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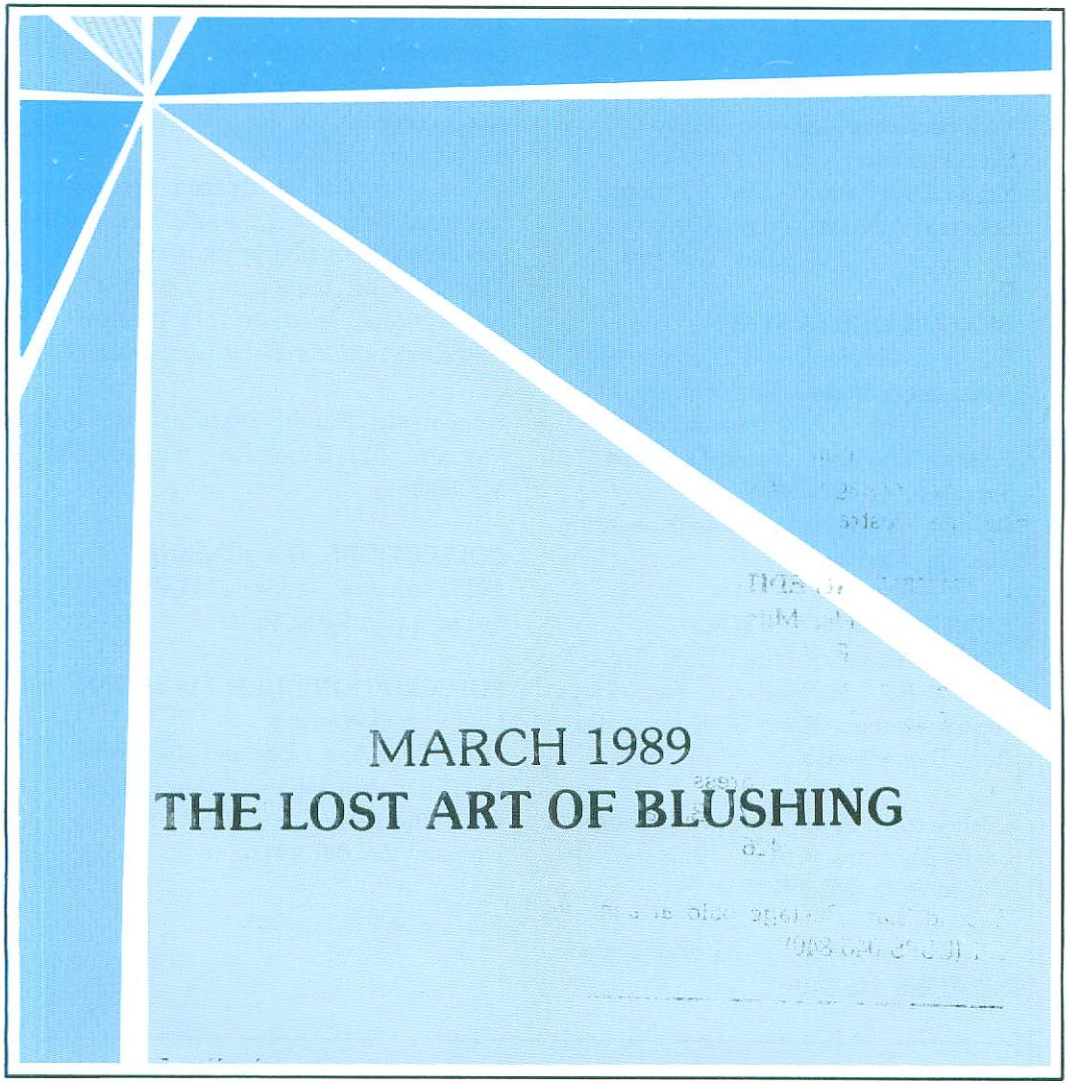

MARCH 1989

THE LOST ART OF BLUSHING

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EDITOR'S NOTES

by David Harbach

When was the last time you blushed? I hope that it was recently. Rev. Heys has a unique way of expressing the art of blushing. He writes, "Blush now and you will in the new Jerusalem shine with glory." Read "The Lost Art of Blushing" to find out about those who have lost the art of blushing at their sins.

Have you had that once-in-a-life-time Experience? Read Gramps' (John Faber's) article to find out about getting ready for the "Experience".

There are going to be many times in your life when you will need to witness to others about what you believe. Sometimes, you may forget to include passages of Scripture, perhaps because you might have forgotten the proof-texts for the various doctrines you believe. Rev. Koole's article on "What Shall We Say?" will help to bring to mind several proof-texts for the five points of Calvinism and the divinity of Christ that you can use in your witnessing.

Define the meaning of the word "Bletonism." I'll give you a hint. It has nothing to do with a ton of blets. Oh come on now, surely you know what bletonism means! You don't! All right, then read Rev. Harbach's article on "God's Controversy With Israel. Hosea 4:11" to find out what this mysterious word is all about.

We can thank Shari Huizinga for preparing the 1988 Index, an oversight on my part which resulted in its late appearance. Enjoy this month's edition of your young people's magazine. If you have any suggestions for passages of Scripture or topics that you would like to see written about in this magazine then send them to me. I will gladly accept copy in the form of poems, puzzles, and art work that can be used in your young people's magazine.

Editorial

A "let's get ready" letter to my grandchildren

by John M. Faber

All you kids remember certain happenings to which you looked forward with much anticipation, I'm sure. Remember the birthday party that you and your Daddy planned in secret? How you found occasions to whisper about your plans; how you decided that you would, for a change, get up before your regular time, get the breakfast table ready; and get the breakfast made, all before your Mom got up? And how pleased she was? Of course the best part of the surprise was the gift you two had bought for her! And, to put the frosting on the cake, so to speak, you then told her that your Daddy was going to take the whole family out to dinner that special evening! Then, oh, she knew it all the time, but she was again assured by her family that you loved her as a special mother in your eyes. What fun that was; the secret plans, awaiting the day, the realization of it, and the smile on her face! Oh, it was worth it all. Besides, that birthday party lasted much longer than that day - it lasted all year whenever she recollected it. How she remembered that after that dinner she did not have to wash the dishes, clean up the table and put all things in order again. How she remembered the good time when you came home for dinner and you all gathered around the dining room table for a game of dominoes. She even caught you at trying to have her win, but she would have none of that! That one event, you enjoyed the preparation for it, experiencing it, and the lasting benefit of it!

And how about the church picnic prepared by the Sunday School teachers! That day took much planning: choice of food; ball and bats for the soft-ball game; horseshoes and stakes for men to play with; the children's game and the prizes given to the winners. Do you remember that you would be anxiously sitting in the car an hour ahead of time, just relishing the fun you would have, hardly accepting the delay? Then when everyone finally was ready you started for the park. Arriving in the parking places for the cars you eagerly looked for your favorite pals with whom you could best enjoy the games and things. You could hardly be pulled away from the games area to come to the table at mealtime. Potato salad, beans, soft drinks, and, last but not least, a big slice of red juicy watermelon! After supper some of you boys would watch the men play ball; the girls would have their own version of fun; but each and everyone of you would have such a good time that none would really be ready to go home. Remember how the little ones would fall asleep in the car because

they were much more tired than they were ready to admit. Again, you enjoyed the preparation, the actual experiencing, the lasting enjoyment of it for days to come.

And remember how many months you looked forward to your Dad's annual vacation from his work. That year that you went to a cottage for two weeks was one you would never forget. And the preparations for it was almost endless in your impatience for The Big Day! I don't exactly know what the girls had to do, because there were no daughters in your Gramps' family, but I can imagine that your Mom found plenty for them to do. I do know that the boys were assigned tasks that were necessary for proper cottage life. To be sure, they had to dig worms for bait; even early morning search for night crawlers. And then the day came! The cane poles were tied to the side of the car, worm supply in the trunk, and what room was left was used for groceries and suitable clothing. Again, the enjoyment consisted of the preparation, the actual two weeks of cottage life, and remembering it for weeks to come.

Remember the camping trip your four friends took last year? You made a list of necessary things to take along, not forgetting the medication for poison ivy rash. Oh, how you were on the lookout for that pretty three-leaved vine climbing a fence post, or running along the ground. The tent had to be prepared and had to be waterproofed. The site for the tent had to be carefully picked; the fold-up table for eating when it was raining outside at the picnic table; the gasoline lantern for evening activities in the tent had to be stored quite carefully, and the hair-raising story books must not be forgotten. Again, the preparation, the actual camping, and the weeks of telling your various friends about it all added to the enjoyments.

And, even I remember the short European trip you took one summer. A couple of your school teachers sponsored and led it. You had to make several preparations for that special vacation trip! You had to obtain visas for entry into the foreign land. Dictionaries of foreign phrases had to be carefully studied and the pronouncing of each practiced among you. One wanted to be sure that when you ordered ham and eggs for breakfast one wouldn't be served shoe polish and a buffing rag. A good guide book to direct you to special places that had to be visited, and all spots of sight-seeing value. Ethnic foods of that locale were to be tried, and wanted to be remembered for their good taste. Oh the weeks of preparation that went into that trip! And the actual experiencing of the people-life of each country visited and the remembering of the whole deal stayed with you for months. You often re-remembered those experiences many times as you shared them with your friends.

This letter is getting so long again and I almost forgot what I was leading up to. I can almost hear you say, "I thought all this writing about preparation, enjoyment and the lasting value is leading up to something. I bet Gramps is going to preach to us again." Right, I am going to call to mind an Experience each one of my grandchildren will live through some day soon. Did you notice the capital letter before that long word? I did that because it is a once-in-a-life-time Experience. And that experience is somewhat different from most experiences we have. Most "just happen" to us. But that one to

which I am referring is one by decision of our own.

By now, I suppose, you have a hint. You young people all must meet that decision head on soon. And you want to, also. You want to make public confession of your faith as soon as possible. You want to search your thoughts regarding your calling in God's Church. You want to tell your parents, and you want to tell your consistory, and you want to stand up in church to tell everyone that you belong to your faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. You are eager to praise God in public that He has given you the New Birth; that you have put off the old man and that you are ready to walk in "a new and heavenly life".

So lets look forward to our goal; like the other goals we wrote about in the beginning of our letter. Let's get ready to enjoy the reaching of that goal; let's think about the actual living in full communion with the saints in your church. That "full communion" includes sitting at The Table of The Lord, the communion table where we eat bread and drink wine as a true picture of eating and drinking Christ.

Now, boys and girls, isn't that a worthwhile goal, a worthwhile fruition and enjoyment of highest value? To ask it is to answer it. May you soon act according to that inward desire of your hearts.

Love, Gramps.

From The Pastor's Study
THE LOST ART OF BLUSHING

by Rev. John A. Heys

Have you young people ever had a red face?

Have you ever been embarrassed because of what you did or are doing that has manifested itself as silly or wrong in the eyes of those before whom you stand?

Young men look at your feet. Did you find that this morning you put on a blue sock on your right foot and a green one on the left foot in the darkness of your bedroom? You will, no doubt, blush, but not if you are alone in the room when you find out this mistake. But if you arrived at school or at work, and others called your attention to this error, you might probably blush, or at least in your soul feel foolish.

Blushing is an outward manifestation of an inward feeling of shame because of a wrong or foolish deed that has been performed. It means that one's face is red because one is embarrassed because of a shortcoming or wrong deed.

Take note, young people, of the fact that Jeremiah gives us a very important warning in regard to such evil deeds that call for blushing. For in Jeremiah 6:14, 15 we read: "They have

healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down saith the Lord."

Plainly that kind of blushing is far more serious. To lie about something is a breaking of the ninth commandment and a sin that calls for punishment in the lake of fire. O, yes it does. Read Acts 5. Ananias and his wife Sapphira both were punished with death for having lied about whether they had given to the church all the money they received for the land that they sold. Peter told them that they lied unto God. And God, not Peter or that early New Testament church, punished them with death.

In the text quoted above we read of certain people who lied and said, "Peace, peace", when actually there was no peace of God resting upon the wicked Israelites. They were not treated peacefully by God but in the awfulness of His holy wrath.

The tragedy, today, young people, is that there are so many sins wherein we are not simply by the world, but often even by the church, encouraged to walk, and told that these acts are not wrong, and do not call for punishment. We are taught that God's peace will rest upon us if we walk in these deeds. We of the older generation can see these things more clearly than you of the younger generation. But make no mistake about it. We so often today tell others as well as ourselves that it is quite all right to walk in this sin or in that evil way. It is claimed that God's peace will not be taken away from us, if we do this or that evil deed, which we call a good deed. In fact in much of the church today it is taught that man is getting better and less sinful than in ages gone by, so that soon the kingdom of heaven will be here on this earth through the works man has produced.

There is so much breaking of both tables of the law today that brings forth not the slightest trace of blushing and shame because of the devilish deed. Not simply in the world is this true today; but also, as in the days of Jeremiah, in the church world there are gross sins that get applause instead of shame and blushing.

God's law, however, teaches us that when we break one of the commandments from two through ten we are breaking the first commandment, and we have a god who in our minds stands before Jehovah. No matter what kind of sin it is that we commit, it is always due to the fact that we have another god before the one true and only God, Whose is this earth and all that it contains, and must be served with heart, mind and strength. And God is sovereign and has the right to demand of us that we live only to His praise and glory and have no idols, but serve Him alone. That idol must not be our flesh. All that we have we owe to God, and we are obliged to use all that which He gives us in a way that confesses Him to be God alone.

We must then feel shame and blush when we set ourselves, or some other creature up as the god we are going to serve. Instead, not only is there no shame and blushing, but men are even praised and feel honored for their evil deeds. Yes, even in the church world that is true. In many churches the art of blushing, that

commendable manifestation of being children of God, is hard to find. And today the church in many ways and with increasing intensity is beginning to look and live like the world. Even as in the name Antichrist you find the name Christ, so in much that calls itself church today there is that anti, that is, that which is against Christ, even though it does claim to be His Church. Instead of being Christian it is anti-christian.

Get the picture, young people, which Jesus gave us in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee did not blush, felt no shame over his doctrine and ways of an evil walk which Jesus condemned. He boasted of his wicked works as that which pleased God. He bragged of God's peace being upon him and not on that blushing publican. He condemned the publican's good works and boasted in regard to the evil works he was himself at the very moment committing. In shame, with a spiritually red face, the publican cried out: "God be merciful to me the sinner." That manifests spiritual blushing and that he was ashamed of what he had done that was contrary to God's holy law. But plainly the Pharisee had another god before Jehovah, a god who enjoyed seeing sin and delighted in works that denied and defied the one only God. The publican pleads for God's mercy, because of the sins which made him blush in shame. The Pharisee behaves as though God owes him something for his satanic works. Yes, he did thank God that he was not as other men are. But note that he thanks God for the fact that he is not one who blushes because of sin, and is ashamed because of sin. For he in his prayer points to this publican, and he thanks God for not being like that publican. He begins his prayer with: "God, *I thank thee. . .*" For indeed he has a god; but that God is not the one Who in Jeremiah 6 condemns boldness in the works of sin. And Jesus makes it very plain that God's peace is not on those kind of people.

Because of the development of sin there are so many violations of God's law that are approved today, and men are lauded for walking in sin. There is today so much dishonoring of those in authority, so much murder in the heart, that is, hatred that wants to kill someone because of his deeds; not only are women allowed to kill the child developing within them; but this murder is also defended and protected by the government, which will even pay for that crime's hospital bill. Adultery is not kept in secret today; but instead of blushing when it becomes known, today there are those who boldly and openly boast of their sexual filth, without the slightest blush. No, they boast about their breaking the "old, outdated life style." Today women do not blush, have red faces and are not ashamed when they appear dressed and undressed as boldly as the world does, dressed in ways that entice to adultery. Sad to say that is in the church world as well as among the unbelievers in the world. In this sin also the art of blushing is getting lost!

There is lying and theft and an overwhelming sin of covetousness all around us and in our midst. That leads to dishonoring the authorities, killing, committing adultery, stealing and lying. Covetousness leads to breaking all the nine commandments above the one that in the tenth commandment forbids it. And with the higher standard of living that we have today, and with so

much wealth and luxury displayed before the eyes of men in our country, covetousness is producing sins that bring smiles upon the faces instead of the blushing of a soul that is ashamed. Satan has been so very, very successful in getting men to seek the things here below instead of the kingdom of heaven.

The tragedy in all this is that which Jeremiah wrote: There is no shame and blushing when these sins are committed and when these sins are made known to others. Yea, some will say to those who commit these sins: "Peace, peace, God loves you", and they heal the hurt of the sinners slightly, that is, for a few years and until they die and God reveals His holy wrath.

Yes, young people, look in the mirror—no, not in one made of glass, but in the word of God which shows sin in its awfulness. Look at your heart as well as at your face when you are enjoying these sins and going along with the world in their worldly amusement and enticement. The TV screen does not make you blush but makes us far more interested in sin. There was a time when men would blush and feel cheap when they were caught coming out of a theatre. Today churches will even advocate and recommend entertainment of the flesh by showing the world in its sins. Sin becomes entertainment, not, as the psalmist wrote: "O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day." Psalm 19:7-14.

Are you willing to heed all this advice, or are you ready to try to defend your position in living as the world lives? Do you want to go with that Pharisee or have that publican as your example? Does it give you joy to weep about your sins, or make you weep when you are kept from sin?

There is something else that we should consider. One of the things that should make us blush and be ashamed of is the widespread, bold and powerful preaching of the lie. Instead of blushing, instead of looking down when a false doctrine is shown as that which must be rejected, there are those who will become furious and defend that which should bring shame. Here too, it must be remembered that, holding on to false doctrines is having another god before Jehovah. For it is calling Jehovah a liar and Satan a promoter of the truth. It is doing exactly what Adam and Eve did when Satan came with the lie that God had been lying by telling them that they would hurt themselves, if they went against His will. And take note of the tragic effect that sin had on Adam and Eve. They did not blush and feel ashamed. They were scared, frightened to an awesome degree. But they ran away from God rather than to Him as the publican did crying out for mercy and confessing that they were guilty sinners. Adam blamed God for that sin, accusing God of having given him Eve as his wife. Eve shoves the blame upon the serpent. No shame, no blushing is there at all, just fear and an attempt to defend self in sin.

Above all, consider that these lines were written to you to benefit you spiritually. Here is the exhortation to hold on tightly to the truth you have received in our churches. Do not let go of the truth that salvation in every part and in every way is a gift of God's grace. He does not plead and beg, coax and invite to salvation. He does not offer it to us who are spiritually dead. He is no fool. He is not subject to our wishes. We cannot prevent Him from

saving those He wants to save. He performs the first act of our salvation. And that act is not knocking on the door of our hearts to beg for the right to come in and save us. The first act (Ephesians 2:1 and 8-10) is to give us spiritual life by a rebirth. God is not changeable. He is the unchangeable, almighty God Whose grace is everlasting and not stopped because men will not accept His "offer."

Be thankful to Him for the truth He gave our churches. And may He give you the grace to be able to blush and be ashamed when you do fall into sin. Blush now and you will in the new Jerusalem shine with glory. For, those who blush because of sin they committed will sing of His sovereign grace in Christ, and thank Him for every bit of their salvation, confessing HIM to be our Savior.

Witnessing (II)
WHAT SHALL WE SAY?

by Rev. K. Koole

We continue our discussion of explaining to others what we believe.

We have suggested that you begin with the doctrine of salvation by God's great and saving grace, simply stating that we believe salvation is all of **grace**; meaning that it is undeserved and that it is accomplished by the power of God. It is not a matter of man's worthiness nor of man's ability and choice. This is 'grace' in the full and complete sense of the word.

We also suggested that at this point we can perhaps indicate that we are Calvinists, and see if there is any response to that. Possibly there will not be, but, regardless, it can be pointed out that it is Calvinism that really honors salvation all of sovereign free grace as it should.

In the second place it will be necessary to indicate that we have a high view of scripture, believing it to be the Word of God, without any error and governing the whole of our life, which is to say, infallible and authoritative.

In this connection it is necessary that we have the ability to use the Bible if called upon to do so. By that I mean we ought to be able to proof-text various doctrines. In this area we are woefully weak (meaning we have not changed much since I was a young person). There is really little excuse for this, and it ought to be remedied.

At the end of the article I will mention some of the proof texts we should know (at least where to find them) and be ready to use.

Our high regard for scripture can show itself in a most natural way. One such occasion which often presents itself arises in connection with our

Sunday observance.

In the course of our discussion at Redlands the question arose, what do we say when someone at work, for instance, with whom we seem to hit it off, suggests going here or there (the beach perhaps) on Sunday? What do we tell these friends?

To be sure we can tell them, "We do not do those things on Sunday. We go to church. In fact we go twice; so we can't go in the afternoon either." But what do we say when they ask "Why not? Why can't we go to the beach after you go to church?"

It does not sound very convincing if all we can say is, "Well that's how I was brought up, and my parents would tend to get upset." We sense we need a Biblical response.

I would suggest that you point them to the Fourth Commandment. Why do we keep Sunday the way we do, and why do we refrain from so many other things, such as recreation? Because the Fourth Commandment states "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

Now, you may question whether this is going to convince them of the rightness of your position. Probably not. But at this point that is not your purpose. Your purpose is to demonstrate your high regard for scripture. That purpose it will serve admirably. What it will demonstrate is that our churches and yourself take God's Word seriously. Who will challenge that the Fourth Commandment is God's Word?

It is possible that someone may respond that the Fouth Commandment is an Old Testament requirement and not a New Testament law. You should ask them whether the same holds for adultery, lying, and stealing. The Fourth Commandment remains one of the Ten, except now the Sabbath is called The Lord's Day.

Pointing to God's commandments makes a powerful testimony. It demonstrates that we are a people of conviction, and that we live by those convictions. Anyone who is going to be attracted to our churches is going to be impressed exactly by this point.

At Redlands we had a recent instance of this. A man with no previous Reformed background became a member of our congregation a few months back. He had had opportunity to observe several of our families who happened to be on his mail route. He was their 'mail-man'. He was impressed by the stability of the homes, and the behavior of the youth. He could tell they were **respectful** (of all things). He came to our services to find out what made these people 'tick'. He did not know WHAT we believed, only HOW we lived, to an extent. Importantly, he noted that where he had gone before, the members, in his own words, were "Christians on Sunday morning. And that was about it." What attracted this brother was that we took the commandments of God seriously, Sunday and the whole week through. This was to him sincerity of faith.

Now to get back to proof texts.

There are two groups with whom proof texts will be most necessary; those who are committed to the 'God-loves-everybody', 'Free-Will' school; and those who deny Christ's real and full divinity, and hence the Trinity as well. The Jehovah Witnesses represent this latter school. As David had five smooth stones 'to-hand' when he confronted Goliath, so we ought to have

a good number of proof texts in our 'pouches' to be used as the need arises.

I will suggest to you ten proof texts for the support of Calvinism, three for each of the first three points, and one general proof text that explodes the myth of 'Free-Willism', namely John 6:37-44.

For the proof of Total Depravity let me suggest:

Psalm 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conveive me." (Man is not born innocent.)

Romans 8:6-8 ". . . So then they that are in the flesh can not please God." Verse 7 speaks of the carnal mind as being "enmity against God." (cf. also Romans 3:10-17)

Ephesians 2:1-5 "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins; . . .and were by nature children of wrath, even as others. . ."

Three proof texts for Unconditional Election would be:

Acts 13:48 "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Romans 9:11-13 ". . . As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Verse 11 speaks of "the purpose of God according to election." This was before the children were born. (cf. also Romans 8:29, 30)

Ephesians 1:4 "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him. . ." Verse 5 goes on to speak of predestination.

Proof texts for Limited (or particular) Atonement would be:

John 10:15 "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." Not all men are counted as Christ's sheep, as is evident from vs. 26.

John 17:9 "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." It is evident that Christ does not love all men. He would certainly have prayed for those whom he loves. For them he also died.

John 6:39 "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." The key phrase is "all which he (the Father) hath given me." Obviously that is not everybody head for head.

A powerful, all-purpose text is John 6:37-45. If we can not recall any others, we ought to know at least this one. Verse 37 states "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (This proves Irresistible Grace.)

Verse 44 states "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (This explodes the myth of 'Free-Willism', for no man can come to Christ apart from God's drawing him.)

I will also suggest five texts for the proof of Christ's divinity. It is very common to be confronted by members of sects which deny Christ's Divinity, as for instance the Jehovah Witnesses. It is a great shame if we can not even use the Scriptures to prove this most basic of all Christian doctrines, the bedrock of our faith.

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful,

Counsellor, **The mighty God**, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." (This passage is important because it proves the doctrine is 'Old Testamental').

John 1:1, 14, 18 (I quote only vs. 14) "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." ('Only begotten' means Jesus shares God's nature, as a natural son does his fathers's.)

John 20:28 "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and My God."

Philippians 2:5, 6 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:"

I Timothy 3:16 "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, etc."

A sixth proof to hold in reserve is the very powerful passage of Hebrews 1:8 (which quotes the O.T.) "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

One word of warning should be sounded here. Most modern versions of the Bible weaken the proof for Christ's Divinity by either changing words or omitting phrases. This is good reason to stick to the King James Version.

In conclusion, if you are somewhat prepared, you will be able to be a 'good witness', that is, able to add to the testimony of your godly walk the Biblical proof of your faith. A little preparation will give the necessary confidence. One does not need the full armor of Saul, (that is, be a full-fledged theologian), but simply the essentials of David, namely, a faith in God, a love for His cause and name, and 5 smooth stones ready for the sling. Who knows what amazing things may occur? God's great grace can work, and does work, in mysterious ways.

"As long as your complaints about the church, and your efforts to improve the church, are motivated by **self**, because the imperfections annoy **you** or displease **you**, and because the church falls short of **your** ideals, then you are on the wrong path.

But once you realize that **not my** honor but the **honor of God** is the true motive for the battle against evil, then the beauty of simple obedience will become clear to you . . . . Then, too, it no longer matters if there are no immediate results upon your efforts and protests against evil. That makes no difference at all. For you realize that you have no right or claim to a model church. You acknowledge yourself a humble sinner whose imperfections add to the corruption of the church."

Dr. Abraham Kuyper

Truth Vs. Error
4. God's Controversy With Israel
Hosea 4:11

by Rev. Robert C. Harbach

"Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart." There is a definite connection between drunkenness and **whoredom**, both corporeally and spiritually. See Prov. 23:20, 27-35. Wine may lawfully be used as a medicine. I Tim. 5:23. But taken to excess (Eph. 5:18), wine acts upon the body as a **poison**. Deut. 32: 33; Prov. 23:31; Hos. 7:5. The abuse of wine takes away the heart, i.e., it renders the abuser devoid of understanding. Isa. 28:1, 7 are plain on this point. The Bible has glaring examples of this in Lot, Gen. 19:33; Nabal, I Sam. 25:36; Elah, king of Israel, I Ki. 16:9; Ben-hadad, king of Syria, who had 32 royal allies. They allied themselves in getting drunk together, the royal sots! I Ki. 20:16. Belshazzar once was getting drunk with a thousand of his lords. We could call it "Belshazzar's bacchanalian bash." They all committed spiritual whoredom, which is idolatry. Dan. 5:1-4. In the Corinthian church there was drunkenness at the Lord's table! I Cor. 11:21. At Mt. Sinai, Isreal fell into both carnal and spiritual whoredom. Aaron produced for them a calf-god, but they produced their own belly-god. Through the counsel of Balaam, Israel became ensnared in heathen seductions by way of ritual fornication. Israel was conquered by the alluring whore of Moab. Whoredom is a danger to any man (Prov. 7:26). It certainly was to Solomon (Eccl. 7:26). At Baal-peor (Num. 25), the Lord punished this sin with a plague that killed 24,000. Epidemical sins are punished wth epidemical diseases.

The Israelite who had consorted so boldly with a Midianite whore was not one of the lower class men from the slums, as would be natural to suppose, but he was what people would think of as "a high quality man," for he was "a prince of a fellow," of one of the leading families in the tribe of Simeon. (Num. 25:14), a member of "high society." Nor did he sneak down to one of the sleaziest areas of the "red light district" to pick up one of the tawdriest of female street walkers. No, he did this openly, in blazen boldness, taking up with what the world calls "a high class whore," one who came from a ruling family prominent in the Midianite social register. She was regarded with more favor than any of the Israelite covenant women. (Num. 25:14-15). Sins of the worst perverted whoredoms in the 1980s have brought on men, world-wide, the incurable plague of AIDS. Scripture labels this a divine judgment. Rom. 1:26, 27. Sin develops, including this double sin of drunkenness and whoredom, —the sin

which finally fills the cup of iniquity. Rev. 17:4-6; 18:3. From these dregs of iniquity, Good Lord, deliver us.

Hosea 4:14

"I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery; for they themselves are separated with whores; therefore, the people that doth not understand shall fall." Why would not God punish their daughters and spouses? Because God gave them up to vile affections (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28), to the sexual immoralities committed by both the single and the married women. But the men were primarily to blame, for "they themselves" were involved in liaisons with whores. Their women not being punished, went on in harlotry. This alone would be grievous punishment for the men, for they who are not chaste themselves like to have their spouses and daughters so.

They were "separated with whores, and sacrificed with harlots." They engaged in Baal-peor worship: "they went to Baal-peor and separated themselves unto 'that shame,' and their abominations were according as they loved" (chap. 9:10b). Matthew Henry calls this Moabite sex-idol, "that shame," and "that dirty dung-hill deity." They gloried in, loved, their shame. Things had become as bad in all Israel as they had been in little Benjamin in the days of Gibeah. This would bring them to their end: they "shall fall." So they were punished, not immediately, but before too long. Reader, take this all in. Let every member of Christ's church pray that His people fall not into Moabitish and Baal-peorean immoralities but live in the faith of the Gospel.

Hosea 4:18

"Their drink is sour; they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, 'Give ye.' " God charges Isreal with continual fornication. Here we see how wine takes away the heart (v. 11) to lead astray to licentiousness and immorality. Drunkenness does that. "Their drink is sour." It becomes sour upon their breath, upon their person and clothes, especially so when, in their drunkenness they vomit over themselves and everything else (Isa. 28:7, 8). Their carouse is over. "They have had it!" For once the body-system becomes saturated with alcohol, wine definitely becomes a **poison** to it; so that the more they drink, the more they poison themselves. They drink continually to excess, and with that continue with a life of sexual promiscuity. This is the most prevalent, the universal sin. The world does not and will not give it up. The Sodomites of our adulterous generation, dying of AIDS in the thousands by this uncontrollable plague nevertheless will never cease from the sin which brings it upon themselves. 2 Pet. 2:14.

God also charges Israel with bribery. Her rulers in indelible shame, crookedness and corruption love, "Give! Give!" Their thinking is, "You people want the privilege to go awhoring without molestation from the authorities? Then give! give! Pay!" This was bribery and blackmail—legalized prostitution, for a price.

At this point, Calvin so rightly calls out attention to the fact that the atmosphere here is fetid, so we **must** take a break, withdraw from the horrifying scene, enter into our closets to breathe the pure air of prayer: "O God, in the multitude of Thy mercy hear me, in the truth of Thy salvation. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me

not sink!" (Ps. 69:13, 14). Then may we take hold of the Lord's comforting promise, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in **Me** is thine help. **I** will be thy King! Where is any other who may save thee?" (Hos. 13:9, 10a).

I. E. **Activity in the occult—divination and witchcraft.** "My people ask counsel of their stocks (idols), and their staff declareth unto them; for the spirit of whoredoms (fornications) hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring, departing from under their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks, and poplars, and elms, because the shadow thereof is good; therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom (play the harlot), and your spouses shall commit adultery." There has been a recent resurgence to these heathen abominations, especially in the sudden worldwide appearance of the **New Age Movement**. This means that the world is being plunged into the sink and sins of **spiritual whoredom**, or **idolatry.** Why is this? First of all, because men have a natural disposition to sin. For this reason, they have a **good** opinion of the **bad**. The field of the occult is said to be good, because it opens up areas that really work out. Pragmatism is thought to be good because it is the practical philosophy that secures results. (But keep in mind that "results do not prove a doctrine" to be true.) This is a cynical philosophy that one does not need principles, or Reformed creeds, or a standard of judgment, if one has "something that works". Divination claims to offer all kinds of things that "really work." But dabbling in the occult is to go a whoring from the true God and to put oneself under the influence of false gods. Paul calls these **demons**. I Cor. 10:20.

"My people" refers to God's choice of Israel above all other nations as His peculiar people, but they had forsaken Him. Their sin here is that they sought counsel of their stocks and their staff. This is occult activity which comes under the general heading of **rhabdomancy**, or rod divination (divining by a prophet's rod). A form of rhabdomancy is known as **Bletonism**, after Bleton, an 18th century Frenchman who located water by divination, also called dowsing (with a dowsing rod). Divination is a form of witchcraft, which is idolatry, and a wicked rejection of the Word of the Lord. I Sam. 15:23. All who use such tools of Satan are abominable to God. Jer. 29:8. This is all in the spirit of whoring, a going after idols. Those who are into these occult practices are abominable to God (Deut. 18:10-12, 14). All occult books should be burned. Acts 19:19. All diviners are frauds and are not of God. Jer. 29:8. This is all in the spirit of whoring, a going after idols. Those engaged in the occult practices becoming so popular everywhere are of a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:28), and because they turn God's glory to shame, and His truth to a lie (Rom. 1:25), God cannot and will not tolerate them. (Gal. 6:7).

"For the spirit (5:4) of whoredom hath caused them to err." Whoredom is spiritual adultery, idolatry. An unclean spirit stirred them up to this deception, and caused them to go astray from the true God. I Ki. 22:21-23. Their idolatrous worship was convened in secluded wooded areas (v. 13), where heathen rites and whorish immoralities could occur in secrecy. There was much that was "shady" about their apostate religion. Jer. 2:20.

II. The Consequences of God's Controversy.

A. God will punish them for their crimes, v. 9.

"And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings."

The people and the priests were both alike careless, profane, ignorant, idolatrous. If the people are so, then you know the priests already were, and so are responsible for corrupting the people. The people were greedy and grasping, for the priests, being so long before the people, led them into covetousness and concupiscence. It was the priests' duty to preserve the people in truth, knowledge of the truth and in godliness, but they had broken down these barriers to let in evil like a flood upon the nation. Then it was that the people themselves would have no teachers but those willing to shut their eyes to sin. Therefore, God would punish them, the people with famine, depriving them of their meat, and the priests of their meat-offerings. "The meat-offering and the drink offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests and the Lord's ministers mourn." (Joel 1:9)

Eternal punishment is denounced against those who are beyond recovery, which punishment would sweep us away were it not that Christ bore our punishment in our place. (Isa. 53)

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by Sharl Huizinga

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PS	From the Pastor's Study		

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August	Pre-Convention
September 17	Southeast
November 19	Faith (Thanksgiving)
December 17	Hudsonville (Christmas)