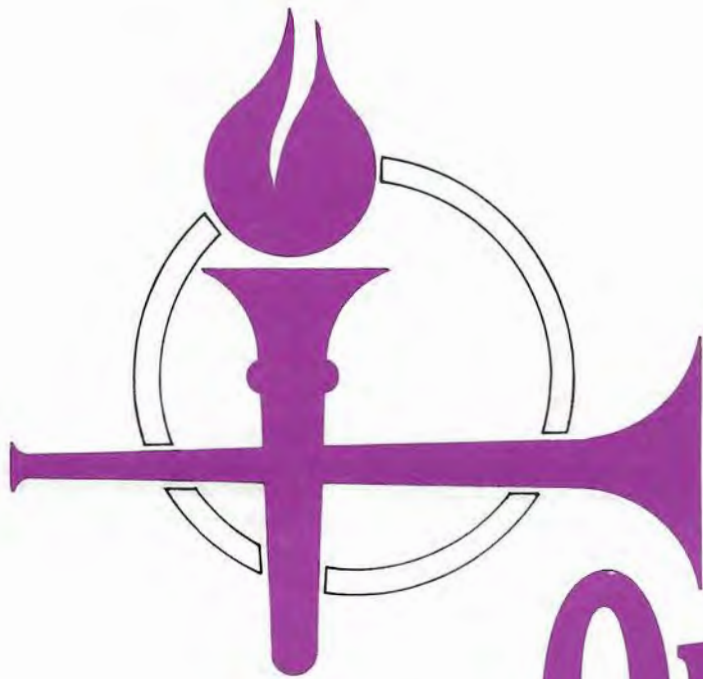




Outlook

*devoted to the exposition
and defense of the
reformed faith*

“Christian” TV

Calvin’s Surrender to Evolution

The New Evangelism

APRIL 1988

AND PETER

...And Peter. Mark 16:7

Peter was one of the twelve apostles. Although we know little or nothing about their families, we know that Peter was married. Jesus at one time healed his mother-in-law when she was sick with a high fever (Mark 1:30).

Peter was impetuous. He often did and said things before he thought them through. Peter got out of the boat in the storm on the sea of Galilee, began to walk on the water to Jesus and then began to sink. Peter answered Jesus' question about His identity when they were up north near Caesarea Philippi. To Peter, Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Later, when Jesus predicted what the disciples would do when He would be taken captive, Peter insisted that even if all of the rest of them would forsake Jesus, he would never do this. When in the garden the Jews had arrested Jesus, Peter tried with one blow of his sword to split Malcus' head. He was ready to die for his Lord. (A secular tradition tells us that much later, when Peter had been taken captive, he asked to be crucified upside down because he did not feel that he was worthy to be crucified like his Lord had been.)

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Here the scene is Sunday morning when Jesus had risen from the grave. The women had been given the good

news. He was alive! They hurried from the grave. And they were given the message, "Go tell the disciples and Peter."

This expression, "Tell the disciples and Peter" is recorded by Mark alone. From subsequent history we learn that Peter and Mark worked together.

And Mark put it in his Gospel narrative. "Tell the disciples and Peter." He didn't say, "Peter and the disciples." Why?

This might suggest that at this time Peter was no longer one of the disciples. Anyone who so positively and vehemently had denied Jesus was no longer worthy to be one of His disciples. Peter himself had cut the bond. And Peter may have felt that this was only right. Hadn't he said that he had never even known the man, Jesus? Later Peter was restored to the office of apostleship on the shore of the sea of Galilee. (From this we also can learn what proper procedure should be in the church of Christ. Where sin had been committed publicly there must also be public confession and restoration.) But at this time that hadn't yet taken place, and Peter was distinguished from the rest of the disciples—with the implication that he was no longer not one of them.

Yet the Lord did not pass him by. This must have hurt Peter. It was one thing that he knew the terrible

MEDITATION

John Blankespoor

sin he had committed, but something else that the Lord made that painful distinction.

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In these words there is also an expression of the Lord's deep love that would never let him go. Try to imagine Peter's life during the past days. The Lord's loving glance had brought him to repentance. John tells us this. Peter had gone out and wept bitterly, in his deep sorrow for his sin against Jesus. Jesus had been crucified and died. As far as Peter was concerned, the Lord was gone, not to return. Who could comfort him? Perhaps he said to himself, "If only I could have an opportunity to tell him about my sorrow."

Here came the message, "Tell the disciples and Peter." It told Peter first of all that Jesus was alive! It told Peter also that Jesus still remembered him and even instructed the women to tell him about it. Jesus still loved him. How comforting the Gospel is to sinners who confess their sins!

• • • • •

"Tell the disciples and PETER."

Notice that Jesus does not say "Simon," which was his natural name, the name given him by his parents. When previously Peter had said that he would never deny Jesus, the Lord in answer called him Simon. "Simon, Simon, Satan has

desired to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you." Simon was his old name, the name of his old nature. In and with that nature he was warned of what he would do. But here he is Peter, even though as Simon he had committed such a sin. What is the Lord telling us here through Mark's inspiration?

To Jesus he is still *Peter*, the rock upon which the church will be built. Even though he had sinned so grievously, as a penitent sinner he is assured that the Lord still loves him. Jesus had prayed for him, and will restore and establish him as "the rock" to strengthen his brothers (Luke 22:31, 32). This is the beautiful message of the church about our Lord throughout the ages. "Though we often have sinned against Him, still His love and grace abide." This does not mean that the Lord minimizes or ignores sin. We must always confess our sins. *But our sins do not undo His love!*

By nature we are still sinners. As believers we are Christians, but as the Heidelberg Catechism says, even the most holy have only a small beginning of the new obedience. This means that only a little part of us is true to the name Christian. But how great is His love and faithfulness! Although Simon, the disciple, committed a terrible sin, to Jesus, he, the penitent, was still Peter.

What is the total message here? Jesus Christ died on the cross for sinners, for His people as sinners. But He arose from the grave. The resurrection is proof that the payment for sin had been made, and that He conquered death. He is Lord in heaven today. We as Christians are still in this sinful world, living also with our old, sinful nature. In the end we will all die (unless the Lord returns soon) and our bodies will be buried in the ground. But our sins have been paid for, and He is alive. Can it be that a living Savior will leave His people in the grave, the people for whom He has died. An utter impossibility!

That is our comfort while we still live on this earth as sinful Christians.

He came to Peter and really said, "Peter, I still love you." He says the same to us as sinful Christians, every day—and He always will.

Isn't that good news?



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"And the three companies blew the trumpets...and held THE TORCHES in their left hands, and THE TRUMPETS in their right hands...and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" (Judges 7:20).

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JOHN CALVIN AS THEOLOGIAN AND EXPOSITOR

Richard C. Gamble
Inaugural Address

Dr. Richard C. Gamble is the new director of the H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies and Associate Professor of Historical Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary. The evening of Jan. 22 was the occasion of his inauguration in the Calvin Library, followed by a reception at the manor house. He was introduced by Dr. Fred H. Klooster of the seminary, who mentioned some of his impressive credentials and service in teaching church history at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Dr. Gamble then spoke on "John Calvin as Theologian and Expositor (or Exegete): Is There Anything New?"

Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:9, "There is nothing new under the sun," and the historian soon learns that in the church and the history of its doctrine there have been very few giants and "none is a VIP." To the question, "Was there anything unique about John Calvin?" one is tempted to answer "No, he was at best a rearranger." Calvin as a theologian has been analyzed with remarkably diverse results.

According to Calvin, we must begin our thinking by considering the foundation of knowledge itself. His famous *Institutes* began with the observation that "true and sound wisdom consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves." For an answer to the question, "How do we know?" Calvin refers us to the Scriptures (the "glasses" through which we with our defective vision are enabled to know the true God—Bk. I. chapter 6). Calvin knows no greater authority than the Bible. We were created by God, "in His image," in a relationship with Him. We must know ourselves as His crea-

tures, infinitely inferior to the Creator who "fills heaven and earth," but who comes as close to us as is needful, telling us about Himself in nature and in the Bible.

How must we read and understand the Bible? God there speaks to us in a way that we may understand, no matter how diverse our education or culture. God is not bound to a "context." He accommodates Himself to us as a grownup does to a child, speaking "baby-talk" to us in the Bible. Although we cannot fully understand God, we do not therefore remain ignorant of Him, for He gives us all of the knowledge that we need for salvation and life. We through the Bible, know Him in His saving purpose and work, although we still see "through a glass darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). This perspective introduces us to the essence of Calvin's theology.

Calvin especially stressed the fact that this true knowledge of God must be accompanied by religion and piety, and this is to be realized within the church. We need the church's education to grow to adulthood. In all of this Calvin also especially stressed the Holy Spirit and His work.

These emphases in Calvin were not new; their main lines were often noticeable in his predecessors. A most important characteristic of Calvin's teaching is his making theology dependent on exegesis of the Bible. It is a mistake to study only Calvin's *Institutes*, for he regarded that major work as only introductory to the study of God's Word which fills his commentaries. Calvin's difference from his contemporaries is especially apparent in his exegesis (or treatment of the Bible) in his

commentaries. 1. That treatment was comprehensive and brief. He looked at the whole text, yet kept his comments short and to the point. (Compare Calvin's one volume on Genesis with Luther's eight.) 2. Calvin saw the difference between the Creator and the creature as fundamental. God accommodates Himself to our capacity in the simple and rude style of the Scriptures, and Calvin tried to reflect that style in his commentaries. The relationship between Calvin's teaching and his method of interpreting the Bible has not received the study that it should, and it is a subject in which the speaker expressed a special interest. The dependence of Calvin's teaching on exegesis of the Bible is a very important practical principle because the church is to be built up by the Bible.

Dr. Gamble's address seemed a refreshing and auspicious beginning for his service among us. It came as a new and needed reminder of what B.B. Warfield once observed in an address on "John Calvin the Theologian" (Appendix to the 1956 volume of Warfield on *Calvin and Augustine*, p. 481, f.). Warfield too noted Calvin's dependence on "exegetical investigation" of the Bible for his teachings. "In one word, he was distinctly...the Biblical theologian of his age. Whither the Bible took him, thither he went: where scriptural declarations failed him there he stopped short. It is this which imparts to Calvin's theological teaching the quality which is its prime characteristic and its real offence in the eyes of his critics—I mean its positiveness. There is no mistaking the note of confidence in

his teaching, and it is perhaps not surprising that this note of confidence irritates his critics. They resent the air of finality he gives to his declarations, not staying to consider that he gives them this air of finality because he presents them, not as his teachings, but as the teaching of the Holy Spirit in His inspired Word." "And it was just because he refused to go one step beyond what is written that he felt so sure of his steps. He could not present the dic-

tates of the Holy Ghost as a series of debatable propositions." Warfield went on in that essay to point out how Calvin, more than any other theologian stressed the work of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Gamble's address highlighted Calvin's fundamental concern to base all of his teaching upon the Bible rather than on any (even "Christian") philosophizing on the basis of the Bible. In the demoralized late medieval church and

society Calvin, following Luther, found his guide in the Word of God. Seeking to help everyone else to follow the same guide created his career as outstanding teacher of the Reformation. In the similar confusion of our times and churches, stressing Calvin's dependence on and faith teaching of the Word of God seems an especially auspicious beginning for a service of teaching in our institutions which bear his name. PDJ

Arthur Besteman

OUR "FAMINE OF THE WORD"

Recently I had lunch with several friends. One of my colleagues had visited several days earlier with the pastor of a large evangelical church in an area where many Christian Reformed Churches are located. The pastor mentioned that many Christian Reformed people were attending his church and that not a small number of them were joining. As we ate lunch that day we asked the question, "Why?" The suggestion was made that perhaps some of these people were hungry to hear the gospel. The church about which we were speaking is neither reformed in its theology nor is it pentecostal. It is known for its clear, forceful presentation of the gospel and the demands of the gospel upon daily life. Some members of the Christian Reformed Church seem to be finding there what they are not finding in their own churches.

As I have been reflecting upon our conversation I recalled a visitor in

our own church several weeks ago who has been a leader in his own church which is one of the larger congregations in our denomination and which is now without a pastor. As we chatted together following the service he said to me, "I can count on one hand the number of visiting pastors who have preached the gospel since we have been vacant." And he was greatly burdened. I recall those occasions when our own family has sat under the preaching of Christian Reformed pastors who neglected to include in their sermons a call to repentance and to faith in Jesus Christ.

It is indeed very well possible that there are members of the Christian Reformed Church who are hungry for the gospel and who are looking elsewhere for what they cannot find in their own churches. As the authority of the Bible is increasingly coming under attack in our denomination and as some lose confidence in the power of the Word preached to attract sinners, we find

some preachers becoming more and more enamored with innovations and novelties. This often takes place at the expense of the proclamation of the Word which alone can fulfill the need of the seeking sinner.

Recently while waiting in an airline terminal for a flight I met a pastor who had completed ten years of service in the Netherlands. He made the observation that where the gospel is proclaimed the churches in the Netherlands are well attended. This he said is in contrast to the poor attendance at the churches where the Word is no longer being preached. Do we note a similar situation in the United States and Canada?

Preachers and parishioners, what is being preached from your pulpit? Is it the word of man which leaves the hearers hungry and searching? Or is it the gospel which is God's power unto salvation to all who believe and which alone satisfies the deepest and greatest need of man's soul?

THE NEW EVANGELISM: A WARNING

Andrew Sandlin

Recently, I glanced through eight or nine copies of a popular, fundamentalist religious magazine. It obviously aimed to fan the flames of revival in the United States and to urge Christians to try to obtain more conversions of the unsaved. While I am grateful for the concern, urgency, and zeal of its revivalistic/evangelistic way of thinking, over the past several years I have been profoundly disturbed by principle elements of this reasoning and strategy; and the editorials, articles, and news reports recently read in this magazine only confirm my deepest suspicions and, I believe, validate my objections to what I consider a travesty of Biblical evangelism. I decided, therefore, to express briefly but clearly my disagreement.

First, contemporary revivalistic evangelism seems to have permitted—or even encouraged—genuine evangelism to degenerate into a chiefly horizontal activity. Christians are, for example, taught specific methods to secure a “salvation decision.”¹ Indeed, evangelistic how-to-do-it manuals are available by which one, if he follows the prescribed plan, is assured he will be able to obtain many “decisions” of salvation on the part of the unconverted. One noted revivalist readily admits that his “personal evangelism” plan largely resembles that of a salesman trying to entice a prospective buyer.

As such, revivalistic evangelism of today has re-directed the concept of conversion from its proper, Biblical location (between God and man) to an expedient one (between man and man). Does not such utter carnality and worldliness incense you as it does me? No longer is the salvation experience perceived as the sinner’s “doing business with God,” as the

old-timers used to say; rather, it is an enlistment effort, much as one would endeavor to secure the promise of a friend to attend Sunday church.

Wrestling with God over conversion is now passe’. Why affirm the Puritan idea of salvation as a direct confrontation with God (an experience that may take considerable time) when by merely accepting a quick plan one can be immediately ushered into the kingdom? Why need the evangelist rely on the power of God when he can coerce the unsaved into “accepting Christ” immediately by describing to the unconverted the horrible torments of Hell (a practice, incidentally, no Christian in the Scriptures ever employed)? Why, in fact, is it necessary to invoke the Almighty as we declare the gospel to the unsaved since, practically if not theoretically, it is really a human transaction? Certainly sinners will be graciously converted any time they are willing to repent; but as the late A. W. Tozer used to say, to our own peril do we talk sinners into the kingdom before they are ready.

I suspect a great deal of the error of contemporary evangelism stems from theological imprecision. Revivalists, as beneficial as they have been to the Christian church, have not been known for their emphasis on thoroughly expounding doctrine or precisely formulating Biblical theology. Modern evangelism in its tactics appears to be unaware, for example, that regeneration is a work of God, not man. Although it is our responsibility to witness (“plant” and “water,” I Corinthians 3), God alone can regenerate a spirit. If regeneration is perceived as human work, a production of a “soul-winner,” the element of the miraculous has sadly disappeared. Regeneration is a

miracle, and only God executes miracles.

Interestingly enough, in this aspect modern revivalistic evangelism acts much like Roman Catholicism, as the late D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has wisely pointed out.² The new evangelism has virtually limited the sinner’s response to the gospel to accepting a set of propositions. One becomes a Roman Catholic by affirming a creed, a set of doctrines; and one becomes a “Christian” according to the neo-evangelistic method by accepting a set of beliefs: I know I am a sinner, I know my sin will send me to hell, I know Christ died for me, I will accept Him to be saved. As Lloyd-Jones reminds us, however, no one is converted merely by accepting a set of doctrines or propositions; one is converted as he has a confrontation by the living God and is regenerated by the Spirit of God.

In the execution of the new evangelism, the activity and power of God are minimized and the ability and expertise of man are magnified. Souls are “converted” when they give mental assent to a pre-packaged program: a sinner gets a ticket to heaven (who wants to go to hell?) and the “soul-winner” gets another charm for his bracelet (who wants to be regarded as unconcerned for souls?).

Second, modern evangelism in the revivalist tradition often provides false assurance of eternal salvation. For a long time I considered the neo-revivalistic deviation as simply an issue of disagreement among brethren. I no longer look at it so superficially. *For any teaching that affords assurance of salvation when there is none must be heretical.* A “convert” who has affirmed the “creed” but knows nothing of the

regenerating power of the Spirit of God will nonetheless be firmly convinced of his own salvation for the simple reason that the one who "led him to the Lord" told him that by accepting various Biblical doctrines he is thus converted. And no matter what sort of life the apparent convert lives or no matter how great is the spiritual void in his life he is convinced — and usually cannot be convinced otherwise — he is truly the child of God because of his decision. Perhaps it is at this point that the decision-oriented view of assurance is most damaging, because such an idea leads to a decision-oriented view of salvation. In other words, the "convert" is warned to remember the date and the time of his decision since he can thereby "remind the devil," when he begins to doubt his conversion, that one day he was indeed truly converted. One will look in vain in Scripture to find any teaching, however, that assurance is grounded in a decision we make. On the contrary, the first Epistle of John teaches we are assured of our salvation if we demonstrate the marks of a converted person (I John 5:13 and *passim*). God's children have within them His spiritual seed, and they cannot but manifest spirituality; it is part of their nature; and since conversion is an alteration of an individual's nature, a Christian will naturally manifest the characteristics of a Christian. An unconverted person may *strive* to manifest these marks but eventually will fail; conversely, a truly converted person may appear at times to manifest the marks of an unsaved person, but eventually he will fail because he has the seed of God in him. Many individuals "converted" under the teaching of contemporary evangelism feel their salvation is valid and secure because of a decision they once made, not realizing (tragically) that it is their own life that will evidence their conversion, and pointing to a supposed experience for assurance is quite unnecessary.

Third, a lot of revivalistic evangelism says little — and can afford to say little — about the Lordship of Christ in conversion. In fact, most modern evangelists stoutly oppose what they term "Lordship Salvation" charging that its adherents teach the

heretical doctrine of salvation by works and demand too much of a sinner.³ Rarely are the Scriptures appealed to. Neo-evangelists do not recognize, for example, that in Matthew 16 Jesus warned that those who refused to deny themselves, take up His cross, and follow Him would "lose their own soul." Modern revivalists attempt often to isolate salvation from discipleship but will be hardpressed in light of this passage and many others to validly do so. Our Lord informed the rich young man that he could not inherit eternal life unless he sold all his possessions and followed Him. In John 8 Jesus Christ informed many of the Jews who believed on Him that they must continue in His word if they would be His disciples; unfortunately, these very Jews who believed on Christ were still unconverted.⁴ Along these lines contemporary revivalists err on two points. First, they do seem to comprehend God's overall, eternal plan for mankind but see merely a part of it. It appears they recognize that God "wants to keep souls out of hell," but they do not seem to understand that deliverance from reprobation is only a secondary dimension of God's design. His primary goal in salvation is to redeem to Himself a people that have fallen through sin and thus become His enemies, and restore them to a place of willful obedience and to a fellowship with their Maker beginning now and continuing throughout eternity (Ephesians 1). Preservation from hell is only a "by-product" of God's main plan. Neo-revivalists try to produce as many converts as possible since they will thereby possess eternal salvation; and then later, the converts are exhorted to submit to the Lordship of Christ, "lay their all on the altar," and so forth. But the very *purpose* of conversion is to bring an enemy of God back into harmony with his maker and motivate a willful submission of the creature to the Creator. If submitting to the Lordship of Christ is not a main feature of conversion, then *conversion* is meaningless. Second, revivalistic evangelists do not distinguish, it seems, the *ground* of salvation from its means. The ground of salvation is the death of Christ alone (Romans 5:8, 9). And our means of salvation

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include belief, repentance, faith and prayer. No one is saved by believing, since belief is a work (John 6:29) and salvation is not of works (Ephesians 2:8, 9). Men are saved by the grace of God on the basis of the sacrificial death of Christ. But although men are not saved *by* believing or *by* faith, yet they are not saved *without* believing and faith. It would do some of the modern evangelists well to read how carefully this Scriptural truth is articulated by many of the Puritans.⁵ Modern revivalists charge their opponents with teaching that an individual is converted "by making Christ Lord of his life;" but this is an unfair and inaccurate charge. We simply assert that submission to the Lordship of Christ is *inherent in or a natural result or evidence of*, conversion; consequently, any person unwilling to submit himself to the Lordship of Christ is merely demonstrating he knows nothing of the enlightening or regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

We must be reminded that many committed Christians embrace the modern evangelism and must not treat them as we would unconverted false teachers; we must love them and love them dearly as children of God, our brothers and sisters in the Lord. Notwithstanding, they are to a large degree perpetrating error which must be exposed Biblically and forcefully. If it is not exposed, it will continue to produce havoc not only within Christ's body but also among the unsaved, who have the most to lose by this modern evangelistic invention.

1. Jack Hyles, *The Hyles Visitation Manual*

(Hammond, IN: Hyles-Anderson Publishers, 1975), pp. 165-208 and *passim*.

2. In "The Living God," *The Evangelical Magazine of Wales*, April, 1981, p. 17.

3. Hyles, *Salvation is More Than Being Saved* (Hammond, IN: Hyles-Anderson, 1985), p.70. Opposition to Lordship in conversion is not, however, limited to the revivalist tradition; see Livingston Blauvelt, Jr., "Does the Bible Teach Lordship Salvation?," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Jan.-March, 1986, pp. 37-45.

4. The term *belief* as used in Scripture often denotes more than bare mental assent. Here I believe the usually accurate Gordon Clark goes awry in *Religion, Reason and Revelation* (Jefferson, MD: Trinity Foundation, 1986, Second ed.), pp. 94-100.

5. e.g., Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1834 [1984 reprint]), 2:53.

Rev. Andrew Sandlin is pastor of the Baptist Temple at Painesville, Ohio.

"CHRISTIAN" TV: a new challenge

John D. Teague

Committed Christians - as, indeed, educated people of all persuasions - have long been aware that network TV viewing requires great selectivity, especially where children are involved. The advent of cable TV, though it expanded their field of responsibility, did not present a challenge which differed *in kind* from that which had long been forced upon them. Nor did screening at this level demand very much analysis: immorality, profanity, vulgarity, ethical relativism, and artistic decadence have become so blatant that no real Christian could fail to recognize how alien to his own was the 'culture' portrayed on his TV. The day seems forever past, when a devout, main-line Christian's manners, morals, and ambitions differed little from his agnostic neighbor's. TV accurately

depicts a society without moorings: a condition which God's people were blessedly unable to share - until now.

Enter "Christian" TV - i.e., daily, marathon programming on whatever sort of channel - and suddenly we are faced by the preposterous and alarming spectacle of The Saints Adrift! And this is only because too few Christians have yet discovered that the constructive viewing of "Christian" TV requires as much discrimination and more analysis than does the non-destructive viewing of "secular" TV. For no reason whatever, Christians assume that all TV evangelists, teachers, panelists, and musicians are "doing the Lord's work" rather than their own, and are therefore above bias and beyond criticism. (Jim and Tammy, of course, lost their exemption from

reproach some months ago; but faithful "Christian" TV fans remember that they never did *quite* trust Tammy. Who could trust anyone who wears more make-up than Boy George?) Even now that 'accountability' has become a watchword among spiritual empire-builders, few of their viewers seem to care that this standard applies only to their money. It does not extend to their doctrine.

Does doctrine matter? The Reformed Christian must answer "yes," whether or not he is happy about it. Is it possible to know the Bible so well and to quote it so frequently as do the stars of "Christian" TV - and yet do so in error? Again, the Reformed Christian must answer "yes." Is it possible for a well-grounded Calvinist to be led astray

by prolonged exposure to *Bible* teaching? This writer's response from personal experience is an emphatic "yes!"

It is their constant reference to the Bible which makes these men, when they err, such formidable agents of confusion. Christians are predisposed to accept what they are told, when it is supported by Scripture - provided the application is not a glaring distortion. Sermons which appeal to Scripture find them with their defences down and their critical faculties suspended. They trust Bible preachers to have done their homework, to have determined that sermon texts are not being quoted out of context or in disharmony with other ones. Seldom do viewers reflect that few if any of their favorite TV teachers belong to a tradition which requires her spokesmen to conform their exegeses to any systematic theology or time-tested rule of scholarship.

Perhaps an Arminian sermon now and then "couldn't hurt." After all, even Arminian evangelists preach the Gospel; and Calvinists believe that God will save the Elect, whether or not they have wit enough to perceive the Scriptural imperative of Election. But it is Fact that a prolonged, uncritical diet of that superficial treatment on favorite verses which characterizes free-lance holy men will in time cause one's own cherished creeds, confessions, and canons to sound foreign.

The Calvinist/Arminian controversy is neither dead nor academic. The Calvinist's God is a Person quite different from the Arminian's; likewise the Calvinist himself, as a man, is - or perceives his nature to be - quite different from the Arminian. With rare insight and boldness, Kenneth Good asserted,

Man is by nature an Arminian. The basically human philosophical foundation of the system is quite compatible with his inherited rationalism. When this is combined with some semblance of Biblical reference (or supposed authority) his natural religious inclinations are satisfied, and he emerges from whatever mental and spiritual exercises have made up his experience, complacent in his "theology." This position of

psychological security he does not wish to have disturbed. In fact, he will fiercely defend it against any real or imagined threat.¹

Our sanctified screens are alight, from morn till night, with the faces of men of this stamp. And many of us are too vapor-brained, or have grown to dulled ("weary") by "much hearing," to "test the spirits" effectively.

We have forgotten that Satan himself can and does misquote Scripture. We are fascinated by the 'perks' and 'kicks' of Charismatica, not realizing (because, sensibly, they don't tell us,) that these people hate everything we stand for.

The common denominator of all Arminian groups, whether of recent or remote origin, is their united animosity toward Calvinism. Irrespective of other differences in doctrine, they are in accord on their willingness to vigorously attack any or all of the "five points." A nearly infallible symptom of Arminianism is the tendency toward emotional outburst...against any form of Calvinism. A sort of "Calviphobia" develops in the Arminian mind which is easily discerned whenever related subjects are introduced.²

Not one Reformed church, ancient or modern, has ever diluted or abandoned its Calvinism through a knowing decision based on scholarly dispute.

When Arminianism challenged Calvinism within the framework of an established theological system, the results proved to be disastrous to the former. ...the best interests of the Arminians are served when they quietly go their separate way. They are no theological match with the Calvinists.³

Seldom did such infidelity result from dogmatic heterodoxy in the pulpit. Almost always it reflected a gradual Closing of the Calvinist Mind, to paraphrase the title of Dr. Bloom's recent and provocative book. The time came, in each case, when church members would not endure, (or even recognize!) sound doctrine. Rather, "having itching ears, they heaped to themselves teachers who turned their ears from the truth."

Most of us can remember when, first "Christian" radio, then "Christian" TV, became realities. Many of us know people who hailed these developments with a delight all out of proportion to whatever quality of word or music was to be expected of any medium which must cater to a widely diverse audience. They seemed almost to be relieved, as if some long famine had ended and at last they were able to indulge in the kind of appliance marathons their neighbors took for granted.

Without judging at all this kind of ceaseless aural barrage, it should be obvious that constant or frequent subliminal input to the brain of messages which are *not* "kosher" - but which aren't, either, sufficiently "unclean" to jangle our warning bells - must have a brainwashing effect in the long run. And when, e.g., the Canons of Dort have come to sound quaint, harsh, or (God forbid!) unscriptural to us, it will already be too late. The damage will have been done, and another Reformed community will have "lost its savor."

Is anyone saying that it's a sin to watch "Christian" TV? Of course not! Or that "Christian" TV is best avoided? No, not even that. Redeemed common sense does suggest, however, that *no* medium in this world can be trusted to invade our untended brains for hours on end - silence is a gift from God! - and that "Christian" media listening requires even more thoughtful discrimination than "secular." After all, our brains do not belong to us any more than our lives do; they're God's brains. Stewards, *en garde!*

¹ Kenneth H. Good: *Are Baptists Calvinists?*, Oberlin, OH: Regular Baptist Heritage Fellowship, 1975, p. 87.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71

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CALVIN'S SURRENDER TO EVOLUTION

The News Report

"Calvin draws fine line in teaching of evolution; Professors get administration backing with note of caution" was the announcement in the Feb. 16 local *Advance* newspaper. (The daily *Grand Rapids Press*, Detroit daily and local TV news had been reporting the matter somewhat more extensively and flamboyantly.) The writer, Rick Boyd-Meritt, gave a brief explanation. "How can professors at a Christian college reconcile evolution with creation in their writings and classroom teachings? That is the unresolved question for faculty, administrators, and members of the Christian Reformed Church as a whole, according to Howard Van Till, a physics professor at Calvin College. Last week Friday, a committee from Calvin that had spent a year studying criticisms of the writings and teachings of Van Till and two of his colleagues, came out in support of the faculty members and their adherence to the church's doctrines. The committee was responding to dozens of letters, criticizing the writings of the professors for swerving from the literal interpretations of creation found in Genesis. While the decision of the Board of Trustees was in support of the professors, the final report from the study committee that interviewed the faculty members was described as 'critical' by one board member."

Naturally, the publicity had provoked discussion and many questions. What does the 7-page study report say?

The Investigation: 1. Clarence Menninga

It first devotes a page and a half to geology professor, Clarence Menninga. "Does Dr. Clarence Menninga use any method of biblical interpretation which excludes or calls into question either the event-character or the revelational meaning of biblical history, thus compromising the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God? (See *Acts of Synod 1972*, p. 69) Does he adhere to '...those utterances of the Confessions that affirm the historical factuality of the events recorded in Genesis 1-3'? (See *Acts of Synod 1982*, p. 107)" The report found that he testified to his personal Christian faith. Believing himself "called to serve the Lord as a geologist," he "has spoken and written about...the earth as being a possible age of several billion years simply because he has observed such geological evidence and he senses a responsibility to report what he observes." He is careful to label his statements "as scientific theories, not statements of absolute truth," subject to revision in future years, but now seeming to be the best explanations. Confessing to believe the Bible, he believes there was a creation, perhaps extending over long periods of time, for the earth possibly 4 1/2 billion years. He affirms Adam was sinless when formed and (with Eve) fell into sin. Though formed of "dust," "maybe the dust is a figure of speech and maybe God formed Adam by enabling a more primitive mother to give birth to an offspring who pos-

sessed the image of God. The Virgin Mary gave birth to someone far more glorious than she. As a scientist, Menninga is not sure how Adam was formed." In summary, the committee found these views "interpret the Scriptures in harmony with the Reformed Creeds and Synodical Guidelines" and supported "his endeavor to enrich the knowledge not only of his students, but also of the church at large."

2. Howard Van Till

The committee began its report on Dr. Van Till by highly praising his personal Christian commitment and "the excellent Christian and scientific scholarship evident throughout" his writings in an area in which "there are very few books...from a Christian perspective." It also noted certain "weaknesses" in his work, imprecision and lack of clarity, expressing "concern" about especially two points. (1) According to Van Till, Genesis 1-11 is an introduction to the covenant, "primeval history," "intended to present 'the truth that God is God and creatures are creatures,' but 'not intended to tell us...precisely how all things came into existence.'" Its stories are "more like parables than like journalistic reports of events." The details of the story he designates as mere "packaging." The committee asks whether such an explanation doesn't endanger the "event character" of the account which the synod of 1972 said must not be questioned. Observing that the meaning of synod's "phrase 'event character' isn't as clear as

could be wished either," it urged Van Till "to refine his method of Biblical interpretation," especially in dealing with Genesis 2-11, in order to comply with the synod's warning.

The committee's second concern was with Van Till's view of human evolution. It found that his explanation "does not indicate how the unique creation of man as the image bearer of God can be compatible with an evolutionary development. He was "encouraged" to clarify and complete his views on this matter so as not to disturb the church and assured of the committee's confidence in him and that his expressed views are within the "acceptable range of Christian and Reformed scholarship."

3. Davis Young

The committee concluded its report with a less-than-one-page comment on the views of geology professor, Davis Young, contenting itself with the general observation that the Bible deals with "redemptive history," not material processes, regarding which we must learn from science. Though Professor Young believes that the Bible teaches us a miraculous origin of man, he wants to leave some openness on man's biological origin. He wants a science that will serve evangelism and apologetics, which the committee commends.

A Contradictory Conclusion

What must one say of this report? One's first observation about it is that it is remarkably cursory and casual for a year-long "investigation." Its conclusions at the key point which it had to investigate are self-contradictory. The committee found that Van Till "does not indicate how the unique creation of man as the image bearer of God can be compatible with an evolutionary development." At the same time it proceeded to judge that these views "are within the acceptable range of Christian and Reformed scholarship." Its conclusion is admittedly not a declaration of satisfaction with the results of its investigation, but of its confidence in Dr. Van Till and the hope that he will remedy the deficiencies which it found and hold the trust of the church." (It seems to

say, "He really flunked the test, but, because he's a Christian, we pass him anyway!")

A Derelict Board

What has happened is rather obvious. The criticisms aroused by Dr. Van Till's book prompted the appointment of a year-long study committee. The appointment of the committee provoked a massive faculty reaction in which a majority voiced support of Van Till, defending their "academic freedom" to teach whatever they please. Hence there were assurances that this committee was not intended in any way to threaten the position of the professors or their freedom to promote their views — and Van Till has been promoting them in many of our church and educational circles with evangelistic zeal. Now when at last the committee report appears, it takes the predictable form of a political "whitewash" of the professors, and the press reports of faculty and student celebration of their "victory" appear to be amply warranted. The whole affair shows, perhaps more clearly than earlier examples, the CRC Boards have in recent years become the obsequious servants of the agencies they are supposed to manage.

"Interpreting" Away the Bible

In this case, since the issue concerned conflicts between plain Biblical teaching and scientific theories, the decision has clearly been that the demanded academic freedom to teach changing scientific theories takes precedence, and "interpretations" of the Bible will have to be found to accommodate them — in case any still care to try. Notable in the committee's procedure is that its treatment of the matter is based, NOT ON THE BIBLE, but on the Synod decisions of the notorious "Report 44" with its carefully calculated ambiguities — to which the committee specifically refers as "not as clear as could be wished either!" The requirement that one only preserve "the event character of Biblical history" has become such a loose formula that as long as one believes, to use an expression attributed to a Dutch scholar, that "some kind of something" hap-

pened, he could claim that he was not violating it!* When we, as in this report, brush aside the Word of God, Pharisee-style, to debate instead only about the increasing ambiguities of our synod "traditions" we, as the Lord warned, make ourselves like them, "blind leaders of the blind."

"But these are fine, well-intentioned Christian men." That is the expressed consideration that moved committee and board to support the views of the professors which they even admit are less than satisfactory. That consideration may be true, but it is really irrelevant to the point at issue. Peter was obviously a Christian man who had just made a model confession of faith (Matt. 16:16f.). When he, though moved by love for the Lord, proceeded immediately to contradict the Lord's prediction of his atonement, the Lord (undeterred by political considerations of what a shock this might cause to the fellowship or of the need to preserve a common front toward outsiders) publicly identified and warned against his utterance as the work of Satan! If we are going to follow Christ in our confession of Him we will have to adopt the same uncompromising policy whenever faithfulness to the gospel is in question.

Joining the Anti-Christian "Mainstream"

Almost without exception, the history of higher education in the U.S. had been one of schools founded by churches to promote the Christian faith, as they grew, compromising away their Christian confession to become centers of unbelief. Christian churches and schools do not have to follow this general pattern of betraying the faith that they were established to promote. But there are no more frequent warnings to be found in the Bible than those against, like Peter, being trapped by the devil into denying what we are called to confess. The Lord can and will preserve the Christian faith and testimony, but He will only do it by way of our persistently praying, working and fighting for it. The Bible from its first to its last pages highlights the antithesis, the age-long battle between God and the devil. Today, as one of our professors

recently observed, it has become the fashion in our school to reject that antithesis, that is to deny the existence of any such opposition. If that rejection means what it says, it means denying any real difference between true and false, right and wrong, God and the devil. When we deny that difference, we have made any further talk of "Christian education" meaningless.

Mythologizing the Creator

Without questioning anyone's good intentions, we must recognize that our churches' and schools' faithfulness to the gospel is in question. The committee's study of this issue really evaded consideration of a Biblically defined first essential of the Christian faith. The Bible says, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Heb. 11:3). The Christian scientists whose views are under criticism reject the alternative of that text, for they are trying to combine the confession that God created everything with an opposite "scientific" explanation of how all things evolved without any such outside interference.

The Bible's revelation begins with God's creation, and the New Testament proclamations of the gospel to pagans, educated or not, begin at exactly the same point (Acts 14:15; 17:24). Accordingly Christians through the centuries have begun their gospel confession with their faith in "God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." We cannot faithfully present that gospel if we reduce that creation to a mere "parable," imaginative" myth or fairytale and replace its revelation of our origins with the ever changing conflicting theories of today's pagans whose only agreement seems to be on the one principle that no religious ideas may have any place in education!

Young's Advice to Preachers

Dr. Davis Young, the investigated professor for whom the committee had nothing but praise, last September addressed the Calvin Seminary students. According to the transcript I received, he attacked particularly

the idea of a universal flood and the dependability of the Genesis account: "It strains credulity to accept the idea that these narratives were transmitted verbally, and without corruption, for thousands of years until they were written down." Van Till throughout his book claims that the evolutionary theory is so well supported by all evidence and so coherent and near complete that there can be no question about its truth. (Anyone who reads at all about the contradictory evidence and conflicting theories that today characterize especially the field of Astronomy soon sees the absurdity of such a claim.) Young, in contrast, admits that "scientists love to disagree with one another" and that "it is clear that evolutionary theory still lacks fully convincing mechanisms." Despite the lack and conflicts of evidence, he finds the scientists so generally agreed that evolution has to be assumed, that he warns the seminarians who would preach the gospel never to criticize it lest they drive all educated people out of the church and "relegate Bible believers to the back eddies of the cultural and intellectual world."

Battle with Baal

Despite the passage of centuries, Elijah once faced a situation that was really very like ours. He confronted 450 well subsidized professionals who were unanimous in their promotion of a naturalistic explanation of the universe and a way of pleasantly adjusting to it. Although it had slightly different mythical trimmings, that Baal worship had the same overwhelming popular appeal and devastating social effects that our evolutionary system does. Especially the young of the increasingly affluent Jewish immigrant communities found the more "progressive," superior and easy-going, do-whatever-comes-naturally, culture of the neighboring Canaanite communities irresistible. Obviously a 450 to 1 majority of professionals couldn't be wrong, and most people obviously believed them. But Elijah, unlike Calvin's educators, could make no compromise. The choice was God or Baal. "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if

Baal, then follow him." We can't have it both ways. "No one can serve two masters." With this landmark decision to compromise even the exclusive claim of our Creator God, although Calvin may continue and even grow, it is joining the multitude of other institutions in its coveted "mainstream" who have forfeited any legitimate claim to the name "Christian."

Van Till in his remark to the reporter was (perhaps in a slightly different sense than he intended) right. "How can professors at a Christian college reconcile evolution with creation?" "That is the unresolved question for faculty, administrators, and members of the Christian Reformed Church." PDJ

*Despite the deficiency of that "guideline," when the committee judges that Van Till does not "call into question the event character of Biblical history" but is only "unclear," its judgment is obviously incorrect. Van Till in his book says of the creation stories "They were never intended to answer questions about precisely what happened" (p. 83) and that "Genesis 1...is not a journalistic (literally, "daily") chronicle of past events" (p. 270). Would it be possible to more plainly deny the "event character" of these accounts?

Jelle Tuininga

"OBEY GOD RATHER THAN MEN"

The liberals in the CRC are becoming very bold the last number of years — almost ruthless one could say. And they have no intention of looking back. They are in the driver's seat (even though numerically they are still a minority in the CRC). We have an article in the *Church Order* (29) which says that decisions of major assemblies are not settled and binding if they conflict with God's Word or the *Church Order*. No problem: we change the *C.O.* to fit the new situation (women in office). No matter if that's putting the cart before the horse. And the Bible — well, that's all a matter of interpretation. Who really knows what it says (or means)?

We have studied headship till the cows come home, and it was decided that that excludes women from serving as elders or ministers. But that's not really what a lot of us meant. That was just a temporary decision, just a tactical move in order to make some headway. Now it's open season again: synod of '87 appointed still another committee to study the matter again. Well, not really to study it, but to find ways of getting around what we said earlier. We "study" things until we get our way. That's the way we do things in the CRC. And every honest person knows it's true. We're playing games — with the Lord's church and with his Word. In 1975 synod said we would not change the *Church Order* regarding women in office unless there were *compelling biblical grounds* for doing so. Did you ever see such grounds? Of course not. There are none. But that, too, was only a temporary decision. When the time is ripe, we

just ignore it and change the rules. We've done it before and we'll do it again.

Some churches are going right ahead and ordaining women elders, and some have even allowed women to preach in their pulpits. Who cares? It's coming anyway, so why wait? We'll force the issue and synod will be faced with a *fait accompli*. Ruthless is the word.

A new book says very boldly and plainly that Genesis is not history — it's just the husk around the kernel. More like a parable or "imaginative illustrations." Our creeds are clear and explicit about the factual historicity of these chapters. But so what? And no matter that we've signed the Formula of Subscription. That's all secondary. The main thing is that we get "the truth" of these new theories out. People have to be told this "exciting new truth." And so it goes.

Meanwhile the conservatives (I know some people don't like the words "liberal" and "conservative," but they are the best we have and everybody knows what we mean by them) are not bold but timid. They are sitting in the back seat. And back-seat drivers are only annoying nuisances. Meanwhile the car keeps going where they'd rather not have it go.

I make a proposal: It's time the conservatives get some boldness too. It's time they take the gloves off too. It's time they fight fire with fire; that they meet the liberals on their own ground and with their own weapons. It won't do to be "nice" and inoffensive and to meekly obey all the rules. No, it won't. And the sooner the conservatives realize this, the better it is.

If Luther and Calvin and the other Reformers had kept on being nice and "paying the quotas," we'd still be in the Roman Catholic church today. There comes a time when we must obey God rather than men, and that time is NOW. No dilly-dallying around.

Let me make some concrete suggestions:

1. Stop paying quotas to agencies which undermine our confessional integrity. It's an elementary principle of Christian freedom that I may send my money (the Lord's money) to causes which I believe are doing the most for the cause of the truth and the kingdom of God. As Vander Kam put it recently in *The Outlook*: "I thought in my naiveté that it was in inalienable right of every person to give to the cause he desired!" Exactly. That's what it is, no matter what any synod may say about it. It's time we claim this inalienable right. Even the state is more tolerant on this matter than our own synod.

2. Ministers and consistories must stop giving *Banner* subscriptions to newly-weds. It amazes me that even conservative ministers do this. Let them give a subscription to Reformed papers instead. Let's use every opportunity we can to promote the truth of the Reformed faith.

3. Consistories must stop using their bulletins to announce meetings of the Women's Committee in the CRC (whether that's in Grand Rapids, Edmonton, or anywhere else). This is a revolutionary outfit, and we should give no promotion to that kind of thing.

4. It's time consistories and churches take the bull by the horns and call and ordain ministers who have

completed their training in Westminster, Reformed (Jackson), Mid-America or any other reliable Reformed seminary. De Koster is right here: we've simply got to call the bluff of our bureaucrats. These men (seminarians) have had a completely adequate and Reformed training—as good or better than they can get at Calvin. There is no reason in the world why they should have to spend an extra year at Calvin. None at all, except that of provincialism (even the *Banner* editor recognized that), and keeping a tight rein on things for the protection of our

“sacred institutions.” This is really a form of idolatry and we have to stop it. A consistory has the right to call a man who has had good Reformed training and whom it deems fit for the ministry, and if classis will not ordain the man, then a few individual congregations can do it. They have that right. The present rule lacks all fairness, integrity and credibility, and it's time consistories challenge it. I hope they will do so. We've tried to change it through proper channels, to no avail. We'll have to change it through “improper” channels then.

The Liberals play fast and loose with confessional formulas and church order rules. It's time conservatives challenge some “synodical regulations.” Exceptional circumstances call for exceptional rules. Such a time is now. If conservatives are not willing to stand up and be counted now, they will be forever doomed to ineffectual back-benchers, where they can continue to wring their hands. Is that what we want?

I'm writing this out of deep concern and love for the CRC and its confessional integrity.

BASIC BIBLE TEACHINGS IV: Who Is Jesus Christ?

(Col. 1:12-23; 2:1-10)

1. His Central Role.

In Basic Bible teachings Christ obviously takes a central place. Even our secularized world reckons time before and since His coming (“B.C.” and “A.D.”). Consider that half of the articles of the Apostle's Creed are devoted to Him. This simply echoes His place in Biblical revelation. “To Him all the prophets witness” (Acts 10:43). “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Rev. 19:10). Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). “Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:13). Paul “determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). A characteristic of heresy has usually been to divert us from Christ, perhaps even to “Christian principles” (as Abraham Kuyper feared)! Especially the letter to the Colossians warns against that: “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradi-

tions of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power” (2:8-10). The warning to be “not Christ-centered, but God-centered,” though sometimes appropriate, may also be misleading. Paul testified to all “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

2. His Nature: God-Man He is God.

Especially the Gospel of John begins by highlighting this fact: He, “the Word was with God and...was God,” through whom “all things were made.” His disciples saw His Divine glory (John 1:1-3, 14). He did what no man, but only God could do (Mk. 2:5-12). “With the finger of God” He cast out devils (Lk. 11:20). He could say, “I and My Father are one” (Jn. 10:30), “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.... He

who has seen Me has seen the Father” (14:6, 9). After His resurrection a skeptical Thomas, seeing Him, confessed, “My Lord and my God” and that confession of Him as God was commended as the way, by believing in Him to “have life in His name” (20:28-31).

He is Man.

At the same time He becomes true man. He “being in the form of God” (having the distinguishing character of God) “made Himself of no reputation taking the form (distinguishing character) of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:6, 7). The Hebrews letter introduces Him as “the heir of all things... the brightness of His (God's) glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power” (1:2, 3), properly addressed as “God” (v. 8). In the next chapter it speaks of His “coming to bring many sons to glory.... Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise

shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (vv. 10, 14, 15). Becoming one of us, He can fully "sympathize with our weaknesses." "Jesus knows all about our struggles." Therefore we are encouraged to turn "boldly" to Him for "grace to help in time of need" (3:14-16).

3. His Official Saving Work.

By God's order, He had to be named "JESUS" ("Jehovah-Salvation"—the Greek form of the Hebrew "Joshua"), for He will save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21). He must also be given the title

of CHRIST ("the anointed," Hebrew "Messiah"). Old Testament representatives of God, prophets, priests and kings, were installed in office by "anointing" as a sign of their Divine calling and equipment by the Holy Spirit for special service. The leadership of those leaders was only a faint anticipation of that of the coming real Messiah, God our Savior.

He had to be Prophet, to speak, as God to teach us—How desperately and futilely the world tries to find counsellors!—He is the "Light of the World," counseling and leading us by His Word and Spirit.

He had to be our Priest, to reconcile us to God by the sacrifice of Himself. "He made Him who knew

no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). "Christ...suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). And "He is...able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:34ff.).

He must be King. Before He was born His mother was told, "of His kingdom there will be no end" (Lk. 1:33). He preached the "gospel of the kingdom." The summary of His career, (echoed in the Creed) simply follows that in Phil. 2:5-11: "He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of

These articles may be summarized in the following diagram:

The Office of the Christian Believer What Is Man Created and Saved to Be and Do?			
Man Created In God's "Image" (Gen. 1:26-28 (cf. Gen. 9:6; Jas. 3:9; I Cor. 11:7))	Fallen Man (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12-21 esp. 19; cf. I Cor. 15:21, 22)	Christ (Hebrew "Messiah," "the anointed" [Ex. 30:22-33]) John 1:41; 29-34 Acts 10:38 Luke 4:18 cf. Isa. 61:1	The "Christian" Named after "Christ" (Acts 11:26) because "anointed" with the Holy Spirit, to be restored to knowledge, holiness and righteousness. (Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24)
1. A "Prophet" To know and speak of and for God.	1. Deluded by the "father of lies," the devil. Eph. 2:2, 3; 4:17-19 John 8:44	1. The Prophet to teach men to know God again. (Deut. 18; cf. Acts 3:22-26) John 1:18; 17:3; I John 5:20, 21 (Heb. 1:1, 2)	1. Prophet Acts 1:8; 2:17 ff. (cf. Num. 11:25-29, Joel 2:28, 29) To know and speak for God.
2. A "Priest" To love and live in the friendship of God.	2. An enemy, estranged from and hostile to God, loving what he ought not. Col. 1:21 Titus 3:3	2. The Priest to bring us back to God Heb. 9:11, 24 ff; 10:1 ff. I Pet. 3:18	2. Priest to love and worship God Heb. 13:15, 16; Rev. 1:6; 5:10.
3. A "King" To serve and rule for and with God. Gen. 1:28; 2:15; cf. Ps. 8:3-9	3. The devil's slave and victim. John 8:44 (ps. 14:1-3; 53:1-4; Isaiah 59:2-8) Romans 3:9-18	3. The King to rule and protect. Luke 1:32, 33 Ps. 1; 8; cf. Heb. 2, restoring to proper status and action.	3. King to share in the service, struggle, victory and rule of His Kingdom. I Pet. 2:5, 9 (cf. Ex. 19:5, 6) Rom. 12:1, 2 II Tim. 2:1-3, 12; 3:14-17; 4:7, 8; Rev. 1:5, 6; 5:9, 10; 20:4, 6 (cf. Dan. 7:13, 14, 18) Ps. 8; Heb. 2:3 ff.

the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." After His resurrection He declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18), and He ascended to heaven to a position "far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come" (Eph. 1:21).

Can we receive Him as Savior, but (in our changing, democratic society which has outgrown authoritarian notions) let Him be only our "Liberator?" The Lord faced such a proposal when the crowds who had

enjoyed a free lunch, wanted more, welcomed Him as prophet and were determined to make Him king (John 6:14, 15). When He diverted them from free dinners to speak of "everlasting life" they quickly left. Those who will not have Him as Lord and King, cannot have Him as Savior, but will have Him as Judge (Psalm 2; Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 19:14, 27).

The apostle Paul always felt overwhelmed that even he, the persecutor, might receive and preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8). All who receive Christ as Savior and Lord are promised (along with the labors and battles of His service as His prophets, priests and kings) not only "abounding grace" now, but a part in His triumphant return and in His eternal kingdom and glory. Overwhelmed by that prospect which goes far beyond our ability to imagine, the Bible especially in its last book gives us

glimpses of all joining in the Hallelujah chorus of praise to our God and Savior who will "reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 5:9-14). PDJ

Suggested Questions:

1. Is our faith to be God-centered or Christ-centered or both? (Acts 20:21.)
2. Why is His Godhead essential for us? (John 1:1-4, 14; 10:30; 14:6, 9; 20:28-31.)
3. Why is His manhood essential for us? (Heb. 2:10, 11, 14-18; 4:15, 16.)
4. What does He do as prophet?
What does He do as priest?
What is His substitutionary atonement? (2 Cor. 5:19, 21; 1 Peter 3:18.)
5. Can we have Him as Savior, but not as Lord? (Rom. 10:9, 10, 13; Matt. 7:21-23.)
6. What does His Lordship mean to us? (Matt. 28:18-20; Rom. 8:34-39.)

SWIMMING ON SUNDAY: OR REVELATION BY QUESTIONNAIRE

Herne Bay Court, a Christian Holiday and Conference Centre in Kent, has decided that next summer its heated outdoor swimming-pool will be open on Sundays. Nothing surprising in that. Most holiday centres do the same; and many Christians have long since declared themselves emancipated from the Fourth Commandment.

What's new is the marvellous argument used by the management to justify their decision.

First, they became gradually aware of an "easing of attitude and freedom of worship" and decided to look into the question of opening the pool on the Lord's Day.

Secondly, the Directors set out to discover the will of God in the matter. They "earnestly trusted" in His leading.

Thirdly, they "allowed" God to lead through His people. A questionnaire was given out to all those attending the Centre throughout the summer. An overwhelming majority voted in favour of Sunday opening: "We now simply accept that God's will has been done, and that our loving Lord has given His assent to our question."

As readers will recall, there is undoubted precedent for this procedure. Some time ago, when the church was stranded in the Sinai Desert, it decided, after due democratic process, to make a Golden Calf. There then followed "the holiday of their lives."

We have no wish (or right) to make merry with the matter or to embarrass the Directors of Herne Bay

Court. They are victims of the vacuous piosity which so often passes for evangelical theology. How easy it seems to be for Christians today to be confident that they are "in God's will" and how dubious are the means by which they discover it. Behind all the clichés, the Directors of Herne Bay Court have simply applied the oldest commercial principle in the world: Give the customer what he wants. Whether it's anaemic veal, Sunday entertainment or a Golden Calf.

From the MONTHLY RECORD of the Free Church of Scotland. Editor, Rev. Donald Macleod.