichrist himself. Then the cup of man's iniquity is full and he is ripe for final judgment. This is the doctrine of the organic development of sin. The *Confession* alludes to it in another figure when it states: "Sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain." This truth is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Romans 3:10-18 describes this hereditary disease as it affects all mankind in these terms:

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

That and nothing less is the magnitude and the horror of the foul fountain of sin into which everyone is conceived and born.

We notice too that the article condemns several errors. With the words "nor is it (original sin) by any means abolished or done away by baptism" the *Confession* condemns an error of Roman Catholicism which teaches that original corruption is taken away

by the sacrament of baptism. The result is that a man is held accountable only for those sins which he commits during his life. The article refutes this position with the words: "since sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain." The real explanation for sin, therefore, is that all our actual sins proceed from the woeful source of the fountain of a corrupt nature inherited from Adam. It is true enough that original guilt is not imputed unto the children of God unto condemnation, but by God's grace and mercy is forgiven them on the basis of the shed blood of the Savior. This is the symbolism of the water of baptism. But original pollution remains. According to his sinful nature the child of God cannot do the good. Daily he must confess with the holy Apostle: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:19, 24)

Thus too with our *Confession* we "reject the error of the Pelagians, who assert that sin proceeds only from imitation." Pelagianism teaches that there is no such thing as original sin. Every child comes into the world as a blank slate upon which can be found no traces of sin. Sin is to be explained from the fact that people fall into evil deeds by imitating the example of others. Everyone is born into a sinful environment and falls into the habit of sin. This doctrine is as pernicious as it is false. Denying the reality and the magnitude of original guilt and corruption it must needs deny salvation by the grace of God. This is also, as noted above, the root error of Arminianism. Arminianism is only a modified form of Pelagianism and is characterized by a very superficial view of sin. This radically affects Arminianism's conception of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally the article condemns the view that the truth that original sin is not imputed to the elect unto condemnation produces in them a carnal security, a "let us sin that grace may abound" attitude. This is utterly impossible. One who truly knows sin in all its horrible power, and one who truly knows his own sinful nature and who at the same time knows the mighty power of God's saving grace will hate and flee his sin, crying daily for forgiveness. (Cf. also the Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. XXIV, Q. 64) The believer always has a profound sense of his corruption and this causes him "often to sigh, desiring to be delivered from this body of death." He realizes that he has but a small beginning of the new obedience. Daily he fights to put off the old man and put on the new (Eph. 4:17ff.). His response to all carnal security, the "let us sin that grace may abound" attitude is always a vigorous, "GOD FORBID!" (Romans 6:1ff.)

## ALL AROUND US

## Insoluble Marriage Problems

Rev. H. Veldman

Of this we were reminded by an article in the *Banner*, an official organ of the Christian Reformed Church. This article appeared in the *Banner* of December 26, 1975, page 4, and it was written by Melvin D. Hugen, professor of Pastoral Theology at Calvin Seminary. We need not quote all of it. We offer our readers the following:

It finally happened. I heard a wedding liturgy with all the verbs in the present tense. Well . . . not quite all. There were a few references to the past and those were rightly and Christianly done.

The one had been married before. Her mate had left her and was now married to another. The pastor spoke of the pain of the past, of a marriage that had been broken, and of sins that had been forgiven and purged. He prayed for both of them in the light of the past. It was well that he did, for the past could not be ignored at that wedding. The past was there in the shape of two children who stood by their mother during the ceremony, not as flower girls but as participants in a rite by which a new family was being formed.

I was happy that there were verbs in the past tense and that they were pointed verbs like "broken," "sinned," "forgiven," and "purged." Christians can use verbs in the past tense because God can and does make the present into the past. When God forgives and cleanses, the past becomes truly the past. Her divorce, even her role in it, no longer shaped and formed and determined the present. This bride and this groom were making a new beginning and we could celebrate that fact because of what Christ had done with the past.

But the rest of the ceremony was in the present tense. The groom spoke movingly about his love for this young woman and her two daughters. She said how she felt about him and what he meant to her. And that was it. No more. No future tenses at all. No one said what they planned to do tomorrow or a year from now, much less until death do them part.

They said they loved each other, and we believed them because it sounded so sincere and it had come through such trial. But they made no promises about loving each other in the future. No one promised love or honor in sickness or in health, in poverty or in riches, for better or for worse. No one promised anything at all. They did not even promise to live together as husband and wife. . . .

In any case, it was a wedding in the present tense.

As we walked out I was thinking to myself, "How could a minister, trained in theology, agree to such a liturgy? Or had that pastor not even read the form before he spoke it to us?" Such could have been, for he read it as if he knew it not. But that gave me less comfort. Do we no longer care what wedding liturgies we use or what theologies they embody?

We need not quote more. In the rest of this article, Dr. Hugen sets forth what kind of a liturgy should have been used at this wedding. I, too, was thinking to myself as I read this article in the *Banner*. This is what I was thinking.

Dr. Hugen, it finally happened. You begin your article with these words. Yes, it finally happened. How expressibly sad!

First, the wedding should never have occurred. Dr. Hugen, please do not look for a proper liturgy to be used at such a wedding. The wedding itself is wrong. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matt. 5: 32, Matt. 19: 9, Luke 16: 18, and many other passages tell us this very clearly.

Secondly, Dr. Hugen, you were happy that there were verbs in the past tense, verbs such as "broken," "sinned," "forgiven" and "purged." But, how could this be? The bride had been married before. And her mate, who had left her, was now married to another. And now she, too, married again. And the pastor speaks of the pain of the past, of a marriage that had been broken, and of sins that had been forgiven and purged? But, Dr. Hugen, how can this be? We read in Prov. 28: 13: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." This bride confessed her sin of a broken marriage, now enters into another, and her sin, being confessed, is now forgiven and purged? That cannot be! Our sins are forgiven when we not only confess them but also forsake them!

Thirdly, it was wedding without vows. Nothing was said about the future. How terrible! But, is this so surprising? Dr. Hugen, this is exactly what one may and can and must expect when a person who has been divorced, whether biblically or unbiblically, is permitted to continue in a second marriage. They cannot promise anything of the future. How do they know whether this second marriage will not also suffer shipwreck? Yes, Dr. Hugen, it finally happened. How inexpressibly sad!

## Dr. John Kromminga and the WCC

In the editorial in the *Banner*, also of Dec. 26, 1975, Prof. John Kromminga tells an audience how the Reformed Church in America appears to him. That we do not quote extensively from this article must not be construed as if we do not consider it worthy of comments. We direct our readers to the following, the second and third paragraphs in the left column, page 7:

I may add, although here I am speaking as an individual perhaps not representative of my own denomination, that some of the ecumenical memberships of the RCA — such as the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches — are fundamentally sound and provide an opportunity for the church to be a positive influence in the wider family of churches. . . .

From my own peculiar point of vantage I could wish that the CRC felt more comfortable with the World Council and the World Alliance. But I could wish that the RCA felt somewhat less comfortable there. Perhaps I betray a certain theological bias. But I feel that through its membership in these organizations the RCA has an opportunity to make both of them more authentically Biblical and theological in their outlook and activities, and to make the World Alliance in particular more authentically Reformed, as in its name it claims to be. But if this is happening, I have not seen the evidence of it . . . So we have different conceptions of what it means, ecumenically, to be Reformed. . . .

Indeed, there are other matters in this speech of Dr. Kromminga to which we could call the attention of our readers. Incidentally, this speech was delivered by Prof. Kromminga at a joint RCA and CRC meeting. There have been efforts afoot for some time already to bring about a reunion of the Reformed Church and the Christian Reformed Church. The speaker declared that it appears sometimes that there are two well-defined opposing minds on matters such as abortion, church union, and the ordination of women to the ministry, and he said that these opposing minds are operating within the RCA. He also declared in this speech that there is little sensitivity to the need of Christian day school education in the RCA, and that this is a screaming demand of the secularity of our times.

Of course, Prof. Kromminga could have said more. He spoke of conditions in the Reformed Church when he referred to such matters as abortion and the ordination of women to the ministry. However, this

matter of the ordination of women to the ministry is surely not a dead issue in his own church. That this is a live issue is apparent from what one reads in the *Banner*. Besides, the professor must be familiar with the causes and conditions which led to the secession of the Christian Reformed Church out of the Reformed Church in 1857. There were issues at that time such as the singing of hymns in the churches, and lodge membership. In addition to this, was not the membership of the Christian Reformed Church at that time sorely troubled because of the Arminianism which was rampant in the Reformed Church of that time? Dr. Kromminga says nothing about this. And this is understandable. The singing of hymns is very common in his own church today. As far as lodge membership is concerned, are there not voices raised these days that these lodge members should be received into the membership of the church and that labor should be bestowed upon them after they have been received into the fellowship of the church? This would be the same as receiving or allowing wolves into the sheepfold of the church and then working with them. What a dangerous procedure this would be! And what could Prof. Kromminga say about the Arminianism that is rampant today? His own church is permeated with it. Do not the Three Points of 1924 speak of a universal love of God which the Lord reveals in the preaching of the gospel which is a universal offer of salvation? And did they not give a life tenure to Prof. H. Dekker, who is openly in conflict with the Canons of Dordt and who believes in universal atonement?

In this quotation, however, the speaker also declares that some of the ecumenical memberships of the RCA — such as the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches — are fundamentally sound. And the professor also states it to be his personal wish that the CRC felt more comfortable with the World Council of Churches. What shall we say? What must one say of a merger of churches when the fundamental truths of the Word of God are either denied or ignored? Well, Dr. Kromminga, you also said that you spoke as an individual, not as representing the CRC. However, I fear that in the future your personal wishes will be shared by more and more in the CRC. This, of course, will not be for the good of the CRC. And I also fear that a merger of the Reformed Church and the Christian Reformed Church, as envisioned by Prof. Kromminga, will not really serve the well-being of either church.

## CONTRIBUTION

## Compromising

Sometimes we are told that we are led as sheep to the slaughter. This was true during the years of the early church and during the time of the Reformation, but not at present. I know that we experience a little opposition sometimes; but we all have nice houses to live in, and every family has one or more cars, etc., etc. Is the roaring lion taking a vacation? Of course not! Neither is it because as churches we pray for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life: for that is never done. (I Timothy 2: 2)

How then is it to be explained that we as churches are so little molested by the State, in cooperation with the false church, which is always, with few exceptions, persecuting God's people? The answer is: Compromise! The State took the diaconate away from us, and the only ones that refused to give in are the Amish people who, therefore, had their horses taken off the plow. But the State has also raised up a great, abominable idol which is called *Public Education*, to which all property owners contribute.

Oh how nice and pussy-footed this monster was introduced. At first, school sessions were begun with prayer and Bible reading; but gradually this was abandoned, and now public education is the most God-defying and immoral monster under the sun.

Every tax dollar we pay for the maintenance of order in society, anyone who has real estate property contributes about an additional four dollars to support the abominable public school system. This is not a hidden tax for which we cannot give an account, but is in plain figures. If we refuse to support this monster, we will have to lose or sell our properties; and then our suffering starts. We will have to rent a place in which to live. And the result will be, of course, that the rent might be raised sky-high. Those of us who have families will have to live in the slum district or in some tumble-down farm house, because no one will rent a house to families with children in a good neighborhood. In order, therefore, to continue dwelling in beautiful houses, going on trips, having nice cars, boats, and cottages, we must compromise.

But God will soon make this impossible, in order that we may be delivered from the snares wherein the prince of this world holds us captive. The time is not far distant when it will be impossible to have our own schools, and also help maintain this modern Molech. It will be Christ or Belial, not both! Then, if we are faithful, we will indeed be led as sheep to the slaughter.

N.D.

## MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

## Letter to Timothy

March 15, 1976

Dear Timothy,

I had thought that we finished this discussion about the relation between the New Hermeneutics and preaching in my last letter to you. But you wrote me about some practical questions which rose in your mind as you pondered the things I had written; and to these questions I will turn in this letter. I hope this ties up some of the loose ends which you called to my attention; but if not, be sure to write again.

You made reference first of all to a remark I had made in a postscript in one of my earlier letters. In that postscript I mentioned the fact that it was very important, though perhaps difficult, to get people to see the issues involved in the approach to Scripture which is advocated by those who are admirers of the New Hermeneutics. I think I even went so far as to say that you could not avoid these things in your preaching. But I let the matter hang there, and did not go more deeply into the matter. Now you ask me to be more specific about this and to point out con-

cretely what must be done in order to accomplish this. I shall try to make some practical remarks about this whole matter.

In the first place, quite obviously I think, it will not do to bring the involved arguments of Hermeneutics to the attention of your people — surely not in the preaching. I say this for several reasons. In the first place, the issues which are raised by the proponents of the New Hermeneutics are certainly important ones, but the manner in which these issues are raised is so extremely technical that even a person who is trained in theology can scarcely make head or tail out of them. I have read a lot of this material and you have read a lot of it. You know that what I say is true. The solutions proposed to so-called problems which the defenders of the New Hermeneutics raise are so complicated and so involved and so filled with all kinds of technical language that I wonder sometimes whether the authors themselves understand what they are saying. I freely admit that I am often at a loss to know what in the world these men mean to say. Let me just give you a random sample which I ran across the other day. “The idea that there are some parts of the New Testament picture concerning which historiography is unable to say whether they are true or false has led to the suggestion that they belong to history, but to history of a different kind from that wherein historiographical criteria are relevant: namely, to something called ‘super-history’ or ‘meta-history’, or even ‘non-historical history’ (*unhistorische Geschichte*) which, Barth says, every history is ‘in its immediacy to God . . . , i.e., it cannot be deduced and compared and therefore comprehended. But this does not mean that it ceases to be genuine history.’” (*Finding The Historical Jesus*, James Peter; Harper & Row, p. 73.)

The technical aspects of the issues involved are not proper material for the pulpit. Of that there is no question. Nor need the people of God be bothered with all this stuff.

But there are a couple of things which are worth noticing nonetheless. In the first place, the very complexity of these issues makes them suspicious with respect to their orthodoxy. We must always remember that the Word of God is clear, and the truth of the Word of God (including the truth concerning the Scriptures) is clear. Everyone of God’s people can understand these things — even little children. If you have a theory concerning Scripture — whether it be concerning Scripture’s inspiration, infallibility, authority, or interpretation — which is so complex that most people cannot understand it, you may be very sure that it is not the truth. Its orthodoxy is suspect because of its very complexity. That’s one thing.

Another matter is that even the proponents of the

New Hermeneutics admit this. I recall discussing this very matter with a man some years ago. He was defending the New Hermeneutics; but he was doing this by pointing out various discrepancies which he found in the gospel narratives. Matthew said one thing about a certain event; Mark said something else. In the course of our discussion he mentioned one particular discrepancy (what it was is not important) and asked me how I explained this. I was not sure in what direction he was going with this discussion, and so I asked him how he explained it. He answered with an extremely long and involved theory which was based on an over-emphasis of the “human element” in the Gospel narratives. When he finished, I asked him whether he would bring all this on the pulpit if he were preaching on that passage. I pressed the matter a bit because he had said that this theory was absolutely essential to an understanding of the text. His response was to the effect that of course he would never do any such thing. He could not bring all this on the pulpit, for the people would never understand what he was talking about. Yet this very matter was critical to an understanding of the text. So, the result is that you have two levels of meaning in Scripture: one level which is appropriate for the common people of God; another level which is for theologians. This is, of course, inevitable if one adopts the New Hermeneutics. But we must abhor that idea and fight against it with every ounce of our energy. That is tantamount to denying the perspicuity of Scripture. And if we deny the perspicuity of Scripture, we are back again in the Middle Ages. The people of God cannot understand the Word of God, but they have to go to the theologians in order to find out what Scripture really means. In answer to all this, I remind you of what Jesus said: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” Mt. 11:25

But to return to the subject. While it is impossible to get the *theories* across to people, and while it is not necessary to do this either, you must get the *issues* across. The issues are, of course, fundamentally, whether the Bible is, in all its parts, the very Word of God, authoritative for us in all matters of faith and life. But this is the general issue. You must be, of course, more specific. For a denial of this truth comes in many different forms and heretics dress their heresies in many different coats. If, for example, the whole issue of women officebearers comes up, and you discover that those who defend the practice of having women in office do so even though they admit that Paul expressly forbids this, then you know that they have a different view of Scripture than you have. You must find out what that view is. Then you will discover, as you already know, that, although they admit that Paul expressly forbids

this, they also insist that Paul was, in that case, only writing for the church of his time, but that his injunction is not in force for us. This, of course, involves a question of Scripture's authority. And so you must face this question head on and you must not only show what is wrong with this view of Scripture, but you must also show what is the correct view, especially as it pertains to this particular question. And you must do this, not with vague and indefinite generalities, but with specific teachings concerning the Scriptures, and specific exegesis of the texts involved. (I might mention in passing that my colleague, Prof. Decker, is going to be writing on some of these matters in the *Journal*.) Whether you do this in a Catechism class, in a Society, in a lecture, or in a sermon, be specific and concrete, and demonstrate carefully the truth of Scripture on the matter.

But you must also show the serious consequences of taking the position which the New Hermeneutics takes. And this brings up another point which ought to be made. I refer to the fact that it is never really enough merely to say that the people of God actually possess the Word of God when they hold the Bible in their hands. They must be *convinced* of this. They must be very *certain* of this. They must firmly *believe* this. Never must you do anything which would in any respect create the least bit of doubt about this.

I consider this a rather serious issue. I refer, of course, to the King James Version of the Bible (or, any other accurate and faithful translation). God's people must understand that when they read the KJV of the Bible at the table with their families, when they meditate on the Scriptures in their own private devotions, when they study the Scripture in preparation for Society or for Catechism or for Sunday worship in the Lord's house, — they must be very sure, I say, that they have indeed the Word of God. They do not have to have the Hebrew and the Greek Bible to have the Word of God. They do not have to have one of these modern paraphrases of Scripture to have the Word of God. They do not have to have commen-

taries to explain the Word in order to have the Word, nor theologians to spin out fine theories in order to possess the real Word of God. They possess that Word in actual fact when they hold in their hands their Bibles. They can find that Word in their Bibles. They can learn it, study it, grow in the knowledge of it, and receive all the blessings that flow from it when they read it. Be sure that they understand this and that they believe this.

Your attitude towards that Word of God is going to make all the difference in the world. I know, and you know, that should you deny all that we have said and should you yourself handle the Word of God carelessly, there will be people in your congregation who will rise up in holy wrath and defend the Scriptures — even against you. They will never permit you to tamper with their most precious and cherished possession. They will show that they are wiser than you and understand the Scriptures better than you do. But God forbid that that should ever become necessary.

You have a responsibility to cultivate in the minds and hearts of God's people a proper attitude towards the Scriptures. You have this responsibility in Catechism, in society, on the pulpit, when you visit God's people in their sufferings and sorrows — in short, when you preach the Word in season and out of season.

And the most important way to do this is to be an expositor of the Holy Scriptures. At the very center of all your work lies the work of careful, faithful, diligent, painstaking exegesis. There simply is no substitute for this.

And now I want to say something about this matter of exegesis. But it looks as if this will have to wait, for the page is filled. I guess it is not without some justification that people sometimes speak of my long-windedness.

Fraternally in Christ,  
H. Hanko

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## GUEST ARTICLE

# Is the Bible the Word of God (2)

Rev. M. Kamps

In the previous article we briefly introduced our subject and presented the reader a two-fold thesis. Further we discussed the idea of priestcraft, which feeds upon the teaching that the Bible is an obscure

book. Very briefly we outlined Martin Luther's escape from Roman Catholic priestcraft and took cognizance of Luther's doctrine of Scripture in as far as it touches upon the matter under discussion. We

saw that Luther boldly denied the Romish doctrine that the Bible is obscure in its meaning and we noted that Luther rejected priestcraft.

But *now* the apostasy of Rome is raising its ugly head in Protestant churches! Make no mistake about it. What troubles the church today is nothing more than the old heresies of Rome. Of course, this is denied, and the attempt is made to hide this fact. Even in "Reformed" churches many theologians are again teaching a fallible, man-made Bible, dark and obscure in its meaning. Again, this is not done openly and directly, but it is done anyway.

There is a view of Scripture among ministers and professors in the Reformed community which effectively *precludes* maintaining the readability and intelligibility of the Bible as the perspicuous, inspired Word of God. This view of Scripture has been around for some time, but only recently has it openly showed itself in the debates in the Reformed community about homosexuality and women office-bearers. What we must clearly understand is that this view of Scripture effectively imposes priestcraft upon the layman. The Bible is no longer intelligible to the ordinary believer. This view of Scripture fetters the layman to what the minister or seminary professor might believe Scripture teaches.

What is this view of Scripture? Above all, its proponents assure us that they, too, believe in the infallibility and, of course, in the inspiration of Scripture. But they tell us that the truth of inspiration and infallibility is to be extended only as far as the "message" of Scripture is concerned. About spiritual things the Bible speaks infallibly, i.e., about sin, the wrath of God, salvation, and redemption through Christ's cross. The message is the important thing and it has been infallibly recorded. But that is all that may be considered to be infallible. About much of which the Scriptures speak we ought not claim infallibility, for this would be foolish in the light of the facts of science and the evidence that historical research has provided us. We must not be obstinate! Rather we must remember that the infallible message of God's love for poor sinners comes to us in the vehicle of human words and through fallible human thought structures. These fallible human thought structures can be easily discerned and explained. We are simply to lift the infallible message of God's love out of the vehicle.

What accounts for this faulty vehicle of fallible human thought structures? To account for this faulty vehicle we must remember that the "authors" of Scripture were *time-bound* and *time-conditioned* men. Very obvious truth, we are told, for we must not forget the primitive cultural setting in which the authors of Scripture wrote. Some of the authors were

tribal leaders of a nomadic people, others were ignorant fishermen, and many were uneducated prophets or enthusiasts. All were limited to the peculiar thought structures characteristic of their own cultural period.

By "time-bound" authors is meant that the authors of Scripture were limited in their knowledge about science, history, geography, political matters, etc. Besides, they entertained many wrong notions of various things, which notions were common to their own time period. This "time-boundness" of the authors of Scripture occasions many errors about scientific, historical, geographical and political matters. This is to be expected, considering the writer's limited intellectual horizons. As examples of these kinds of innocent errors we might mention the "speaking snake" of the narrative of the fall, the universal flood and the ark of Noah laden with a "zillion" animals and insects, Jonah and the whale, and the triple-decked universe concept of ancient times — all these historical narratives reflect the superstitions of that culturally primitive people and the obvious "time-boundness" of the authors of Scripture. Those that hold to this view of the authors of Scripture might ask of us; "Do I have to believe the story of the 'speaking snake' in order to know that sin entered the world?" "Do I have to believe the universal flood story of Noah in order to know that God is displeased with sin?" "The message of God concerning sin is clear to me," one might say, "but I cannot accept the story about the flood and the big boat." This kind of reasoning, of course, can be applied to the narrative of the New Testament as well: "Do we have to believe in the publican's narrative about the *virgin birth* to know that God loves me and sent His Son to die for me? Really now!"

The second element of this view is that the writers of the books of the Bible were "time-conditioned." By "time-conditioned" is meant that the authors of Scripture were socially conditioned about religious or ethical matters. In each time-period men hold various opinions concerning ethics and they have a particular attitude about what is and what is not religiously acceptable. Consequently, the authors of Scripture reveal by their work this limitation or imperfection peculiar to their time. Each cultural period and each nation of that particular time period nurtures its own particular foibles about religious and ethical matters. Twentieth century man, man come of age, cannot accept at face value what might have been good for ancient peoples of a primitive culture. For instance, consider what was written by Moses many centuries ago. Moses tells us that homosexuals and adulterers were to be stoned. Now, pray tell, what does that mean to us? Would you want to begin stoning homosexuals and adulterers? Again, Paul's writings reflect

the disparaging view his society took towards women as a class; thus we need not accept what he writes in these instances as normative for us. However, we are told, we must always distinguish between the redemptive message of God and the vehicle of this message. The vehicle is the fallible construction of time-bound and time-conditioned men. We are to retain the message of God's love in Christ and ignore or reject the vehicle of fallible human thought structures in which the message comes to us. Simple enough!

What this erroneous view of Scripture does, is that it divorces the historical facts of the Biblical narrative from the message of the gospel. A disjunction is set up between the human words and human thought structures, on the one hand, and the message of God's love, on the other. It is wrong to make this separation. It is in fact impossible. The message of God's love is the factual, historical narrative and the factual, historical narrative is the message of salvation. To set up a disjunction or separation between the narrative of Scripture and the gospel of Christ is to manufacture a false disjunction. Message and biblical narrative are one and the same. If what in Scripture is presented as historical fact is not true, (are not God's very words) then there is no message of redemption. A non-historical narrative, i.e., false statements purported to be true, cannot be the Word of God's love.

But we must return to our main point. With this kind of view of Scripture that considers the authors as time-bound and time-conditioned men, who will be able to interpret the Bible? Who? If there is a message somewhere in the vehicle of man's fallible thought structures, who will be able to discover it? Not the layman! The ordinary layman will be fettered to the new priestcraft. For who among the laity can discern in any given passage when Moses or Joshua was actually writing God's Word? If Moses was wrong about the snake, maybe he was wrong about Abel, Abraham, Isaac, the Exodus, and the giving of the law. If the flood narrative is not true maybe the virgin birth narrative is not true. If the whale did not swallow Jonah, maybe Christ was not laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. Maybe all those miracles recorded in the N.T. are nothing more than idle tales, which were told to tell how *fantastic* Jesus seemed to be. If Paul speaks at one time on behalf of rabbi Gamaliel and at another time for Christ and God, who, besides the priest of priestcraft, will be able to discern this certain fact? With this kind of approach to Scripture, the Bible becomes a dark, obscure book. Who will interpret it? How can one be sure that he understands it correctly? The layman will be told to turn to the modern day priests of priestcraft, the seminary professors, the pastor, the college professor. The layman will be ignored and "shut up" as one who is considered ignorant and unable properly to inter-

pret Scripture.

The ordinary layman, under the influence of this view of Scripture as written by time-bound and time-conditioned men, becomes at first hesitant, then doubtful, and finally despairing. He cannot understand Scripture! He sooner or later takes the attitude, "What's the use?" Having been conditioned to view the Bible as a book obscure in its meaning, the layman is again fettered to priestcraft. He finally says, "Let the experts tell us what Scripture means to say." Or he might despairingly ask: "If the seminary professors do not know what to believe about the Bible, how do you expect *me* to know?"

One who expresses himself in such a manner is fettered to priestcraft. He is principally just as much fettered by priestcraft as was Luther before he broke with Rome. The layman in many sectors of the Reformed community has been intimidated, overcome, and spiritually robbed of his blessed heritage. He no longer believes that it is his right and his responsibility to interpret the perspicuous, authoritative Word of God. He no longer considers himself able to interpret Scripture. The layman has been robbed! He is at the mercy of proud, self-seeking intellectuals in the church. Again today the ominous visage of Romish priestcraft casts a long shadow of death upon the Reformed community. We do well to take heed and attempt to escape and protect ourselves *and our children* from this encroaching evil.

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The only answer to the question, "Is the Bible the Word of God or the Word of men?" is to reply that the Bible is in its entirety the Word of God. The Bible is the very speech of God. This answer alone will free us from priestcraft. This answer alone can be the basis for our faith in a perspicuous, intelligible Bible, which is the infallible record of God's self-revelation.

Remember, the Bible must be allowed to tell us what kind of book it is. The Bible says that it is a God-breathed book. (II Timothy 3:16) The circumstances under which Paul wrote these words to Timothy only serve to underscore Paul's conviction that the Old Testament Scriptures were literally out of the mouth of God. What were those circumstances? Paul was in prison in Rome about to die for his faith at the hand of Nero. He had one last message for "his son," Timothy — Preach the Word! The Word had to be preached. For it alone, in distinction from all the opinions, ideas, and books of men, is the breathed-out or inspired Word of Almighty God. The urgency of Paul's command is rooted in his conviction that the Scriptures alone are the infallibly inspired Word of God.

We could note also II Peter 1:19-21, a passage which Luther cites to prove the perspicuity of Scrip-

ture in his debate with Dr. John Eck. But Christ Himself acknowledged the authority of Scripture and even *identified* what Moses wrote with the very speech of God. Consider Matthew 22:23-33, where we read of the attempt of the Sadducees to catch Jesus in His words by raising a problem which defies rationalistic proof. The Sadducees denied the reality of angels and spirits and the truth of the resurrection. How does one prove the reality of the resurrection? Jesus told the Sadducees that "ye do err not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Moreover, Jesus identified the words of Moses with the very speech of God when Jesus said; "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was *spoken* unto you by God saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." (Matthew 22:31-32)

What was written in the Scriptures was for Christ the authoritative Word of God. How often had Jesus not said, "it is written," with which words He routed the Devil. (Matthew 4:1-11) Many other passages of Scripture reveal that Christ, the apostles, and the prophets received the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments as the very speech of God. (Cf. I. Timothy 4:1, II Peter 3:16, Jeremiah 1:5, Galatians 1:15-16, Acts 7:1ff) The apostolic Church conceived of no disjunctions between human thought structures and the speech of God. Scripture is God's Word in its entirety and is His Word no matter on what or when Scripture speaks.

Faith confesses that the only author of Scripture is the Holy Spirit of God. (I Peter 1:10-11, II Peter 1:19-21) This truth faith knows to be the testimony of Scripture itself and that is the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. (Art. 3-5, Belgic Confession) Faith humbly allows, no, *wills*, that Scripture speak about creation, fall, flood, deliverance out of Egypt, the virgin birth, and the place of women in the in-

stitute church — and the place of homosexuals outside of the Church. Faith bows for Scripture. Faith obediently hears and appropriates the testimony of Scripture concerning its own authority, infallibility, and divine inspiration.

Unbelief proudly will not allow Scripture to speak of its own nature and authority. Unbelief will not hear and appropriate God's Word. The human mind has been enthroned by unbelief (rationalism) and, consequently, the human mind is placed in judgment over what is true and not true. The priests of priestcraft, addicted to rationalism, assume the right to elucidate the obscure Bible by means of scientific inquiry and historical research for the advantage of the poor layman.

Remember, to reject one part of Scripture in disbelief is to stand principally over against the whole of Scripture in unbelief.

There is an inseparable relationship between faith in Scripture as God's authoritative Word of self-revelation and divine inspiration. To say that the Bible is God's Word is to presuppose that human writers were infallibly inspired by God to record His revelation. Thus we must maintain the historic position of the Church of Christ concerning graphic, plenary, verbal and organic inspiration. Many will mock us for our faith; many will taunt us with charges of worshipping a book, Bibliolatry; but they do so to their own spiritual destruction.

We must continue in the faith for our own spiritual wellbeing and that of our children. Without an infallibly inspired Bible, i.e., without God's Word written, we cannot have fellowship with God and communion with Christ. Loss of confidence or trust in a text or portion of Scripture, is to lose confidence eventually in all of Scripture. Loss of conviction about the infallibility and perspicuity of Scripture is to lose the gospel of Christ to rationalism and priestcraft.

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## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

# Do ALL Things to God's Glory?

Rev. G. Van Baren

In our last article in this rubric, we discussed one error related to the view of common grace which suggests that surely God does not *send* sickness. This article will treat another error which seems to arise logically out of the common grace theory. I was surprised to hear this particular error raised; yet, upon

reflection, it would appear to be a logical conclusion from a false premise. The question with which I was confronted in a discussion on common grace, was: Is *everything* to be done to the glory of God? Are there not many things done by the child of God which are "neutral" in character — that is, neither to nor against

the glory of God? Specifically, the example of the basketball game was used. Can not a Christian and a non-Christian both play that game — without any consideration of the glory of God? Both are interested simply in the game as sport. By extension, of course, there would then be many “neutral” areas where Christian or non-Christian could be active without ever encountering the question of the glory of God.

The entire question came up in connection with the third point of common grace. That third point suggests that by a “common” grace upon all men generally, even the reprobate wicked can do some civil and natural good. These can, by that grace, have a good family life. These can perform many acts of charity presumably by this same grace. These can save others in extreme danger — even at the risk of their own lives. Rather than labelling all these acts as “sin,” the Christian Reformed Church officially labelled this as civil good performed through the effect of God’s common grace operating in men generally.

The Christian Reformed Church faced the problem of harmonizing this viewpoint with its own confession on “total depravity.” A church of Calvinistic tradition, of course, is expected to maintain that point of the five “points of Calvinism.” That difficulty has been evaded by some in the C.R.C. by distinguishing between “total” and “absolute” depravity. It is suggested that “total” depravity involves the truth that each part (mind, will, etc.) of a being is affected by sin (as a bushel of apples, each of which has a rotten spot), whereas “absolute” depravity means that the *whole* of every part is affected by sin. Common grace, according to this theory, has prevented “absolute” depravity — though allowing yet a confession of “total” depravity.

The distinction is rather clever — but still clearly subterfuge. Depravity, after all, itself suggests complete corruption. By definition, depravity means that man’s nature is “innately bad and perverse because of original sin.” To add the word, “total,” is not to abridge the fact of a nature being “innately bad,” but rather to emphasize exactly the badness and perverseness of that nature. To distinguish between a “total” and an “absolute” depravity is, plainly speaking, nonsense.

Within the framework of this discussion, it was suggested that there was a realm of “neutral” activity both by Christian and by non-Christian. Such a conclusion is not too strange to understand. After all, if there is saving good and non-saving good, if there is the good that sinners do and the good which the righteous perform, if at times the wicked do good and at times they sin; it is not then too strange to conclude that there are areas of “neutrality.” Such a con-

clusion seems to be the result of trying to classify the works of the wicked: works of sin, works of goodness, and then, presumably, neutral works. And, if the wicked can do “neutral” works, then surely the child of God does also.

This is not a question of the “adiaphora.” There are certain things, such as the eating and drinking which the apostle Paul mentions in I Corinthians 10, which certain Christians believe they can do to the glory of God; whereas other Christians believe that they can not glorify God in those things — hence, do not do them. But this is not the question before us. Rather, the question is: is it true that there are certain things which both a Christian or a non-Christian can do without becoming involved in the matter of glorifying God?

The question is not simply academic. Nor is it only one which can arise because of an adherence to the view of common grace. But often, among ourselves too, there is a walk which seems to reflect the attitude that there are many things we can do which are in a realm neither of being God-glorifying nor God-dishonoring. This attitude is often in the area of entertainment. The watching of television, the attendance of movies, the playing of various sorts of games — all these, we can easily convince ourselves, we do simply for our own pleasure; it is not, we tell ourselves, a question of God’s glory.

That same erroneous attitude can be seen, too, in relation of one’s work or in the friendships he establishes on this earth. It appears that one can quickly and easily convince himself that these involve that which need not be done to God’s glory; it is a “neutral” area.

One must acknowledge, of course, that many times a person may readily confess that he must do *all* things to God’s glory — yet that too often he does not do this. He knows that he must glorify God in all things, but he confesses that he is remiss in this. He is ashamed of this fact and prays earnestly that God forgive these sins of neglect.

But the fact that one must glorify God in *all* things, is clearly spoken of in Scripture and also in the confessions of the church. There is the well-known passage of I Corinthians 10:31, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Obviously, the passage does not teach that glorifying God involves only church attendance, contributions to the poor, reading of Scripture and prayer. One is to glorify God even in such apparently insignificant actions as eating and drinking. It is true that Paul speaks in I Corinthians 10 of the eating of a certain kind of food (things offered to idols); yet surely his conclusion is that *all* eating and *all* drinking must be done to the glory of

God. And what is true of eating and drinking is certainly true also of every action and thought.

John Calvin in his commentary on I Corinthians states on these passages, "Lest they should think, that in so small a matter they should not be so careful to avoid blame, he teaches that there is no part of our life, and no action so minute, that it ought not to be directed to the glory of God, and that we must take care that, even in eating and drinking, we may aim at the advancement of it. This statement is connected with what goes before; for if we are eagerly desirous of the glory of God, as it becomes us to be, we will never allow, so far as we can prevent it, his benefits to lie under reproach."

Romans 14:23 is very clear on this point too: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin." That is strong language. Not only does that passage make clear that the wicked sin in whatever they do (for they act not in faith), but even when the child of God does anything *not out of faith*, he sins. There is nothing neutral.

Again, John Calvin clearly expounds this passage in his commentary on Romans. "The reason for this condemnation is, that every work, however splendid and excellent in appearance, is counted as sin, except it be founded on a right conscience; for God regards not the outward display, but the inward obedience of the heart; by this alone is an estimate of our works. Besides, how can that be obedience, when any one undertakes what he is not persuaded is approved by God? Where then such doubt exists, the individual is justly charged with prevarication; for he proceeds in opposition to the testimony of his own conscience."

Our confessions speak the same language. The *Heidelberg Catechism* states in question and answer 91, "What are good works? Only those which proceed from a true faith, are performed according to the law of God, and to His glory; and not such as are founded on our imaginations, or the institutions of men." And

in the preceding question we are instructed, "What is the quickening of the new man? It is a sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works."

The *Canons of Dort* express too the thought that there is no "neutrality" in any action of man. These state in head III-IV, article 3, "Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation." There is here suggested neither any sort of "neutral" work nor any "good" work on the part of children of wrath.

All of this ought to point out the seriousness of our calling in this earth. First of all, we are not to call "good" that which God's Word condemns. The standards for that which is "good" are set forth clearly in Scripture: according to God's law, to God's glory, and out of a true faith. Whatever is not of this, says Scripture, is sin.

But the child of God himself must faithfully seek to do all things to the glory of God. There is no area of "neutrality." Our thoughts, words, deeds are either to the glory of God — or they are not. One who imagines he can do anything "neutrally," had better carefully reconsider. What is not done to the glory of God is sin. We too had best examine well all that we do in light of this standard set forth in Scripture. When we sin in this regard, we are to repent and seek again to walk in the way of holiness. Let us then, knowing that the night is far spent, endeavor by God's grace to do those things which are and can be done to the glory of God. It is our desire that some day we may glorify the Name of our God perfectly in the new heavens and new earth. Ought that not then be the desire also of regenerated children of God already on this earth?

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## IN HIS FEAR

# Doctrine and Life

Rev. M. Joostens

It is Saturday evening, the children are snugly tucked under the covers and in the safekeeping of the usual babysitter, while the Joneses are out to late

dinner with some casual acquaintances. The dinners are sumptuous; after all, it is a night out on the town, the drinks flow freely. Before the night is over, all are

in a laughing and carefree mood. As the evening comes to an end, the babysitter is hustled home before the Sunday morning deadline, and the Joneses place their heads upon their pillows, and promptly fall asleep. After all, it is not right to pray in this state of mind. They had a "good" time.

It is Friday evening, this is the big date that Paul has long awaited. His car has been polished on the outside, and thoroughly cleaned on the inside for this occasion. Paul has the night all planned; they will bowl and perhaps stop for a sundae afterwards. But, the bowling alley is jammed. Paul places his name on an hour waiting list. The first half hour passes so slowly and the Devil, as he always does, takes advantage of boredom. Carefully negotiating, Paul and his girl justify going to see a movie. They have placed themselves in the clutches of the Devil, and he pursues the opportunity by using the strong visual and auditory senses to excite the lust of the carnal flesh. Paul and his date live along with the sins portrayed before them. They, too, find it hard to pray, for the sin is yet too fresh in their minds.

On Tuesday evening the Smith's attend society while their children in the low teens take care of themselves. The standard rule applies now as always; no garbage is to be watched on T.V. The older ones indoctrinate the younger that silence to mother and father is to their profit. The teenagers turn on the television, after quickly checking the movie guide. "Don't forget on which channel Dad last watched the news!" "OK, help me remember channel three." The time quickly passes for eager eyes of the children and soon it is 9:30. There is yet a half hour of the "garbage" left, but the eldest turns off the television because it has to have time to cool before Dad places his testing hand upon the cabinet. "Remember, it was on channel three!"

I am sure that parents, children, young people, as well as the aged, if they were candid and honest, could add numerous accounts to these various portrayals. But, though much could be said about the novels read, soap-operas watched, and entertainment engaged in, the purpose has been served and we must move on to a nearer treatment of the above title.

What do we mean by doctrine? We use the word often. We speak of doctrinal differences, of being doctrinally correct or incorrect, of doctrinal preaching, etc. Yet, what do we actually mean when we say doctrine? The English word is etymologically derived from the Latin word *doctrina*, which means a theory on a certain instruction as it is related to a particular *doctor* or teacher. Therefore a certain doctrine is a body of principles which are set forth regarding a particular branch of knowledge. For our purpose, doctrine has reference to a certain body of religious principles which are logically set forth on the basis of

the Scriptures. Thus, they are not the teaching of a certain man. But they are the principles which the church of Jesus Christ sets forth in a logical way, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They are, for example, the truths as we know them in the five points of Calvinism: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. Or, to take an example peculiar to our history as Protestant Reformed people, the eternal covenant of grace which God has unilaterally established with His people in Christ, belongs to those principles. These Scriptural truths, that are systematically taught us in catechism class and detailedly expounded to us from the pulpit, are doctrine.

Then, besides the connective, there is the other term in our caption: life. You say, yes, how basic and elementary. But we must carefully elucidate exactly what we mean by this term. We speak of life in the sense that the Bible uses the words walk and conversation. The figure of walking upon a way calls to mind the picture of a pilgrim's path, with each experience and activity of life being but a footstep upon that path. Likewise, conversation refers to one's conduct and manner of living. We mean by life, the sum total of the experiences of a person that constitutes the history of his being from birth unto death. It is an all inclusive term, that excludes none of our activities here below. Our every word, thought, and deed is comprehended in this term life.

So much for the terms life and doctrine, as far as definition is concerned. For, we are not so much interested in these terms as they stand segregated from one another, rather as they are integrated. Our concern is well expressed by the old cliché; "doctrine is life." Or to put it in practical terms, one ought to practice that which he believes.

The child of God makes a fundamental error when he divorces doctrine from his life. It is a very grievous mistake to live in a way that is not in harmony with the doctrines which we hold to be true and valid. To do this is to be a "Sunday Christian." That is to say, we hear the truths of the Bible expounded to us and we even express whole-hearted agreement with the admonitions that are applied to us, but somehow on Monday morning the recollections of Sunday's sermon are suppressed. And we often rationalize to ourselves, that things are different on Monday and Tuesday. All these doctrines which are laid out so clearly for us make more sense on Sunday than during the week. The minister (God's Word) doesn't seem to fit in with the dealings and concerns of the work-a-day world. It is much easier and causes a lot less friction if we put our doctrines aside at certain times and engage in a little compromising of principles. After all, if you are in the world you have to

play the game by the rules of the world, else you lose!

To take this sort of an attitude in life is spiritually demoralizing. To live in such a way, whereby we segregate doctrine from life to one degree or another, is to be infected by a sort of dead orthodoxy. Such a dead orthodoxy is nothing more than a mere intellectual assent to the truth, without any practical application thereof. It is to confess the doctrines of the Scriptures and to understand them mentally, without striving to make them a vital part of our daily lives. James speaks of this problem. "Faith without works is dead." (2:26) "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue (or does not live according to his religious principles or doctrines). . . this man's religion is vain." (1:26) What James means to say is, that if our religiosity consists of holding doctrines and principles without practicing them, or then our religion is empty. And such an empty religion is despicable in the eyes of the Most High and can never expect His blessing. That is why it is such a grievous error to separate doctrine from life!

Furthermore, the error of which we are speaking has a tendency to lead us toward antinomianism. But, interrupts someone, do we not stand in the freedom wherein Christ has made us free? We ought not therefore to fall into this opposite error of legalism. But, rest assured, this is not what we have in mind. The child of God ought to be careful that he not use his liberty for license! Never may we excuse our non-christian conduct by the fact that after all we are children of God. It is a terrible thing when we say to ourselves, "I know better than to do this, but God's not going to send me to hell on this account." It terrifies me when I hear comments of this nature. We have all heard them, if not regarding someone else, then we have spoken them in our own mind. We hear this expressed about our young people sometimes: "O well, they have to have a few years in which they sow their wild oats," or, when young people begin to partake liberally of the things of this world, "they'll straighten out; we all went through it, you know."

Our young people, or any of us, may not conduct his life, thinking that it will all be straightened out in the end. This comes pretty close to that which Paul condemns so vehemently in Rom. 6:1ff. . . "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid."

If we may yet come a little closer to home, we might warn in the following manner. Our confidence and assurance may never be founded upon a particular name or a mere abstract body of truths. As churches, we have a beautiful heritage. The cardinal truths of the Bible are clearly set forth in our midst, and our children, as well as we ourselves, are continually exposed to them. We must be careful, lest these glorious truths make us careless and profane in our daily lives. The truths and doctrines which we hold so precious, may never be relegated to the shelf or contained in un-opened books; rather, they must be a living and vital reality in our every day living.

That brings us to the positive aspect of the subject at hand. Doctrine and life must be unified. This is a necessary unity, for the doctrines which we hold are derived from the Scriptures which guide our feet during our pilgrim's journey toward the heavenly Canaan. O, if the doctrines we held were merely founded upon the rationale of men, then not to live them would not be a grievous wrong. But the doctrines which are our precious heritage are the truths of the Bible as they are systematically set forth throughout history by the guiding of the Holy Spirit. He has led us in all the way of the truth. In that truth we ought to walk. The Word of God is a light upon our pathway and a lamp unto our feet.

When we willingly segregate doctrine from our life, then we are as a traveler in a strange land who willingly refuses to follow the map provided him. That is foolishness. That is sin. Rather we must integrate scripturally-based doctrine into our daily lives. Then we walk in wisdom, as a traveler who diligently searches his map that he may not stray from the path leading to Mt. Zion. That constitutes sanctification, a walking in His fear!

## NOTICE!!!

Due to our decision to add a fourth teacher to our Staff, the SOUTH HOLLAND PROTESTANT REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL is accepting applications for the position. Anyone interested should write or phone Mr. Menno Poortenga, 18425 Oakwood Ave., Lansing, Illinois 60438. Phone: (312) 474-0675.

## CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to begin studies this fall in either the pre-seminary or seminary department of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches are requested to appear before the Theological School Committee at its meeting to be held on Thursday, March 18, 1976, at 7:30 P.M. in the Theological School Building, 4949 Ivanrest Ave., S.W., Grandville, Michigan 49418.

### Pre-seminary Department:

Permission to pursue the pre-seminary course of study shall be granted by the Theological School Committee. A transcript of grades from High School and College (if any), a letter of testimony from a student's pastor or consistory, and a certificate of health from a reputable physician shall be submitted.

### Seminary Department:

Permission to pursue the Theological course in the seminary shall be granted by the Synod, upon

recommendation of the Theological School Committee, to such an aspirant only who comes supplied with a testimonial of his consistory that he is a member in full communion, sound in faith and upright in walk, and also a certificate from a reputable physician showing him to be in good health.

A complete high school education and the equivalent of a four year (125 hour) college education are required for entrance into the seminary department. Moreover, each entrant into this department must produce evidence that he has credit for the required college courses. Requirements are listed in the school catalog, available from the School.

In the event you cannot be present at this meeting, please notify the undersigned secretary of your intentions, prior to the meeting. Mail all correspondence to the Theological School.

Richard H. Teitsma, Secretary

### NOTICE !!!

On April 1, at 8:00 P.M., Rev. David Engelsma will lecture in Kalamazoo on the topic — "A REFORMED LOOK AT PENTECOSTALISM." Place — Kalamazoo Christian High School, Stadium Drive at Howard Street. (Take US 131 to Stadium Drive East, then right at the second traffic light). YOU are invited!

### NOTICE !!!

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene in regular session on April 7, 1976, at 9 AM, in the meeting room of the parsonage of Faith Protestant Reformed Church, 7194 — 20th Ave., Jenison, Mich. All material to be dealt with at this meeting must be in the hands of the Assistant Stated Clerk no later than 10 days prior to meeting date.

Rev. M. Joostens  
Assistant Stated Clerk.

### IN MEMORIAM

The Men's Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to Rev. Kortering and family in the loss of his sister, MISS ERMA KORTERING, whom the Lord took home.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21)

Tim Kooima, Vice-All  
Peter Roy Westra, Sec'y.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church extends heartfelt sympathy to their beloved pastor, Rev. J. Kortering, and his family, in the passing of Rev. Kortering's sister, ERMA JEAN KORTERING. Our prayer for them is that they may be comforted by the Gospel which assures us that: "... the grave has no victory and that death has no sting." (I Cor. 15:55).

Mrs. Bernard Driesen, Sec'y.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The members of the Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa, extend their sincere Christian sympathy to our pastor, Rev. Kortering, and his family in the passing of his sister, MISS ERMA KORTERING. We commend them to the care of our loving Heavenly Father for the comfort and sustaining grace that only He can provide.

Roger Buys, Vice Pres.  
Arlip Hoekstra, Sec'y.

### RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa, extends its sincere sympathy to their pastor, Rev. J. Kortering, and his family in the passing of his sister, MISS ERMA KORTERING.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15)

Tim Kooima, Vice Pres.  
Henry Hoekstra, Clerk.

## News From Our Churches

Time certainly flies by. It seems only a few months ago that Faith Church was established in Jenison, Michigan. On February 22, however, Faith Church celebrated anniversary number three — but let Rev. Joostens tell it: “This Sunday is special, in that it was exactly three years ago that we became organized as Faith Protestant Reformed Church in Jenison. This is a good occasion to reflect and give thanks for the fact that the Lord has richly prospered us. He has blessed us materially, in that our building program is ahead of schedule; numerically, in that we have grown to be 42 families in size; but especially spiritually, in that we have grown from week to week in His grace and fellowship.”

The Reformed Witness Committee (a committee composed of members from our churches in Hull and Doon, Iowa, and Edgerton, Minnesota, who concern themselves with the work of church extension) continued their lecture series in Rock Valley, Iowa on February 18. Rev. J. Slopsema was to speak on the subject, “Are You Sure of Your Salvation?” Prior to the lecture a pamphlet by Rev. Slopsema was mailed in the Rock Valley area. The pamphlet is titled, “The Assurance of our Salvation.”

In the performance of their classical duties, the ministers in Classis West seem to do quite a bit of traveling. The meeting of Classis West on March 3 in Edgerton, Minnesota, will be the occasion for our ministers from South Holland, Illinois, to Lynden, Washington, to once again gather to transact business relating to the churches in common. Rev. Miersma planned to take a little detour on the way to Edgerton by way of Pella, Iowa. Rev. Miersma was asked by the Pella consistory to preach for them the Sundays of February 22 and 29. Rev. Lubbers, Pella's pastor, is in Jamaica for the months of February and March at the request of the Mission Committee of our churches.

In addition to the official preaching of the Word in regular church services, most of our people take advantage of the opportunities for spiritual growth and the communion of the saints available in the

meetings of the various societies in all of our churches. In addition to a systematic study of the Bible, other topics of interest are often considered. Some of the topics considered during the past couple of months include a talk on “Birth Control” by Prof. H. Hanko for the Southwest Mr. and Mrs. Society. Southwest's Jr. Young People's Society heard a paper on “God's Covenant Promise.” South Holland Mr. and Mrs. Society discussed “The Place of Children in the Family” and “Discipline in the Family.” Loveland Young People's Society had as their topic “Our Duty of Self-Preservation” for an after recess program. Loveland Men's Society heard a paper on “Sitting or Standing for the Congregational Singing.” Edgerton Ladies' Society also considered two interesting topics, “May We Rejoice in Our Own Works?, Eccl. 3:22,” and, in response to a *Standard Bearer* article last November, “Question: Should we open our eyes during the salutation and the benediction?”

The Young People's Societies have been active in other ways this winter as well. Most have been sponsoring both social and fund raising activities. Any ‘profits’ from these events are usually set aside for the Young People's Convention. Redlands Young People's Society sponsored a roller skating outing on February 23. South Holland and Loveland had similar outings. Edgerton Young People's Society planned a sliding party to which the entire congregation was invited. Apparently the older folk in the congregation had enough sliding this winter, as not very many responded to this invitation.

Rev. Kamps declined his call from Edmonton.

Every attempt is made to report the facts in this column. But, sometimes one gets by me. This column reported that G. Feenstra was the new clerk and bulletin clerk of Southwest Church. Mr. Feenstra is the clerk, but the immediate past clerk has retained his job as church bulletin editor. So, if you will kindly redirect the flood of bulletin announcements for Southwest from Cardinal Dr. to P. J. Lotterman, 871 Rushmore St., Jenison, Michigan 49428, all will be well again — I hope.

K. G. V.