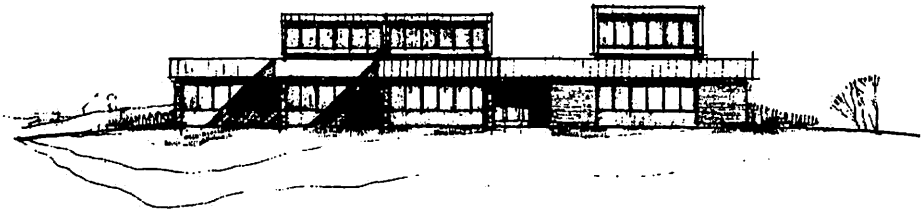


N. Jones

PROTESTANT REFORMED THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL

**MARCH, 1981
VOLUME XIV, NO. 2**



**THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL
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CONTENTS:

	Page
The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism (8)	
Prof. Herman Hanko	3
The Second Reformation in Scotland (2)	
Rev. Chris Coleborn	12
The Arian Controversy	
Rev. Ronald Hanko	45
The Pastor	
Prof. Robert D. Decker	61
Book Review (The Deacons Handbook)	
Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko	67

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Those of our readers who have been with us for some time are aware of the fact that, from time to time, we publish in our *Journal* papers which have been written for assignments in the Seminary. We have included in this issue another such paper. It will be published in two sections with the concluding section appearing, the Lord willing, in the Fall issue. The paper is written by Rev. R. Hanko, minister of the Word of God in the Wyckoff Protestant Reformed Church in Wyckoff, New Jersey.

We welcome back to the pages of the *Journal* Prof. Decker who continues his series on pastoral work. We are sure that these articles will be of special help to the many of our readers who are pastors, for the pastoral work of the ministry is an important part of the minister's calling and is receiving increasing emphasis in our day.

Pastor C. Colborn's article on the Scottish Reformation is completed in this issue of the *Journal*. We are grateful to Pastor Coleborn for permission to publish this paper. You will recall, from our last issue where this essay was begun, that Pastor Coleborn is minister of the Word in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. We extend to our brothers in Australia and Tasmania the invitation to submit to us any other papers, which may have been written by them, for publication in our *Journal*.

With this issue, the editor completes his series on infant baptism. Perhaps, the Lord willing, the Fall issue of the *Journal* will contain a further article on a critique of David Kingdon's book written by Dr. J. Douma of the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands and entitled, "Infant Baptism and Regeneration." Copies of all the articles are available.

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The Seminary still has a few copies of Turretin available, both in hard cover and in soft cover with plastic binding. If you would like to have a copy, please write soon.

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With this issue of the *Journal* we conclude fourteen years of publishing. This is hard for us to believe; the time has gone very swiftly. Our beginning was very modest and somewhat hesitant because we did not know what reception our paper would have. But God has blessed our efforts beyond what we have asked or thought. Our subscription list has increased over 500 % and we have been able to alter our format to make our publication look more professional.

All these years we have sent the *Journal* out to our subscribers free of charge. For the moment we anticipate no change in this policy. We are willing and eager, insofar as possible, to bear the cost ourselves. Nevertheless, the costs continue to climb both in publishing the paper and in mailing it. If, therefore, any of our readers (many of whom have written us to express their appreciation for our work) desire to assist in paying these mounting costs, such assistance would be greatly appreciated. We are not asking for subscription prices, but we do believe you will want to know that our costs are great and that you may help us financially in this work.

THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF INFANT BAPTISM (8)

Prof. Herman Hanko

In bringing our series on the Reformed doctrine of infant baptism to a close, we are discussing a few issues which may in a sense be called peripheral. They do not deal with the heart of the debate between those who hold to infant baptism and those who maintain believers' baptism; but they are questions which repeatedly come up in the course of the discussion. And, by way of conclusion, a few words ought to be said about them. Two or three such matters we discussed in the last issue of the *Journal*; in this issue we conclude this discussion.

MALE CIRCUMCISION

An objection against infant baptism which is often raised by advocates of believers' baptism is the fact that in the Old Testament only males were circumcised, while in the New Testament both males and females are baptized. The argument goes something like this. If baptism has taken the place of circumcision, then there should be an analogy between the administration of the sign in the Old Testament and in the New as far as participants are concerned. Then in the Old Testament the sign of the covenant ought to have been administered for boys and girls as baptism is in the New.

Now it ought to be clear at the outset that this argument is not very weighty. It has, in fact, no weight at all among so-called Reformed Baptists. Reformed Baptists, generally, agree with us that circumcision was a sign of the covenant in the Old Testament and that baptism is a sign of the covenant in the New. Their disagreement lies elsewhere: they maintain that the two covenants are so different in content and administration that the fact that infants were circumcised in the Old Testament in no way proves that infants must be baptized in the New. Thus, Reformed Baptists are open to the same charge: why were males baptized in the Old Testament and males and females baptized in the New? Only fully dispensational Baptists can really bring up this objection because they take the position that there is no identity nor analogy nor connection (of any kind) between the Old Testament and the New. Hence, that males only were circumcised in the Old Testament while both males and females are baptized is not an important or significant matter. It is probably because Reformed Baptists do want to speak of circumcision as a sign of the covenant

and of some connection (however tenuous) between the Old Testament covenant and the New that Kingdon does not bring up this point in his book, "Children of Abraham."

Nevertheless, we ought briefly to look at the objection.

No doubt, in part, the difference in the sign has to do with the nature of the Old Dispensation. God chose circumcision as a sign of the covenant in the Old Testament. We are not told in Scripture why God chose this sign in distinction from other possible signs which He could have chosen, and any answer to the question will be somewhat speculative. But we suggest that there are two possible reasons. The first reason is that the sign of circumcision was a *bloody* sign. A great deal of blood was shed in the Old Dispensation because God wanted to remind His people all the time that without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22). A blood sign of the covenant would reinforce that general teaching. In the second place, and in close connection with this, the nature of the sign (performed on the organ of generation) was a constant reminder to believing Israel that they were incapable of bringing forth the seed of the covenant by natural generation, conception, and birth. They were able only to bring forth children of the flesh, children dead in sin. To bring forth the children of the promise, the true children of the covenant, required a wonder of grace, the miracle of grace which God performs in both the Old Dispensation and in the New.

Now if this be correct that this is, at least in part, the reason why God chose circumcision as a sign of the covenant in the Old Testament, then it stands to reason that this sign could be given to males only.

However, this must not be construed as being an unhappy corollary of the nature of the sign which God chose. The fact of the matter is that the line of the covenant was carried on through the males. The males occupied a position of special importance in the Old Testament, and it was sufficient for them to bear the sign of the covenant. If one reads the genealogies of Scripture in the Old Testament one cannot help but be struck by the fact that only males are mentioned. The exception to this is the genealogy in Matthew 1 where four women are mentioned. But these four women were unique in the covenant line. Tamar brought forth the seed of the promise by an act of adultery; Rahab and Ruth were foreigners and Rahab was a public harlot in the city of Jericho; Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah whom David stole from Uriah by adultery and murder. But the genealogies are limited, for the rest, to males.

It is interesting to note that Reformed theologians generally have taken the position that the female was included in the male and thus participated in the sacrament. Cf. also Calvin, *Institutes*, IV, xvi, 16. This was because of the

Old Testament. In the New Testament the females are lifted to a higher position in God's covenant because they too, along with the males, receive the Spirit when Christ pours Him out. Peter quotes the prophecy of Joel on Pentecost which emphasizes this very truth: "And your sons and your *daughters* shall prophesy. . . . And on my servants and on my *handmaidens* I will pour out in those days of my Spirit" (Acts 2:17, 18).

It is not therefore strange that the sign of baptism is given to both males and females in the New Testament.

CHILDREN AT THE LORD'S TABLE

Another objection which is brought against the paedo-baptist position is the objection that children were allowed to partake of the Passover in the Old Testament, but children are not, generally, allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper in the New Dispensation.

Kingdon writes concerning this:

Secondly, it is assumed that children will be present at and participate in the celebration of the passover. . . .

If our interpretation is correct then those who make much of the circumcision-baptism analogy should make a little more of the Passover-Lord's Supper analogy. If following circumcision infants were present at, and partook of the passover, then why do our Reformed Paedo-baptist friends deny the Lord's Supper to infants? If the analogy holds good in the one instance it should do so in the other. (p. 73)

In the *Baptist Reformation Review*, (Vol. VI, No. 3,) Fred A. Malone takes the same position. Arguing on the basis of Exodus 12:24 that children partook of the Passover Feast he concludes:

What now is my point? Assuming that children in the Old Covenant were allowed to participate in the Passover Feast as soon as able to consume the elements, and assuming that children in the New Covenant are not allowed to participate until saving faith and self-examination are evidenced, my questions are:

What has changed in the application of the Covenant Family concept from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant?

Why does the covenant child participate in the Passover and not in the Lord's Supper?

Has the New Covenant child less blessings than the Old Covenant child?

What EXACTLY are the Covenant blessings for the new Covenant child? (p. 7).

There are not many passages which are quoted in support of the point. Kingdon refers to Exodus 23:17 and Deuteronomy 16:16 in which passages all male members were commanded to appear before the Lord in the tabernacle and temple. He also refers to Exodus 12:26, 27 and Deuteronomy 6:20ff. where "it is assumed that children will be present at and participate in the celebration of the passover. 'And when your children say to you, What do you mean by this service? you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover . . .'" (p. 71). Malone refers to Exodus 12:24 where God says: "And you shall observe this event as an ordinance for you and your children forever."

There are two or three remarks we ought to make about this line of reasoning.

1) That, according to Exodus 12:24, God commanded the people and their children to keep the ordinance of the Passover forever does not necessarily mean that very young children partook of the feast. On the one hand, the emphasis falls upon the fact that Israel must keep this feast throughout her generations; and, on the other hand, the age of these children is not mentioned.

2) That the males were commanded to appear before the Lord to celebrate this feast says nothing about the age of the children. Kingdon calls attention to the fact that the text speaks of *all* the males. But this does not necessarily mean all the children and infants. In fact, Keil, commenting on the passage (without any axe to grind in connection with the question of baptism), writes: "The command to appear, i.e., to make a pilgrimage to the sanctuary, was restricted to the male members of the nation, probably to those above 20 years of age, who had been included in the census (Numbers 1:3). But this did not prohibit the inclusion of women and boys (cf. I Samuel 1:3 sqq., and Luke 2:41 sqq.)." (Pentateuch, Vol. II, *loc. cit.*)

3) It is certainly true that the children were to ask their parents what this service meant, and the parents were to explain the service to the children, but the following remarks are pertinent in this connection: a) The Passover was celebrated in houses with households where the children were, naturally, present and would observe the meal. This does not necessarily imply that they participated in the meal, but the command to explain the meal was a part of their preparation with a view to participating at some future date. b) The same is true in the New Dispensation. When the Lord's Supper is celebrated in the church, our children are present with us. They ask us what these things mean which we do. We explain to them the meaning of the sacrament. This is our responsibility and obligation. But it does not mean that they partake of the sacrament. c) Even if they did partake of the Passover meal, it must be remembered that the fact that they ask the question and that an explanation must be

given to them implies that they were sufficiently mature of understanding to do these things.

4) In connection with Jesus' visit with His parents to Jerusalem, Ederheim writes: "In strict law, personal observance of the ordinances, and hence attendance on the feasts at Jerusalem, devolved on a youth only when he was of age, that is, at thirteen years." (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. I, p. 235.) There are few better authorities on Old Testament customs than Ederheim.

And so our conclusion is that the question of the age when children celebrated the Passover is a question which cannot be answered easily, although the evidence points to the fact that children did not participate in the Passover until a later age. It therefore ought not to have any bearing on the discussion one way or another.

JOHN'S BAPTISM

Much is made by Baptists of the fact that John the Baptist baptized adults only. Kingdon writes:

Secondly, the principle of birth connection is clearly abrogated in the baptism of John. His was a baptism of repentance. . . . Those capable of confessing their sins are clearly not infants. . . . If John baptised only those who could confess their sins, and if the disciples of our Lord followed the same practice, why should it be so difficult to believe that the apostolic Church did not practise infant baptism?

According to the Paedobaptist argument, John should have baptised infants as well as adults since he would, as a Jew, have accepted the principle of "thee and thy seed." Yet he did not baptise infants. How do Paedobaptists account for this? I suggest that on their own premises they are caught in a very difficult position. They could maintain, firstly, that since John did not baptise infants without a clear command not to do so, he had acted without divine authorization. This is unthinkable in the light of his mission as God's messenger (Mark 1:2).

Secondly, Paedobaptists could argue that in the case of his repentance-baptism the principle did not apply. If they choose to argue in this way they must show why the principle should not apply to Christian baptism which is also, among other things, a repentance-baptism (e.g., Acts 2:38). (pp. 35, 36)

In a way it is not surprising that Baptists should have a misconception of the ministry of John the Baptist, for their inability to see the relation between

the Old and the New Dispensations would, quite naturally, lead them also to a misunderstanding of the ministry of John the Baptist. And their misunderstanding of the nature of his work would also lead them to misunderstand the nature of his baptism.

John the Baptist occupied a unique place in the historical realization of God's covenant. Jesus points this out in Matthew 11 where He calls John the greatest of all the prophets (vss. 9-11) and yet makes the statement that he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Greater than all the prophets, but less than the least in the kingdom of heaven!

How can this be?

The answer is that John lived in that period of transition between the Old and the New Testaments as the forerunner of the Lord Jesus Christ. As such his position was unique. He was a part of the Old Testament, but announced the arrival of the New. He was born, preached, and died in the Old; but no one stood as close to the New as he — until the New finally arrived in all its glory through the work of Christ. He preached in the waning days of the Old Testament while standing on the threshold of the New.

So John's calling had a positive and a negative aspect to it. From a positive point of view, John's calling was to prepare the way for Christ and to announce Christ's coming as the One Who would establish the kingdom of heaven. This John did in all his ministry which finally culminated in John's stirring words: "Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." When John had pointed Jesus out to the people, John's work was all but over and John's ministry completed.

But that work of preparing the way of the Lord had also a negative aspect to it. Although John's ministry is discussed in all the gospel narratives, this aspect of it is especially emphasized in Matthew's gospel, chapter 3. John was a part of the Old Testament and, as such, stood still in the Dispensation of types and shadows when all of Israel's economy pointed ahead to the realities of the kingdom of heaven which were to come. But that Old Dispensational economy of types and shadows had become corrupt through the abuse of the wicked in the nation. Godless Herod Antipas sat on David's throne and the nation itself was under the crushing heel of a foreign power. The hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees controlled the religious and ecclesiastical life of the nation so that the temple with all its sacrifices and ceremonies was under the control of unbelieving men. The house of God had been made a den of robbers and the precepts of the law were hidden under the ordinances and laws which men had invented. The whole typical structure of Israel's life was weighted down with human inventions, and work-righteousness was promoted as the way of salvation.

No wonder then that John's ministry took on the form that it did. John labored in the wilderness to call the people away from the temple and the worship of dead form. He announced that the axe was laid at the foot of the tree (the tree of Israel's ceremonial and typical life), for God was about ready to push out of the way that whole economy of types and shadows now that the reality had come. Thus the burden of John's ministry was that the kingdom of heaven was near and judgment was to come upon the apostate house of Israel. The whole Mosaic system was about to pass away as the picture makes room for the reality, and the nation as a whole was about to fill the cup of iniquity so that judgment could come on the house of Israel and the gospel might, through Christ's work, become truly catholic in the gathering of a church from every nation and tribe and tongue.

Against this background John preached. And in the context of this truth John performed his work. Understanding these things, the following is clear concerning John's baptism.

1) The principle of believers and their seed was still in force (contrary to what Kingdon says). It was in force because the time was still the Old Dispensation. It operated as a principle even as it always had. And still the rite of circumcision was the sign of the covenant, for it was still not the day of the kingdom of heaven. John preached and labored, warned and baptized within the context of the same Old Testament truth that God established His covenant with believers and their spiritual seed. So true was this that both John and Jesus were circumcised according to the law.

2) The text does not tell us whether children were present in the wilderness and whether they with their parents were baptized or not. We have no way of telling. Surely, because John preached and baptized in the rugged desert country of southeastern Judea, it was not likely that people would take their children with them. Even the pilgrims, on their way to Jerusalem, who were called by John as they crossed the Jordan would not likely have children with them who were younger than twelve. But, as Baptists are so fond of reminding us, we may not make conclusions on the basis of silence, and the text is silent on this point. We do not know. Baptists do not know. Nor does it matter.

3) The question uppermost in John's mind when the Scribes and Pharisees came to him was the importance of warning them of the fundamental truth (a truth which God had emphasized throughout the Old Testament, but which needed emphasis once again), that children of Abraham were never and are not during John's day those who are of natural birth: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Matthew 3:9).

Calvin has an interesting paragraph or two on this verse:

He thus tears from them the wicked confidence, by which they had been bewitched. The covenant, which God had made with Abraham, was employed by them as a shield to defend a bad conscience: not that they rested their salvation on the person of one man, but that God had adopted all the posterity of Abraham. Meanwhile, they did not consider, that none are entitled to be regarded as belonging to "the seed of Abraham," (John 8:33), but those who follow his faith, and that without faith the covenant of God has no influence whatever in procuring salvation. And even the little word, *in yourselves*, is not without meaning: for though they did not boast in words, that they were Abraham's children, yet they were inwardly delighted with this title, as hypocrites are not ashamed to practise grosser impositions on God than on men

The meaning of the words, therefore, is: God has made an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his seed. In one point you are mistaken. While you are worse than bastards, you imagine that you are the only children of Abraham. But God will raise up elsewhere a new seed of Abraham, which does not now appear." He says in the dative case, *children TO ABRAHAM*, to inform us, that the promise of God will not fail, and that Abraham, who relied on it, was not deceived, though his seed be not found in you. Thus from the beginning of the world the Lord has been faithful to his servants, and has never failed to fulfil the promise which he made to them, that he would extend mercy to their children, though he rejected hypocrites. (*loc. cit.*, p. 191)

It was always a principle of the covenant of God that "not all who are of Israel are Israel" but that the children of the promise are counted as seed. But this point is now especially emphasized since the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and the only way into the kingdom of heaven is the way of repentance. Not that this is any different than it always was — how often does not the Old Testament emphasize this very thing? But with the arrival of the reality this fundamental truth must be stressed. The whole economy of types and shadows is to be done away. With it will pass God's dealings with the nation of Israel as type of the Church. Mere appeal to being Abraham's seed means nothing in the kingdom of heaven. Repentance! that is the important thing.

4) Thus John also baptized. On the one hand, baptism was not strange to the people for they were accustomed to many ceremonies which involved washings and sprinklings and various purifications. But, on the other hand,

baptism was a part of the transition between Old and New. Circumcision was still in force, for our Lord Himself was circumcised. But the day of new things was coming, and baptism was about to take the place of circumcision. Repentance unto forgiveness of sins was now the mark of those who entered the kingdom of heaven. And baptism was a sign and seal of that. Because reality had come, the sign was all the clearer. The bloody sign of circumcision and of the inability to bring forth the seed of the promise was finished, for the Seed now was there to work all things necessary for salvation. And so baptism was administered along with circumcision until the time when circumcision was finished altogether when the kingdom actually arrived in the outpouring of the Spirit of the exalted Lord. And so here the emphasis falls upon the meaning of baptism, and the question of the baptism of infants is totally irrelevant.

But it is exactly this continuity which underscores the continuity also of the principle: believers and their seed. This Jesus makes clear when He takes little children to Him and stresses: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." And this too Peter stresses on the very day of Pentecost: "For the promise is unto you and to your children. . . ."

This brings us to the end of our series on the question of infant baptism. We have showed in this series that the Baptists are wrong in their division and separation of the Old and New Dispensations; that, in fact, their position must inevitably be one of Dispensationalism when they make separation between the covenant with Abraham and his seed and the covenant which God establishes with His people in the New Dispensation. We have showed that throughout both the Old and the New Dispensation God establishes His covenant with the seed of the promise only and not with all who are the natural seed of Abraham — or of believers. We have showed how circumcision and baptism are one and the same and that the latter has taken the place of the former in the works of God. We have showed that the principle of believers and their seed is therefore applicable to all generations and to all times. We have showed, however, that this must be taken organically — as Scripture also does. And so we have showed that the baptism of infants in the line of the covenant is the command of God Himself, and that we are disobedient to God's command when we refuse to do this.

May those of our Baptist friends who want to be Reformed and Calvinistic and who want to maintain the doctrines of grace, understand these precious truths of Scripture and come to say with us: "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Psalm 127:3-5).

THE SECOND REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND (2)

Rev. Chris Coleborn

(We conclude in the following article an essay prepared by Rev. Chris Coleborn of the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches of Australia. The first part appeared in the last issue of the Journal. In the introduction Rev. Coleborn wrote: "In this essay we shall seek to: 1) Indicate the similarities between the Reformation in Scotland and those in England and the Continent, 2) Show how the political situation in Scotland led to the enunciation of the principle of the independence of the Church from the State, in contrast to the domination of the Church by the State in Europe generally. 3) Show that the Scottish Reformers of the Second Reformation went further in emphasizing that the Lord Jesus Christ was King of kings and Lord of lords, and therefore, the nation, in its own sphere, should be subject to Him. 4) Make reference to, and take illustrations from, the Covenants and Scottish history in general." He divided his paper into three parts: 1) Similarities between the first Scottish Reformation and the English and Continental Reformation, 2) The political and ecclesiastical background to the Second Reformation in Scotland, 3) The Advancement of Christ Jesus' universal Kingship and authority in the Second Reformation. The first two points were treated in that part which appeared in the last issue of the Journal; the last point is discussed in this present essay.)

III. THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRIST JESUS' UNIVERSAL KINGSHIP AND AUTHORITY IN THE SECOND REFORMATION

We have already noted how the real crux of the Second Reformation was the matter of *authority*. The Second Reformation was concerned with delineating further the authority not only of the Church, but also that of the State and the relationship of each to the other. The tyranny of the Stuarts, and their grievous persecution of the Reformed Church of Scotland (then the great majority of Scotland) had forced the Church to examine further the matter of *authority*.⁹⁰

We mention by name some of the men involved in the work of the Second Reformation. It could be said that Robert Bruce, in opposing the tyranny of the crown, was one of the first notables of the Church's pastors (after Knox's time) to question an *unlimited* rule and *authority*. He was followed by such erudite and godly men as John Craig, Andrew and James Melville, Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie, Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie, Robert Rollock, etc.⁹¹ All of these ministers and the majority of their generation were Covenanters, in that they so understood *authority* in its universal application, to be vested in Christ Jesus, that His rule was to be acknowledged in Church, home, and State, and that that rule was to be acknowledged in solemn Covenant terms and constructions.

The above named men and the Reformed Church of their day were apologists for Christ's universal Kingship and authority, and, by considering their personal testimonies and writings, as well as by considering those legal documents which came into existence at that time we can observe how they advanced this proposition from Scripture. Such documents as the *Second Book of Discipline*, the *Second National Covenant*, the *Solemn League and Covenant*, particular articles of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, such books as George Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, etc. and Rutherford's *Lex Rex*, Rollock's and Rutherford's works on the Covenant of Redemption and Grace, all of which set forth the great proposition of Christ's Kingly and Universal Lordship.

We shall now endeavour to consider the principles advanced by the generation of the Second Reformation, principles the Covenanters believed were justly and truly founded upon the Word of the living God. We shall then briefly consider some of the documents which set forth these principles.

A. The Principles which typified the Second Reformation.

As already mentioned, we understand the following points to summarize and set forth both the gist and sum of the Second Reformation's principles. It was of course vitally concerned with *authority*. We believe these following points, in which we have sought to tie up the principles of the Second Reformation, also set forth and emphasize the areas where the Second Reformation advanced over that of both the Continent and England.

1. A great attachment to the truth that Almighty God has revealed Himself and His will for faith and life through the Mediator of the Covenant, Christ Jesus. It was not only a dogma, but a personal belief;⁹² Christ Jesus was seen as OUR King, the King of kings with Whom we are bound in an everlasting Covenant of Grace. Nor was it just a theological and experimental truth. It was seen rather to have ramifications for the nation's total civil life too.

The Westminster Standards,⁹³ as we have noted before, in many ways represent the fruit and the principles of the Second Reformation in Scotland. In the Confession of Faith we read of how that Almighty God reveals Himself in and by the Covenant of Redemption and Grace, and the Mediator of it, Christ Jesus. Thus we read in Chapter VII, Section i,

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they could never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of COVENANT.

In Chapter VIII, *Of Christ the Mediator*, Section iii, we read of how the Almighty Triune God has established this Covenant in and by the Mediator Christ Jesus, Who as both God and man, has all power and authority in heaven and earth. Thus we read:

The Lord Jesus, in His human nature thus united to the divine, was sanctified, and anointed with the Holy Spirit, above measure, having in Him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell; to the end that, being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, He might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a Mediator and Surety. Which office He took not unto Himself, but was thereunto called by His Father, who put all power and judgment into His hand, and gave Him commandment to execute the same.

That the Scottish Reformed Church was greatly persuaded of and attached to these above truths of the Covenant and its only Mediator, and their practical application, is a matter commonly acknowledged. Thus Berkhof in his *Systematic Theology* quotes Walker when he writes,

The old theology of Scotland might be emphatically described as COVENANT THEOLOGY.⁹⁴

This concept of the Covenant and of treating the claims of Christ Jesus as a reality for the nation as well as the Church was no mere scholastic concept, but it burned in the hearts of the people as a divine fire of commitment to, and implicit trust in, the Christ of God and His good rule. Thus Smellie writes, for example,

... the men ... were crusaders of Jesus Christ. They wished to have Him enthroned over the country which they loved with more than the patriot's affection. It was His crown which was the oriflamme of their holy war. For His inalienable rights they counted no peril too hazardous and no sacrifice too great.⁹⁵

The very wording and idea behind the *National Covenant*, the *Solemn League and Covenant*, etc. was that which grew out of the attachment the Reformers had to the need to be in Covenant with Christ Jesus, and to see that the country as well as the Church could have, to use the words of the Confession, "no blessedness or fruition of Him" except by way of God's Covenant, and voluntarily binding the nation to God by covenant. The concept of Psalm Two is very relevant here. It speaks of authority and nations and how naturally the nations do not want God's rule, but to be their own authority. Thus they set themselves against the Lord and His Christ.

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His Christ, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us (vss. 2-3).

But the psalm reminds us of the power, authority, and judgment of the Lord and His Christ, and how in the light of this fact they should freely embrace Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant.

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way (vss. 10-12).⁹⁶

With such conviction as we have described, a conviction the Church of Scotland found truly in God's Word to them, it should thus be no surprise to us that it was impossible for them to confine and limit what God had to say, to the ecclesiastical and metaphysical realm only. If Almighty God be true, as all creation, history, and their hearts shouted to them He was, and if Christ Jesus ruled from heaven with all power and authority over heaven and earth, and over every principality and power, as God's Word certainly declared, then they could never see civil matters as purely secular and divorced from spiritual matters and God's revealed will. Thus the concern of the Scots in the national treaty between England and Scotland was cast into the mould of a covenant, *The Solemn League and Covenant*.⁹⁷

So it is, that one of the unique peculiarities of the Second Reformation, was the great attachment held to the concept of the Covenant in Scripture, and its relevance not only to the Church and individual, but the nation and all the families of the nation. While the Reformed Churches of the Continent appreciated the truth of the Covenant of Redemption and Grace, yet none were so Biblically consistent and practical in advancing the doctrine to its Biblical conclusions. It was an open and practical social and personal concept for all areas of life, not just for the secret workings of a person's soul, nor just as a "mystical" or metaphysical truth for the Church as an abstract dogma. Christ Jesus was a historical reality, and the things He had to say to us and to all men, were objective realities. They were indeed truly spiritual, yet this was not to say there was a conflict between the realities of this world and the truths of Christ. Rather, without Christ and His life and wisdom, we are all lost and floundering, both for eternity and for the days of this life.

2. A strong conviction that the Church had the obligation laid upon them to make known what absolutes God had to say about civil rulers and their authority, limits and duties, as well as what God had to say to the Church.

Perhaps the area where the Church of Scotland at the time of the Second Reformation was most unique, though not in conflict with earlier reformed principles as such, was their working out in a practical way, the actual limitations of the secular and civil authority and of the Church's relationship to it. It should be remembered that at the time of the Second Reformation, the Church in many ways was the only representative of the rights of the common people.⁹⁸ Thus their stand and task was, at this time in history, to work out Biblical principles of *practical government*, a practical theory for the maintenance of the Church, the people's rights, and the functioning of the State.

At the First Reformation in Scotland, the reformation of the Church began, but the State remained, as we have observed, unchanged. Its theory of its own supreme authority over all aspects of the nation's life was still that of the pre-reformation era.⁹⁹ The Church's conviction, based upon Scripture, was that all ultimate, absolute, and real authority resided in Christ the Mediator of the Covenant, and that His will must be followed as the principle regulating faith and life. The conflict of these two principles of authority is what caused the issue of the role and limits of authority, both spiritual and secular, for all of life, to break forth. If at first the Church did not clearly grasp the above principle it was driven to it by the despotism of the government, as it sought to whittle away the liberties of the Church, and sought to make it a mere instrument of government policy and a rule devoid of absolutes.¹⁰⁰

The civil ruler's authority was not unlimited. It was a real authority they

possessed, certainly, but they were men also under a higher and absolute authority. They were to be ruled by the absolutes of God as revealed in His Word. This concept of a limitation on the authority of the state, and the king as its head, was really the principle of the founding of modern Scotland's (and Britain's) civil rule. The glory of the United States' and Britain's government, and the governments that have sprung from these countries, such as Australia, with their precious rights and liberties, are but the fruit of the Second Reformation,¹⁰¹ though sadly the root and principle from whence they grew is lost and forgotten. And one wonders and fears how the despotism of civil power can possibly be guarded against and prevented in our generation and the future, when the principle and root of the Biblical concept of authority is lost.

So we should remember that in Scotland the conviction that the Church had to make known what God had to say to nations, brought about a revolution in which the philosophy of an unlimited civil power was abolished. Wylie writes:

Thus in Scotland the Church is older than the modern State. It was the Church that called the modern, that is, the free State, into existence. It watched over it in its cradle; it fought for it in its youth; and it crowned its manhood with a perfect liberty. It was not the State in Scotland that gave freedom to the Church: (as in all other Reformed Churches and countries, C.F.C.), it was the Church that gave freedom to the State.¹⁰²

McCrie, quoting Aikman, writes of the *National Covenant* and the *principles and concepts* which essentially lay in it,

"To this much vilified bond," it has been well said, "every true Scotsman ought to look back with as much reverence as Englishmen do to their Magna Charta. It was what saved the country from absolute despotism, and to it we may trace back the origin of all the efforts made by the inhabitants of Britain in defence of their freedom, during the succeeding reign of the Stuarts."¹⁰³

The Church then, from its pulpits, in its influence upon sacred, yet civil, documents (such as the *National Covenant*), in the writings of its apologists, (such as Rutherford's *Lex Rex* and George Buchanan's *De Jure Regni Apud Scotos*, etc.) taught that there could be no true religion, no true freedom, no true liberty, either in the Church or the state unless proper Biblical limits and principles of authority were practically implemented and acknowledged.

Macleod, commenting upon Rutherford's position as seen in his work, *Lex Rex*, a position also representing the Church of the Second Reformation,

summarizes Rutherford when he writes:

Absolute power it is irrational and tyrannical to claim and it is beyond the right of the people to grant it. For they have all to answer to the King of kings. And such power cannot be entrusted to Parliaments or to Senates or to Congress or to Dictators. The freedom of a constituency of responsible rational beings is not a thing to be bought or sold or sacrificed or trodden under foot. Such lessons are not so antiquated or old-fashioned as not to be called for in these days of ours. Our old Scots Whigs were true conservatives of Divine rights and duties in the realm of civil government and citizenship.¹⁰⁴

We find this conviction that the Church had the obligation laid upon them to make known what God had to say about civil rulers and their authority, limits and duties, preached by the Rev. James Renwick in the fields during the “killing-times” just after the full establishment of the Second Reformation, when the restored Stuarts were seeking by every means to destroy the Reformed Church. We believe Renwick accurately states the convictions and stance of the Church of the Second Reformation. He preached from a fervent soul that the Lord had a quarrel with the civil powers because they had robbed the Church of her glorious gospel ordinances and privileges; because they trampled upon men’s consciences and tried to ensnare them; because they spoiled the land of its liberties, and the people of their goods and estates, in short, that their robbery of the people was spiritual as well as temporal. Renwick continues to upbraid the despotic government of the day,

... this antichristian (view is) flowing from the fountain of absolute power, arrogated by the present dominator; a power, above all laws both divine and human. Absolute power is that which none can claim but God, who is infinite, and whose will is a law: But yet the present tyrant claims this, and requires all to obey it without reserve of religion, conscience, credit, or honour; but all are to be mancipate and enslaved to it: O! if we had zeal of Christians, or the courage of them then we would disdain to be home-born slaves.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, the General Assembly of the Reformed Church of Scotland declared in 1649 that:

... magistrates and their power are ordained of God; so they are not to walk in their power according to their own will, but according to the law of equity and righteousness¹⁰⁶

Some, such as Meeter and Douglas, have suggested that Rutherford and the Covenanters whom he represented, really placed human sovereign power in either the people or else in the Church.¹⁰⁷ This is to misunderstand completely the point the Covenanters laboured to make. The practical outworking of the principle that *authority* was primarily found in the God of heaven and earth was that no man, whether one or many, could take to himself what belonged alone to God. (Thus the modern idea today of democracy, as found in the U.S.A., Britain, Australia, etc., where all *authority* is seen as "in the people," is as foreign to the Covenanters as a despotic monarch.) It is true that the Covenanters forcibly argued, as Rutherford does in his *Lex Rex*, that one of the limits of the authority of the king was the will of the people, but this does not mean that Rutherford or the Covenanters believed that "the will of the majority is right" and that "the majority are authoritative for the minority." Rather they believed, as they practiced in the drawing up of the Covenants, that authority is found only in Christ Jesus, and both people and rulers are beholden to Christ for their several duties, rights, and authority. It is therefore our observation that the Covenants were, in effect, *Constitutions* for the land, spelling out Biblical principles, and putting into concrete terms the rights and duties of the people and the rights and duties of the king. Thus the Covenanters sought to embody practically Christ's authority in the Covenants. Neither the king, the people, or the Church had supreme authority, but Christ alone. They sought, by the lawful means of the oath and vow, to embody principles which would exalt the nation. They cast the Covenants into the sacred form they did because they could not conceive of principles of civil government without due reference to Christ Jesus and His real position and power.

Before we leave this point, we must also comment on the fact that the Covenanters were forced to work out more fully, by this very same conflict, a more exact and Biblical stance for Church government and its doctrine and worship. Not only was Christ's authority and His Word to rulers to be acknowledged by the State, but His supreme and absolute authority in matters of Church government and worship was to be acknowledged and implemented by the Church in its own sphere. Man could not do as he wished. The principle regulating all actions for the Church was Christ Jesus' Meditorial and Covenant rule over His Church, a people over whom He was supreme Prophet, Priest, and King. We not only find this truth expressed in the Westminster Standards but also in the works of the Apologists of the time, such as George Gillespie's writing, particularly in *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, where he defends the proposition that, "The Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head of His Church, has therein appointed a government in the hand of Church-officers distinct from the civil magistrate,

over against the presumed authority of the civil magistrate to order the Church as it saw fit."¹⁰⁸

When the Monarch sought to subvert the Presbyterians for his own end, and to make himself lord and ruler in the Church, it raised, as we have argued, the whole question of authority. The response was the *National Covenant*, because guaranteed civil and religious liberties, already previously acknowledged and granted to the people and Church by the State, were then threatened.¹⁰⁹

Thus the Church's concepts of government and worship were not formulated by civil power or influence, as was the case on the Continent and in England, but by its own deliberations upon what Christ the King had to say to them in His inerrant Word. Hetherington writes:

Believing that God's Word contained the only authoritative direction for doing God's work, the Scottish reformers made their sole appeal "to the law and to the testimony"; and though they respected the great continental reformers, they sought the principles of doctrine, discipline, and Church government, from no foreign model, but from the Holy Scriptures alone From its origin it had to encounter the world's opposition; in its growth it received little or nothing of a worldly intermixture; and when it reached somewhat of matured form, it still stood opposed to the world's corrupting influence.¹¹⁰

Thus we find, in consequence of this principle of Christ's authority as the only rule in the Church, that the Church of Scotland in its forms of worship went beyond that of the Continent. For the Continental Reformed Churches, being still influenced by the power of the civil government, did not take to their consistent and practical application, the regulative principle. Thus the *Synod of Dort* for example, allowed a set formal liturgy and observance of days such as Easter, Christmas, Pentecost, etc. in the Church Order, for which no warrant could be found in the Word of God. To this day it is among the descendants of the Covenanters of Scotland that the regulative principle remains a practical reality as regards the government and worship of the Church.¹¹¹

And so it was that a second principle which made the Second Reformation in Scotland so unique was the strong conviction that the Church had the obligation laid upon it to make known what absolutes God had to say about civil rulers and their authority, limits, and duties, as well as what God had to say to the Church.

3. The third principle advanced by the generation of the Second Reformation, which they believed to be taught in the Word of the living God, and

which helped to make the Second Reformation go beyond the First was the belief that the doctrines of God's Word brought liberty, justice, true life, and that they belonged to the common people to enjoy and to possess, as much as the aristocracy or scholars in their various institutions.

Already we have noted that the Reformers emphasized the need, Biblically speaking, to consider the God-given rights of the common people. Thus Buchanan and Rutherford's emphasis on how rulers can properly reign only when the people properly consent, that it is necessary to have the approval of the people to be effective in ruling.¹¹²

Nor should we imagine that the common people's lot was not considered by the English and continental Reformers. However, it is obvious from history that in no other country did the common people participate in a more significant way than in the Reformation of both the Church and the civil government as in Scotland.

We see the Reformers and the Church of the Second Reformation evidencing their conviction of the importance and dignity of the common people by their being invited to participate in the courts of the Church, by their rights to call or approve of their own pastors, and by how firmly and warmly they received the teaching of the Covenanting pastors and held to the doctrines they taught, so that in the "killing times" even all the concerted might and terror of the civil government could not budge the people from their firm and Biblically enlightened consciences.

Commenting on the common people's reception and signing of the *National Covenant* in 1638 for example, Wylie writes,

Noble followed noble, swearing with uplifted hand, and subscribing. The barons, the ministers, the Burgesses, thousands of every age and rank subscribed and swore.¹¹³

Macpherson writes:

In all parts of the country the people flocked out to sign it.¹¹⁴

Other historians go on to relate how many thousands of the great majority of Scotland went on to sign the *National Covenant*, and so it became the expression not only of the nation and the Church, but of families and of many individuals.¹¹⁵

The fact that the Church believed in the Biblical power and authority of the ruling or lay elder, and of their right and duty to contribute to the government of the Church shows us how far the Reformers esteemed the rights of the

common people. Thus king Charles I dreaded the influence of such elders upon the Church. Smellie writes,

He (the king's spokesman) objected to the presence of the lay elders, the influence of many of whom Charles greatly dreaded: were they all, he asked sarcastically, "fit to judge of the high and deep Mysteries of Predestination, of the Universality of Redemption . . . of the Resistibility of Grace . . . of Election and Reprobation."¹¹⁶

The Church, by its doctrines of eldership, and as expressed in its standards, declared, seeing this was God's order, that Biblically qualified and called ruling elders were thus fit to judge!

Again, we see the love the Covenanters had for the common people, in that they were ever concerned to preach their needs and rights that flowed from Christ Jesus and His work, not only for their souls, but for their bodies and material needs and rights also. Thus James Renwick, while being of a later generation, rightly represents the true position of the Reformers of the Second Reformation when he administers the Word of Life to them and holds before them their civil rights as well as spiritual rights.¹¹⁷

This intense loyalty and informed thinking of the common people is seen by their willingness, after the climax of the Second Reformation, to lay down their lives, as so many did, for the sacred cause of Christ's authority and power both in the Church and State.¹¹⁸

We may also see the commitment of the common people to the cause of the Second Reformation, and their involvement in it, from the various Revivals which broke upon the land of Scotland when God's Word and Spirit moved and changed eternally so many souls. McCrie, writing of the period 1625-30, states:

The persecutors might remove the labourers from the field, but they could not destroy the fruits of their labours . . . they (the congregations) were wonderfully enabled in patience to possess their souls, so that no sufferings could induce them to abandon their principles, or resign themselves to despair.¹¹⁹

It was during this time as well as at later periods that quite remarkable revivals took place, which involved, more than ever, the common people. Wylie writes, for example,

Even the men of the world were impressed with these tokens of the working of a supernatural influence. . . . The moral character

of whole towns, villages, and parishes was being suddenly changed, now it was on a solitary individual, and now on hundreds at once, that this mysterious influence made its power manifest¹²⁰

Thus, we can see and conclude that Scotland in its Second Reformation went further than either the Continent or England in the extent of the common people's influence upon and the involvement in the work of the Reformation in Scotland. It could be said that Scotland had far more of its total citizens' support than did any other country, with the exception perhaps of the Reformed States of the Netherlands.

We finish this point concerning the involvement in and care of the common people in the Second Reformation, with a quote from Macleod.

These men (the Reformers), were more than guardians of the Church; they were the tribunes of the people and the champions of civil freedom.¹²¹ It was in defence of the rights of the Church's head that they fought their stern and long drawn out fight. In the course of this struggle they enlisted on their side, what their teaching and witness may be said to have brought into being, the loyal and enlightened support of the common folk who are the ultimate constituents of both Church and State. A people instructed, interested, and evangelized proved the anvil on which the hammers of royal absolutism and oppression rained their blows in vain.¹²²

B. The Documents of the Second Reformation

We could say there were two classes of documents which embodied and summarized the Second Reformation's principles. There are, firstly, those which had formal ecclesiastical and civil approval and publication. Secondly, there are those which were privately written by various Reformers of the Second Reformation and often published against official approval, but which still, we believe, faithfully embody the principles of the Second Reformation.

Most of the formal documents were cast into a covenant form. It is often thought that the concept of covenanting as a body of people to be bound together and to the Lord in a righteous cause is a Scottish peculiarity. However, we find that in other Reformed Churches the same practice and concept existed. The Scottish Covenants were unique only in the sense of their being national rather than party documents, and of being more clearly seen in the light of the principles of Covenant theology. They were also *constitutional*, rather than merely for personal encouragement. Wylie thus writes:

The Lutheran princes repeatedly subscribed not unsimilar bonds. The Waldenses assembled beneath the rocks of Bobbio, and with uplifted hands swore to rekindle their "ancient lamp" or die in the attempt. The citizens of Geneva, twice over, met in their great Church of St. Peter, and swore to the Eternal to resist the duke, and maintain their evangelical confession. The capitals of other cantons also hallowed their struggle for the gospel by an oath. The Hungarian Protestants followed this example. In 1561 the nobles, citizens, and troops in Erlau bound themselves by oath not to forsake the truth, and circulated their Covenant in neighbouring parishes, where also it was subscribed. The Covenant from which the Protestants of Scotland sought to draw strength and confidence has attracted more notice than any of the above instances, from this circumstance, that the Covenanters were not a party but a nation, and the Covenant of Scotland, like its Reformation, was national.¹²³

We shall proceed then, to consider and examine briefly the two classes of Documents from the Second Reformation.

1. Formal Documents.

a. *The Second Book of Discipline* (also called "The Book of Policy")

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1578 proceeded to consider various systems of ecclesiastical polity. This was because of a conflict between the state and the Church over the Church's power to rule in its own sphere. The state was at this time supporting the "Tulchan bishops," and thus an episcopal system, in an effort to obtain both revenue and political power.

It is called the *Second Book of Discipline* to distinguish it from the *First Book of Discipline* issued during Knox's time in 1560.¹²⁴ It is shorter than the First Book, defines the government of the Church more exactly, and was drawn up with greater care and deliberation. This document from that time (1578) forward was the authorized standard of the Church of Scotland in respect of government and discipline.

It consists of 13 chapters and leading propositions, including the following.

- 1) There is an essential line of distinction between civil and ecclesiastical power.
- 2) This distinction lies in there being a government of the Church, appointed by Christ Jesus Himself, and distinct from the civil.
- 3) This government is exercised by ecclesiastical officebearers as Christ Jesus has appointed, and not by the civil government.

4) The civil authority has for its direct and proper object the promoting of external peace and quietness among the subjects, all enforced by external means.

5) The ecclesiastical authority has as its direct and proper object the direction of men in matters of religion, and matters which pertain to conscience, all enforced by spiritual means. The power and government of the Church should be directed by the Word of God.

6) Yet, while there is a separation between the two, they are both of God, and tend to one end, if they be rightly used. They ought to co-operate within their respective spheres and fortify one another.

7) The government of the Church consists in three things.

- a) doctrine
- b) discipline
- c) distribution.

8) Corresponding to this division there arises in the Church a three-fold sort of church officers, ministers (variously known in Scripture as pastors, doctor, bishops, or teaching elders), ruling elders (who do not labour in the Word and doctrine), and deacons.

9) The officebearers of the Church are to be admitted by election and ordination.

10) The Presbytery or eldership, has the inspection of a number of adjoining congregations and power to ordain, suspend, and depose elders, and exercise discipline in its bounds.

11) Provincial Synods possess the power of all the Presbyteries within a province.

12) The General Assembly is composed of commissioners, pastors, and elders from all the churches in the realm, and takes cognizance of everything connected with the welfare of the National Church.

13) Among the abuses which ought to be removed, the following are particularly specified:

- a) The titles of Abbots and others connected with monastic institutions, and their ecclesiastical positions in state or church if any were held;
- b) The usurped superiority of bishops;
- c) The exercise of criminal jurisdiction by Church officers;
- d) The holding of plural charges and patronages.¹²⁵

The Parliament of Scotland ratified this document in 1592.

The Reformer, Andrew Melville, had much to contribute to the document, though it was in no way his opinion imposed upon the Church of

Scotland, as some have suggested.¹²⁶ Rather, he was at the head of his fellows as they stood for the intrinsic freedom that the Church is ruled by Christ through His Word and Spirit, and as they opposed secular aggression.¹²⁷

b. *The King's Covenant* (also called *The First National Covenant of Scotland*; *The Second Scottish Confession*; or *Craig's Confession*)¹²⁸

As with the other Covenants, this Covenant was drawn up as a solemn oath to defend the doctrine and organization of the Reformed Church against all hostile attacks.

This Covenant was drawn up in 1580 by John Craig.¹²⁹

It was signed at Edinburgh in 1580 by James VI and his court at Holyrood House in 1580, and by noblemen, preachers, and men of all ranks in 1581. Also, in the years following, it was renewed and, under Henderson's pen, recast in 1638.

This document swore to:

1) Resist popery, including all episcopal theories of Church government, and all rites and traditions of the Church without or against the Word of God.

2) Maintain Protestantism.

3) Maintain the monarchy.

4) Adjured:

a) Romish tenents,

b) All that stopped them from adhering to and defending the doctrine and government of the Reformed Church of Scotland.

c) To defend the person and authority of the king.

The document also ratifies the old Scottish Confession of 1560, and was approved by the General Assembly, which enjoined subscription to it upon all ministers and commissioners. Ministers of religion were required to obtain the subscription to it from their parishioners.¹³⁰

c. *The National Covenant* (also called *The Second National Covenant of Scotland*)

The *National Covenant* was drawn up in 1638 by Alexander Henderson and Johnston of Warriston, the Earls Rothes, and Loudon. Lord Balmerino revised it. These men were appointed by the Commissioners of Scotland, under pressure from the people, to prepare the Covenant for renewal. It was called for by the *four tables* of the Scottish nation, consisting of the nobility, the barons, the boroughs, and the Church at a most critical time both for the Church and the nation. Charles had clearly manifested his intention to overthrow completely the rights of the nation and Church, and the Church at

its Assembly refused point-blank to conform to the king's pleasure; thus it was a time of great tension in the land. They had suffered their liberties to be eroded to the point where they could go no further.

The Church and nation, calling to mind how God had blessed the previous Covenants in which the nation had bound itself by the most solemn obligations to put away all idolatry, superstition, and immorality and to worship God in simplicity and faithfulness according to His own Word, arrived at the conclusion that they should again renew their Covenant engagements to Him and His law.

Henderson and Johnston buttressed and punctuated the *King's Covenant*, and so, while this document is a fuller document than the *King's Covenant*, it is nevertheless identical in sentiment and substance to it. For that reason this document is often seen by historians as merely the *renewal* of the *King's Covenant*.

The Covenant consists of three parts,

1) The first section was the *King's Covenant* of 1581, exactly as at first prepared.

2) The second section listed the acts of parliament condemning Popery, and confirming and ratifying the acts of General Assembly.

3) The third section dealt with the practical application of the foregoing to the present circumstances, especially a grave and emphatic protest against those alien modes of worship which had provoked the present troubles.

The second part was drawn up by Johnston, and the third part was prepared by Henderson.

The Covenant included the defence of all those confessions and acts laid down by General Assemblies including the *Second Book of Discipline*. The document also defended the Presbyterians against the charge of rebellion, and held all, as with the *King's Covenant*, solemnly bound to be true to the Reformed religion, to their allegiance to the king and to the liberties and laws of the kingdom.

The Second National Covenant was ratified by the parliament of Charles I in 1640.

This Covenant (or its renewal) had such an effect on the people of Scotland, and was so universally received, that it truly was a most remarkable document and justly styled a *national Covenant*, for it was at once a charter of rights as well as a holy document, supported by almost all of Scotland.

Loane writes of it:

The great burden of this famous statement was that of full personal and national dedication to God. This alone can explain all the later scenes of enthusiasm among a people whose tradition for reticence is so strongly rooted in character and history. "From the knowledge and conscience of our duty to God, to our king and country . . . so far as human infirmity will suffer, wishing a further measure of the grace of God for this effect," so the Covenant asserted, "We promise, and swear by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD, to continue in the foresaid Religion."¹³¹

The National Covenant was signed by the great majority of Scotland's people of all ranks. It was received with great enthusiasm in the whole realm, with the exception of two places, St. Andrews (the Episcopal capital) and Aberdeen.

John Livingston tells us what he saw with his own eyes at Lanark:

I may truly say that in all my life-time, excepting at the Kirk of Shotts, I never saw such motions from the Spirit of God. . . . I have seen more than a thousand persons all at once lifting up their hands, and the tears falling down from their eyes.¹³²

It should also be remembered that Henderson visited the city and shire of Aberdeen to explain and defend the Covenant. He afterwards secured five hundred signatures for the Covenant in the city as well as those of some fifty ministers in the district.¹³³

d. *The Solemn League and Covenant*

The Solemn League and Covenant was drafted by request of the Scottish parliament by Alexander Henderson, and put into shape by the Scottish parliament and the General Assembly, with the concurrence and assistance of English commissioners sent to Scotland for that purpose. Johnston of Warriston assisted Henderson in its formulation.

This covenant's expressed purpose was the "Reformation and Defence of Religion, the Honour and Happiness of the King, and the Peace and Safety of the three Kingdoms of Scotland, England and Ireland."

It was subscribed several times by King Charles II, as well as all ranks in the three kingdoms, including the English Parliament and the Westminster Assembly of Divines.

It was approved by the General Assembly in 1643 and the Parliament of Scotland in 1644.

The document was partly civil and partly spiritual, seeing the historical occasion threatened both. It was the matured and summarized declaration of the people of England and Scotland on the great question of civil and religious liberty. It was heartily accepted by the ablest statesmen, the most learned divines, and the whole body of the Protestant people in both England and, especially, Scotland.

Its principles were:

- 1) Defence of the Reformed Presbyterian religion in Scotland.
- 2) Promotion of uniformity among the Churches of the three kingdoms in their Confession of Faith, form of Church Government, Directory of Worship, and catechizing.
- 3) The extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, and all unsound forms of religion.
- 4) The preservation of Parliaments and of the liberties of the people.
- 5) Defence of the sovereign in his maintaining the Reformed religion, the Parliaments, and the liberties of the people.
- 6) Discovery and punishment of malignants and disturbers of the peace and welfare of the nations.
- 7) Mutual defence and protection of each individually, and of all jointly, who were within the bonds of the Covenant.
- 8) Sincere and earnest endeavour to set before the world an example of public, personal, and domestic virtue and godliness.

This Covenant and oath with and to God thus became the foundation for the union and constitutional liberties of the three kingdoms. The Reformation in England was then established on the basis of solemn national dedication to God, even as the Presbyterians of Scotland had been.

Despite the criticisms raised against this Covenant both by friend and foe, who could deny that its issue was in fact the very preservation of the liberties of Great Britain? Hetherington, the noted historian, makes the point that it can be said that one other fruit of this Covenant was the place it played in preparing the mind of England for the calling of the Westminster Assembly, about two and a half years after it was first entered into. He further makes the point that it contributed for a time, at the Westminster Assembly to prevent to a considerable degree the rise of jealousy in the ecclesiastical proceedings that followed, till the harmony that had prevailed was destroyed by the Independent and Erastian controversies.^{134a, 134b}

e. *The Westminster Confession and Standards*

Though opposed by the king, the Parliament of England,

convinced that the Reformation of religion was necessary for the peace and security of the nation as well as civil constitutional reform, issued an ordinance in June, 1643 for an Assembly of Divines to meet at Westminster on the first day of July, 1643, to consider all things necessary for the peace and good government of the Church.

One hundred and fifty-one names are listed in the ordinance calling the Assembly. There were ten Lords, twenty Commoners as lay assessors, and one hundred twenty-one divines. Of the total called, about twenty-five never appeared at the Assembly, one or two having died about the time of the meeting of the Assembly and others, having feared the displeasure of the king, failed to appear.

Among the many outstanding divines were William Twisse, Stephen Marshall, Anthony Burgess, Thomas Goodwin, Jeremiah Burroughs, Edmund Calamy, and John Lightfoot, to name but a few. There were also representatives of the French Reformed congregations in England, as well as the Scottish divines, including Alexander Henderson, George Gillespie, Samuel Rutherford, and Robert Baillie. The Scots sat as participating observers only, and not voting members.

Each proposition was first considered in committee. There it was long and anxiously debated. It was next discussed sentence by sentence and word by word by the Assembly.

For over five years, between sixty and eighty men were daily in attendance, laboriously and patiently toiling to the best of their knowledge and power, through prayer and fasting, to build by the rock of Scripture, to build, as Wylie says,

... a temple in which three nations might worship; to erect a citadel within which three kingdoms might entrust their independence and liberties.

The Assembly framed a Confession of Faith, a Form of Church Government, a Directory for Public Worship, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, all of which were voted by an overwhelming majority of the Assembly. The Metrical Version of the Psalms, still used today, was also approved.

There were three great parties in the Westminster Assembly.

1) The Erastians, who held that it belonged only to the civil magistrate to inflict Church censures as well as civil punishments, and who held, generally, that the civil magistrate is the proper head, the source, and ruler of all power, ecclesiastical as well as civil.

This party was active and vehement, but not numerous, consisting chiefly of lawyers and only one or two ministers.

2) The Independents, who held that every individual congregation of Christians has an entire and complete power of jurisdiction over its members in all religious matters, a power to be exercised by its elders within itself and by its own sole authority. These amounted to about a half a dozen men who were of considerable ability and who were very persistent in maintaining their opinions.

3) The third group were the Presbyterians, who formed the majority of the Assembly (approximately one hundred) and generally coincided with the opinions of the Scottish commissioners. But as this latter party, though most numerous, was but indifferently acquainted with the Presbyterian polity, having little knowledge of any other than the Prelatic form of Church government, the task of explaining and vindicating Presbytery devolved chiefly upon the Scottish divines.

A more careful study of the work of the Assembly does not lie within the scope of this essay, important though it is. It is perhaps sufficient to state that, generally, the doctrines of the Church of Scotland and the earlier Confessional documents of the Church in no way conflicted with the Westminster Confessional Standards.¹³⁵ Rather, we find the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland both approving the Westminster Confessional Standards and accepting them as containing "nothing contrary to the received doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Kirk."¹³⁶

The Westminster Confessional Standards, then, represent the apex of the Second Reformation in Scotland, the stance of the Reformed Church of Scotland, the propositions of the Confessional Standards being supported after great and intense Scriptural deliberation by a General Assembly of the three kingdoms.¹³⁷

2. The Personally Published Documents.

Though there are various documents we could cite, historical as well as apologetical, which were published by the Covenanters, such as David Calderwood,¹³⁸ the noted historian, who assisted Henderson in drawing up the *Directory of Public Worship*, we will limit ourselves to a brief examination of two men and their writings. We shall consider the works of Samuel Rutherford and George Gillespie. Though both wrote extensively, we will limit ourselves to Rutherford's *Lex Rex*, (The Law and the Prince), and Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, as expressing in two different spheres the one truth they both held dear, together with all the Covenanters of Scotland: the sovereign and universal dominion of Christ Jesus over all of life, State as well as Church.

a. Samuel Rutherford's *Lex Rex* (1600-1661)

As a divine, Rutherford drew even the attention of the Theological Schools of the Netherlands, then in their golden age, and he was invited more than once to take a place as a Professor in one of their Colleges.

Deeply committed to the Covenanting cause and position, and being persuaded of its supreme truth from the Scriptures, he became one of its most outstanding apologists. He was a man of deep piety as well as of conviction.

Rutherford followed directly in the line of Knox, Buchanan, and Melville in his teaching that the obedience the people owe to the civil power is restricted, that the civil power's authority is within certain bounds, that the force or power of the people does not limit it, and that the people's power is not unlimited. All power is vested in and flows from God, and both are bound by that and not by one another.

While the English Parliamentary Wars were being fought and the Covenanters were struggling for their existence, and while Rutherford sat at the Westminster Assembly as a Scottish Commissioner, his work, *Lex Rex*, was published.

The work deals with man's duty as a citizen or subject, and the magistrate's right to exact obedience. Rutherford sought to expound Scriptural concepts and principles relating to this still very difficult question. Rutherford maintained:

1) Scripture, as the revealed will of God is absolute, and must be a guide for all of us.

2) Scripture teaches that government is from God and by His authority.

3) This authority, as seen from Scripture, is not inherent in a person but is invested, in the last resort, in the people as a whole, (kings are made, not born as such).

4) Government then has no right to irresponsible lordship.

5) Governmental power is, by God's Providence, put in trust by the people's own choice.

6) The government is to use its power to conserve and not to override or dispense with the law, and the justices of the land are servants to the kingdom rather than the executive.

7) Above all, a duty is owed in a civil office to the Supreme Monarch (God), which is paramount over that which is due to their earthly king.

8) Rutherford in his work discusses the origin of government, and how it is from God and is by His authority. He asserts that the particular form of government is by the voluntary choice of men.

9) The power of the people is in the sense that theirs is the power to choose who shall rule.

10) In the case of a tyrant, the people can recall the power they have given. They can take it to themselves again *if* the conditions on which it is bestowed are disregarded and broken, though they are to suffer much before they resume their power.

11) Thus, in matters unlawful, obedience can be refused by the people, who must obey what God says rather than obey a despotic ruler.¹³⁹

Loane, (an Episcopalian) writes of this work of Rutherford,

Lex Rex was a masterly discussion of the Stuart dogma that the king is above the law, and it provides us with a fine statement of the principles and politics of Puritan government. It was well knit with a convincing argument and great dialectical ability, bound and clamped with the iron bands of proof from Scripture and a mass of syllogisms The book was written in the faith that truth to Christ could never be treason to Caesar, and that arbitrary power is a fit garland only for the brow of eternal Majesty.^{140a, 140b}

b. George Gillespie's *Aaron Rod Blossoming* (1613-1648)

George Gillespie wrote several important works, including his *Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies*, *The Hundred and Eleven Propositions Against Erastianism*, etc. However, the work *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, published at London about the year 1646, is probably his best known work.

If Rutherford in his work was concerned to record and advance the general thinking of the Church of the Second Reformation as regards the matter of authority of the king in the civil realm, Gillespie was equally concerned to advance the position of the Church at the same time on the authority of the king (or magistrate generally) in the ecclesiastical realm.

It was during the years that the Westminster Assembly sat that Gillespie, a Scottish Commissioner, like Rutherford, also produced his work in defence of the freedom of the Church to carry out the will of its Head and Lord. Hetherington writes of this work,

In (this) peculiarly acute and profound work will be found the very essence of the Westminster Assembly's most important discussions on the subject of Church Government, with the

arguments employed against both the Erastians and the Independents, and answers to the most elaborate productions of their chief writers.¹⁴¹

Gillespie in his work *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, makes the following points:

- 1) Christian magistrates have a responsibility to the Church.
- 2) However, his power is limited by God in His Word.
- 3) That if the magistrate go beyond his authority, Christ's servants are to obey God rather than man.
- 4) That the power and authority in the Church is spiritual, and it is distinct from that of the magistrate.
- 5) The Church, then, has power to discipline.
- 6) Christ Jesus, as the Mediator, has also appointed a specific government in the Church distinct from the magistrate. That government, as taught in God's Word, is Presbyterian.¹⁴²

Gillespie thus held to the Scriptural concept that authority in the Church was from God, and not man. Man had not the power, whether he be king or not, to impose or require what God had not required.

Like Rutherford, Gillespie saw the need for authority and power in the Church as well as in the State, and that such a power should be honoured, respected, and obeyed most humbly in all things lawful, but the power was lawful only when it was exercised according to proper Biblical principles.¹⁴³

CONCLUSION

While we would not agree with all of Douglas' conclusions and his portrayal of the Second Reformation, yet we feel he most certainly has touched on the very crux of what the Second Reformation wrestled with and sought Biblical solutions for. He writes,

... the real problem of the Reformed Church, (the Covenanters, C.F.C.), the crux of the matter, was not in the last resort one of the royal supremacy, nor did it concern the right of a people to rebel. IT WAS A PROBLEM OF AUTHORITY. WHEREIN DID AUTHORITY LIE? (Emphasis ours, C.F.C.)¹⁴⁴

This, it could also be said, was the main problem for the Continental and English Reformers. However, while they all saw that the supreme authority was in the Triune God as revealed in the face of Christ Jesus, the Mediator, the

Continental and English Reformers were concerned to work out these implications in the area of the prophetic and priestly work of Christ. It remained for the Church of Scotland especially, as God in His Providence planned, to be faced with such historical circumstances that they were forced to consider anew the matter of authority, *especially* as it concerned the State, the Church, and the relationship of the two to Christ's Kingly office.

While there may be certain historical circumstances that make the Second Reformation unique compared to the continental and English Reformations, yet we would see this further development of Christ's kingly and mediatorial work in the area of civil and social application as being its most unique contribution.

We thus should not view the Covenants of the Second Reformation merely and purely as pragmatic political forms of a bygone age, as historical curiosities! While they may not be very meaningful in their historical circumstances and their wording and mould to us in 20th Century society and government today, they nevertheless embody, we believe, eternal *principles* which are most profound, and are sacred and revealed truths from Almighty God to guide men in the way they ought to go.

It is true there are problems still to be answered, such as, how applicable are these principles to purely secular/pagan societies and governments? Nevertheless, we cannot ignore principles of God's Word. If there be an Almighty God Who has created the heavens and the earth, before Whom all men stand accountable, as we most certainly believe, and if this great Sovereign and Supreme God has revealed Himself through a Mediator in history, Christ Jesus, unto Whom belongs all power in heaven and earth, as He has historically claimed, and if the will of God in Christ is revealed in an infallibly written record, as can be shown, *then* we cannot ignore these principles! They are not merely subjective existential concepts. They must be treated as objective and concrete realities in the real and struggling world we live in. Realities, if ignored, will lead mankind into a pit of lawlessness, anarchy, injustice, and a death so profound that it is infinite for body and soul.

These principles, enunciated by the Scottish Covenanters, are, we believe, extremely applicable to today. For on every hand throughout our world today we see secular power and claims increasing. It is true that many Western governments assent to the proposition that their authority is limited as far as their control over the individual and society generally is concerned. However (and it is a most important *however*), we must understand that such governments accept that their authority is limited upon *pragmatic* and *relative* principles! For on every hand we see, even in the Western world, governments taking to themselves

more and more power and authority, in and of themselves, to control not only the economic affairs of their citizens but also their social and moral affairs.

Totalitarian government is not limited to dictatorships. It is found in Communist lands, and increasingly in Western countries we find governments becoming more and more totalitarian, functioning under the belief that in reality its power and authority is not really limited, and that it can make and repeal whatever laws it sees fit. Thus its power and authority is seen in and of itself, and limited merely by relative factors, such as public opinion.

It is in this day and age that once again, before the face of our Covenant Head, we must return to His Word, and see what He has to say to us, not only as individuals, but as families, as a Church, and as a nation. To refuse to do so, or to neglect to teach such things, is to perish and die as a nation, a Church, a family, and as an individual. For to have Christ Jesus as our Prophet, Priest, and King in all of life, is to have peace, order, justice, happiness and, in the end, a true life that is eternal. If the claims of Christ be true, as we believe they are, then it is only in Him that we can find the way to truth and life, life fully abundant for both time and eternity.¹⁴⁵

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began: that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant; the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life . . . to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:68-79).

APPENDIX A

List of the chapter headings from *Lex Rex*

- I Whether government be by a divine law.
- II Whether or no government be warranted by the law of nature.
- III Whether royal power and definite forms of government be from God.
- IV Whether or no the king be only and immediately from God, and not from the people.
- V Whether or no the P. Prelate proveth that sovereignty is immediately from God, not from the people.
- VI Whether or no the king be so allenarly from both, in regard to the sovereignty and designation of his person, as he is no way from the people, but only by mere approbation.
- VII Whether the P. Prelate conclude that neither constitution nor designation of kings is from the people.
- VIII Whether or no the P. Prelate proveth, by force of reason, that the people cannot be capable of any power or government.
- IX Whether or no sovereignty is so in and from the people, that they may resume their power in time of extreme necessity.
- X Whether or not royal birth be equivalent to divine unction.
- XI Whether or no he be more principally a king who is a king by birth, or he who is a king by the free election of the people.
- XII Whether or no a kingdom may lawfully be purchased by the sole title of conquest.
- XIII Whether or no royal dignity have its spring from nature, and how true "Every man is born free," and how servitude is contrary to nature.
- XIV Whether or not the people make a person their king conditionally or absolutely; and whether the king be tyed by any such covenant.
- XV Whether the king be univocally, or only analogically and by proportion, a father.
- XVI Whether or no a despotical or masterly dominion agree to the king, because he is king.
- XVII Whether or no the prince have properly the fiduciary or ministerial power of a tutor, husband, patron, minister, head, master of a family, not of a lord or dominator.
- XVIII What is the law or manner of the king discussed fully.
- XIX Whether or no the king be in dignity and power above the people.

- XX Whether inferior judges be essentially the immediate viceregents of God, as kings, not differing in essence and nature from kings.
- XXI What power the people and states of parliament hath over the king and in the state.
- XXII Whether the power of the king, as king, be absolute, or dependent and limited by God's first mould and pattern of a king.
- XXIII Whether the king hath a prerogative royal above law.
- XXIV What relation the king hath to the law.
- XXV Whether the supreme law, the safety of the people, be above the king.
- XXVI Whether the king be above the law.
- XXVII Whether or no the king be the sole, supreme, and final interpreter of the law.
- XXVIII Whether or no wars raised by the estates and subjects for their own just defence against the king's bloody emissaries be lawful.
- XXIX Whether, in the case of defensive wars, the distinction of the person of the king as a man, who may and can commit hostile acts of tyranny against his subjects, and of the office and royal power that he hath from God and the people, can have place.
- XXX Whether or no passive obedience be a mean to which we are subjected in conscience by virtue of a divine commandment; and what a mean resistance is. That flying is resistance.
- XXXI Whether self-defence, by opposing violence to unjust violence, be lawful, by the law of God and nature.
- XXXII Whether or no the lawfulness of defensive wars can be proved from the Scripture, from the examples of David, the people's rescuing Jonathan, Elisha, and the eighty valiant priests who resisted Uzziah.
- XXXIII Whether or no Romans xiii, 1 make any thing against the lawfulness of defensive wars.
- XXXIV Whether royalists prove, by cogent reasons, the unlawfulness of defensive wars.
- XXXV Whether the sufferings of the martyrs in the primitive Church militant be against the lawfulness of defensive wars.
- XXXVI Whether the king have the power of war only.
- XXXVII Whether the estates of Scotland are to help their brethren, the protestants of England, against cavaliers, proved by argument 13.
- XXXVIII Whether monarchy be the best of governments.
- XXXIX Whether or no any prerogative at all above the law be due to the king. Or if JURA MAGESTITIS be any such prerogative.

- XL Whether or no the people have any power over the king, either by his oath, covenant, or any other way.
- XLI Whether doth the P. Prelate with reason ascribe to us doctrine of Jesuits in the question of lawful defence.
- XLII Whether all Christian kings are dependent from Christ, and may be called his vice-regents.
- XLIII Whether the king of Scotland be an absolute prince, having a prerogative above laws and parliaments.
- XLIV General results of the former doctrine in some few corollaries in twenty-two questions.

APPENDIX B

List of the chapter headings from *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*
(or, The Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated)

1st BOOK

- I That if the Erastians could prove what they allege concerning the Jewish church government, yet, in that particular, the Jewish church could not be a precedent to the Christian.
- II That the Jewish church was formally distinct from the Jewish state or commonwealth.
- III That the Jews had an ecclesiastical sanhedrin and government distinct from the civil.
- IV That there was an ecclesiastical excommunication among the Jews; and what it was.
- V Of the cutting off from among the people of God frequently mentioned in the law.
- VI Of the casting out of the synagogue.
- VII Other scriptural arguments to prove an excommunication in the Jewish church.
- VIII Of the Jewish exomologesis, or public declaration of repentance by confession of sin.
- IX Whether, in the Jewish church, there was any suspension or exclusion of profane, scandalous, notorious sinners, from partaking in the public ordinances with the rest of the children of Israel in the temple.
- X A debate with Mr. Prynne, concerning the exclusion of profane, scandalous persons from the passover.
- XI A confutation of the strongest arguments of Erastus, namely, those drawn from the law of Moses.

- XII Fourteen arguments to prove that scandalous and presumptuous offenders against the moral law (though circumcised, and not being legally unclean) were excluded from the passover.
- XIII Mr. Prynne's argument from I Cor. x (which he takes to be unanswerable) discussed and confuted.

2nd BOOK

- I Of the rise, growth, decay, and reviving of Erastianism.
- II Some postulate, or common principles, to be presupposed.
- III What the Erastians yield unto us, and what we yield unto them.
- IV Of the agreement and the differences between the nature of the civil and of the ecclesiastical powers or government.
- V Of a two-fold kingdom of Jesus Christ: A general kingdom, as he is the eternal Son of God, the Head of all principalities and powers, reigning over all creatures; and a particular kingdom, as he is Mediator, reigning over the Church only.
- VI Whether Jesus Christ, as Mediator and Head of the Church, hath placed the Christian magistrate to hold and execute his office under and for Him, as His viceregent. The arguments for the affirmative discussed.
- VII Arguments for the negative of that question formerly propounded.
- VIII Of the power and privilege of the magistrate in things and causes ecclesiastical, what it is not, and what it is.
- IX That by the word of God there ought to be another government besides magistracy or civil government, namely an ecclesiastical government (properly so called) in the hands of church officers.
- X Some objections made against ecclesiastical government and discipline answered.
- XI The necessity of a distinct church government under Christian as well as under heathen magistrates.

3rd BOOK

- I An opening of the true state of the question, and of Mr. Prynne's many mistakes and misrepresentations of our principles.
- II Whether Matt. xviii 15-17 prove excommunication.
- III Further demonstration that these words, "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican," are not meant of avoiding civil, but religious or church fellowship.

- V That "Tell it unto the church," hath more in it than "Tell it unto a greater number."
- VI "Of the power of binding and loosing," Matt. xviii 18.
- VII That I Cor. v proveth excommunication and (by a necessary consequence, even from the Erastian interpretation) suspension from the sacrament of a person unexcommunicated.
- VIII Whether Judas received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
- IX Whether Judas received the sacrament of the passover that night in which our Lord was betrayed.
- X That if it could be proved that Judas received the Lord's supper, it maketh nothing against the suspension of known wicked persons from the sacrament.
- XI Whether it be a full discharge of duty to admonish a scandalous person of the danger of unworthy communicating; and whether a minister, in giving him the sacrament, after such admonition, be no way guilty.
- XII Whether the sacrament of the Lord's Supper be a converting or regenerating ordinance.
- XIII Twenty arguments to prove that the Lord's Supper is not a converting ordinance.
- XIV Mr. Prynne's Twelve arguments, brought to prove that the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance, discussed and answered.
- XV Whether the admission of scandalous and notorious sinners to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper be a pollution and profanation of that holy ordinance, and in what respects it may be so called.
- XVI An argument of Erastus (drawn from the baptism of John) against the excluding of scandalous sinners from the Lord's Supper, examined.
- XVII Antiquity for the suspension of all scandalous persons from the sacrament, even as such as were admitted to other public ordinances.
- XVIII A discovery of the instability and looseness of Mr. Prynne's principles, even to the contradicting of himself in twelve particulars.

FOOTNOTES:

- 90. Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
- 91. MacLeod, J., *Scottish Theology*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1974, p. 41 ff.
- 92. Smellie, *op. cit.*, p. 2 ff.
- 93. By the Westminster Standards, we not only mean the Confession and Catechisms, but the other documents, such as The Directory of Public Worship, etc., so that they are seen as further exposition on the teaching found in the Confession.

94. Berkhof, L., *Systematic Theology*, Banner of Truth, London, 1971, p. 212; Symington, W., *Messiah the Prince*, Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh, 1881, for an exposition of this principle.
95. Smellie, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
96. See also Moncreiff, H. W., *The Free Church Principle: Its Character & History*, Macniven & Wallace, Edinburgh, 1843, p. 133 ff., Dickson, D., *The Psalms*, Banner of Truth, London, 1959, p. 4 ff. This interpretation of Psalm two was held to by pastors of the Church. For example, David Dickson, a pastor of the period, makes this application in his commentary on the Book of Psalms.
97. McCrie, *Sketches*, I, *op. cit.*, p. 279; Hetherington, *W/Assembly*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
98. Meeter, H.H., *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1975, pp. 153-154.
99. For example, Hetherington, *W/Assembly*, pp. 98-99.
100. *Ibid.*
101. Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
102. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 531.
103. McCrie, *Sketches*, *op. cit.*, p. 211; see also pp. 250-251.
104. Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 73. See also Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-51, though one finds him at more than one place misrepresenting the Covenanters. For example, on page 35 he teaches that the Scots sold Charles I to England, while McCrie, *Sketches*, *op. cit.*, II, p. 23, refutes this position and teaching.
105. Renwick, J., *A Choice Collection of Very Valuable Prefaces, Lectures, and Sermons*, S. & A. Gardiner, Glasgow, 1804, pp. 184, 185, & 567.
106. *Ibid.*, p. 633.
107. Meeter, *op. cit.*, p. 145; Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
108. Hetherington's Introductory Essay in *Presbyterian's Armoury*, Ogle, Oliver & Boyde, Glasgow, 1846, (3 Vol), Vol. I, p. xxvii.
109. Hetherington, *W/Assembly*, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99; Smellie, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
110. Hetherington, *W/Assembly*, *op. cit.*, p. 98; Douglas, p. 45.
111. *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 447.
112. The point needs to be remembered that Buchanan and Rutherford's positions do not support the modern concept of democracy. The people were no more supreme than the king, in the sense that unlimited power was theirs. All earthly power is limited, and it is limited by Christ. Ultimately Christ is *the* power, and both king and people are answerable to him, and must be guided by Him.
113. Wylie, *op. cit.*, pp. 543, 544.
114. Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
115. Hetherington, *C/Scotland*, *op. cit.*, p. 90 ff; Collins, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18.
116. Smellie, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
117. Renwick, J., *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.
118. See such books as Smellie's, *Men of the Covenant*.
119. McCrie, *Sketches*, Vol. I, pp. 189 & 196; Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 190; Hetherington, *C/Scotland*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59 & 79.
120. Wylie, *op. cit.*, pp. 523-534.
121. We should not imagine that this viewpoint of the Covenanters is that of the so-called social gospel. Rather, while they addressed themselves to social issues, their address both started, continued and finished in the person and work of Christ. He

- and His salvation and law must be preached. There could be no consideration of social issues; there could be no humanitarian concepts without Christ. A far cry from the liberal-christian viewpoint of today.
122. Macleod, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.
 123. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 521; McCrie, *Sketches*, I, *op. cit.*, p. 105.
 124. A copy of the First Book of Discipline is found in *The History of the Reformation in Scotland*, by Knox, *op. cit.*, as an Appendix.
 125. See the *Second Book of Discipline*, as found in *Summary of the Laws and Regulations of the Church of Scotland*, (1560-1850), W. Bennett, 1852, p. 127.
 126. For example, Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21 compared with Macleod, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44.
 127. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 519; Hetherington, *C/Scotland*, pp. 45-47; Macleod, *op. cit.*, I, p. 101; McCrie, *Melville*, *op. cit.*, p. 55 ff.
 128. Bear in mind that the First Reformation under Knox produced a Covenant in 1557, known as *The First Covenant*, Hetherington, *C/Scotland*, *op. cit.*, p. 20, and another in 1559, known as the *Second Covenant*, *ibid*, p. 23.
 129. See Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 57; Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 132 for further information.
 130. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 521; Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 131; *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, *op. cit.*, p. 114, Vol. III; Hetherington, *C/Scotland*, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Schaff, *op. cit.*, p. 480.
 131. Loane, M. L., *Makers of Religious Freedom*, I.V.F. London, 1960, p. 29.
 132. *Ibid*.
 133. Wylie, *op. cit.*, pp. 543-544; Hetherington, *C/Scotland*, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-92; Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 24 ff. and 197; Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Loane, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30; Smellie, *op. cit.*, p. 4-9; Latourette, *op. cit.*, p. 773; McCrie, *Sketches*, *op. cit.*, I, p. 209; Preface to the *Second Book of Discipline*; McCrie, *Miscellaneous*, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.
 - 134a Hetherington, *W/Assembly*, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-376 (appendix).
 - 134b Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 549; Hetherington, *C/Scotland*, *op. cit.*, p. 110; Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 32 ff; Loane, *op. cit.*, p. 42; Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 413; Smellie, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-17; Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 160 ff.
 135. There were several declaratory acts made by the Church of Scotland, as may be found in the Act of the Church of Scotland, August 27, 1647, Session 23. It defined the circumstances under which, for example, the magistrate may call a synod.
 136. *Ibid*.
 137. Wylie, *op. cit.*, p. 550 ff; Hetherington, *C/Scotland*, *op. cit.*, p. 111; Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 103; Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32 & 40 ff; Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 200; Loane, *op. cit.*, p. 42 ff; Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 421; *Encyclopedia*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 115; Latourette, *op. cit.*, pp. 773 ff. & 821; *Testimony*, *op. cit.*, p. 56 ff.; Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 96 ff; Hetherington, *W/Assembly*, pp. 91 & 110 ff; *The Church and State in Revolutionary Times*, *op. cit.*, Ch. 3; *The Scottish Covenanters*, by G.N.M. Collins; Murray, G.J. & Jones, H.R., (EDS), *God and Caesar*, British Evangelical Council, St. Albans 1973, p. 30, Church and State in Scotland; Murray, J., *Collected Writings of, The Claims of Truth*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1976, p. 253 ff.
 138. *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, *op. cit.*, under Calderwood.
 139. See Appendix A, for a list of the chapter headings from *Lex Rex*.
 - 140a Loane, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

- 140b Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 71 ff; Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-59; Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 198; Loane, *op. cit.*, p. 78 ff; Rutherford, S., *Lex Rex* (An Abridgement), R. Robb, Edinburgh, 1976, Rutherford, S., *Lex Rex, or The Law and the Prince*, Ogle & Oliver, & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1843; Murray, J., *op. cit.*, p. 253.
141. Hetherington, *C/Scotland, op. cit.*, footnote, p. 114.
142. See appendix B, for chapter headings of Gillespie's work.
143. Macleod, *op. cit.*, p. 79 ff; Hetherington, *C/Scotland, op. cit.*, p. 114; Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 38 ff; Macpherson, *op. cit.*, p. 198; see also the Introductory Essay by Hetherington in *The Presbyterian's Armoury, op. cit.*
144. Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 59; see also Murray, J., *op. cit.*, p. 298.
145. See John 14:6; John 10:10.

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY

Rev. Ronald Hanko

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible:

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, both those in heaven and those on earth:

who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and entered humanity and suffered, and rose the third day, ascended into heaven, is coming to judge the living and the dead:

And in the Holy Spirit.

But as for those who say that there was a time when He was not, and that before He was begotten He was not, and that He came into being from things that were not, or who affirm that the Son of God is of a different subsistence or essence, or created, subject to change or alteration, them the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Arian Controversy is really the climax of Ancient Church History both from historical and doctrinal points of view. The Pelagian controversy is probably equally important, but it represents in the final outcome a backward step doctrinally rather than an advance, and has nowhere near the ecumenical prominence of the history of Arianism. Also, the history of the Pelagian controversy takes one into what is really Medieval Church History.

The Arian controversy began about A.D. 318 and lasted till 381, the date of the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople. From a doctrinal viewpoint we find in this period the first official formulation of the truth of Scripture. The doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ was officially established and expressed at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325. This formulation and its subsequent vindication represent a mighty advance in the history of the development of the Christian truth.

The truth which was expressed at Nicea was the basis of all subsequent

developments in Christology. But this doctrine of the divinity of the Son of God is also the foundation of the whole Christian faith. It was the substance of Christianity which was the issue at Nicea in 325. Faith in a God Who sovereignly saves His people by Himself making an atonement for their sins in the Person of His own Son is the heart of the Christian religion. Take away the truth of a divine Son of God from the Christian faith and you have nothing left.

Historically this period also marks several firsts. In this period we see, for the first time, the Church officially recognized by the civil government. In all her previous history the Church had been denied official status: usually she was suppressed and persecuted. Now not only is the Church officially recognized, but Christianity becomes the favored religion of the Empire. As a direct result of this, we also find in this period the first instance of civil interference in the affairs of the Church. Having given the Church a favored place, the Emperors supposed that they had the right and obligation to guide ecclesiastical affairs and when necessary to "help" in ending controversy and enforcing Church policies and doctrines.

The result for the Church was not always good:

What gave Arianism a vitality as well as a prominence and importance that it never would have acquired by itself was the accident of its civil and political power and influence. . . . It was not Arius and his associates but Constantine and his successors that lifted the Arian discussion into a world-wide and historical significance that attaches to no other heresy.¹

Such prominence meant many years of chaos in the Church and much suffering for the defenders of the truth.

Another first in this history is the Council of Nicea, the first Ecumenical Council. All other Synods and Councils before it had been local in character. As the Council, so also its creed is ecumenical, even today. The Creed of Nicea (with its subsequent revisions by the Council of Constantinople) is the only creed which is accepted by *all* of Christendom, Eastern and Western, Roman and Protestant. This is not in itself important but it illustrates the importance of this history.

The history of Arianism is the history of the Roman Empire as well as the history of the Church. From layman to Pope and from lowliest slave to Emperor, all had at least an intellectual interest in the controversy. Gregory of Nyssa describes the situation very graphically:

1. William Du Bos, *The Ecumenical Councils* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1897), p. 105.

Men of yesterday and the day before, mere mechanics, off-hand dogmatists in theology, servants, too, and slaves that have been flogged, runaways from servile work, are solemn with us, and philosophize about things incomprehensible. Ask about pence, and the tradesman will discuss the generate and the ingenerate; inquire the price of bread, and he will say, "Greater is the Father, and the Son is subject"; say that a bath would suit you, and he defines, "the Son is out of nothing."²

Again, the interest shows the importance of the issue.

There have been other heresies in the church but none so prominent as Arianism. There have been other Church councils, but none so important and illustrious as Nicea.³ It is well worth our while, then, to take a close look at this history. The heresy of Arianism is still alive today and from the history of Nicea we may well learn the answer of the Church to those who deny that Jesus Christ is very God.

THE ISSUE

The issue in the Arian controversy was the divinity of Jesus Christ. The problem, however, was theological rather than Christological. The divinity of Christ as that concerns the value and significance of His person and work was not at stake, but rather the divinity of Christ as that concerns the nature of God. It is true, of course, that the two cannot be separated. In fact, the Arian controversy led into the Christological controversies because, as Athanasius clearly saw, Arianism *did* concern the whole work of Christ and our salvation. Nevertheless, the issue as such was trinitarian and theological.

The problem was this: the Church had always confessed belief in God the Father and in His Son, Jesus Christ. She believed that God was divine and that Jesus was divine. Baptism was administered in the name of the Father and of the Son, and in the Apostolic Creed the Church confessed, "We believe in God the Father, Almighty . . . and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord." But on the other hand she maintained a strict monotheism over against all pagan and heretical polytheism. The problem, then, was to confess both, without denying either. The Apostolic Creed proved to be inadequate, for its language (which is also the language of Scripture) was, at least for the Arians, open to

2. Quoted in: A.E. Burn, *An Introduction to the Creeds and to the Te Deum* (London, Methuen, 1899), p. 75.

3. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1950), v. III, p. 630.

misinterpretation. The Arians simply denied that “only begotten Son” meant that Jesus was God in the absolute sense.

THE PROBLEM OF TERMINOLOGY

What the Church had to do, then, was find a terminology which would adequately express the truth of Scripture and at the same time leave no room for Arian “misinterpretation.” The Church at this time did not possess the terminology to explain a Trinity of Persons in a unity of essence, and so could not at first express herself positively. The Church understood from the very beginning, and correctly so, that “only begotten” meant that from eternity Christ was the natural Son of God, but to express this in clear and unequivocal language which did not conflict with the truth that God is one was the work of almost fifty years.

There was especially one word which filled all these requirements. That was the word *homoousios* (“of the same substance”). This word clearly expressed the equality of the Father and the Son, left no room for Arianism, and allowed for the personal distinction of Father and Son. This was the word proposed and adopted by the Council of Nicea for those reasons. The trouble was that many opposed the use of this word – many even who were really opposed to Arianism. The objections were two. In the first place, the word was not Scriptural. In the second place, the word was suspected of having Sabellian overtones. Paul of Samosata had used it to deny any personal distinction in the Trinity, and he had been condemned for his error.

Compounding this confusion was the fact that in the fourth anathema, the Creed of Nicea used the word *homoousios* synonymously with the word *hypostasis*. This was foreign to the thought of some who used the second word to mean “person.” To speak, therefore, of one *hypostasis* also sounded like Sabellianism: the men from Alexandria spoke of three *hypostases* or “persons.”

Finally, matters were complicated by the fact that the word *ousios* was itself ambiguous. The word could be used to indicate sameness of essence in numerical separation. It could be said, for example, that two men are *homoousios* just because they are both men. In the Nicene Creed, however, the word was used to indicate *identity* of essence. Altogether, these facts led to much unnecessary fighting. But until these matters were cleared up, the controversy was not settled: when the distinction between the words was finally made clear, then the controversy was over too.

THE ROOTS OF THE CONTROVERSY

In order fully to understand this controversy, we must go back to its

roots which lie in the previous period. There are two things especially which made this controversy almost inevitable. They are (a) the contradictory Christology of Origen and (b) the Monarchian tendencies of the School of Antioch.

THE CHRISTOLOGY OF ORIGEN

Throughout the Eastern Church and even in the West, Origen was regarded as the greatest theologian that the Church had produced. He was generally thought to be orthodox at all points. That he was a great theologian is true; that he was always orthodox in his views is not. His Christology is a case in point.

Origen did much work in Christology and from one point of view his work represents a tremendous advance in the history of the Christian Faith. Origen was the first to speak of the eternal generation of the Son. In connection with the divinity of Christ he recognized and pointed out the fact that the words "only begotten Son" could only mean that Jesus Christ was eternally the Son of God. If He was begotten in time He would be no different from any other creature, and then He could not be called "only begotten."

On the other hand, however, Origen also taught that the Son is not God in the same sense as the Father. The Father is "the God" (ὁ Θεός), while the Son is only "God" (Θεός). The Son, he said, is "of a different essence" (ἕτερος τῆς οὐσίας or τοῦ ὑποκειμένου), "begotten out of the will of the Father." He called the Son "a secondary God" (δεύτερος Θεός) in distinction from the Father (αὐτόθεος), and thus he made the Son subordinate to the Father. In his *Commentary on John*, II, 6 he says:

Thus, if all things were made, as in this passage also (John 1:3, RH), *through* the Logos, then they were not made *by* the Logos, but by a stronger and greater than He. And who else could this be but the Father?

* * * * *

We consider, therefore, that there are three hypostases, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and at the same time we believe nothing to be uncreated but the Father. We therefore, as the more pious and the truer course, admit that all things were made by the Logos, and that the Holy Spirit is the most excellent and the first in order of all that was made by the Father through Christ.⁴

4. Origen, *Commentary on John*, II, 6. Quoted in *The AnteNicene Fathers*, vol. X (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1974), ed. Allan Menzies.

And in this connection he also speaks of the fact that the Son is begotten as an act of the Father's will.

Now these two cannot be reconciled. If the Son is begotten in eternity then He cannot be begotten out of the will of the Father. If He is begotten of the Father's will then He is a creature and not the natural Son of God. If He is eternal, then He must be equal and not subordinate to the Father, for only God is eternal. If He is God, but of a different essence than the Father, then there are two Gods. But Origen did not see these contradictions, although that was in part because the distinction of essence and person had not yet been made clear.

Both sides appealed to Origen's teachings in the Arian controversy. Some held only the one side of his system and concluded that the Son was indeed not equal to God. They went a step further however and said that the Son was a creature, or at best a sort of demi-God. The orthodox in the controversy laid hold on the doctrine of eternal generation, and, abandoning the rest of Origen's system, logically concluded that the Son was equal to the Father in all things — that He was "of the same essence" as the Father.

This, theologically, is the root of the Arian Controversy.

ANTIOCHENE MONARCHIANISM

Historically, Arianism arose out of the Catechetical School of Antioch and thus out of Sabellian Monarchianism. This School was one of two very important theological schools of the ancient Church in the East: the other was at Alexandria. Between these two schools there was a bitter rivalry, for the school at Antioch was extremely Monarchian in its teachings, that is, it tended to maintain the unity of the Godhead at the expense of any personal distinctions.

It was out of this school that the Monarchian heresy arose in both of its forms (dynamic Monarchianism and Sabellianism). In fact, both the Bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata, and the head of the School, Lucian the Martyr, had been deposed around the year 270 for their teaching that Jesus, a man, was the adopted Son of God by virtue of the power of God in Him. Their views however only represented the thought current in Antioch at that time. Their teaching was carried on in the form of Sabellianism which taught that the "persons" of the Trinity were only different ways in which the One God revealed Himself.

Arianism was decidedly Monarchian in its tendencies but differed from Sabellianism:

The motive of both is Monarchian, but while Sabellianism defends the unity of the divine principle by denying any real distinction in it and makes Father, Son, and Holy Ghost one in person as well as nature, Arianism attains the same end by

widening the distinction of persons into one of nature and so attributes real divinity and original causation only to the Father.⁵

Both Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia, the leaders of the Arian party, were students of Lucian and carried over his one-sided emphasis on the unity of the Godhead.

Opposed to the whole School of Antioch and its thinking was the School of Alexandria. There the personal distinctions in the Trinity were strictly maintained. The Orthodox party in the Arian controversy arose out of this school. Alexander and Athanasius (successively the bishops of Alexandria) maintained the eternal generation of the Son. But together they carried that doctrine through to its logical conclusion, namely, *homoousion* theology.

THE THREE PARTIES

At Nicea and subsequent to it there were three parties in the Church. On the one side there were the Arians (also called Eusebians or Anomoeans) and the Semi-Arians or Homoeans. On the other side was the Orthodox party. Each had a different view of the relation between the Father and the Son.

THE ARIANS

The Strict Arians were always a very small party. At the Council of Nicea they numbered only about 18 persons, a very small minority. But by political intrigue and deception they gained an unusual, though temporary success. This success was due in large measure to imperial interference and was accomplished by alliance with the Semi-Arians. The best Emperors vacillated in their support of the Orthodox, and two, Constantius and Valens, were fanatically Arian.

Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia were the original leaders of the Arian party. When they died the leadership of the party passed into the hands of such men as Aetius of Antioch, Eunomius of Cappadocia, and Acacius of Caesarea in the East and Valens of Rome in the West.

There were several divisions in the Arian party from the very start. There were of course, the Semi-Arians, who used the term *homoiousios*, but they were really a separate party. There were also three groups in the Arian party itself. The political Arians cared little for the doctrine involved in the controversy and were willing to unite with the Semi-Arians if that was to their political advantage. The other two groups, who were seldom in agreement, differed in

5. Du Bose, p. 91.

emphasis rather than essentials. The Anomoeans (Aetians and Eunomians) stood in opposition to the Nicene doctrine of *homoousios* as well as the Semi-Arian *homoiousios*. They spoke of the Son as being *heteroousios* (of a different substance) and *anomoios* (unlike) the Father. There were also those who disdained all use of the term *ousion*, but opposed the doctrine of eternal generation. They spoke of the Son as a creature. Alexander calls them "οἱ ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν" (the ones who said that "there was a time when the Son was not"). Arius really belonged to this latter group.

ARIUS

Arius is a strange figure. He was "an able preacher and a man of learning, ability, and piety."⁶ Among the people he was very influential. The other side of his character is not so nice, however. Schaaf calls him "proud, artful, restless and disputatious."⁷ As a thinker he was not very deep. But, worst of all, he was not even reverent. He translated his theories into verses "which were sung to the tunes of licentious and comic songs."⁸ As Burn says, "A tree is known by its fruits."⁹

He was also very devious. Athanasius several times complains of the fact that he was always changing what he said. In order that he might return from exile after Nicea, he drew up a creed, ostensibly to show conformity with Nicea, but which carefully avoids all the issues in question.¹⁰ Presenting it to the Emperor, he was restored to communion in order that he might continue his intrigues.

When he first began to propound his heresy he was the priest of Baucalis, a suburb of Alexandria. Earlier, as a deacon, he had been on the wrong side in the Meletian schism and had been excommunicated. He had been reconciled to Alexander's predecessor, Achilles, and had been appointed presbyter of Baucalis and teacher of exegesis at one of the schools of Alexandria as a token of good faith. It was not long before he was again embroiled in controversy. He died in 336.

EUSEBIUS OF NICOMEDIA

Eusebius is an even more distasteful character than Arius. He was a man

6. Geo. Ophoff, *Church History: Ancient Period* (Grand Rapids, Theological School of the Prot. Ref. Churches), p. 160.

7. Schaaf, p. 620.

8. Burn, p. 75: cf. Appendix VIII for fragments of the "Thalia.

9. Burn, p. 75.

10. Cf. Appendix I; "Creed of Arius."

of few scruples, interested only in his own advancement. He was originally Bishop of Berytus, but he used his political influence (he was high in the favor of Constantina, the sister of Constantine) to gain first the Bishopric of Nicomedia, the city of the Imperial Court, and later that of Constantinople for himself. He used his influence from these positions to further the cause of Arius and undermine Nicene Orthodoxy. Always the courtier, never interested in the welfare of the Church, he was the real political leader of the Arian party.

ARIANISM

Because both Arius and Eusebius were disciples of Lucian, the keystone of their system was:

... the conviction of the absolute transcendence and perfection of the Godhead. God (and it was God the Father whom he had in mind) was absolutely one: there could be no other God in the proper sense of the word. . . . This God was ungendered, uncreated, from everlasting to everlasting: Himself the source and origin of whatever else existed. The being . . . of the unique God was absolutely incommunicable.¹¹

From this it follows necessarily that the Son was subordinate to the Father, and this was Arius' heresy.

Arius taught that the name "Son" implies an act of procreation. Therefore, He said, before such an act there was not a Son, neither could God properly be called "Father": "once God was alone, and not yet a Father, but afterwards He became a Father."¹² The Son, therefore, is not co-eternal, but begotten of the will of the Father, begotten out of nothing, begotten before time. He is a creature, "created and made." The Father is the only one without a beginning and "there was a time when the Son was not."

Arius taught, however, a certain superiority of the Son to the rest of Creation. He was the firstborn of all creatures (the first to be created, cf. Heb. 1:6), and the agent of the Father in the work of creating the world:

God, willing to create originate nature, when he saw that it could not endure the untempered hand of the Father, and to be

11. J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (N.Y., David McKay, 1960), p. 231.

12. Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos IV*, II, 5, in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, vol. IV; ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1975). These "Orations" are the primary source for the views of Arius and the Arian party, since little of their literature is extant.

created by Him, makes and creates first and alone one only, and calls Him Son and Word, that through Him as medium, all things might thereupon be brought to be.¹³

The Son was as like God as it was possible to be, the highest of all creatures, the architect of the universe, but not equal to God: "One equal to the Son, the Superior is able to beget; but one more excellent, or superior, or greater, He is not able."¹⁴

There are several corollaries which attach to such a doctrine and Arius did not hesitate to lay hold on them. The first is that the Son, because He is finite and the Father infinite, can have no real knowledge of the Father:

... "even to the Son the Father is invisible," and, "the Word cannot perfectly and exactly either see or know His Father"; but even what He knows and what He sees, He knows and sees "in proportion to His own measure," as we also know according to our own power.¹⁵

The second corollary is that the Son is liable to change and sin, though Arius also said that the Son never sinned by virtue of the strength of His will: "And by nature, as all others, so the Word Himself is alterable, and remains good by His own free will, while He chooseth."¹⁶

Finally, this doctrine of subordination affected Arius' view of the incarnation. He taught that this created Son of God, that is, the Logos, took the place of the human reasoning spirit in the man Jesus — a sort of hybrid of Sabellianism which was later called Apollinarianism.

THE ORTHODOX

The orthodox party was even smaller than the Arian. At times during the controversy, there were only three or four men who were professedly orthodox. One of these was always Athanasius and often it was literally true of him that he stood *contra munda*. He and Alexander before him were the strength and hope of orthodoxy.

ALEXANDER

Alexander was Bishop of Alexandria and the leader of the African church

13. Athanasius, *Orationes*, II, ii, 24.

14. Athanasius, *De Synodis* ii, 24.

15. Athanasius, *Orationes*, I, ii, 6.

16. Athanasius, *Orationes*, I, ii, 5.

when Arius first began to expound his heretical opinions. He was the first opponent of Arianism. It was he and not Athanasius who was the official representative of the Alexandrian Church at the Council of Nicea. It was also he who called the Council of Alexandria in 323 which deposed Arius. At that time he was already an aged man and he died soon after Nicea. He was sound in his beliefs and held to the doctrine of eternal generation.

ATHANASIUS

Athanasius succeeded Alexander as head of the Alexandrian Church. He became the great champion of the Orthodox cause. In fact, the history of the Orthodox party in the controversy is really no more than a history of Athanasius. He gave his life and energy to a defense of the Nicene Faith. Schaff says:

It was the passion and life-work of Athanasius to vindicate the deity of Christ, which he rightly regarded as the cornerstone of the edifice of the Christian Faith, and without which he could conceive no redemption. For this truth he spent all his time and strength; for this he suffered deposition and twenty years of exile; for this he would at any moment have been glad to pour out his blood. For his vindication of this truth he was much hated, much loved, always respected or feared.¹⁷

It was largely on account of his efforts that the Orthodox party finally prevailed.

His role at the Council of Nicea is not completely clear. Nominally, he was the private secretary and trusted advisor of Alexander, but what influence he had there is the subject of much discussion. Some regard him as "the controlling spirit and genius of its proceedings."¹⁸ That is probably an exaggeration, though he himself says that he "spoke boldly against the impiety of the Arian madmen."

Whatever his role at the Council may have been, his place in the subsequent controversy is very clear. Inflexibly opposed to Arianism, he was both leader and champion of the orthodox party. His enemies, as a result, were many. Five times he was sent or forced into exile — twenty of the forty-five years of his official life were spent in exile. Never did he waver in his convictions.

Always the target of malicious charges, lies, and slander, he never returned as he received. In all the controversy he showed himself to be a man of God. Du

17. Schaff, p. 890.

18. Du Bose, p. 125.

Bose says of him: "It is an immortal honor to Athanasius that he showed the temper and spirit of Christ in dealing with men who had so bitterly opposed him."¹⁹ Even when victory was in sight, he continued to show a wise and godly moderation and patience.

His appeal is always Scriptural. Of his four great *Orations Against the Arians*, about eighty percent is exegetical explanation of various Scripture texts and this is characteristic of his writings.

It has been suggested by some "that he left the people out of account, that his appeal is always to the theologians and the professionally religious."²⁰ This is decidedly not the case. Never did he see the controversy as a dogmatic matter among theologians. Always he appeals to the people's own faith and hope. Again and again he sets forth as his conviction that if Jesus was not true God then He cannot be the Saviour.

He was truly a great man. Even Gibbon lays aside, as has been said, "his solemn sneer" to do honor to the memory of this champion of the faith, who never lost heart, but could make of failure "a triumph's evidence for the fulness of days."²¹

HOSIUS OF CORDOVA

Hosius, or Osius, was Bishop of Cordova in Spain. He lived to be over a hundred and was for half that time "the most influential bishop in Christendom."²² He was the court bishop of Constantine as well as his official envoy. It was he whom Constantine sent to Alexandria at the beginning of the controversy with an official rebuke of Arius. He also advised and represented Constantine at Nicea.

Again, due to lack of official records we do not know much about what he did at that Council. He seems to have had much influence. Athanasius says that the Creed of Nicea was in large measure composed by him. Most historians agree that it was probably at Hosius' behest that Constantine proposed the insertion of the word *homoousios* into the Creed. Whether or not that is true we know that he regarded the word as a bulwark against Arianism.

Athanasius invariably refers to him as "the Great," and says of him:

Of the great Hosius, who answers to his name, that confessor

19. Du Bose, p. xxxv (preface).

20. Burn, p. 97.

21. Harnack; quoted by Burn, p. 97.

22. Du Bose, p. 109.

of a happy old age . . . is of all men the most illustrious and more than this. When was there a Council held in which he did not take the lead, and by right counsel convince every one? Where is there a Church that does not possess some glorious monuments of his patronage? Who has ever come to him in sorrow, and has not gone away rejoicing?²³

To the day of his death he supported Athanasius. He was one of the three or four banished by the Council of Milan (346), the only ones in the whole empire who would not subscribe to Arianism and a condemnation of Athanasius.

THE THREE CAPPADOCIANS

When Athanasius died (373) the leadership of his party passed into the hands of three very capable men. Although they arose out of the ranks of the Semi-Arians, they were the ones who finally vindicated orthodoxy and implemented the final union of Orthodox and Semi-Arians. They also further developed the doctrines of Nicea in combatting Macedonianism and Apollinarianism. These three are Basil of Caesarea in Cappadocia, his brother Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa. They all saw that the question of Christ's divinity involved His efficacy as a Savior, and thus, eventually they too came to defend Nicene faith.

HILARY OF POTIERS

Mention should also be made here of Hilary of Potiers. Burn calls him "the great western ally" of Athanasius. He did much to clarify the terms which had resulted in so much confusion at Nicea. It was his work in this area that finally made the union of Orthodox and Semi-Arians possible.

THE ORTHODOX POSITION

The views of the Orthodox party are best represented in the writings of Athanasius since he is the main figure in the controversy and since little else is extant. Athanasius, Berkhof says, strongly emphasized the unity of God and insisted on a construction of the doctrine of the Trinity that would not endanger this unity.²⁴ He therefore defended without qualification both the Nicene doctrines of *homoousios* and of eternal generation.

His views are best presented by quoting him. In his own statement of faith

23. Athanasius, *Apologia de Fuga*, 5.

24. Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1975), p. 85.

we have a brief and clear picture of what he taught:

We believe in one Unbegotten God, Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible, that hath His being from Himself. And in one Only-begotten Word, Wisdom, Son, begotten of the Father without beginning and eternally; word not pronounced, nor mental, nor an effluence of the Perfect, nor a dividing of the impassible Essence, nor an issue; but absolutely perfect Son, living and powerful (Heb. iv. 12), the true Image of the Father, equal in honour and glory.²⁵

* * * * *

Neither do we hold a Son-Father, as do the Sabellians, calling him of one but not of the same essence (ΜΟΝΟΥΣΙΟΝ

καὶ οὐκ ὁμοούσιον), and thus destroying the existence of the Son. Neither do we ascribe the passible body which He bore for the salvation of the whole world to the Father. Neither can we imagine three Subsistences separated from each other, as results from their bodily nature in the case of men, lest we hold a plurality of Gods like the heathen.²⁶

* * * * *

He (the Son) is then by nature an Offspring, perfect from perfect, begotten before all the hills (Prov. viii. 25), that is before every rational and intelligent essence, as Paul also in another place calls Him "firstborn of all creation" (Col. i. 15). But by calling Him First-born, he shows that He is not a creature, but Offspring of the Father. For it would be inconsistent with His deity for Him to be called a creature. For all things were created by the Father through the Son, but the Son alone was eternally begotten from the Father, whence God the Word is "first-born of all creation," unchangeable from unchangeable.²⁷

That, in the words of Athanasius, is the Orthodox position.

THE SEMI-ARIANS

Finally, then, we come to the compromise party, usually called Semi-Arians. This was by far the largest party in the controversy. The party itself arose at Nicea out of opposition to the use of the word *homoousios*, though it also rejected emphatically the views of Arius. In spite of the fact that the party really stood closer to the Orthodox doctrinally, and even though all signed the Creed of Nicea, the party afterwards sided with the ultra-Arians in opposition to the Orthodox.

25. Athanasius, *Ecthesis*, 1.

26. Athanasius, *Ecthesis*, 2.

27. Athanasius, *Ecthesis*, 3.

Many of them did not even understand the point at issue and in the interest of Church unity tried to compromise. That compromise was never really successful. The many excesses of the Arian party eventually drove them closer and closer to the Orthodox. Finally, through the patient work of Athanasius and Hilary and the leadership of the Three Cappadocians they were united to the Orthodox in confession of *homoousios*.

On the whole, they too held to eternal generation and the true divinity of the Son. They avoided *homoousios*, especially because of its Sabellian connotations. They proposed *homoiousios*, "of like substance," as an alternative term at Nicca and that word became their battlecry.

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

The Semi-Arian party was under the leadership of Eusebius of Caesarea. From every point of view he is an excellent representative. In one person he represents the feelings of the whole Semi-Arian party: vacillating, indecisive, generally on the side of the Arians against Athanasius. But he is so inconsistent and indecisive that it is difficult to tell exactly what he believed. Most agree that he leaned toward Arianism but on the whole simply was not able to make up his mind where he stood:

At bottom, he thought like Arius; but in proportion as the latter was clear and precise in his explanations, so did the Bishop of Caesarea excel in clothing his ideas in a diffuse and flowing style, and in using many words to say nothing.²⁸

Nevertheless, he was considered to be the greatest scholar of his day and thus wielded considerable influence both with the Emperor and with his own party. As Bishop of Caesarea he was succeeded by Acaius, a friend of the Arians.

THE EMPERORS

The Emperors can not be considered as a separate party in the Nicene debate. Nevertheless, they hold a special place in the controversy and must be taken into account. Their interference in Church affairs made both the temporary triumph of Arianism and the final victory of Orthodoxy possible.

CONSTANTINE

Constantine was the first and most important of the Emperors who took a

28. Louis Duchesne, *Early History of the Christian Church* (N. Y. Longmans, Green, 1922), vol. II, p. 104.

hand in church business. After becoming sole ruler of the Roman Empire he gave official recognition to the Christian church and used it as a force to weld together his huge empire. But he united the Empire under the banners of Christianity, only to find that the Church itself was divided and in turmoil over the Arian question. He was determined to have unity and called together the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea to end the strife.

He himself took a leading hand in the controversy and attended the Council of Nicea (as well as several subsequent Councils) in person. His desire for Church unity made itself felt in the Council. Probably at the prompting of Hosius he supported the Orthodox, and himself proposed the addition of *homo-ousios* to the Creed when it became evident that nothing else would do. Once passed, the decisions of Nicea were zealously defended by him. Those who spoke against the Creed or showed a spirit of rebellion he sent into exile (Arius, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nicea). While he lived the Orthodox party held sway.

His interest in the question was primarily political. He does not seem to have had a great deal of interest in the question as such, dismissing it as petty bickering:

... his great aim was the peace and unity of his empire and the good name of the new faith which he had espoused, and in his eyes the doctrine which commended itself to the mass of Christians was the only true faith whether in the event it proved to be Arian or Athanasian.²⁹

His political motives can be clearly seen in the restoration of both Arius and Eusebius after only a few years in exile, and in the exile of Athanasius on the basis of trumped-up charges by the Arians.

THE SUCCESSORS OF CONSTANTINE

With the possible exceptions of Gratian and Theodosius, the Emperors who succeeded Constantine were moved by the same political motives as he. Two of them, his son Constantius and, later Valens, supported the Arians, even to the extent of persecuting the Orthodox. The rest more or less supported the Orthodox. Most of the time the Empire was divided not only politically, but also ecclesiastically, between two Emperors, the Eastern Emperor supporting Arianism, and the Western Athanasius. Gratian and Theodosius secured the final victory of the Orthodox.

... to be continued.

29. William A. Curtis, *A History of the Creeds and Confessions of Faith in Christendom and Beyond* (Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1911), p. 66.

THE PASTOR

Prof. Robert D. Decker

As we continue our series on the subject of Pastoral Care we wish to focus on the pastor. The question to be faced at this point is this: "Who performs pastoral work?" While the answer may appear to be self-evident, it is not all that simple these days. We must deal with such questions as these: Who is the pastor? What is required of a pastor? What gifts are necessary in a man before he can be a pastor of God's sheep? To these questions and more we shall be addressing ourselves.

Negatively, it must be emphasized that the one who performs pastoral care is not the believer in general. Many advocate just exactly this. All of the members of the congregation are called to counsel one another. This is not only the work of the pastor. It belongs to the calling of all the saints. There is a great deal of emphasis in this direction of late. This is apparent, for example, in the writings of Dr. Jay Adams. It is his contention that God's people must counsel one another and that they are competent to do so. At the least, Adams is a bit fuzzy in his distinctions between the *official* work of the minister of the Word and the *mutual counseling* among the members of the church. For all of our appreciation of Adams' significant and needed contribution in the field of pastoral care we must take issue with him at this point. Neither is this movement new. It has been around for several years already. (Cf. G. Brillenburgh Wurth, *Christian Counselling In the Light Of Modern Psychology*, pp. 101 ff.) To be sure, there is a place for soul care by the entire congregation. Believers are called "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is . . . but to admonish one another" (Heb. 10:24, 25). Scripture calls believers to "edify one another, comfort one another, and love one another." Soul care, mutual care among the people of God is beneficial, it is necessary, and it is completely Biblical. All Christians have the calling to visit the sick, comfort the sorrowing, help the needy, visit the prisons, etc. Inasmuch as we do these things to the least of the brothers of Christ we do them to Christ Himself (cf. Matthew 25:31-46). By those very works of faith all believers shall be judged by the Son of man. But, all that being true, two things need saying in this connection. 1) Mutual care among believers is not possible apart from the official preaching of the Word and pastoral care of Christ through those whom He calls and ordains to serve in the church. Mutual care among believers is

precisely the fruit of the preaching of the Word and the pastoral care by those whom Christ gives to the church (cf. Ephesians 4:11 ff.). 2) Mutual care among believers must never be emphasized, therefore, to the exclusion of the *official* nature of pastoral care of the souls of God's people. This is exactly the tendency in our day. Today the tendency is to devaluate and even ridicule the *office* of the pastor. This is true also in the area of contemporary evangelism with all the emphasis being placed on equipping all the members of the church to evangelize and win souls for Christ. One may observe this phenomenon also within the established church and its worship. The place of the sermon in the liturgy is in many places greatly diminished. In place of the sermon come dialogues and discussion, dramatic productions, "children's church," choir programs, and testimonies by individual members of the church. Evidence of this is found too in the large place given to psychology (to the exclusion entirely of the pastor in many instances) of which we wrote in the previous article. People are led to believe that only psychologists and psychiatrists are able to deal with all these problems: mental illness, emotional problems, marriage problems, and more. Some openly advocate that pastors "leave their hands off" these problems. Make no mistake, we do not deny a legitimate place to psychology. It has its place. But then it must be *Christian* psychology, and it must not intrude upon the sphere of the labor of the pastor who represents Christ, the Good Shepherd of the sheep. The key to this whole movement is to be found in a lack of respect for *authority*. It is part of the spirit of the age in which we find ourselves. We must avoid this destructive, unbiblical tendency at all costs.

Both the reason this tendency must be avoided and the utter seriousness of this matter will become apparent the moment one realizes who is really the subject of pastoral care. Even a cursory examination of the Scriptures and the Confessions of the Reformed Churches yields the unmistakable conclusion that Jesus Christ Himself is the subject of pastoral care. In that marvelous tenth chapter of the Gospel according to John we find Jesus speaking to His disciples about Himself: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from

me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (verses 11-18). After telling the unbelieving Jews that they believe not because they are not of His sheep (verses 19-26) Jesus says, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one” (verses 27-30). Jesus is pre-eminently the Good Shepherd of the sheep given Him of the Father through the laying down of His life at the cross and taking it again in the resurrection. This is the commandment He received of His Father, and this is why the Father loves Him. Through this great work the Good Shepherd gives the sheep eternal life. Those sheep belong eternally to the Good Shepherd, for they shall never perish and no man is able to pluck them out of Jesus’ hand. The beautiful benediction of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls Jesus the great shepherd of the sheep. “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” (verses 20-21). The emphasis in this passage is the same as in John 10. Jesus is the great shepherd of the sheep through the cross, “. . . the blood of the everlasting covenant.” The inspired Apostle Peter has this exhortation for the elders: “The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed (the verb is, *poimainoo*, and means, to shepherd) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Peter 5:1-4). Here Christ is said to be the Chief Shepherd Who rewards faithful elders with the crown of glory.

Jesus Christ, therefore, is the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd of the sheep of God. Christ gained for them the forgiveness of sin through His suffering and death on the cross, and He gave them eternal life through His blessed resurrection from the dead. Christ shepherds those sheep and preserves them unto glory. This means that to deny or minimize the official work of the pastor in God’s church is to deny or minimize the very work of Christ. This is true because Christ is pleased to exercise His Shepherd’s loving care over His precious flock through the officebearers He ordains in and by the

church. Scripture is very clear on this. Speaking of the ascended Lord Christ the Apostle Paul writes as follows to the Ephesians: "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we hence forth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (4:11-16). Christ gives the pastor/teachers to His church for the work of the ministry. And through them Christ perfects the saints, edifies them, and keeps them from being tossed about by the winds of false doctrine. Christ through the Holy Spirit makes men overseers in the church (Acts 20:28), and Christ Himself says to these overseers or elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you." (1 Peter 5:1). Hence the subject of pastoral care is the pastor primarily, but also the elders and deacons of the church (there is overlapping here and a reciprocal relationship among these, cf. previous article) as these are called and ordained by Christ through the church. In one word, therefore, Christ is the pastor of God's flock.

This fact, namely, that Christ is pleased to care for His people through the pastor has far reaching and rich significance for the pastor himself. It is this blessed truth and the conviction of this truth in his own heart which affords the pastor the support he so sorely needs in all his work among the people of God. The pastor after all is not "super-human." He is a man of like passions with all of God's children. Because he knows himself to be an imperfect saint, a struggling sinner, a problem confronts him. Though he is a shepherd, he is at the same time one of the sheep. And he is very much like them in his sinful nature, weaknesses, temptations, and the tendency to wander. The problem he faces is this: what gives him the *right* and the *ability* to function as the shepherd of God's children? He is no better than they, no more pious, no less a sinner than any of the sheep for whom he cares. Just as is true of all God's children the only way he can be saved is by grace through faith, the gift of God. Even the Apostle Paul realized that keenly. Consider that great and moving seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans where he cries after his terrible struggle with sin: "O wretched man that I am. Who shall deliver me?" Or again consider the confession of this same

apostle: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15). His only right (right in the sense of authorization) to function as a shepherd among God's flock lies in the fact that Christ, the chief Shepherd, calls him and is pleased to feed His flock through the Word which the pastor brings. This is the answer to the problem also from the point of view of his *ability* to be a shepherd. Christ Who calls also promises to equip those whom He calls. This gives the pastor the courage and the boldness to do the work. But it also gives him the humility to depend completely upon the grace of Jesus Christ Who said, "without me ye can do nothing," and "lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Once again, let it be said that the pastor comes in the name of Christ and by the strength of Christ. He has been called by the Great Shepherd of the sheep and, therefore, is under holy obligation.

Practically speaking this means that the pastor must be a man of prayer. There is no way to give this the emphasis it ought to have. God in Christ gives the qualifying grace of the Holy Spirit to those whom He calls to shepherd His flock. But, we confess with the Heidelberg Catechism that "God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desire continually ask them of Him, and are thankful for them" (Lord's Day XLV, q. 116). If prayer be necessary for Christians generally, and it surely is, how much more is it not necessary for the pastor? The prophets were men of prayer. In fact, their difficulties often came exactly when in moments of weak faith they failed to pray. The apostles often prayed for themselves and requested the churches to pray for them. Think of Paul's tender request of the Ephesian Christians: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Ephesians 6:18-20). Even our Lord felt the need of prayer. The Good Shepherd, though He knew all things and was the person of the Son of God, on more than one occasion was constrained to withdraw from the people to be by Himself to pray. He often spent whole nights in prayer, and, if Gethsemane is any indication, the Lord must often have prayed in great struggle and anguish. If the Good Shepherd needed prayer, how much more do not they whom He calls to shepherd His flock? The point is that pastoral work must be in the sphere of the Word of God, and the pastor is totally dependent upon the grace of the Spirit of Christ for the fruit upon his labors. The moment the pastor forgets or neglects to pray he will surely falter! Practically, too, this is indispensable for the pastor's well-being. Shattering

disappointment, crushing depression, and the desire to "quit" (as so many pastors are doing these days) follow the quickly-held, proud notion that *I* will accomplish or should accomplish great things for the Lord in the congregation. The pastor must NEVER forget that Christ, not he, cares for the sheep through His powerful and effective Word which never returns void. And, this care is normally internal and gradual, through the "still small voice." It is seldom dramatic. Though the pastor may wish to see the congregation aflame for the Lord, it just does not happen very often. This ought to clothe the pastor with the most essential virtue necessary for the ministry: *humility*.

When the mother of the sons of Zebedee asked Jesus if her sons could sit on His right and left hands in His Kingdom Jesus had this to say to His disciples: "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28). The pastor must never forget these words of Jesus. As the pastor of God's flock he must, after the example of his Lord and Savior, be the servant of the people of God. There is a double danger in this respect. The humility must be genuine and not false. Sometimes a pastor has "inferior feelings" with respect to colleagues in the ministry or with respect to certain gifted members of the church. This is not humility. It is simply the weakness of faith. This leads to a lack of respect for what the minister says and a forgetting that he comes in the name of Christ. The pastor must work in the confidence of faith that Christ makes perfect His strength through our weakness. At the same time the pastor must remember that the authority of the office of the ministry is not authoritarianism (cf. again, 1 Peter 5:1-4). The only word before which God's people must bow is the Word of God, not the pastor's. Genuine humility consists in this that the pastor knows that his sufficiency is of the Lord and not of self. In this awareness he will shepherd God's flock in such a way that the people see Jesus and the glory of God.

This humility in turn should incite an earnest sense of responsibility. There is no more weighty position than that of an officebearer in the Church of Jesus Christ. The thought that he must some day give an account (cf. Hebrews 13:17) to Christ concerning the care of the sheep for whom He laid down His life ought to fill the pastor with a holy zeal to labor faithfully. Perhaps there is no easier position in which to be lazy than the ministry. It is always easier to find reasons not to work than reasons to work. For this reason as well the pastor must "pray without ceasing." A lazy pastor is one of the greatest tragedies

conceivable; it is also a most heinous sin for it results in sickly, starving sheep. May God in Christ give the pastors of His church grace to be faithful. Then His Church will flourish and His Name will be praised.

BOOK REVIEW

THE DEACONS HANDBOOK, A Manual of Stewardship, by Gerard Berghoef and Lester De Koster; Christian's Library Press, Inc., P.O. Box 2226, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501, 1980; 269 pp., \$12.95. (*Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko.*)

This is the second of the authors' works on the offices in the Church. The first book, a handbook for elders, was a very worthwhile book from which elders in the Church of Christ could profit. We are sorry to say that this second book does not begin to measure up to the value of the book for elders. We cannot even recommend it to our deacons nor to those who are interested in the office of deacons. We are sorry about this because we had looked forward to the publication of this book because a book which would assist deacons in their work in the Church, especially in these troubled times when the deacons face so many difficult questions, would be of great worth and help. This book is not of that kind of help.

After reading the book and reading over again the notes which I jotted down while reading it, I began searching for the main reason why this book is not a very good one. After pondering this matter a bit I came to the conclusion that perhaps the chief reason of this book's failure is the lack of precise definition of the Scriptural teaching concerning the office of deacon. Apparently the authors have some idea in their heads concerning the nature and character of the office; and, indeed, their ideas on this score come out rather clearly in what they write. But there is no explicit treatment of this matter. We criticized the "Handbook for Elders" on this same score, but there the ideas which the authors held concerning the nature of the office of elders seemed to be fundamentally sound. This is not the case here. It soon becomes clear that the idea of the office which these authors hold is not Scriptural, is not the idea as held by all Reformed men who studied Reformed and Scriptural Church Polity, and is not the same as the idea of the office still held by conservative Reformed Churches in this country and abroad. If only a section of the book had been devoted to a careful study of the Scriptural teaching concerning the office of deacon and a careful study of the historic teaching of the Reformed Churches concerning this office, the book might have been quite different.

But, what weaknesses appear in the book because of this lack of precise definition?

In the first place, much too much space is given to discussions concerning the principles of Christian stewardship. While a discussion of these principles is probably worthwhile and could be of benefit to the Church of Christ, nevertheless: a) The discussions are not always very Biblical; b) They could more profitably appear in some future "Handbook for Those Holding the Office of Believers." There are too many important matters to be treated in connection with the office of deacons to spend as much time on this question as the book does. The authors themselves evidently sense this because they suggest on page 91 that another title for the book could be "Manual of Citizenship," referring to citizenship in the kingdom of heaven.

In the second place, insofar as they do treat the Biblical idea of the office, they treat this very sketchily, and even engage in some very doubtful exegesis. For example, on page 65 they write:

Is it just a coincidence that the office of deacon arises in connection with table service — though it will soon expand to other forms of charity?

Not at all! Nothing in the history of the Church is mere coincidence.

Three tables all point to the same thing: the table called "altar" in the Old Testament; the table of the Lord's Supper; and the tables served first by deacons — all three relate to sacrifice, which remains at the heart of Christianity.

In this same connection we could note that while their discussion of deaconesses has some worthwhile material in it, they do not distinguish clearly and sharply between the work of deaconesses and the work of the office itself. They do not, therefore, make any contribution to the burning issue in the Christian Reformed Church concerning women officebearers. It is difficult to imagine how the authors could omit this important subject unless they favor the idea of women officebearers but did not want to come out clearly for the idea in their book.

In the third place, the book has a very strong tendency to "strain at a gnat while swallowing a camel." The book is inordinately brief on important matters of the deacons' calling. There is, e.g., absolutely no mention of the calling of deacons to bring to the poor "comforting words from Scripture," as our Form puts it, and, consequently, no discussion of how this can be done. But a great deal of attention is paid to peripheral matters which are, in fact, so peripheral

that they ought not really to occupy the time and attention of the deacons. Much is said about the whole financial operation of the Church, the upkeep of the buildings, purchasing paper clips, running off newsletters, selling bonds, etc. By this sort of emphasis the office is reduced to mere earthly financial management.

But finally, and most important of all, the book has a very wrong and anti-Scriptural view of the office of deacon, which view underlies all that the authors write and which, at bottom, destroys the office in the Church of Christ. For one thing, the authors do not discuss the whole question of government welfare. They simply assume that it is proper and desirable. In fact, they go so far as to say that the deacons ought to encourage government welfare, infiltrate the welfare system, make abundant use of it, attempt to influence it, and direct it towards the Church's goals. Do not the authors know that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel (Prov. 12:10)?

But this is not the worst. The authors are of the opinion that the Church's concern for the poor is chiefly responsible for the welfare state because it was this concern of the Church which aroused a national conscience. If this is true, if the Church is responsible for the present mess, then shame on the Church. But the authors' point is that the welfare state is desirable because the Church brought it about.

The Church is largely responsible for the coming of the modern welfare community. The Church could be largely responsible for purging welfare of its faults and problems. IF enough deacons caught the vision!

The Church brought about the welfare state in two ways:

1. As we have seen, the Word which the Church proclaims demands charity and justice for the poor. As this Word has permeated at least the Western world, an alerted public conscience has demanded public welfare. The Church is the parent of the welfare community.

2. But the Church did not, and perhaps in some respects could not, measure up to her own ideals. Not all the starving were fed, not all the homeless given shelter, not all of the oppressed and exploited relieved. The cries of the needy ascended to heaven. The Lord answered with the welfare state. The government undertakes to do what the Church demands and then fails to achieve by herself. (pp. 221, 222).

But even this is not the worst. The authors speak of a world-wide diaconate which will serve as "the cutting edge" of efforts to overthrow totalitarian regimes by means of revolution. This, in the minds of the authors, is the grand

dream of deacons everywhere. And if only the deacons of the world would get busy with this task, then the Church would also have its own answer to Marxism and Liberation Theology which now gains so much favor because it is dedicated to help the down-trodden and exploited.

In short, the deacon stands on the firing line in the on-going struggle between using structures of freedom for the witness of service, and perverting social structures into Marxist totalitarianism through violent revolution (p. 227).

The answer to Marxist structural change through violent revolution aimed at "dictatorship of the proletariat" was spoken by the Apostle Peter when Jesus asked His disciples if they, like the fickle crowd, would also desert Him. Peter replies, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). Revolution mounted to ensure the free preaching of these words is blessed . . . (p. 228).

It is clear from all this that the authors have reduced the office of deacon to a social office. This can only be because they have written this book in the context of a social gospel which denies the antithesis and has no proper and Biblical conception of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For these reasons, I cannot recommend this book. It has no value to speak of for those who wish to preserve and labor in the office of deacon according to the Scriptures.