



REFORMED

— PAVILION —

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 25

SEPTEMBER 28, 2024

*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.*

—Psalm 27:5

CONTENTS

3 MEDITATION
Jehovah Upon Mount Sinai

4 EDITORIAL
Schism and Scattering

9 HERMAN HOEKSEMA'S *BANNER* ARTICLES
Article 77: The New King and His Kingdom (continued)



REFORMED
— PAVILION —

Editor: Rev. Andrew Lanning
From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

See reformedpavilion.com for all contact and subscription information.

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

—Exodus 19:16–20

Jehovah Upon Mount Sinai

Jehovah descended upon Mount Sinai.

It was unforgettable. Israel talked about it for years afterward. The scriptures refer to it repeatedly.

Just before Jehovah descended upon Mount Sinai on the morning of the third day, there were terrible signs. A thick cloud covered the top of Mount Sinai and hid the sky from Israel's view (Ex. 19:16). The atmosphere was blackness and darkness and thick darkness (Deut. 4:11; Heb. 12:18). The whole sky above the people's heads heaved and boiled with storm. Blinding shivers of lightning, crashing thunders, and wild winds chased across the mountain (Ex. 19:16; Ps. 77:18; Heb. 12:18). Above the frightful din of thunder and wind and tempest was the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud (Ex. 19:16)—the voice of God!

And then Jehovah descended!

Jehovah descended upon the mountain in fire (Ex. 19:18; Deut. 4:11–12; Heb. 12:18). Jehovah was an inferno. He engulfed the entire mountain. When Moses had last seen God on Mount Sinai, only a bush burned. Now the whole mountain burned! Smoke billowed up to heaven. The air distorted and shimmered with heat. The fire roared up from the mountain as high as heaven. Israel had already seen Jehovah's fire in the pillar by night, but they had never seen him like this!

In the blaze an eternal truth about our God was revealed: our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

The trumpet of God was loud now and growing louder (Ex. 19:19). The people shook (v. 16). Moses shook (Heb. 12:21). Even Sinai shook! It quaked greatly (Ex. 19:18). As well it might! It was as if the mountain reverberated with the shock of the impact of Almighty God's feet landing upon Sinai in his descent.

Tremendous signs! And there is one more. Unseen by Israel, the holy and mighty angels were in attendance at Sinai with Jehovah. Why were they there? What can we creatures of the dust know about that, except what God reveals? They were there as the servants of God, as they always are (Ps. 104:4). And they were there to bear witness to the giving of God's law (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19).

But now would we hear a precious truth to comfort our quaking hearts? It is this: Jehovah did not descend to destroy his people. His consuming fire was not for them! After all, he who descended is Jehovah, the covenant God. In the midst of all of the signs of God's holy majesty, behold this beautiful work of our mediator: "And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God" (Ex. 19:17).

—AL

Schism and Scattering

Prof. David J. Engelsma published the following article this month in response to two editorials in *Reformed Pavilion*. The editorials instructed and warned those former members of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) and the Reformed Protestant Churches (RPC) who are currently joining the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) and the United Reformed Churches (URC) that the OPC and the URC hold to the Arminian doctrine of the well-meant offer of the gospel. In response to those editorials, Professor Engelsma published the following article blaming the undersigned for the exodus of Protestant Reformed members to the OPC and to the URC. The heart of Professor Engelsma’s article is the charge that the undersigned committed the condemnable sin of schism in the Protestant Reformed Churches and that my schism in the PRC has had the lingering effect today of scattering the sheep and the lambs of the PRC into other churches.

Professor Engelsma’s charge of schism is worth examining. The profit of examining the professor’s charge is not the clearing of my name. The reformation of the church always draws the charge of schism, so let the charge continue to come, and let my name continue to be reviled under that charge. I have committed that charge against me to the Lord, the righteous judge. As Professor Engelsma indicates, those who have been charged with schism must answer in the final judgment. Let Professor Engelsma remember that those who make the charge of schism must also answer in the final judgment. At the final judgment the Lord will have his say—the final and decisive say—about that charge of schism.

Rather, the profit of examining the professor’s charge of schism is for the instruction of the church. Professor Engelsma charges schism,

but he does not define it. It is profitable for the church to examine the charge so that she knows what schism truly is. Professor Engelsma charges the scattering of the sheep, but he does not define it. It is profitable for the church to examine the charge so that she knows how it truly is that the sheep are scattered. Ultimately, the profit of examining Professor Engelsma’s charge is that the sheep might take comfort in the Lord’s promise to gather his scattered sheep and feed them in peace, which promise in Christ the professor completely overlooks in the midst of all his charging.

What Is Schism?

Professor Engelsma is correct that there was schism in the Protestant Reformed Churches. The result of that schism was the signing of the Act of Separation in January 2021, by which men and women and families left the PRC and were formed anew by Christ as his church. Professor Engelsma assumes that these members’ leaving the PRC was the sin of schism. Professor Engelsma is not alone in his assumption. The members of the PRC as a whole have made it a proverb among them that those who left in 2021 are the “schismatic group” or some like designation.

But Professor Engelsma and the PRC are wrong in their understanding of schism. After all, what is schism? Schism is not leaving the PRC, as Professor Engelsma alleges. Rather, schism is dividing the church from Christ. Schism is dividing the church from the truth. Yes, the word *schism* means *division* or *splitting*. But the sin of schism is not merely dividing or splitting a church institute on the earth. Rather, schism is dividing and splitting the church from Christ, as he is made known by the truth.

This definition of schism is biblical and confessional, for the unity of the church is Christ.

The church is the holy catholic church of Christ (Lord's Day 21, Q&A 54). The church enjoys the unity of Christ's Spirit (see Eph. 4:3). The unity of the church is the truth. The church agrees in true faith (Lord's Day 21, Q&A 54). She has "one faith" (Eph. 4:5). Schism, then, is the dividing of the church's unity by separating the church from Christ and separating the church from the truth. The schismatics are those who "cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned" (Rom. 16:17). The schismatics are not those who "withdraw [themselves] from every brother that walketh disorderly," but the schismatics are those who walk "not after the tradition which [they] received of us" (II Thess. 3:6).

Yes, there was schism in the PRC. But the schism was the false doctrine of conditional covenant fellowship. The schism was the false doctrine that Jesus *and* the believer's good works are the way to the Father. The schism was the false doctrine that if a man would be saved, there is that which he must do. The schism was the false doctrine that the believer's sanctified life of obedience obtains for him the enjoyment of God's fellowship. The schism was the false doctrine that union with Christ is unconditional, but communion with Christ is conditional. The schismatics—to name only a few of the most egregious—were then-Rev. David Overway, Rev. Kenneth Koole, Prof. Ronald Cammenga, and then-Rev. Ronald Van Overloop. The schismatics were also all the ministers and elders who defended those heretics.

When men and women stood up against the false doctrine that the wolves had brought into the PRC, the denomination's response was to protect the heretics and finally to kill those who opposed the heretics. Men were put out of office and put under discipline in the PRC for standing for the truth of God's unconditional covenant. No place whatsoever was left to them in the PRC. When people finally left in January 2021 through the Act of Separation, it was because the PRC had committed schism against them, not the other way around.

What Is Scattering the Sheep?

Related to Professor Engelsma's charge of schism is his charge that the undersigned scattered the sheep of the PRC. Here again Professor Engelsma is correct that sheep were scattered, but he is mistaken what that means.

The scattering of the sheep does not mean that people leave the PRC. Rather, the scattering of the sheep means that people are fed false doctrine by their undershepherds. Sheep are not scattered in their *leaving*. Sheep are scattered in their *eating*. So says Jeremiah. "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD" (Jer. 23:1). And how did these pastors scatter the sheep? By what they fed them: "Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD" (v. 2). And what did these pastors feed the people? False doctrine: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD" (v. 16). And again: "Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the LORD" (v. 32).

This means that false doctrine itself is the scattering of the sheep. Even if every single member of a church would remain a member of that church, all those members are nevertheless scattered. Even if no member would ever leave for another denomination, all those members are nevertheless scattered.

The Protestant Reformed Churches scattered the sheep and continue to scatter them by the churches' false doctrine of conditional covenant fellowship. The Protestant Reformed members who leave for the OPC and the URC are scattered, certainly. But the Protestant Reformed members who stay in the PRC are scattered just as much as

those who leave. And when some reviled worm cries a warning against the lies of the PRC, he is not scattering the sheep, even if his warning would cause every single member of the PRC to leave those churches.

Perhaps Professor Engelsma would protest that the PRC still teach the truth of the unconditional covenant of grace. Perhaps Professor Engelsma would maintain that the PRC are not teaching lies and that it is schism for anyone to say that they are. Then let us have a “Letter to My Family” from Professor Engelsma about the decisions of Synod 2024. Professor Engelsma’s Protestant Reformed Churches adopted this doctrine about justification at Synod 2024: a man’s good works are not to be slighted in assuring that man of his justification.¹ Does Professor Engelsma believe that to be the Reformed and confessional doctrine of justification? Does Professor Engelsma believe that to be the gospel truth of justification by faith *alone*—that a man’s works are to be used to assure a man of his justification and, indeed, that a man’s good works are *not to be slighted* in assuring that man of his justification? Is it Professor Engelsma’s doctrine of justification that a man’s works have some not-to-be-slighted use in that man’s assurance of his justification? Does Professor Engelsma believe that justification—the heart of the gospel—includes the usefulness of *works* in assurance of *justification*? Then let Professor Engelsma say so. Why the constant flogging of the dead dog over in Remnant Reformed Church? Let us hear instead for once Professor Engelsma’s evaluation of his own synod’s decisions.

The Protestant Reformed doctrine of justification in 2024 is Roman Catholic. It is the doctrine of justification by faith *and works*. In the PRC a man’s assurance of his justification is no longer faith alone; rather, in the PRC a man’s works are not to be slighted in assuring that man of his justification. The Protestant Reformed doctrine of justification in 2024 is just as bad as the Arminianism of the Orthodox Presbyterian and United Reformed well-meant offer of the

gospel. If Professor Engelsma is such a paternal shepherd as to write a “Letter to My Family” about the damnable Arminianism of the OPC and the URC, then let him also write a “Letter to My Family” about the damnable Roman Catholicism of the PRC. If he is serious—truly serious—about warning his family against the error of the OPC, then let him begin at home by delivering his family from the error of the PRC. And then let Professor Engelsma join us schismatics and sheep-scatterers over here in calling for all the members of the PRC to flee before the Protestant Reformed hirelings and wolf-shepherds scatter them into hell.

But if Professor Engelsma will not warn his family and his denomination about their own denial of justification by faith alone, then the professor reveals to all that he was never truly serious in all his loud condemnations of the Arminianism in other denominations. Who needs the professor’s warnings against Orthodox Presbyterian Arminianism if the professor is willing to tolerate Protestant Reformed Roman Catholicism?

“I Will Gather the Remnant”

But what about the poor sheep of Christ’s flock who have been scattered by the lies of the false shepherds? What about the wretched lambs who have been driven to despair by constantly being fed their own diseased works instead of their Shepherd’s pure works? What about the fearful and the lacking and the dismayed sheep who know that something is desperately wrong in their pasture but who are too sick and weak and paralyzed to know what to do?

Ah, for the scattered sheep there is the loveliest good news! For the dismayed and the fearful, there is the most refreshing relief! Here is the glad tidings of the Shepherd for his sheep: “I will gather the remnant”! (Jer. 23:3).

Do you hear that? Do you hear the freedom of it? Do you hear the relief of it? God says about your deliverance that he will do it: “I will!” You do not have to be wise enough. You do not have

¹ Andrew Lanning, “I Will Come Unto Thee Quickly,” *Reformed Pavilion* 2, no. 11 (June 22, 2024): 4–9.

to be good enough. You do not have to be strong enough. You do not have to work for it. You do not have to find the way to God. Why not? Because God will find the way to you! God will come to you in the strange country where he has brought you, and he will gather you. And having gathered you, he will feed you and nourish you and comfort you.

And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the LORD. (Jer. 23:3–4)

And how will the merciful God do this wonderful work? Ah, this too is good news! For the Lord will save his people by Jesus Christ. Jesus, the righteous Branch. Jesus, the reigning and prospering King. Jesus, our Righteousness. Behold Jesus Christ, who is your way to the

Father and who is also the Father's way to you. Jesus Christ, the way of God's sovereignty. Jesus Christ, the way of God's righteousness. Jesus Christ, the way of God's mercy. Jesus Christ, by whom the Lord gathers the remnant of his flock.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Jer. 23:5–6)

It is that Jesus who is proclaimed in those places where the Lord feeds his sheep. It is that righteous Branch who is proclaimed among the remnant in those places where the Lord has gathered them. And it is that Jesus alone who is our righteousness before God. What a glorious word of relief for scattered sheep! And this word is absolutely sure, for "the LORD liveth" (see Jer. 23:7–8).

—AL

Scattering the Sheep: Letter to My Family about Schism

by David J. Engelsma

(September 2024)

Dear Family,

My attention has been drawn to a complaint, or lament, by a leader, Mr. Andy Lanning (AL), of the schism in the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). His complaint is that some who have left the PRC as the result of the schism have joined the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) or the United Reformed Churches (URC), rather than the schismatic group he heads. His purpose, of course, is that those who leave the PRC join his schismatic group.

This complaint, or lament, on his part is ironic. The content of the complaint is sound. Particularly the OPC has for all intents and purposes adopted the Arminian heresy. It has done this by its adoption of the doctrine of the "well-meant

offer" of the gospel as the leading element of the broader doctrine of common grace, which the OPC has approved. The Reformed creed, the Canons of Dort, judges the Arminian heresy, which the doctrine of a well-meant, or (in the language of the OPC, free), offer is, to be the "bring[ing] again out of hell the Pelagian error" (Canons 2. Rejection of Errors 3). By the well-meant, or free, offer, the OPC confesses that God loves and desires the salvation of all humans and, in this love and desire, offers salvation to all humans with a desire that all be saved.

This doctrine of the OPC, which goes in the OPC by the name, "free offer of the gospel," clearly implies that salvation depends, not upon the gracious will of God, but, contrary to Romans 9,

upon the will of the sinner. It is the denial of the gospel of grace.

In addition, the OPC is committed to, and practices, the adultery of remarriage after divorce.

The OPC stands for everything that the PRC was raised up by God to oppose on behalf of the truth of the gospel and a holy life.

The same is true of the URC, which is, in reality, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) without women in office. Those former members of the PRC who join the URC in effect go back to the CRC.

What is ironic is that AL is evidently surprised by this drifting of ex-PRC members to the OPC and to the URC. His surprise is ironic because this scattering of the sheep is the natural effect of the schism that AL caused. Schism scatters the sheep in all directions, that is, to all churches. Once the membership of persons in a denomination of true churches (the PRC) is abandoned, there is no telling where they will go. What AL complains about is the natural and inevitable consequence of the schism he caused. In addition to his scattering the sheep into churches that deny the gospel of grace—by their adoption of the heresy of the well-meant offer (and more)—it is likely that some weaker members of the PRC will, as a result of the schism, forsake the Reformed faith altogether, if some have not done this already. It would not surprise me that the result of the schism is that some abandon the church altogether. Schism scatters some former members of the church into the world. Wolves are watching for scattered sheep—and for their lambs.

Likewise, the effect of AL's schism will certainly be that former members of the PRC will in the future divorce and remarry, thus committing adultery (Matthew 19; Mark 10; Luke 16; Romans 7; and I Corinthians 7). Living impenitently in adultery, they will perish eternally. For their sin and its punishment, AL will have to give account in the Final Judgment.

He scattered the sheep into this unholy behavior. If God does not visit the sin of adultery upon the adults who have scattered into the OPC and into the URC, He will visit it upon their children and grandchildren: listening to the teaching of these churches, of which they are now members, they will certainly divorce and remarry. "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

This prophecy is not far-fetched. I have it on reliable authority that ex-members of the PRC have already, in just months, listened to their OPC minister and now believe that divorce and remarriage are permissible. AL and the other schismatic leaders will answer for this. They have scattered the sheep!

AL's surprise and even indignation that ex-PRC church members scatter in all ecclesiastical directions, including churches that corrupt the gospel and compromise the Christian life are ironic. Did he not expect this as the result of his dividing the PRC? Did he suppose that he could control schism? Did he really expect that he could guide all the scattering sheep neatly into his fold? Schism is the devil's work. Satan does not intend to enlarge the fold of AL. He intends the destruction, in time and in eternity, of the sheep, including the lambs, and the destruction of Christ's sheepfold.

Woe to AL and the other leaders of the schism!

This is not merely my outburst.

This is the inspired, awful judgment of the prophet: "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the LORD. Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:1, 2).

With paternal love,
Your father (and still a kind of shepherd)



Article LXXVII. The New King and His Kingdom (continued)

The one possible objection against the doctrine of the absolute and all-comprehensive character of the counsel of God we have tried to answer.

It was expressed in the question: Is there unrighteousness with God? If God's counsel is all-comprehensive and if according to that counsel all things are realized in time, how about the presence of sin and evil in the world?

We answered first of all that the very question as to God's righteousness is absurd. Such questions are possible only in cases where there is a higher standard, a more absolute criterion than the object in question. This is not true in regard to God. Hence, we cannot judge God.

We, therefore, came to the conclusion that the only correct position to take is to say that God is righteousness because He is God. To say that God is God is the same as to say that God is righteous. To question, to try the righteousness of God is to deny His Godhead from the outset.

We pointed out further that the question as to God's righteousness is of no practical value, since in the immediate consciousness of every moral being the testimony stands indelible: God is righteous. God, through His Spirit, justifies Himself. And no moral being He permits to rid himself of the consciousness that God is justified.

To this we now add that by faith we look forward to the public theodicy, the final justification of God in the future. History has not yet come to a close. The character of sin is not as yet fully revealed. The man of sin must still show himself in all the horror of his appearance. The day of final judgment is still to come. By faith we expect that day. By faith we know that in that day the Lord

God shall stand fully justified before all the world. Much that is wrong is still to be righted. The world cries for the final judgment and the divine adjustment of all things. And when the Judge of all the earth shall have expressed His final sentence, that judgment shall before all the world be righteousness and justice.

This, however, is one side of the question that keeps us busy for the present. It is God's side. There is also a human side to this problem. And when that phase is discussed, the charge of determinism is frequently brought against us.

What is meant by determinism? It is the view according to which man in his moral action is absolutely determined by forces or motives that are not his own, and that destroy his moral freedom and responsibility or, at least, leave nothing but a semblance of it. In both his good and evil deeds man is determined, forced, compelled from without. He is not free. If he commits murder he does so not as a free agent, but rather as a victim of some influence either from without or from within, but foreign to himself. His actions are not the result of free choice, but the necessary outcome of circumstances of which he is the victim. In short, determinism denies the freedom of the moral creature.

Of this view there are different varieties.

In the first place, there is what may be called fatalism. According to it, all things, also the moral creatures, yea, even God or the gods if any, are determined irresistibly by some blind force or power that stands above all things. With iron necessity things take place in the world, and that without wisdom and goodness, without respect

to righteousness or justice. This blind Fate that stands above all things has no definite purpose, is not intelligent and wise, is neither righteous nor holy or good, knows neither love nor mercy. It is simple, blind necessity. Nothing more. And according to this blind necessity all men act. There is no escape. There is no choice. Man is the pitiable victim of this blind and cold Fate that is in control of all things.

A terrible, cold, lifeless, hopeless, deeply pessimistic view of life and the world!

In the second place, there is what is called the materialistic view. According to it there is no dualism of matter and spirit. What we call soul is nothing but a manifestation of matter-action. In our day we would say very scientifically that there are psychic phenomena but that there is no soul as a spiritual entity. These so-called psychic phenomena, however, are after all nothing but the result of nervous action. Matter is really all that exists and from the result of the action of this matter must be explained even the moral actions of men. What a man wills or does at a given moment depends upon the action of matter. There is really no will as a faculty of the soul. At bottom the theory comes down to this, that all spiritual, all moral, all religious action is determined by matter.

A dangerous view that undermines all responsibility and justice. It is to be attributed to this view that so many criminal actions are traced to insanity, an abnormal condition of the brain for which the subject is not responsible.

In the third place, there is the pantheistic view. After all, there is no personality. All that is in the world is nothing but a manifestation of the great world-soul. This world-soul is God, and the world is his manifestation. This world-soul, this God, comes to consciousness in man. He lives and works in all the world and in every being. Every creature is but a little wave of this life of the world-soul. But in man this pantheistic God comes to His own, comes to consciousness, knows Himself. And, therefore, every man lives the life of this great world-soul consciously, yet not personally. It is this world-soul that controls,

that determines his every action. Or rather, for this expresses it very adequately, the life of the world-soul is the life of every man. There is no discrimination. Man's life is dissolved into the life of the pantheistic God. It follows that on the basis of this view there is really no individual action, there is no personal responsibility. There is but one great Consciousness, there is but one great Mind, there is but one great Will, there is only the consciousness, the mind, the will of the world-Spirit. And hence, all responsibility is gone.

It is almost needless to say that the Reformed view of the counsel of God has absolutely nothing in common with any of these deterministic views of man's moral life.

It is the very opposite of fatalism, for it maintains and even strongly emphasizes that not blind force or stupid necessity or whimsical fortune, but an All-wise, Good and Righteous God is in control of all things. It postulates that the eternal purpose of this all-wise God is being worked out in the history of the world. It is not difficult, indeed, to see the difference between the Reformed view of the all-comprehensive counsel of God and Fatalism. For Fatalism there is no counsel, there is no wisdom, there is neither righteousness or love. There is only cold and blind necessity in control of the world. For Calvinism the world is the product of an All-wise Creator, and it is in control of an Almighty God who made His wise counsel from the beginning. Fatalism is cold and hopeless, makes one shudder; Calvinism is full of hope and affords rest to the heart of man. Anyone that makes the comparison between Fatalism and Calvinism so as to identify the two, or even so as to discern a certain amount of similarity between the two views, never understood the beautiful doctrine of the counsel of God.

It has nothing in common with the materialistic view of life. For materialism there is no contrast of matter and spirit. All that is, is matter. Spiritual entities do not exist. What is called spiritual is nothing but a manifestation of matter. It is matter in action. But Calvinism sets out with the determinate counsel of a God who is in

Himself the absolute and infinitely perfect Spirit, who is before all things, and by whom all things are created and subsist. It postulates and strongly emphasizes the existence of the Absolute spiritual Entity before all things. And, therefore, it is impossible to build on the Calvinistic view any theory of materialistic determinism. Man, created after the image of God Himself, is spirit as well as matter. He is a personal being, whose actions cannot and may not be explained from mere material operations but are the result of free and conscious choice. And, therefore, the doctrine of the counsel of God has nothing in common with materialistic determinism whatever.

Again, there is a wide gap between pantheistic determinism and the Calvinistic view of God's all-comprehensive counsel. According to Calvinism God is a personal Being. He is the Triune God, who in and by Himself lives an all-sufficient and absolutely independent life. He has existence apart from the world. He existed before the world was, and within His own Being lived the highest possible covenant-life. He had need of nothing. That absolutely independent

God made His eternal counsel. Freely, though in harmony with His own Being, He determined upon all that exists and occurs in time. There is, therefore, an absolute difference between God and the world. Truly, God is in the world, and according to His counsel He works all things by His providence. But God is also before the world was, and personally He is high above all things. Though, therefore, there is the most intimate contact between God and the world, there is also the widest difference. The two are closely related, especially in man, created after God's image, yet they are never identified. And, therefore, on the Calvinistic basis man is never to be called a mere wave of the world-life or world-spirit. He is a personal being, as God is a personal Being. There is communion, there is contact, but there is no dissolution and no identification whatever.

Rightly conceived, it is exactly the doctrine of the counsel of God that strongly repudiates all deterministic theories.

However, we must have the correct view of moral freedom. About this next time.

—Grand Rapids, Mich.



REFORMED

— PAVILION —