

The
GOLDEN CALF
of the
REFORMATION



BY
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"And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel and that were in Dan" —2 KINGS 10:26-29.



Jehu has just vigorously and zealously prosecuted a sweeping reformation in Israel. He has deposed and destroyed wicked Ahab, his wife Jezebel, and all his descendants. He has purged Israel of Baal worship. But his reformation drew up short when it came to the "... sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, ...to wit, the golden calves, which were at Bethel and at Dan." This failure becomes a repeated dismal refrain spoken of successive ungodly kings of Israel. Not less than eight times we find those words repeated, "He departed not from the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin."

Exactly what is this sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, and what is its profound significance to us in respect to the Reformation, which Christendom so devoutly celebrates today?

David, the King after God's own heart, has died and left the united Hebrew monarchy to his son Solomon. Solomon proved to be a wise politician and statesman, but a poor spiritual leader. He also began to oppress the people with severe taxation. After his death the people sought relief from his son and successor, Rehoboam. But

Rehoboam unwisely followed the counsel of his young and foolish friends. The outcome was a split in the nation with ten tribes defecting to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Before Solomon's death, the Lord had sent the prophet Ahijah to Jeroboam who told him that God would rend the kingdom, and give ten tribes to him. Furthermore, the Lord again sent his prophet forbidding Rehoboam to go to war in any attempt to recover the tribes. So, Jeroboam's kingdom was secure in the sovereign providence of God. He had nothing to worry about. What God had done could not be threatened by men. But Jeroboam did not trust God. He trusted politics, and was not above using religion to facilitate and secure his ambitions. He reasoned that if Israel went up to Jerusalem to worship God, as God had commanded, they would be subverted, and would defect back to Rehoboam. So, in arrogant defiance of the word of God, he sets up two golden calves, one at the southern and the other at the northern extremities of his kingdom, builds altars of sacrifice, and ordains his own priests and "holy men" to administer them. Then he tells his people that it is too much trouble for them to go up to Jerusalem and worship according to the word of God, instead he has provided a more convenient and commodious worship arrangement for them, with the blatant lie, "behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (I Kings 12:28).

This, then, is that infamous sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat which caused Israel to sin. It all centers around those two golden calves and what they represent. It is important to note that these were objects of worship, and were ostensibly established for religious purposes. But the truth is, their existence had nothing to do with religion or worship. They were there as a political expediency: to enlist and hold the maximum number of people in the Northern Kingdom and secure it under the power of Jeroboam. That is why Jehu would not allow his reformation to destroy them, and why no succeeding King would touch them either. In their minds, they were necessary for the kingdom to continue. We are told that this sin "made Israel to sin." Let us now note the sins it initiated and perpetuated.

- It taught the people to set aside the Word of God that a form and manner of worship might be installed which has no warrant in the scriptures.

- It effectually put the people back under a vain system of religion, which they had learned in their days of bondage, one that for them had been judged and abolished. Calf worship was an Egyptian tradition.
- It taught people to despise God's salvation and to put their trust in the works of men's hands. (It was these calves, not Yaweh who brought them up out of Egypt.)
- It taught the people to put men, who had no divine credentials, into the sacred service of God. No true priest would have anything to do with those golden calves or that altar, so Jeroboam "made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi" (I Kings. 12:31).
- It taught people to practice idolatry, the worship of images. The golden calves were "Trojan horses" that brought image worship into the kingdom. Destroying the icons of competing religions, then, was only snipping sprouts. While the root of the calves was preserved intact, idolatry was firmly entrenched in the people's hearts and would continue to proliferate. It provided the basis of a false hope, while insuring that the kingdom would be filled with graceless people.

Small wonder, then, that this sin, symbolized by golden calves which the kings of Israel refused to touch, so brought the wrath of God upon the nation, that He eventually destroyed it and sent it into Assyrian bondage!

Let us now consider Christianity, the development of Christendom, the Protestant Reformation and its effect upon both Christendom and the Christian church.

CHRISTENDOM

It is commonly thought that the Christian Church had, in the course of 1500 years, apostatized and fallen into moral and theological ruin. Then certain spiritual giants appeared on the scene, to wit, magisterial reformers, Martin Luther in Germany, Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland, and finally, John Calvin in French Switzerland. These men discovered the doctrine of justification by faith, the authority of scripture, and free grace in Jesus Christ. By the unprecedented courage, faithfulness and scholarship of these men, the Church was re-

formed. Since that time, Christendom has been divided into two camps, Catholic and Protestant (Reformed). Later, the Synod of Dort divided the Protestant sector into Calvinists and Arminians, the former claiming to be the true successors of the "Reformed" faith. In recent years a surge of interest in Puritan literature and a wholesome explosion of sovereign grace preaching have generated a host of converts to Calvinistic soteriology from a wide variety of evangelical denominations. Practically all of these new grace oriented people are either Baptists or of churches holding to Baptist ecclesiology, many of whom now wish to be considered "Reformed." Some of this will need debunking.

The Christian Church has never apostatized and fallen into moral or theological ruin. Christ sent the promised Holy Spirit to abide with it forever, and declared the gates of hell could not prevail against it. It has always existed, however unseen, outlawed and unheralded, alongside the Catholic and the Reformed Churches.

In the fourth century Constantine came to power in Rome and not only legitimized Christianity, but made it the State religion, while outlawing all others, and requiring all members of society to be members of the Christian Church. This membership was signified by water baptism. As children were born, they likewise were inducted into the sacral society by water baptism. Thus they grew up as "Christians." This blending of church and state was nothing new. It was the tried and proven means of solidifying the loyalties of all the people, and subjecting them, not only by the power of the sword, but by the threat of excommunication from religion and its benefits. Before the advent of the Christian church it was the altogether common practice of political entities. Even Old Covenant Israel was a sacral society.

Faithful Bible believers, however, recognized this for the apostasy which it was. It was utterly contrary to the New Covenant, which clearly mandates a communion of regenerate believers only ("for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord"—Jeremiah 31:34). This political convenience of Constantine created a religious monstrosity, filled with unconverted professors of Christianity. The true Christian church refused to become a part of this apostate hybrid and was outlawed, persecuted and hounded into hiding, where it survived for the next twelve centuries.

Such true Bible doctrines, alleged to have been discovered by the Reformers, have been known and cherished by the saints from righteous Abel forward, and have never been lost (Jude 3). In fact, if the truth were known, the sixteenth century reformers were, in all likelihood, exposed to and influenced by some to these exiled "heretics."

During those twelve hundred years many would-be reformers, not a whit inferior to those of the sixteenth century, arose and cried out against the false altars of Rome, but they were all deposed, exiled or put to death. They could not resist the powerful church/state monolith that was secured by infant baptism. Luther and Zwingli's reformations succeeded for one reason only. Political and economic unrest and instability in the lands where they preached, for the first time, made it possible for them to enlist the sympathies of a sizable number of princes in the realm who could protect them from the juggernaut of Rome. Both of these men had original intentions of pressing their reformation to full Biblical compliance. That would have mandated a regenerate church and believer's baptism, which they well knew the Bible taught. Persecuted and outcast Christians of that day hoped to join with these reformers, and gain some relief from their outlawed status. But, when the Reformers saw the cost of rejecting infant baptism, they pulled up short. The reason? To reduce the church to genuine born-again Christians would leave them with nothing but a scraggly remnant. They would lose the favor of the princes who responded only to political pressures of masses. Without a magistrate's sword to protect them, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin would have gone down in oblivion just like all their predecessors. But they did not. Like Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, they took stock of the situation and faced reality. If they were going to keep the people and solidify their power, they would have to significantly widen the gate, and impute to that wide gate the credentials lawful only to the Narrow One. What easier way to facilitate that than to continue the altogether familiar and acceptable device already in place? The infant baptism instituted by Constantine, which secured his power in the Roman Empire, and nurtured the apostasy and blasphemies of Roman Catholicism, became the golden calf of the Protestant Reformation. Make no mistake about this: There would have been no Reformation without it. Reformed churches could not have risen to their prominence or held their power without it. And it is nonsense to talk about being Re-

formed, while rejecting infant baptism. It is the bedrock foundation and icon of the whole system.

In England, the Reformed church began as Anglican, differing from Romanism in almost no respect except that the authority of the Pope was claimed by the ruling monarch in England. When Protestant Elizabeth succeeded her Catholic sister in 1558, all the power over Church as well as State that had previously been Rome's now became the Queen's. The Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity declared the civil magistrate to be supreme in both Church and State, and that no other religion would be tolerated. The Stuarts continued these policies, and the "purists" (Puritans) embraced them heartily. To argue that ecclesiastical and civil government cannot be united in the same person, said John Whitgift, is to spoil the civil magistrate of half his jurisdiction. "Break unity once, and farewell strength." Infant baptism could be given up only to the peril of the crumbling of the whole system. The argument was that in this way only could the "unity of the church" be preserved. The Biblical command, "compel them to come in," was directed to the civil magistrate. People who now had Bibles in their hands were constantly pressing for more reformation and more liberty of conscience, and some were granted, more for political than theological considerations, but the sacred cow of infant baptism or anything that threatened it, was never touched.

Further reformation (principally in the sphere of church government) was advanced among Presbyterians and Congregationalists in Scotland, and Dutch Reformed in Holland. But these all, likewise, clung to the political expediency facilitated and symbolized by infant baptism. When Reformed Christendom was exported to the New World, it faced formidable challenges from the democratic forces at work in America. But New England Puritans were no more merciful to dissenters and Baptists than they were in England. They were flogged, deprived of property and livelihood, imprisoned, banished from society or executed.

Eventually, however, in spite of the Puritans, religion was wrested from the power of the State, and the Reformation lost its stranglehold on the Christian church. Serious minded Christians, intent on being guided by nothing other than the Word of God, and freed from the tyranny of a State Church, embraced the Biblical teachings of believer's baptism and a regenerate church. Although political condi-

tions now frustrate Catholic and Reformed churches' true purposes of infant baptism, they continue the practice to this day. They are faithfully keeping the structure in place, while working and looking for the time when they can once again coerce the whole of Society to conform to their religion.

CORRUPTION OF THE CALF

As Jeroboam's golden calves "made Israel to sin," so does infant baptism corrupt and subvert the people of Reformed churches. It effectively overthrows the four key touchstone doctrines of the Reformation: Scripture Only, Christ Only, Grace Only, and Faith Only.

"Scripture Only" meant that authority for Christian doctrine and practice would come from the Bible only. For the Reformers this meant that no more would the Pope or the traditions of the Roman Church have any power over the Church. Everything would be strictly brought to the Word of God. That is nothing more or less than the way things should be, but it runs into a snag immediately. There is absolutely no scriptural authority for infant baptism! Every command to baptize, to be baptized, and every water baptism in the New Testament is for believers only. There is no scriptural warrant to consider anyone a member of the Body of Christ other than regenerate believers. There is no scripture for an unconverted church. So, the Reformed church has to resort to the reasonings and writings of men in order to validate this departure from scripture. It is mind-boggling to consider the sheer volume of books, publications and writings on infant baptism, a subject not even mentioned in the Bible! Perhaps it is somewhat a rule that the less warrant something has in scripture, the more men's writings are necessary to give it respectability. Reformed theologians preach the dogma that writings of men, creedal statements which are "logical" conclusions from scripture, are scripture also, and have the same authority as the Bible! This precipitates an avalanche of canons, confessions, creeds, and catechisms that actually supplant the Holy Scripture. Ask a Presbyterian a Bible question and you will get a creedal answer. They do not study the Bible. They are catechized by the creeds and confessions from early childhood, and are taught the canons emerging from church councils and synods. It is from them, not the scriptures, that they draw "divine" authority. Exit the word of God!

"Christ Only," for the Reformers, meant that no longer would the Pope, the Roman clergy, and venerated saints arrogate themselves as mediators between man and God. Again, this is an altogether true saying. But it is too true for the Reformers who wished to get Papism out of the picture, yet found it imperative that salvation should not be available without the religiously certified human. (We are not here talking about the Biblical means of prayer and preaching of the gospel, but an extra-scriptural means invented by sacralism.) Reformed theology will grant the unchurched sinner to come to Christ without a mediator, but unbaptized "covenant children" are in jeopardy. If they are baptized, they are given a leg up on everyone else. Their believing parents are taught an unscriptural hope in the salvation of their children because their own parents were (ostensibly) believers, and that they were born of believing parents who brought them to the baptismal font as infants. Reformed preachers bring the literal full force of Deuteronomy 7:9 ("the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments") into the New Covenant. They impute full gospel benefits to this abolished Old Covenant promise, asserting that one father's faithfulness in respect to his children can assure the salvation of a thousand succeeding generations. Is that not astounding? Does this not put a lie in the mouth of John when he said, "which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John. 1:13)?

By "Grace alone" the Reformers intended to exclude any and all conditions and deeds prescribed by Rome, which claimed effective merit for the favor of God. This nullifies all good works, purchased indulgences, and other supererogations (doing more than God required), by which one might build up assets and obligations against God's treasury.

If one confines himself strictly to the soteriological sector of Reformed theology, he will find it faithful to the scripture. Salvation is by the sovereign grace of God. He is absolutely free to save or leave to damnation whomever He will. Those whom He elects to save, He does so without any obligation incurred by anything done by the sinner, or anything men may do on behalf of the sinner. But Reformed ecclesiology cannot let it lie there. Their ecclesiology invades soteriology in the issue of infant baptism. Although some Reformed

theologians will grant that the infant is yet unregenerate when he is baptized, most are not content to leave it at that. They have to assert that in some way God is now either obliged or more obliged to save that infant than He would be if the infant had not been sprinkled with water. Parents would not be motivated enough to have their babies baptized merely for them to be members of the church for a while and then go to hell. They are led to falsely hope their child's salvation will in some way be augmented by the rite.

This is perhaps the most outrageous truth about the whole matter. Infant baptism effectively overthrows the sovereignty of God in salvation and makes Reformed theology nothing more than back door Arminianism! And it is a worse brand of Arminianism than that advocated by the Remonstrants. At least they contended for a healthy responsibility on the part of the sinner, but this abomination robs God of His freedom and binds Him to save a sinner solely on the account of something his parents did. Most apologists for infant baptism will not admit this. Indeed there have been, and still are, many excuses set forth for this sacred cow. Here are some:

- The oldest and the original is the one brought into the Reformation intact from Rome. Infant baptism washes away original sin, which was imputed him from Adam's sin. This is why Pelagius opposed it. He did not believe Adam's sin was imputed to his posterity.
- It gives the child benefits of a so-called "Covenant of Grace" which, nevertheless, may be short of salvation.
- It encourages the child to hope that he is elect, and motivates him to believe. (Is not faith a gift of God bestowed in sovereign grace? Romans 4:16 inseparably binds sovereign grace to the sovereign gift of faith. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all." Thus saving faith is lifted out of the realm of human ability and works, either circumcision or baptism, and bestowed upon the elect by God's free and uncaused grace.)
- Because he is a church member, by virtue of his water baptism, he is more responsible and obligated to be well behaved. In Reformed ideology society and church are identical, and better

off with well-behaved hypocrites than open sinners. (This is one reason why children of first generation Reformed Christians are so well behaved. They are taught to be good hypocrites!)

- Infant baptism is the New Covenant equivalent of Old Covenant circumcision. God's command to Abraham to circumcise his male infants is appropriated to the New Covenant father to baptize all his infants. (Does baptism equal circumcision? Fine. "circumcision (baptism) is nothing" I Cor. 7:19, and "avails nothing" Gal. 5:6; 6:15).
- Most Paedobaptists insist that water Baptism of an infant effectively puts him into Christ and makes him a member of Christ's corporate body, the church. The consequence of this error leaves the system with two undesirable options: The infant is either regenerated by water baptism, or Christ's Body contains unregenerate members. Most opt for the latter, which is blasphemous.

But none of these, nor a thousand more, weak and lame excuses for the practice have the power to impose it upon the people. Only the strong belief that God is somehow obliged to save this person because he is baptized will compel people to cling to the ritual.

By "Faith Alone" the Reformer meant that a sinner would stand just before God by nothing but faith. His justification would be independent of any penance for his sins that may be imposed by Rome, or any absolutions or confirmations its clergy might hold out. Reformed theology also correctly releases the sinner from any condition of obedience to the law as terms of acceptance. He is accepted as a helpless sinner totally dependent upon the saving merit of Christ's obedient suffering. Thus faith, in the New Testament, is always set against (perfect compliance with) the law as grounds of justification. All of this is soundly Biblical. But how can infant baptism be made to fit into that? Water baptism is always a sinner's public confession of his faith in Christ. The infant can neither believe or confess.

In an article under "Signs and Seals" in the June 1998 issue of Table Talk, R. C. Sproul attempts to rescue Paedobaptism from Justification by Faith by tying it to circumcision. He tells us that both are signs of God's promise of redemptive blessings, both are signs of faith, and that both are covenant signs. None of the above are true. Circumcision was a sign of God's promise to Abraham of temporal Old

Covenant blessings. Administered to children, it had nothing to do with the child's faith, but the father's only. Under the Old Covenant the children either received directly imputed benefits of their parent's faith or likewise imputed curses for their parent's unbelief and sin. All that was abolished with the New Covenant (Jer. 31:29-34). The sign of God's promise of New Covenant redemption is the outpoured Holy Spirit (Eph. 1: 13-14). Water baptism is not a sign of anything. It is always a public confession of faith in Christ, a figurative testimony of a sinner's death and burial with Christ and the resurrection of a new creation.

Mr. Sproul also arbitrarily asserts that although in adults faith must precede water baptism, in the case of infants it must follow. The latter is an excellent example of Reformed creation of additional scripture out of human logic. There is no scripture for infant baptism; therefore, there is no scriptural mandate that associates faith with it. The whole thing is fabricated out of the logic of Covenant theology. The faith that justifies, that is called the "faith of Abraham," is a faith that precedes any sign or confession (Romans 4:11-12). Both the sign confirming the promise (Eph. 1:13) and the confession in water baptism come after faith is exercised. Infant baptism thus subverts the very nature of saving faith and overthrows the doctrine of justification by faith.

It is significant to note that the cover of the above mentioned publication carries the subtitle "To You and Your Children". This is lifted from Acts 2:39, and is appropriated by Covenant theology as a special promise of God to save the children of believers. But the verse from which the partial quotation is taken goes on to say (the promise is to) "all that afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This is not an exclusive promise to those in covenant with God, but includes those who are "afar off." What power this golden calf has, to constrain men who are able and careful Bible expositors, and who are ordinarily meticulously honest and above reproach, to so pervert and misuse the Word of God!

COVENANT THEOLOGY

As with Jeroboam's golden calves, infant baptism is presented as a religious necessity, but is nothing more or less than a political expediency. It, nevertheless, relentlessly assaults the faith once delivered to

the saints. Having set aside the Word of God as our sole authority, supplanting it with reasonings and writings of men, the whole system is undergirded by Covenant Theology. This is a somewhat ambiguous title, and means different things to different people, but it is essentially an importing of abolished Old Covenant features into New Covenant Christianity. As Israel was put back under the vain religion of their Egyptian bondage, so this effectively puts the liberated church back under feckless Old Covenant law. It nullifies those "better things" God has provided for us in the New Covenant that are necessary for the perfection of Old Covenant saints as well as ourselves (Heb. 11:40). It overthrows the priesthood of the believer, each person's responsibility and adequacy before God through none but Christ, and has God going back to dealing with whole groups of people (families, churches, nations) as one. It imputes to the whole the sins or the righteousness of some. It ties the prosperity and success of the church with the righteousness of the state. It fosters the idea that God cannot bless a holy church in a wicked nation. It also confounds spiritual New Covenant blessings with temporal prosperity of this world.

Although its soteriology ostensibly teaches salvation by the sovereign grace of God, its ecclesiology teaches people to put their trust in the works of men's hands. A Reformed church is not a body of believers saved by sovereign grace, but a group or people subscribing to men's creeds, learning men's catechisms and faithfully observing men's sacraments. And this church is entered by the sacrament of infant baptism. To the people, it is not the sovereign mercy of God which brought them where they are and keeps them safe. It is the sacraments.

Jeroboam made priests "of the lowest of the people." Reformed theology makes priests of the highest of the people. One is as equally unscriptural and abominated by God as the other. Both set aside God's Word and operate on the basis of human reason and political expediency. Since Reformed theology effectively puts its eggs in the basket of the arm of flesh, it is reasonable that its ministry should be staffed by the very best flesh available. Therefore, none but the wise, mighty and noble are called, the "best and brightest." Among those who may have a divine calling for the gospel ministry, the lowly and "weak," those uncertified by worldly educational institutions may expect from Reformed hierarchy, at worst, contempt and rejection and at best

only indulgent patronizing tolerance. What is admired, extolled and promoted is the "scholarly," the powerful, the gifted, the proven "mover and shaker," and the renown in mental and physical powers. This, of course, puts godliness and spirituality on low priority and effectively militates for a carnal, if not unregenerate, ministry. Indeed, Reformed history is full of debate over the necessity of a regenerate clergy. And even today the idea of a valid New Testament church with unregenerate clergy, as well as an unregenerate membership, is vigorously defended! Are they not all baptized in water and subscribing to the creed?

This system is full of idolatry. Idols are not necessarily constituted by physical images of wood, stone or precious metals. Those Roman images have been purged from the system and replaced by more subtle ones. Images in the mind, the imaginations of the heart are as much objects of worship as physical creations. All these false doctrines and teachings are as much the creations of men as Jeroboam's golden calves. They effectively supplant the worship and adoration of the one true God.

Before proceeding to final thoughts and observations on this matter, we must pause and put all this in the perspective of God's wise and gracious sovereign providence. We would be the worst of bigoted fools to deny that much good has come out of the Reformation, and that some of the very best, the godliest and most devout of the Lord's servants have served, and still do serve among us today under the banner of Reformed. Even as there were true believers in Israel all during the reigns of Jeroboam's successors, so have Christians survived and flourished even in Reformed churches. God has seen to it that His Word has been translated and published in the languages of the people. Protestant Colonialism has exported the gospel to darkened lands. Even today, the most sound and enduring mission works all over the world are found to have roots planted by Protestant missionaries from Europe and the British Isles. Great strides have been made in social structures, making the world a more humane and merciful place in which to live. Some of those few mighty and noble whom God has called are among the Reformed, and they have been used to set forth a powerful apologetic of God, of Divine revelation, and of the gospel of Jesus Christ to an unchurched unbelieving world. Non-Catholic, Non-Protestant Christianity reaps abundant benefits from all of that.

DEEP APOSTASY

Nevertheless, Reformed Covenant Theology, symbolized by infant baptism, absolutely mandates that its churches will become filled with unregenerate people, and that apostasy will come quickly. Two or three generations, at the most, will be sufficient to leaven the whole lump. All churches and denominations apostatize, but Reformed churches pose the worst hazard for two reasons. Firstly, their apostasy goes much deeper than that of their non-Reformed counterparts. Secondly, they survive much longer with great worldly power and influence, even in the midst of their apostasy. Because of their sensitivity and involvement in politics, Protestant (Reformed as well as Arminian) ministers will be the first to respond to political issues and pressures. They are the first to neglect, and finally abandon Biblical evangelism in favor of a "social gospel". They will be found among the most supportive and ardent defenders of liberation theology, and the harshest critics of fundamental Christianity. They are quick to align themselves with "political correctness." The setting aside of Biblical truth and adoption of authority of man-made creeds paves the way for more church councils to accommodate and validate such outrageous practices as sodomite pastors and same sex marriages. Thus, they sit as the citadels of religious lies in society. They are the most effective slanderers of the very name of Christianity.

All of this ought to set off some alarm bells for some of us who are considering escaping the disorder of pseudo-biblical evangelicalism into the more structured, and orderly Reformed Camp on the basis of creedal soteriology. The remark is often heard to the effect that "sprinkling those babies isn't going to hurt them". That is quite true, but we had better be warned: There are awesome powers and ramifications behind that sprinkling of infants that will hurt you "badly" if you start down that road.

In the above mentioned issue of *Tabletalk*, is an article by ex-Baptist minister Robert Booth, ominously titled "A Journey Home." This is an account of Mr. Booth's conversion to Covenant theology and Presbyterianism. The title of the article appears under a picture of a pilgrim with his duffel bag heading down a winding road, ostensibly on the way "home." Let us be reminded that the Reformation began in Rome, bringing much of Rome with it, and the road that

leads from there is the same one that leads back there. If we start back up the road of Reformed theology, pursue it consistently and steadily, we shall soon be back in Rome. Reformed ministers are arriving there every day. Our "home" is not "back" anywhere, certainly not to an abolished Old Covenant or a Puritan era no less bloody than that of Rome. The whole of the book of Hebrews is a warning against going back and an exhortation to "go on." Our home, our perfection, our full inheritance, is complete in our glorious Captain Jesus Christ, Who is gone on ahead for us. Let us keep our backs to the past and our faces focused on Him, ever pressing forward to that mark of His high calling! ☞



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