

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August

Published by the Reformed Free Publishing Association

Editor - Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, 1842 Plymouth Terrace, S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Contributions will be limited to 300 words and must be neatly written or typewritten. Copy deadlines are the first and fifteenth of the month.

All church news items should be addressed to Mr. J. M. Faber, 1123 Cooper, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

Announcements and Obituaries with the \$2.00 fee included must be in by the 5th or the 20th of the month, previous to publication on the 15th or the 1st respectively, send to Mr. James Dykstra see address below.

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr. James Dykstra, 1326 W. Butler Ave., S.E. Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

Renewal: Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Subscription price: \$5.00 per year

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Second Class Postage paid at Grand Rapids, Michigan

## NOTICE

Pre-Seminary and Seminary students in need of financial assistance in attending our Protestant Reformed Seminary should come to the meeting of the Student Aid Committee to be held May 17 at 8 o'clock in our Southwest Protestant Reformed Church.

P. Cnossen, Sec'y.

## MEDITATION—

# Ascending the Hill of the Lord

by Rev. J. Kortering

*Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing of the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

Psalm 24:3-5

The hill of the Lord!

On that hill heaven and earth embrace each other.  
What a joy it is to climb the hill of the Lord.

From an outward point of view there isn't much that seems to make this hill any different from the others. This was true in David's day, Jerusalem was the city set upon a hill. There is no question, but that Jerusalem was a splendid city. Her walls were fortified, her gates were well fixed, majestically she crowned the naked rock and sheer cliffs. There were however, other cities that possessed as great and even greater splendor from this point of view. Nineveh and Rameses could well outdo Jerusalem in such a contest.

Within the walls of Jerusalem there arose still another hill. Part of the city was elevated above the rest. On this summit stood a tabernacle. It wasn't much to the eyes; even David bemoaned that the Lord should dwell in such a humble abode. Not until the reign of Solomon was it replaced with the splendor of the temple. Nevertheless, David's joy in this psalm centers in this tabernacle. It is this structure that is the focal point of Psalm 24, for it alone made the hill of Jerusalem the hill of the *Lord!*

Jehovah dwelt in this tabernacle on top of this hill. Not that He was confined or limited to this one place; that would be impossible for He is the omnipresent God.



Rather, it was in the dwelling place on the hill that God had fellowship with His people. This was a great wonder. The whole earth was cursed, and mankind was under the sentence of death. This death is an expression of judgment and wrath of almighty God against the sinner. Yet, in the midst of the blackness of death, while the whole earth was enshrouded in the black veil of God's wrath, there was one place that was excluded, and that was behind the veil in the holy of holies, within the tabernacle on top of this hill in the heart of Jerusalem, in Judah of the land of Canaan. This was Jehovah's hill, His dwelling place, His home in the midst of death.

This hill radiated the glory of His presence. Since God is the holy God, His dwelling place is holy. We need but recall that Moses after he dwelt forty days in the mount of the Lord returned to the people, and they could not gaze upon him, for his countenance was as a bright light. Similarly, Peter, James, and John beheld the exalted Christ in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. There, too, He appeared in glistening white and sinful man could not look upon Him. So, too, in the temple, the most holy place was filled with the glory of the Lord, the Shekinah. God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. His dwelling place reflects His own character. He alone is the highest good and perfectly consecrated unto Himself.

To climb the hill of the Lord indicates that we enter into the presence of the Lord, we join Him in His sanctuary.

That is a good place to be, for, according to this text, it is on this hill that God dispenses righteousness and blessing. In these two words we have summarized all that God gives to us in His favor. In righteousness we have the necessary foundation for the friendship of God. God's friendship is not extended to the sinner in his sins, rather to the opposite, the sinner who becomes righteous. Righteousness is the legal aspect of our salvation. By it God declares that we have no sin before His holy law, and that as Judge He views our whole life as perfectly conformed to His sovereign will and purpose. Once we are righteous, God continues to pour out His blessings upon us. He frees us from the corrupting dominion of sin, and writes His law upon the tables of our heart. Under the blessing of God we are converted from sinner to saint, and thus responsive to the fellowship of God upon His holy hill.

What does all this really mean to us from the view-point of our daily life? It means that the burden of sin is lifted from us on the hill of the Lord. Our transgressions bring us very low, for our conscience accuses us. The damning evidence burns its way into our inmost self, and we cannot find peace with ourselves. We ascend the hill of the Lord, and He takes from us that terrible burden and assures us of the joy of forgiveness. As we learn to hate our sins, the power of sin becomes increasingly wearisome. We struggle day after day with the weaknesses of our flesh, and desire to be more zealous in faith. Yet, we find the forces of evil gnawing their way into the fibre of our life, and our spiritual vertebrae weaken, and we collapse into the ravine of death. Grace draws us out

of the depths of sin and leads us to the hill of the Lord to be strengthened. Frequently we fret beneath a load of care, being burdened with sicknesses and sufferings and wonder whether the face of the Lord is against us. We sorrow in our loneliness, and often question the mind of the Most High. All this changes when we pause on the crest of the hill and gaze upon the face of the Almighty. The righteousness of the Lord and blessing from the God of our salvation bring a deeply rooted peace in our soul.

It is good to spend much time on the hill. For David that involved going to the tabernacle; for us it involves gathering in His house of worship, pausing a moment to pray, meditating either alone or with other children of God upon the Word of God. The hill of the Lord is any place and any time you stand consciously face to face with God. It is a foretaste of heaven.

And who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?

Only those who are perfect, the holy ones.

David describes this perfection as, "He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." With this description the Psalmist touches upon all the aspects of human life. The heart of man must be pure. This means that the spiritual core of man must be perfectly conformed unto the will of God; it must beat in harmony with the love of God. What's more, man's soul must not be lifted up in vain, that is it must not be focused upon that which is empty and common; it is to be concentrated upon Jehovah alone with all its thoughts and desires. Still more, his hands must be clean and his tongue may not swear deceitfully. Taken together the hands and tongue represent our life as we stand in relationship with our neighbor, and that, too, before God. With our hands we work and with our tongue we speak to and about God and the neighbor. We must cease from sin and love God from the depth of our heart and show this in all the work of our mind, soul, and strength.

You ask, who then can ever ascend the hill of the Lord?

No mere man can ever do such a thing.

This psalm of David focuses our attention upon our Lord Jesus Christ. It seems quite apparent that David wrote this psalm in connection with the return of the ark to Jerusalem. The ark had been at the home of Obbedom for three months and David perceived that the blessing of the Lord was upon his house. He took courage, and with the priests and Levites brought the ark to Jerusalem and placed it upon the hill of the Lord. Triumphant he and the congregation followed the ark, singing, "Lift up your heads o ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors and the King of glory shall come in; who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."

Typically this portrayed the ascension of Christ into heaven. In its deepest sense the hill of the Lord is heaven, the place where God dwells in all His splendor. Ascending that hill requires absolute perfection. This Christ did for us after He finished His work on the cross. David saw the significance typically; we can see it in reality.



Christ ascended the hill of the Lord. He did that as Mediator. As the natural Son of God He was begotten eternally of the Father and therefore abode on that hill. But, as Mediator He left that hill to descend into the lower parts of the earth. He had to lead captivity captive. Typically this was portrayed in that ark; the blood sprinkled upon the mercy seat once a year spoke of the atonement. The gates of Jerusalem could well lift up their heads and welcome the King of glory, for Israel was typically holy in the blood of the Lamb. All Israel followed and David the king with them, shouting and dancing, for Christ was ascending the hill of the Lord and Israel with Him.

How much more glorious this becomes at the moment of reality. Jesus who had come into the world for the sake of His own, assumed their guilt and became sinful in their place. Because God who dwells in the hill is a holy God, He is a consuming fire against all iniquity. Yet, Almighty God knew that His own could never bear the burden of their guilt and throw it off and climb the hill of themselves. It was in love that He sent His Son to bear our guilt and the punishment due to us for them. This Jesus did on the cross. The holy God of the hill poured upon Jesus the terrible punishment due to us for our sins. His raw wrath unleashed upon Him, forced from His lips the lonely cry, forsaken! Jesus did more than we could ever do. He bore this judgment in perfect love and paid the price of sin once for all. He merited perfection for all His own. The proof is in the open tomb; there God sealed the work of Jesus Christ and labelled it, perfect!

Since Christ and His people are inseparably united before God, so much that they are as one body, Christ the head and His church the members, the work of Christ is imputed to us. In Christ we are righteous and holy. In Christ we are made worthy to receive the blessings of Almighty God.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?

Jesus Christ has already ascended. Having finished His work of redemption He ascended before the eyes of His disciples and was taken from them by the cloud, by Jehovah the Lord of the hill.

We have therefore principally ascended the hill. We are inseparably united with Him. Before God we are pure and clean, counted worthy to ascend the hill and dwell with Him forevermore.

How do we know this? After His ascension into heaven, God crowned Christ's perfect work with the gift of the Holy Spirit, by Whom He sanctifies us and cleanses us from all our sins. By this Spirit we know the friendship of God and dwell with Him on the hill.

Our life is a constant struggle to climb higher and higher. It involves a daily denial of the flesh, a putting away of former things and seeking more and more the fellowship of the living God. Principally our whole life is an expression of dwelling in the presence of the living God. No longer is there a secret room where God and His people meet; the veil of the temple was rent, the tabernacle of God is now with men. Our life must be so conducted that our heart, soul, hands, and mouth express our consecration to God. Following our High Priest Jesus Christ we have the calling to live the consecrated life within the hill of the Lord.

This requires one thing, divine grace, sovereign and free.

There is one place wherein we lay hold of this grace, that is the house of worship where God meets His people in Jesus Christ. That is the greatest expression of God's friendship with His people on this side of the grave.

Let us ascend the hill of the Lord, following our Lord Jesus Christ. May God give us grace to do this daily, till we shall ascend it in death and dwell in the New Jerusalem, in the city four-square.

Our life is hid with Christ in God.

## EDITORIALS—

# The Story of an Ass and A Bridge

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The editor of *De Wachter* (who does not relish unsolicited advice, but who nevertheless receives it occasionally) does a rather clever take-off on a Dutch word for which there is no exact English equivalent, but which is a picturesque term for our word *mnemonic*. A mnemonic is a device to assist the memory. And the Dutch term referred to is *ezelsbrug*,—literally,

“ass’s bridge.” The editor points out that this Dutch term derives its significance from the fact that an ass is proverbially a stupid and a lazy beast, the idea being that when these same attributes are found in a human being, then a mnemonic (*ezelsbrug*, ass’s bridge) is necessary to get across the memory gap.

The esteemed editor of the *De Wachter* then goes



on to inform his readers that he has in mind a Reformed ass's bridge, or mnemonic. This Reformed mnemonic is the well-known T-U-L-I-P, which is, of course, peculiar to the English language in the very nature of the case, and which is designed to assist one in remembering the Five Points of Calvinism. However, the editor of *De Wachter* tells his readers that they need not bemoan the absence of this mnemonic in the Holland language because it would be better if we would do away with it in the English language also.

Do not misunderstand.

The objection of the editor is not to the Five Points of Calvinism, but it is to the letter L. Moreover, he objects not to the *doctrine* of limited atonement, but to that word *limited*. And his objection is that the term *limited* is really a less fortunate term to express the truth that it is intended to express, and that the preference should be given to *particular* or *definite*. This, of course, is a point which has frequently been made in the current discussion about Christ's atonement. As I see it, the editor of *De Wachter* has especially two reasons in this connection for discarding this letter L, and thus discarding the entire mnemonic (*ezelsbrug*, ass's bridge). The fact is that the term *limited* is not used by the Canons. Hence, he says, we would do better to avoid this word and to employ the more accurate terms *definite* and *particular*. And he suggests that it would be too bad to hold fast to a word which gives a less accurate expression to the doctrine we wish to confess merely for the sake of memory. The second is that the terms *particular* and *definite* are positive, while the word *limited* is negative in tendency and emphasizes the idea *not for all*. The Canons, according to the esteemed editor, are positive, and speak of "those and those only."

And thus the editor concludes with the admonition to discard this little mnemonic (*ezelsbruggetje*) because "even if we give it the more exalted (Latin) name of *pons assinorum*, it remains only a means to assist the memory. The doctrinal thinking of the church must employ language which gives expression to the truth of Scripture in the most clear manner. Discarding of that mnemonic has nothing, but then nothing to do with letting loose of a doctrine."

\* \* \*

Now when I read this little article in the April 4 issue of *De Wachter*, I was first inclined to think within myself, "Editor Haverkamp can write a rather 'cute' editorial and make a rather clever application of a picturesque Dutch term and a definition from Van Dale's *Woordenboek*." In fact, my first reaction, I must confess, was to say, "Fully agreed!"

But then I began to think into this little story of the ass and the bridge; and I came to the conclusion that the editor of *De Wachter* is in need of some advice after all, — even though he does not solicit it. And after all, is it not rather proverbial that advice is to be given, but not received?

Do not misunderstand.

As far as the proposition as such is concerned, that the terms *particular* and *definite* are more accurate, I am, indeed, fully agreed.

Nevertheless, there is something amiss, first of all, in Editor Haverkamp's reasoning.

In the first place, it must be remembered that the terms *particular* and *definite* also do not occur in the Canons, — no more than the term *limited*. For that matter, not even the term *atonement* occurs. Hence, the absence of the term *limited* from the Canons is no indication that it is less accurate.

In the second place, it simply is not true that the term *limited* has any negative tendency and emphasizes the idea of *not for all*, in distinction from the terms *particular* and *definite* as being positive. *Limited* is a positive term; *unlimited* would be a negative term. The truth of the matter is that the term *limited* expresses the idea of "those, and those only" as well as the terms *particular* and *definite*. This is precisely the good side of the term *limited*. All three terms mean to express the idea that the atonement is *exclusive*, that is, for the elect only. From this point of view the term *limited* is a perfectly good term. In fact, there actually is very little misunderstanding of the term, especially not in Reformed circles. We all know that it means to express that the atonement is for the elect exclusively, not for all men.

What then is the flaw in this term? The flaw lies in the possibility that it might be interpreted as saying something about the *value* of Christ's atoning death, which is infinite, and therefore, unlimited. Or the term *limited* might possibly be interpreted, — but not among those who know the T-U-L-I-P, — as meaning that Christ did not atone *fully*, but only partially, for our sins.

Hence, it would have been far more proper that Editor Haverkamp had emphasized that the term *limited* is *basically* a good term, especially in these days when the tendency to forget the doctrine of particular atonement is very strong, and when apparently even more than an *ezelsbrug*, or mnemonic, is necessary.

In the third place, *volens nolens* the editor of *De Wachter* tends to leave the impression, especially upon one less fully acquainted with the current situation, that the entire controversy centers upon such an insignificant thing as a "precious little mnemonic" (*dat geliefkoosde ezelsbruggetje*) and the mere term *limited*. And this surely is not the case.

Besides, I rather like that TULIP. True, it is not particularly a Scriptural figure; nor is it a confessional term. But mnemonics have their advantages, especially when they are correctly used, and especially for children and youths, and more especially in this day when the tendency to forget the Five Points of Calvinism is very strong. There is more than one advantage to this mnemonic, — call it an ass's bridge, if you will. For one thing, the flower-idea is very useful; pull off one of the petals, represented in these letters, and you spoil the flower. For another thing, seeing that the TULIP is especially associated with the Netherlands, this mnemonic serves to remind us that the Five Points of Calvinism are our heritage from our Dutch Reformed forefathers at the Synod of Dordrecht. But for another, in spite of the minor flaw



connected with the letter L, this is basically a good device to aid one in remembering the Five Points. And after all, as Koenen's *Woordenboek* has it: "*een ezelsbrug wordt vooral niet versmaad door een minder snuggeren knaap.*" That is; a mnemonic (ass's bridge) is especially not disdained by a less intelligent youth.

Hence, the editor might have done better than to advise the discarding of this *pons assinorum*.

And that brings me to my main advice.

That is that the editor of *De Wachter* could do far better than to write editorials about *ezelsbruggetjes*.

In fact, even if he wished to write a parable about an ass, he could write about the proverbial *halsstarigheid*, stubbornness, of this creature, and apply it to those who stubbornly refuse (and that includes both Dekker and his associates and the Doctrinal Committee) to accept the doctrine of particular atonement.

He might also stop forevermore saying, "*Voorzichtig!*" — something which in effect means, "Don't rock the boat," and something which he does in his very next editorial in the same issue of *De*

*Wachter*. He might far better sound the alarm and answer his inquirer in that next editorial that Prof. Dekker should have been called to account under the Formula of Subscription long ago on the ground, not that he attacked the late Prof. Berkhof's view of limited atonement, nor on the ground that he literally came right out and said he did not agree with the confessions (who ever does that?), but on the ground that he in truth and in fact denied in his writings about the love of God and the atonement what the confessions teach.

And if he still wished to write a story about an ass, he might in all seriousness have applied the proverb about the ass which he himself quotes in his editorial: "*Een ezel stoot zich in 't gemeen geen twee keer aan dezelfde steen.*" That is: "An ass does not usually stumble twice over the same stone." And he might warn the Christian Reformed Church that they have already in principle stumbled once, — in 1924, — over the doctrine of particular atonement, and that they must by all means not do so again, — lest they be worse than that dumb beast, the ass.

## "Report of the Doctrinal Committee"

### A Critical Study

## The Committee and the "Offer"

by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

### The Committee Strives To Avoid The Issue

We have seen previously that the Doctrinal Committee apparently discerned rather clearly that the First Point of 1924 and especially its well-meant offer of salvation to all are at stake in the so-called Dekker Case. Does not 1924 lead inevitably to a doctrine of general atonement if its consequences are traced to the end? The Doctrinal Committee apparently, — but only apparently, — does not want to accept this consequence of 1924. Prof. Dekker, *cum sociis*, critical of 1924 to an extent, but agreed with its fundamental principle, insist upon it that the general, well-meant offer of the gospel demands that God loves all men with one and the same love (redemptively) and that Christ died for all men.

This issue the committee strives to avoid.

The first hint that the committee wants to avoid the issue is by the preliminary observation (p. 440) that

in connection with the matters touched upon by Prof. Dekker "we meet with great difficulties." And here we have the perennial appeal to the mystery and the paradox, on the basis of which appeal they assert that "no one is able to give a completely satisfactory solution of the problems which they raise." Yet, according to the committee, extremes on both sides must be avoided; and so there will have to be some affirmations made. No one will quarrel with the committee's assertion that we cannot fully comprehend the relation between God's eternal counsel and man's moral responsibility. But the committee thoroughly misrepresents matters when it writes as follows:

And so, too, we should recognize that it is not easy to harmonize the doctrine of a definite atonement with the equally important truth, enunciated in the Canons of Dort, namely, that "as many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called," (III & IV, 8) and that



"the promise of the gospel is that whosoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have eternal life;" and furthermore, that "this promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel." (II, 5)

It should be noted, first of all, that the committee does not really mean that there is difficulty in harmonizing the doctrine of definite atonement and the doctrines stated in the above statements quoted from the Canons. There is absolutely no lack of harmony between these doctrines, nor any seeming lack of harmony, nor any difficulty in seeing the harmony. But the committee already has in mind the well-meant offer and the First Point. And the general, well-meant offer of salvation flagrantly contradicts the doctrine of definite atonement: it demands the doctrine of general atonement. But in order to cover this up, and in its zeal to defend the First Point at all costs and yet not to go over into Dekker's camp completely, the committee begins to make things vague and hazy by first acting as though it is a question of harmony between the doctrine of definite atonement (Canons II, 8) and the doctrines of the seriousness of the gospel call and of the general proclamation of a particular promise (Canons II, 5; Canons III & IV, 8), and then proceeding to state that it "is not easy to harmonize" these doctrines. This is camouflage. But it is precisely this camouflage that must serve as a general cover-up for all the devious meanderings of the committee as it desperately tries to prolong the First Point's contradiction of the Reformed faith and at the same time tries to avoid the consequence which Prof. Dekker insists must be drawn from a general offer of salvation, namely, general atonement.

Next, the committee tries desperately to rescue the First Point and its general offer by divorcing it from the whole context of questions concerning saving grace, concerning general salvation, and concerning Arminianism. Mind you, they are troubled by Dr. Daane's question, "How can such a non-saving grace come to expression in the preaching of the gospel that preaches only saving grace?" To avoid this question, the committee strives to take the general, well-meant offer of salvation out of the realm of saving grace altogether and to put it in the context of common, non-saving grace. They can do this with a semblance of validity, of course, because the well-meant offer was supposed to be proof of a common, non-saving grace. But it is only a *semblance*. Fact is, that everyone who ever brought his preaching into line with the First Point of 1924 fell into the error of Arminianism and forgot all about so-called common, non-saving grace as soon as he began to talk about the well-meant offer element of the First Point. But this we shall see presently.

The question is now: how does the committee try to get away from this problem? They do this by attempting to deny that the First Point of 1924 teaches or intends to teach that the preaching of the gospel is a general offer of grace to all who hear. For after conceding that the "little point of the first point" is again

the point that is calling forth shades of 1924 in their present controversy, they write as follows:

Needless to say that the debate which followed on this matter was characterized by much misunderstanding (hardly true, HCH) and confusion (very much so, because men were trying to be Arminian and Reformed at the same time, HCH). This confusion was compounded by the use of the term "offer of grace" ("aanbod der genade") which became the bone of contention to both sides in the dispute. The question was poised: in the preaching of the gospel what kind of grace is supposed to be offered to the non-elect? Rev. Hoeksema vehemently contended that God's grace (and by this he meant, of course, the one grace of God which is always particular) can never be common, or something that is offered to all men indiscriminately. And certainly he was on solid ground, when he argued that the confessions, and particularly the Canons of Dort, never did speak of a grace of God that is offered to all men, except when they referred to the so-called "common grace" of Arminian vintage. (And at this point the committee makes references to the Canons but does not refer to the one place, Canons III & IV, B 5, which literally speaks of common grace, HCH).

In connection with the above, the committee notes the following in a footnote: "It is noteworthy that neither the advisory committee of the Synod of 1924, nor the Synod itself in its official declarations ever used this term. The committee spoke of a 'well-meant offer of salvation' and the Synod referred to 'the general offer of the gospel.' Nevertheless, both sides began to argue about the meaning of the phrase 'offer of grace.'"

Then the committee goes on, as follows:

From the side of our church, however, there were also those who, in spite of contrary evidence from the confessions, did try to maintain that God offers *grace* to all men indiscriminately. (At this point the committee inserts a footnote in which they put Dr. Daane in this class. They almost sound Reformed, in fact, when they upbraid Dr. Daane for holding it "as axiomatic that grace is *offered* in the preaching of the gospel." And to refute Daane they appeal to Dr. Roger Nicole, who, if we judge from the quotations the committee makes from him, has no understanding of the whole issue of the "well-meant offer." HCH) By doing this they allowed Rev. Hoeksema to put them in the uncomfortable position of having to explain what kind of grace then was supposed to be offered in the so-called offer of grace. Was it common grace, as some thought was implied by the Synod of 1924? Or was it special grace that was offered to all men? Or again, was it some kind of grace in between? This was the problem that plagued all those who tried to defend the doctrinal declarations of 1924 on the basis of some kind of grace which was supposed to be offered by God to all in the preaching of the gospel. Unfortunately, however, none seemed to realize that Synod had never spoken of an "offer of grace;" but rather of "the offer of salvation," or "the offer of the gospel." If this had only been realized, much misunderstanding and needless debate might have been avoided, and the controversy with our Protestant Reformed brethren would have been much more pointed and profitable. For, while the Canons do not speak about an offer of grace, they do plainly state that in the preaching of the gospel there is a sincere and well-meant offer of salvation made to



all men indiscriminately. More than that, the Canons do not hesitate to aver that Christ Himself is offered in the gospel preaching. Again, they state that the gospel contains a promise of "salvation, rest of soul, and eternal life" to all men who are called by that gospel to come to Christ and to believe in Him. (II, 5; III & IV, 8, 9).

All of the above is one grand piece of falsification. It is false on the following counts:

1. *It utterly falsifies the Canons.* I challenge the committee, or anyone else for that matter, to show that the Canons "plainly state that in the preaching of the gospel there is a sincere and well-meant offer of salvation made to all men indiscriminately." The Canons nowhere state this; to say that they do is blatant falsification of the Canons. I challenge anyone to show that "the Canons do not hesitate to aver that Christ Himself is offered in the gospel preaching." The Canons nowhere make this statement. And most of all, I challenge anyone to show where the Canons "state that the gospel contains a promise of 'salvation, rest of soul, and eternal life' to all men who are called by that gospel to come to Christ and to believe in Him." The Canons surely never state this; in fact, they attribute this heresy to the Arminians.

2. *It is utterly false historically.* Did the committee never consider the fact that it was the very fathers of the First Point who themselves spoke of an "offer of grace" (*aanbod der genade*)? Do they not know that a man like Prof. Heyns, who instructed a whole generation of Christian Reformed ministers, uses and explains and defends this expression repeatedly, and always in the Arminian sense? Do they not know that the late Prof. Berkhof followed this same line? Do they not know that the Rev. Keegstra in *De Wachter* desperately tried to defend the First Point and fell into the same error? What *historical right* does the committee have to say that the issue was not one of an "offer of grace"? Does the committee think itself more capable of explaining the First Point of 1924 than the men of 1924 themselves? Does the committee think that the polemics of that period was about a totally imaginary issue? Such nonsense!

3. *It is materially false.* Essentially it makes no difference whether one speaks of an offer of grace or of an offer of salvation. For salvation is but the implication of all the blessings of grace. To say, therefore, that salvation is offered is equivalent to saying that grace is offered. The committee, therefore, does not get away from the problem by trying to eliminate the expression "offer of grace." And, as will become plain later in this study, the committee also literally contradicts itself on this point. In this connection it should be observed that the fundamental question which the late Rev. Hoeksema posed and which the Protestant Reformed Churches still pose over against the First Point is not; what *kind* of grace is offered in the so-called offer? Our question is; what *grace*, — of whatever kind, — is there for the reprobate? What grace is there for the reprobate in the things of this present time, in rain and sunshine? How are rain and sunshine grace for the reprobate? Or what grace is there

for the reprobate in the preaching of the gospel? How is the preaching of the gospel *grace* for the reprobate? In this same connection, it should be noted that the fundamental objection is not to the idea that the so-called offer is general and well-meant, but to the very idea of an *offer*. Neither grace, nor salvation, nor the gospel is an *offer*! But it is exactly when one begins to speak of an *offer*, the contents of which is salvation, or of an *offer* of the gospel, that one is already sailing in the Arminian waters of free-willism. Certainly, also the committee can see, — I dare say, in fact, that they saw, but chose to ignore, — that it is not the so-called natural blessings of a so-called common grace that are offered in a supposed offer of the gospel or offer of salvation. It is salvation itself that is offered, — offered not merely by the human preacher, but offered graciously, well-meaningly, to all who hear the gospel preached by God Himself! This is the meaning of the First Point's "little point." This is what all who write and preach according to that First Point always teach. This is what the fathers of the First Point always taught in connection with passages like Ezekiel 33:11 and Romans 2:4. This is what involved the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 and thereafter in all the hairy problems of Arminianism while they were supposed to be a confessionally Reformed denomination. This is what has led inevitably to the support of the Billy Graham crusades by so many in the Christian Reformed Church. And this is what has led inevitably to Prof. Dekker's universal atonement.

4. *It is false in the light of official decisions.* The committee refers only to the language of Synod of 1924 and its committee. We should remember that in 1926, in answer to the Consistory of Middelburg, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church made some significant declarations about the First Point. (Incidentally, the committee will find that in 1926 the Synod itself used the terminology "well-meant offer of salvation" as well as "lovely invitation of the gospel." The committee, which does not like the term *grace* in "common grace," but prefers to speak of benevolence or goodness or long-suffering, would also discover in the same decisions of 1926 that the Synod does not hesitate at all to speak of "*genade*" or "grace.") But the main point I want to make is that the Synod of 1926 went even more openly in the Arminian direction than did the Synod of 1924. The Consistory of Middelburg complained that the Synod of 1924 did not do justice to the distinction between "Common Grace (*Gemeene Gratie*)" and "Particular or Covenant Grace (*Bijzondere of Verbondsgenade*)" but confused the two. The Synod of 1926 denied this, and in so doing distinguished very clearly between the "little point of the First Point" and the main proposition of the First Point. For, in the first place, they declared:

(b) That the Synod did not confuse the goodness of God toward all men (Common Grace) and the goodness or grace of God in the causing to go forth of a well-meant offer of salvation to all to whom the preaching of the Gospel comes. This appears clearly, among other things, from the fact that of the eight Scripture passages quoted (under Point I) there are six that con-



cern the goodness of God toward all creatures, while the other two refer to the goodness of God which appears from the well-meaning character of the offer of the Gospel for everyone to whom that offer comes. These two kinds of texts are also clearly distinguished by the Synod and even separated by the transition sentence (Acts, 1924, p. 126): "Also texts which point out that God comes to all with a well-meant offer of salvation prove this." (Acts, 1926, p. 116)

Then in point "c" of the same decision the Synod of 1926 concedes that they cited the Canons solely with reference to the goodness of God manifested in the well-meant offer of the Gospel to everyone to whom the call of the Gospel comes; and they assert that the Synod proved that "besides the saving grace which is for the elect alone, there is also a certain grace, goodness, or favorable attitude of God which is revealed toward a circle of men which is broader than the group of the elect, and that this appears clearly, among more things, from the fact that God well-meaningly calls everyone to whom the lovely invitation of the Gospel comes."

And then in point "d" the Synod tries to distinguish this grace of God in the "lovely invitation of the Gospel" which comes to thousands who are not saved and who thus appear to be not elect, from God's particular grace, which is irresistible and saving. They assert that the former is nevertheless undeserved favor and thus rightly called "grace (*genade*). And by implication they assert that this grace is resistible and, of course, not actually saving. But, mind you, they are speaking of a grace in the preaching of the gospel! They are speaking of a grace which they earlier said is clearly distinguished from the goodness of God toward all men. They are not talking now about all men, but about a circle of men broader than the elect, namely, all those to whom the gospel is preached. And they conclude:

"Be it true that the saving or particular grace is only the portion of those who are internally and effectually called, the outward calling, which extends to a broader circle, is nevertheless also proof of a grace of God, that is, of a favorable attitude of God which comes to the sinner undeservedly." (Acts, 1926, pp. 116-117)

From all this, it is abundantly clear that the Christian Reformed Church actually adopted two graces in 1924, supposedly in addition to God's particular grace. They adopted in essence Abraham Kuyper's common grace theory. And in their desperate striving to prove the latter from the confessions, they adopted the General Grace theory of the Arminians. It is from this last that the committee tries to escape, at least in part of the Doctrinal Report, due to the fact that Prof. Dekker can justly appeal to this part of the First Point for his universal atonement theory also. Thus also the committee continues the paragraph quoted in part before, and tries to limit the whole matter to common grace. They even quote three of the six texts which Synod of 1924 adduced for the common grace theory of the First Point. But they do not so much as mention the two texts (from Ezekiel and from Romans 2) which

the Synod used for the General Grace theory of the well-meant offer.

### The Committee Fails To Avoid The Issue

At this point the committee almost seems to have thought it has gone too far in its emphasis upon the common grace aspect of the First Point; and it very ineptly tries to return to the idea of the well-meant offer by referring to Hebrews 6, the passage which Arminians so often use to teach a falling away from grace. They even speak of "special tokens of God's mercy which they receive who are privileged to hear the gospel, and to receive in that gospel the command to repent and believe, accompanied with a promise, sincere and well-meant, that, if they do repent and believe, they will receive 'rest of soul and eternal life,' yea, all the blessings of salvation which Christ has merited on the cross." Note that here the committee uses the very strong term *mercy*, the virtue of God according to which God wills to deliver those who are in misery and to make them blessed with Himself! They also try to distinguish these "tokens of mercy" from the "common favors which come to all men alike." But what they fail to do utterly is to show how this has nothing to do with *salvation* and to show that this is nothing but a so-called common grace. In fact, they fail to show how this grace differs from the grace of which the Arminians speak in this connection. And they fail to show how Hebrews 6 speaks of grace at all, in view of the fact that the men who are the supposed the recipients of this grace nevertheless fall away and cannot be renewed unto repentance, and, in fact, are compared to soil which brings forth thorns and thistles.

At this point the committee bethinks itself once more, it seems, and gives utterance to this amazing piece of wisdom: "But there is *one thing* that is not common to all men, nor even to all who hear the gospel. And that is the special grace of God, that grace which the Canons of Dort refer to under various names...." The committee seems to have some Reformed pangs of conscience at this point. They are bent on eliminating Prof. Dekker's chances of appealing to the First Point, of course!

The mountain labored and brought forth a mouse, — the mouse in this case being a truism! Mind you, one thing is not common! That one thing that is not common is the special grace of God!

But make no mistake! This statement of the committee is not Reformed, even though they appeal to the Canons. The statement would have been Reformed if they had eliminated the word "special". Then it would read: "But one thing is not common to all men....And that is the grace of God!" That is our Protestant Reformed position, of course.

But the Christian Reformed Church has a confused position:

1) They teach common grace (*gemeene gratie*), which is a favor of God to all men in the things of this present time and which results in so-called temporal blessings.

2) They teach general grace (*algemeene genade*),



which is the same as the Arminian position with respect to the preaching of the gospel: God wills that all who hear the gospel be saved, and He offers this salvation to all to whom the gospel is preached, well-meaningly, upon condition of faith and repentance. This is a saving grace which does not actually save and which is resistible. And this is the part the committee is trying to get away from, but yet without denying the well-meant offer.

3) Confessionally they hold to particular grace (for the elect only), a grace which is irresistible and which actually saves the elect. This is what the Doctrinal Committee tries to say is special and is the one thing that is not common to all men. But this contradicts the grace under "1" and "2" above. For it is *sovereign* grace, grace for the elect only. And sovereign election implies sovereign reprobation; sovereign love implies sovereign hatred; sovereign grace implies sovereign wrath.

Because of this confused, Janus-head position the committee weasels with words and twists and turns in every direction in order to escape the compelling reasoning of Dekker's position that the well-meant offer demands a general atonement. The careful reader of the Doctrinal Report may discern several elements in this process:

1) The committee tries the sop of so-called non-saving benefits of the death of Christ. These are supposedly involved in the general offer of the gospel. And several times in the course of the report these so-called non-saving benefits are referred to both in connection with the offer and in connection with the death of Christ. But here the committee faces more than one problem. In the first place, really neither the committee nor its opponents are satisfied with this notion of non-saving benefits. Basically, of course, they are bothered by the problem that we have always raised in this connection: what *grace*, what blessing, is there in these so-called benefits wherewith a man nevertheless goes lost? In the second place, they are confronted by the problem that the well-meant offer to all men is supposed to be an offer of *salvation*, expressive of God's delight in the salvation of all who hear the gospel preached and of His will that no man should perish! And, in the third place, they face the problem how even so-called non-saving benefits can accrue from the death of Christ while the atoning death of Christ is nevertheless supposed to be, according to the committee, for the elect only. (To this third problem we shall return when we study the committee's view of the atonement. For it is absolutely not true that the committee maintains the doctrine of particular atonement, though they try to leave the impression that they do. Let no one be deceived on this score!)

2) The committee steadfastly avoids throughout its report any facing up to the Reformed truth of sovereign reprobation, and its corollary of a two-fold and sovereign operation of God in connection with the gospel, namely, that of saving and that of hardening. Very little does the term *reprobation* appear in the report. The committee prefers, — as do many in our day, — only to speak of the *non-elect*, a purely negative term.

But never is reprobation represented in the report as being *sovereign*. And never does the committee in its report face up to this truth of sovereign reprobation, though they seem at times to place a certain amount of emphasis on election.

3) Finally the committee must needs face up to it that the general, well-meant offer is after all *an offer of grace* and that it is a genuinely well-meant offer of grace to all who hear the gospel. Hence, the committee ends by contradicting itself and by maintaining an *offer of grace* though they warned that the First Point must never be understood this way and that this led to confusion and to being placed in an uncomfortable position by Rev. Hoeksema and the Protestant Reformed Churches.

You say: does the committee actually do this?

My answer is: if words have any meaning at all, then the committee does this in the same paragraph in which they once more assert that grace is never offered!

The proof is on page 494 of the Acts of Synod, 1966:

.....As we said in our introduction, grace is never offered, but always conferred or bestowed. What the gospel does offer is not grace, but full redemption from all sin and eternal life in Jesus Christ. Fact is, it is Christ Himself in all the fulness of His grace and truth who is offered therein.

Now if words have any meaning whatsoever, here is a blatant contradiction. For, first of all, the committee says that full redemption from all sin and eternal life are offered. But what is full redemption from all sin and eternal life, except grace? But secondly, the committee goes on to say that Christ Himself is offered in the gospel. But according to the committee's own words, Christ Himself *in all the fulness of His grace!* Now it is certainly true that there is a fulness of grace in Christ; He is the implication of all grace. But if this Christ is offered, then it can only mean that grace is offered.

The committee fails miserably and ends by contradicting itself!

## CONCLUSION

This accounts, in the first place, for the nonsense, the cover-up statements, and the flat contradictions in the conclusions of the committee's report. These are found not so much in the conclusions proper, but in the grounds under these conclusions. Let me cite a couple examples.

First of all, under conclusion IV, where the committee states that it is not warranted to say to every man, "Christ died for you," we find this in "C":

Although this statement, "Christ died for you," might be correctly understood as referring to the many universal and undeserved benefits which accrue to all men from the death of Christ; yet in the kerygmatic situation this statement is usually understood by the hearers in an Arminian, universalistic sense.

Now apart from the repeated nonsense about the many universal benefits which accrue from the death



of Christ, will anyone make plain why this same statement is not true about a general, well-meant offer of salvation and grace? Whether one says, "Christ died for you," or whether one says, "God well-meaningly offers you salvation and grace; and God delights in your salvation and wills to save you," to every man makes absolutely no difference! But even if the committee sees some difference, what then is the difference between the latter statement and any Arminian presentation of the gospel? How can anyone ever understand that statement in anything but an Arminian, universalistic sense?

The committee wants the Arminian doctrine when it comes to the preaching of the gospel. Prof. Dekker wants it both as to the preaching of the gospel and as to the meaning of the atonement. Both are Arminian. When the committee criticizes Dekker, it is only a case of the pot calling the kettle black!

Secondly, although one could agree that the doctrine of definite atonement (the true doctrine, not the committee's twisted version of definite atonement) is an incentive for mission enthusiasm and endeavor, rather than a hindrance (Conclusion V), yet we find this amazing statement in the grounds, without a scintilla of Scriptural proof or confessional backing:

The universal gospel offer is grounded in the atoning work of Christ which actually merited salvation for sinners.

Is this not amazing?

Remember two things which the committee tries to hide by vagueness. In the first place, the committee has tried to maintain—however inconsistently—that the atoning work of Christ is *particular*, that is, for the elect only. In the second place, the committee has therefore tried to maintain that the atoning work of Christ actually merited salvation, not merely for sinners, nor, certainly, for all sinners, but only for elect sinners.

Now insert these elements in the above statement of the committee. You get a result something like this: "The universal gospel offer (that is, a well-meant offer of grace on the part of God to all who hear the preaching) is grounded in the atoning work of Christ which was accomplished for the elect, and for them only, and which actually merited salvation for elect sinners, and for them only."

Will someone please explain how in the name of all that is true and sensible the latter can be the ground for the former?

This is the question Dekker and Daane have faced. They have answered: No, a universal offer must be grounded in a universal atonement!

And this makes sense,—that is, if you want to maintain a universal offer.

But the committee's position is utterly impossible!

And this brings me to the conclusion of this part of this study. It is this: if the committee had really wanted to do the Christian Reformed Church a service, they would have come with the simple advice that it is high time for the Christian Reformed Church to review and to repudiate the well-meant offer doctrine adopted in 1924. And they would have come with the warning that the alternative is full-blown Arminianism.

Editor Vander Ploeg of the *Banner* and the Rev. Adam Persenaire (April 7 issue) may assume the ostrich attitude and claim that the difference between the Christian Reformed Church and the Protestant Reformed Churches is not one about limited atonement. But all the facts belie this. Or else why is it that everyone who has written about the current atonement controversy has without fail been compelled to face the problem of the First Point of 1924?

When,—oh, when,—will those Christian Reformed brethren who genuinely wish to remain truly Reformed wake up to the fact that you cannot fight Arminianism on the basis of 1924's First Point?

## ALL AROUND US—

# Liberalism in the Netherlands

by Prof. H. Hanko

It has through recent years become increasingly apparent that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands are straying far from the truth of the Reformed faith. Magazine articles and books have brought some of these indications to the attention of those in our own country. And reports from people who have travelled to the Netherlands confirm these suspicions that all is far from well.

But things are far worse than many of us imagine. This appears clearly from an article which was written in *Tot Vrijheid Geroepen* (March, 1967) in which a letter was quoted which was sent to all the Consistories of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* by a group which apparently is similar to various groups in denominations in our own country—groups of concerned members of the church who bemoan the heresy rampant in their



denomination. The entire article we quote (The translation was graciously provided by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema):

### UNREST IN THE GEREFORMEERDE KERKEN

The society of "*Gereformeerde Verontrusten in Nederland* (Reformed Alarmed Ones in the Netherlands)," whose seat is in Harderwijk, has addressed a letter to all the consistories of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands, in which letter it mentions expressions of ministers and professors of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* which give occasion for serious unrest and alarm concerning the maintenance of the authority of Scripture and of the confession. The letter follows in its entirety.

To our great alarm the authority of Scripture and the confession are increasingly being attacked in our churches. According to II Peter 1:19-21 and II Timothy 3:16 the basis of our faith is the infallibility of Holy Scripture, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit. In that Scripture there are words spoken by men. Nevertheless these words are God's Word in this sense, that God caused them to be included in the Scriptures, so that we are certain that these men indeed spoke them even as Scripture records them. But when our new theology speaks of a word of man in Scripture, it means thereby that part of Scripture are not inspired by the Holy Spirit, but are accounts of fallible men.

In *Gereformeerde Weekblad* of Sept. 16, 1966, Prof. Koole writes that the Bible is ancient Western historiography, of which one may not expect that it is absolutely exact. In *Opdracht en Dienst* of January, 1966, Drs. T. M. Gilhuis mockingly calls the serpent, Balaam's ass, and the fish of Jonah the three saving animals, about which we must not take the stories literally. But Christ and his apostles Paul and Peter in Matt. 12:40 and II Cor. 11:3 and II Pet. 2:16 establish those stories as historical facts. Then these witnesses, who are above suspicion, have adapted themselves to the mind (*mening*: opinion, meaning) of their contemporaries or they said these things in their ignorance. Prof. Bakker alleges the latter concerning Paul in *Geref. Weekblad* of October 14, 1966, when he writes that Paul in II Cor. 11:3 gazes against his own horizon (*tegen zijn eigen horizon aankijkt*).

Dr. F. L. Bos ventures to declare in *Trouw* of January 8, 1966 that Paul views the creation account about the bi-unity (*twee-eenheid*) of man and wife through colored glasses. What is left in this way of the Biblical doctrine that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God?

Dr. Kuitert is a grave threat for our church. At the convention of the society of Christian scientists of April 20, 1963, he said that Genesis 1 is an account borrowed from Babylonian myths, that God's creation, from the beginning on, never was good, and that Genesis 3 surely would not be an account of facts. According to a report of the meeting (assembly) of the *Chr. Paedagogisch Studiecentrum* of Oct. 5, 1966, he there made such terrible statements that the following conclusion is allowed: According to Prof. Kuitert there has been no Adam, no Eve, no paradise without sin and death, no fall (*Friese Kerkbode* of Nov. 11, 1966). According to *Trouw* (May 13, 1966), Prof. Kuitert declared at Kampen's School Day that one cannot say: "Because it is in the Bible, it really took place." Therefore he could also say there: "I can very well agree with it, that in the time of Joshua Jericho did not exist."

In "*Feestbundel voor Prof. Berkouwer*" Prof. Polman denies reprobation from eternity. According to Prof. Rothuizen in *Centraal Weekblad* (June 12, 1966), homosexuality is not sin. When the homosexual writer Van het Reve compares God with a little donkey with which fornication is committed, then that is not railing blasphemy, according to Rothuizen in *Trouw* of October 15, 1966, but he finds Van het Reve to be in many respects a Christian writer. In the *Groninger Kerkbode* of January 9, 1965 the Rev. Zwanenburg departs from the doctrine of original sin.

According to *Trouw* of May 9, 1966, Prof. H. Ridderbos said: "The Bible has no authority when it comes to the formulation of a definite cosmogeny (*wereldbeeld*; literally: world-picture) or when it comes to a particular style or when it comes to pronouncements on history." In the *Nieuwe Haagse Courant* of May 7, 1966 he wrote: "We are more and more understanding that the real authority of the Bible lies in its content and is not a formal authority." Apparently Prof. Ridderbos means that this way: One may no more say that one must believe Scripture because it is God's Word, but one must trace the content of the Bible in order to make out what is credible (trustworthy) and what is not.

Now Prof. Ridderbos understands that this brings one into difficulties. For if A discards a part of the Bible, and B twice as much, and C thrice as much, what is then credible? According to *Trouw* (May 9, 1966) Prof. Ridderbos gives the following solution for this problem, that the fallible church, which is under the guidance of the Spirit, must determine what must be believed. Practically speaking, then, the Synod, i.e., the professors, decide.

But if now a former synod declares that Genesis 3 must be taken literally and a following synod declares that Genesis 3 must be taken figuratively, which Synod is under the guidance of the Spirit? We, alarmed ones, say: the first, for the Synod is only under the guidance of the Spirit if it obeys God's Word. But the new theology says: the second, for one must take into account modern science. The only safe guide which the Spirit uses is no club of fallible professors, but God's infallible Word.

Now Prof. Kuitert and other theologians of the new trend say that the facts of salvation must be believed. Why? Because Scripture mentions these facts of salvation. But if Jesus teaches the doctrine of the atonement for our sins through his blood in Matthew 26:28 and if Paul preaches the resurrection of Christ in I Cor. 15:4, why must I believe that, if the same Jesus and the same Paul tell something in Matt. 12:40 and II Cor. 11:3 that is not true?

Professors and ministers have solemnly declared at their entrance upon office that they believe that the doctrine contained in our confessions agrees in all respects with the Word of God. They have promised not to teach or to write anything contrary thereto, that they will bring any possible objections against this doctrine to the attention of consistory, classis, or synod, that they will keep silence until the latter have made a pronouncement and will submit to their judgment, under the penalty of suspension in case they act contrary to this promise.

We urgently beseech you, officebearers, to draw your conclusion from the above.

The World Council of Churches has in its midst officebearers who deny the Christ. The World Council takes sides with the communist countries. In view of



these facts we beseech you on the basis of the Word of God to oppose joining the World Council. We beseech you to do the same, just as much on the basis of God's Word, with respect to the ascribing of the special offices to women.

In view of all the preceding, we beseech you, office-bearers of our *Gereformeerde Kerken*, to maintain unabridged the authority of Scripture and the confession. Moreover, we would point you yet to the admonition of the elders in the Form for Ordination to be as watchmen over the house and city of God and to take heed to the maintenance of purity of doctrine. Therefore we also beseech you to drop all unnecessary ornamentation in the services for public worship and not to allow the preaching to degenerate into a chatty little essay of twenty minutes.

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This article demonstrates vividly how far things have progressed in the Netherlands in the direction of error. Yet, the Christian Reformed Church, a sister denomination of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, is principally not so very far removed from the errors spoken of in this article. The only difference, perhaps, is that (as has been true over the years) the Christian Reformed Church lags a few years behind her sister. But she is rapidly closing the gap.

The article quoted above speaks of the denial of the infallible inspiration of Scripture. Apart from the fact that the truth of creation and the flood has been consistently denied in Christian Reformed circles, the truth of inspiration is also being attacked.

In the *Standard Bearer* of December 15, 1966 I called attention in this column to the denial of creation and a universal flood made by J. K. Van Baalen in the columns of the *Reformed Journal*.

In the November, 1966 issue of the *Calvin Theological Journal* Prof. B. Van Elderen writes an article on "New Perspectives in Biblical Research". After giving a very general testimony of what he believes by the statement "The Bible is the Word of God" in which he makes no reference to infallible inspiration, he goes on to say:

The doctrine of organic inspiration maintains that God used these authors in their settings and environment with their knowledge, culture, cosmology, view of reality. We must recover these elements in order to understand their writings, and often archaeological and historical research are the means of recovery.

In other words, it is essential to define the *Sitz im Leben* of a given author. This *Sitz im Leben* should include the author's culture, education, understanding of reality and also the purpose, intention, emphasis and recipients of the document.

The same idea is set forth by Prof. John H. Stek in the same issue of the *Calvin Theological Journal* in a review of two books dealing with the subject of creation. Stek writes:

Undoubtedly Genesis 1 was written, not for a few, but for the many and, consequently for the "common man." But it was written for the "common man" of Israel at a given time in Israel's history. Its mode of

speaking is therefore, very much historically conditioned, and *far more than the Hebrew language stands between the modern reader and Genesis 1*. Three thousand years of human history, including many cultural revolutions of which the last is but the most radical intervene.

The whole point which these men are making is that Scripture was written by men and for men who had serious misconceptions and mistaken notions of many subjects. They greatly misunderstood the nature of the work of creation and had no access to modern scientific discoveries. Their writings were influenced by the times in which they lived, and the errors prevalent in their times pervaded their writings — including the writing of Scripture. Scripture must therefore be corrected by us who know so much better than they did what is right and what is wrong. But what does this do to Scripture's infallible inspiration?

The letter quoted above speaks of the fact that reprobation is being openly denied in the Netherlands. But this is being done also in the Christian Reformed Church. H. Petersma recently wrote a series of three articles in the *Reformed Journal* which were intended to be in support of the position of Prof. H. Dekker. But in these articles on the subject of "Predestination" the truth of election is grossly corrupted and the truth of reprobation openly denied. A brief quote from these articles will illustrate this.

What about God's reprobation or rejection? Does election not *logically imply* rejection? . . . Does not election really mean selection? . . . Israel's election, though sometimes misunderstood by the people themselves, ultimately meant their being called for service to the other nations. Therefore it was not a case of the other nations being forever excluded, but of God's electing Israel *on his way to the others*. Election in the biblical sense does imply service, but apparently it does not imply rejection.

The same was true of an article in the *Reformed Journal* referred to in the December 15, 1966 issue of the *Standard Bearer* in which Prof. L. Smedes all but denied the existence of hell.

The letter of these concerned members of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* speaks of the violation of the Formula of Subscription. This too is being done in this country. We called attention to an article in *The Banner* some time ago in which a Christian Reformed Church minister spoke of how the Formula of Subscription is being violated. And this violation of the Formula continues.

The article closes with a plea to fight the decision to join the World Council of Churches. Also in the Christian Reformed Church there are many who advocate membership in this antichristian organization.

I say again, the Reformed Churches here in this country are only a few steps behind their sister congregations in the Netherlands. And surely the awful errors exposed in the letter quoted will soon be prevalent in the Christian Reformed Church unless they repent and return to the faith of Scripture and the Confessions.



## QUESTION BOX—

## More Questions on Dispensationalism

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

Once more Mr. L. W. of Spokane raises further questions and offers criticisms the esteemed editor and undersigned deem worthy of answer. But as Mr. W.'s letter is rather lengthy for the Question Box, brief excerpts will be taken from it with answer made as concisely as possible. It had been said (TSB, Mar. 15, 1967, p. 287), "the historic creeds and theological systems contain nothing of" Dispensationalism. Our western reader takes exception to this: "The Calvinist theology can be compared to a tree with at least two large branches. One branch is the covenant...theology, the other is Dispensationalism." Answer: What Calvinist theology gives credence to Dispensationalism?—certainly not Calvin's (nor the Reformers'), nor Owen's (nor the Puritans'), nor Hodge's, nor Debney's, nor Vos', nor Hoeksema's.

Quoting *Bibliotheca Sacra*, which we assume is the theological journal of Dallas Theological Seminary, Jan.-Mar., 1943, pp. 136f, L. W. writes, "The covenant theology 'as a 'constitutive principle of theology'...was...not mentioned even by any of the great teachers of the reformation period itself.'" Answer: We would not expect a theological principle, as such, to be mentioned before its existence or development. That, indeed, was "definitely peculiar to the Reformed System of Doctrine" (ibid.). For it is, admittedly, a historical fact that "It is a peculiarly Reformed heritage, even more distinctively so than the doctrine of sovereign predestination. For while the latter truth is held by other than the Reformed churches, the truth of the covenant was developed exclusively by them" (*The Heidelberg Catechism*, An Exposition, VI, 130, by Rev. H. Hoeksema). There we agree. Yet the covenant receives considerable mention in Calvin's writings despite the fact that he did not treat or develop federal theology. For he was a most covenant-minded man, as is evident from his very frequent use of the term itself, being full of the covenant idea. (*Inst.*, II, X; IV, XVI). Besides, covenant doctrine in its incipency was taught by Caspar Oleivianus (d. 1587), one of the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism, in his popular tract, "The Nature of God's

Covenant of Mercy With the Elect," which was published about one hundred years before the death of Coccejus ("whom almost everyone concedes to be its (covenant theology's) original exponent..." (L.W.'s quote). So also Zacharius Ursinus, co-author of that catechism, and author of its well-known commentary, was an early Reformation exponent of covenant truth (Ursinus' *Commentary* 2nd Amer. ed., xiii, 96ff; *Creeds of Christendom*, I, 773f). Both the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession hold forth the truth of the covenant, yet say nothing of any covenant of works, and that 84 years before the Westminster Confession. Therefore "great teachers of the reformation period" made considerable mention of the covenant. But we hold the covenant doctrine and reject Dispensationalism, not because either has or has not confessional support prior to 1561, but because the former is according to Scripture, and, remember, also according to the Reformed Confessions, while the latter is repugnant to both!

We are also informed that in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, July-Sept., 1966, a review appears of *The Standard Bearer* article, April 1, 1966, *Dispensationalism*, in which the reviewer wrote, "Reading the article makes it plain that the author has read little or nothing of the current and recent literature by dispensationalists..." Answer: L.W. has made quotes from this journal which go as far back as 1943—not very "current and recent." However, copies of that journal in that period were consulted in doing the research on the *Standard Bearer's* Dispensationalism series. Thousands in this country carry almost everywhere with them a Scofield Reference Bible, so that there is still quite a current of dispensationalism moving along, a rather recent one, too, for that Bible in the same 1917 edition is still very much in evidence. With all its errors, it has never yet been withdrawn. True, by the middle of April, 1967 a new edition of this Bible is expected! on the market. But will these errors and inconsistencies of dispensationalism be therefrom eliminated? That remains to be seen.

The above reviewer is also said to have quoted from the article, *Dispensationalism*, "that a dispensation: 'is

stewardship, administration (literally, economy) and signifies not an era.'" This is not correct, for it takes out of context. The remark was not with reference to "a dispensation," as such, but referred to the word in the King James version incorrectly translated *dispensation*, which more correctly means economy, stewardship, administration, and not a period of time. The article also stated, "Dispensationalists need make no appeal for their contentions to the word translated *dispensation* in the Bible. For there it does not mean a period of time." And, "This brings us to the crux of the matter. For dispensational error lies not in holding that there are dispensations of time in sacred history. The Church has never denied that. The error lies in the fact that the Church is made a mere parenthesis in God's scheme of things..." It is plain that L.W. has not read this article where these statements appear.

He then goes on, "From the title of the article, 'Dispensationalism; An Ancient Heresy,' (sic) would it be the opinion of the Protestant Reformed Churches that Professor Pieters was a heretic?" Reference to the latter is in connection with his "use of the word 'dispensation' to indicate a period of time," to which usage there is no objection, as already shown. But where is the above title found? Does it not rather appear in large, bold type, "Dispensationalism An Ancient *Error*"? There is quite a difference between heresy and error. Nor have these articles conceived of Scofield himself as a heretic. But as to how serious an error this theory is, re-read the last sentence under the above, and correct, title.

Attention is next called to "*The Standard Bearer* for Feb. 1, 1967, p. 200, 'Dispensationalism, then produces a view of history which is man-centered.' In seeming contrast, Dr. Charles C. Ryrie..." wrote "that Dispensationalists believe that 'Scripture is not man-centered as though salvation were the main theme, but it is God-centered because His glory is the center' (*Moody Monthly*, Nov. 1965, p. 10)." Answer: It is good that Dispensationalists lay claim to theocentricity, but then they ought to be con-



sistent with it, for their theory is still man-centered, as was demonstrated in the second paragraph of the above article, the general contents of which, by the way, were not called into question, as was neither the main point of the article itself.

Again: "Were not all the other ages dispensations of grace? Of course, the Dispensationalist will answer, No (*TSB*, Feb. 15, 1967, p. 235). 'In seeming contradiction, Dr. Ryrie writes: 'The labeling of the present dispensation as that of grace has been taken by critics

to mean dispensationalism teaches there was no grace in any other age. But the charge is not true...the positive teaching of dispensational writers is that salvation is always through God's grace (*Moody Monthly*, Nov. 1965, p. 60).'" Answer: Why then does Scofield in his note on John 1:17 see "legal obedience as the condition of salvation" in the Old Testament day? Why then does he also say at I John 3:7, "the righteous man under the law became righteous by doing righteously; under grace he does righteously be-

cause he has been made righteous?" Why, further, does he say, "The Sermon on the Mount is not grace (SRB, p. 989)?" See also what he wrote at Ephes. 3:2 and Matt. 28:19. This from literature still "current and recent" but nonetheless erroneous. Then if one agrees with the Ryrie-statement, above, one ought also to agree with "Dispensationalism A Blind Legalism," (*TSB*, Feb. 15, 1967) if not for its title, then for its content's sake.

## EXAMINING ECUMENICALISM—

# The Reformed Ecumenical Synod and the Union Question

by Rev. G. Van Baren

The R.E.S., during its brief history, has treated a variety of subjects of interest to the churches in common; it is in process of study on other subjects. One subject of special concern also to us is its study on social and political organizations and the Biblical principles governing these. Particularly there is the question concerning the stand of the church with respect to unionism. I wish to point out the stand of the R.E.S. on this subject in the present article. The quotations which follow are from the "Acts of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod - 1963".

The topic of "separate Christian organizations" arose when the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands presented an overture to the Fourth Reformed Ecumenical Synod of Potchefstroom (1958). The Gereformeerde Kerken presented the following to the R.E.S.:

(3) The eventual necessity to be organized in the social sphere on our own. Regarding this problem Synod had in mind the members of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands emigrating to different countries and finding themselves in quite different circumstances as they were used to as far as social organizations are concerned. Synod does not in the least wish to convey the idea that she thinks that all organizations must fall in line with those in the Netherlands. Synod thinks it fit to investigate this problem now and rather from the view of principles concerned. (pg. 93)

The Fourth Reformed Ecumenical Synod appointed a committee to study and suggest an answer to this overture. The following was submitted and adopted by this R.E.S., and this forms the basis of a report presented to the R.E.S. of Grand Rapids in 1963:

Conscious of both the scope and profundity of the problems appertaining to separate social and political organizations, your committee recommends that the Ecumenical Synod appoint an international study committee instructing them to make a thorough investigation concerning the Biblical principles involved and regarding the application of these principles in practice, and to report to the following Ecumenical Synod.

Since it yet remains desirable to indicate some guiding principles, tentatively your committee also recommends:

That this Ecumenical Synod declares that it is not at all imperative for Christians, and especially for emigrants, who in their Homeland were separately organized, but now live under entirely new and different circumstances, always to establish such organizations;

That the obligation to organize in this manner lies interwoven with the prevailing state of society as a whole and/or local circumstances. In the event that the antithesis between the Kingdom of Light and that of darkness in any society or section of it is already evident or in case the Christian is hampered by the so-called neutrality of Positivism, then he, for the sake of the maintenance of the foundations of a Christian society as such and its development, is called to organize separately. This should, however, always take place in a clear realization of the fact that isolation is never an end in itself, but should be designed to serve God and one's neighbour. (pp. 94-95)

As a result of the above decision, a very lengthy report was presented to the R.E.S. of 1963 which met in Grand Rapids. This report is included in the Acts of that Synod, pages 93-155. The report is a summary of the labor movement in the Netherlands, especially the Christian labor movement, and the action of the Reformed Church with respect to that movement.



There is also a similar summary of the labor movement of the United States and the basic decisions of the Christian Reformed Church pertaining to that movement. The report, finally, contains recommendations that the R.E.S. adopt certain "principles" which govern membership in political and social organizations. These recommendations were revised by the R.E.S. itself and were then adopted as presented below.

#### DECISIONS OF THE R.E.S. RE MEMBERSHIP IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

The R.E.S. took action on several points, some of which were disputed and questioned by a minority at the meeting.

##### Preamble:

As it is the calling of the church to let the light of the prophetic Word, entrusted to her, shine upon all spheres of life, Synod deems it desirable to formulate some directives regarding separate Christian organizations in the social and political fields. Therefore Synod declares:

1. Believers should reflect individually, in groups, and in organizations on their responsibility in the political and social fields and on the manner in which this responsibility can be discharged.

##### Ground:

The church's confession and proclamation of the Kingship of Christ in all phases of life demands that believers reflect on the manner in which they are to discharge their duties in the social and political fields. Such reflection is demanded more and more in this age of constantly increasing organization of man in all kinds of alliances. (p. 55)

This particular point is very general and therefore, I suppose, would be acceptable to most people. No doubt but that believers ought to "reflect" upon their responsibility on the political and social spheres. It should have been emphasized that this "reflection" must be in harmony with Scripture and the confessions of the Reformed churches. Too often it is the case that even the believer, in his "reflections," considers that which can best serve himself. Yet the point is well-made: the believer ought to consider and discuss the question of his calling in this evil world. It is a good subject for consideration on Sunday-evening visits as well as in societies.

2. Although it is not possible for Synod to say that Christians must always organize on a separate basis in the social and political fields, there exists a need for greater stress on considering concerted Christian action in the above-mentioned fields.

##### Grounds:

a. It is the duty of the church to preach the full counsel of God, including the principles of Christian behavior in the social and political fields and not the function of the church to prescribe the details of what is or what is not Christian behavior in the social and political fields.

b. Modern developments of unchristian activity in the social, economic and political fields in which ruthless power often seems the only norm that reigns, make the question of establishing and/or joining Christian organizations a matter of great importance.

In this resolution the R.E.S. suggests the advisability of organizing separate Christian organizations in the social and political fields. The R.E.S. is not ready to say that this must always be done — though it appears rather inclined to say this nevertheless. This resolution is also worthy of our study and consideration. It is very brief and does not consider the problems which arise within certain particular areas. The next resolution further elaborates on the subject of separate organizations.

3. In the social and political fields Christians should promote the one true justice and righteousness, taught in the Word of God, and should be encouraged to organize to that end whatever and whenever it is possible.

##### Grounds:

a. It is God's will, as revealed in His Word and testified by His Spirit in our hearts, that justice and righteousness be established in society. (Cf. Jer. 22:3; Isa. 1:17; Ps. 15:1, 2; Isa. 32:17; 33:15-17; Phil. 1:11; I John 2:29; 3:7, 10).

b. Of all people, Christians should be the most sensitive to injustice and unrighteousness. Although the individual Christian can and should witness against these, in the increasingly complex and massive organization of society, it would seem that the Christian witness can be made more effective through Christian organizations. It should be noted that the possibility of effective Christian social and political organizations will depend to a considerable extent on the prevailing state of society as a whole and/or of local circumstances. (pp. 227-228)

From the minutes of the R.E.S. meeting, one concludes that there was a measure of opposition to the strong insistence on establishing *separate* Christian political and social organizations. In the second resolution above, an amendment was made and carried to elide the word "separate" from the original proposal where it had been placed in the last part of the second ground: "...and/or joining separate Christian organizations...." In the third resolution above, there was an amendment to change ground b. to read: "...in the increasingly complex and massive organization of society, the Christian witness can be made more effective *through organization*, and sometimes most effective through separate Christian social and political organizations. It should be noted...." This amendment failed. But note the deliberate intent to water down the original resolution. The amendment would have suggested that the Christian would be obliged to enter into *any* organization in order to make his Christian witness "more effective." It would have not merely condoned but even approved of membership within the worldly unions. There is no indication which delegate from which denomination suggested such an amendment. There is a note, however, that Prof. H. Stob of the Christian Reformed Church registered his dissent from recommendations 3 and 4. (p. 58). He, evidently, did not consider this to be a proper resolution (as it was passed) to guide the churches. I expect to treat this further in the next article, D.V.



## TRYING THE SPIRITS—

# Dispensationalism and the Two Israels

by Rev. R. C. Harbach

The Holy Scripture provides for a very clear and plain interpretation of itself. Difficulty, however, will arise if we do not observe that there are words and terms employed in Scripture which have variant shades of meaning. It may not therefore be insisted that each word in every instance of its occurrence has the same single meaning. Such a method of interpretation could easily produce false doctrine. Error would obtain, for example, if we invariably referred the word "flesh" to the physical body. Objectionable it would be also to translate the N.T. word "baptize" in every one of its instances in such a way as to express any mode of baptism. More than one false doctrine, but especially a false view of the atonement, will be the result of translating the word "world" in every place it is found as meaning the whole human race of all men without exception. One must certainly see that the word "repentance" does not always mean a true saving repentance (cp. Mt. 27:3). Modern mass "evangelism" is worse than superficial in not marking the difference between the natural "believing" of John 12:42, 43 and the spiritual believing of Rom. 10:10. It is therefore of the greatest importance to maintain the biblical distinction between the carnal "seed" and the spiritual seed, between the natural or national "Israel" and the true Israel.

If a man insists that he interprets the Bible not only strictly "literally," but always with the same uniform meaning throughout for each oft-appearing word, he cannot possibly understand the seven terms noted above. The entire Bible will never make sense to him, nor anything else he may read. Atheists, almost to a man self-styled "intellectuals," have come up with some of the most puerile allegations that the Bible contradicts itself. Believing that the Bible is the infallible Word of God, inerrant, verbally inspired, accurate and absolutely trustworthy, we unhesitatingly maintain that there are no contradictions in the Bible, real or apparent. Nor will the following references give any trouble to anyone believing the self-consistency of Scripture. We do read that "Saul inquired of the Lord" (I Sam. 28:6) and we also read that Saul died because "he inquired not of the Lord" (I Chron. 10:13, 14). But both statements are true! It is said that "the Lord is far from the wicked" (Prov. 15:29) and also that the Lord "is not far from every one of us." (Acts 17:27) But if this causes the reader any difficulty, he, as to knowledge of Scripture, must be a novice. In

Rom. 10:13 the apostle wrote, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," while in Prov. 1:28 it is stated, "Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me." "The pure in heart shall see God." (Mt. 5:8) How does this compare with "whom no man hath seen nor can see"? (I Tim. 6:16) We point out these differences in order to emphasize the need for a little careful distinguishing thought in interpreting Scripture.

Now to further illustrate the biblical distinction of the scriptural term "Israel," we have the injunction, "Behold *Israel* after the flesh." (I Cor. 10:18) Is it not rather obvious, even without your checking on the context of this passage, that to speak of "Israel after the flesh" is to distinguish them from Israel after the spirit, that is, the spiritual and regenerated Israel? The "Israel after the flesh" were "Jews by nature," (Gal. 2:15) the natural Israel, the natural seed of Abraham. They are in contrast to the *spiritual* Israel, the *Israel of God*. (Gal. 6:16) The latter are believers, those born from above, whether from Jews or Gentiles, and in this dispensation at least are Christians! Therefore "Israel" in Scripture will be identified by the context, so that it must be observed how Scripture qualifies the term. Then Scripture distinguishes the spiritual Israel and a mere natural Israel, not a "heavenly" as over against a mere "earthly" people.

The term *Israel* then is not limited exclusively to natural Jews, neither the phrase "the children of Abraham." Who *are* the latter? "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham!" (Gal. 3:7) The children of a person resemble that person, so that "the children of God" are like God, the "children of the wicked one" are in the image of the devil in character and conduct, while "the children of Abraham" resemble him and imitate his faith. Included under the designation "the children of Abraham" are therefore all true Christians. Mere Jews never were "Abraham's children," as Jesus firmly maintained. (Jn. 8:39) For true, spiritual children of Abraham "walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham." (Rom. 4:12) But the Jews Jesus reprimanded neither did the works of Abraham nor walked in the steps of his faith. According to Jesus, they only *ipso facto* proved themselves *not* the children of Abraham. But whether Jew or Gentile, anyone belonging to Christ is "Abraham's seed."



(Gal. 3:29) The error that the Galatian church had to resist was that of the Judaizers, false teachers, who taught that only Jews or proselyted, circumcized Gentiles were "children of Abraham." These alone could expect to partake of his blessing. But "they which be of *faith* are blessed with faithful Abraham," (3:9) none else!

The superficial and false distinction that the Jews were an "earthly" people, while the church is a "heavenly" people is supposed to be based on texts like Gen. 13:16 and 15:5. Because it is said that Abraham's seed should be multiplied "as the *dust* of the earth," therefore the earthly seed of natural Jews is meant, whereas where it is said his seed should be in number as the *stars* of heaven, the church is meant. "Dust" denotes an earthly people, but "stars" denotes a heavenly. The descriptions "dust" and "stars" are said to connote quite a difference. What then would be the difference between "dust" and "sand"? For in I Kings 4:20, "Judah and Israel were many as the *sand* which is by the sea in multitude." If the "stars" indicate a heavenly seed, especially denoting the church in contradistinction to natural Jews, then why do the "stars" refer to earthly Israel in Deut. 1:10; 10:22; 28:62? Why doesn't the writer of I Chronicles maintain this "distinction"? For he says that "the Lord had said He would increase *Israel* (the nation of Israel) like to the *stars* of the heavens," (27:23) which is here said to have been accomplished in David's reign. From this it may be seen that the term "stars" does not necessarily indicate a *heavenly* seed. When we then read, "I will multiply thy seed as the *stars* of the heaven, and as the *sand* which is upon the seashore," (Gn. 22:17) two different seeds, a spiritual and a natural, are *not* in view. For "stars" denote Jews as much as "dust" or "sand".

"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." (Rom. 9:6) What Paul is plainly saying here is that they are not all *spiritual* Israel who are of natural Israel. The apostle at this point is discussing God's sovereign rejection of the Jews and His calling of the Gentiles — this in keeping with His predetermination to cast off the Jewish nation as such (so long before foretold, Isa. 65:15; and again by Christ, Mt. 21:43) and to preserve a spiritual remnant, particularly from out of the Gentiles. This was a very sore spot with the Jews, since they mistakenly supposed that God's promises of the old covenant were made to all the natural seed of Israel, exclusively to those circumcized and made a visible part of the nation. Their attitude was, "We have Abraham to our father," (Mt. 3:9) although

by John they had been strictly warned not to assume that. Paul refutes this error. Dispensationalism reveals how Judaistic it is in putting it back into circulation.

What Paul teaches, in fact, all Scripture teaches, is that the promises of God were *never* made to mere natural men, men in the flesh, but rather men in the spirit — regenerated men. The distinction of the Word of God is not that of two kinds of people, an earthly people and a heavenly people both of which shall be saved and share in the kingdom of Christ, but of two kinds of Israelites, a carnal Israel, born after the flesh, and a spiritual Israel, born by promise, the latter alone "the children of the promise." (Rom. 9:8; Gal. 4:23) Many mere Jews are not God's children at all, (Jn. 8:42,44) whereas many Gentiles by nature have been made fellow-citizens *with* the saints — what saints? Old Testament saints! for *they* are "blessed *with* faithful Abraham." (Gal. 3:9)

When Paul maintains "We are *the Circumcision*, which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:3) he means that mere natural Israel was only a carnal circumcision, was not, never was the spiritual circumcision. Those of the mere natural circumcision Paul warns against, in the words, "Beware of the concision." That is what they, mere natural Jews are, *the concision*, the Mutilation. The contrast is between the carnal Israel, the Mutilation, and the Circumcision, the Israel of God.

Circumcision was the sign of the old covenant, the meaning of which was regeneration. "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of *your heart*, and be no more stiffnecked." (Dt. 10:16) That is a *command*, but if the Lord will only *promise*, He may command what He will and it shall be done! For every command there *is* a promise. "The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God." (Dt. 30:6) The true meaning of circumcision is the purifying of the heart, i.e., regeneration. It signifies a work accomplished objectively in the crucifixion of Christ, in which all Christians are involved and identified with Christ, and subjectively a work of grace in the heart of the Christian in which he is given a new heart. (Col. 2:11; Gal. 5:24; Ezek. 36:26)

NOTE: In the article in this department in the April 1 issue, page 299, 13th line from the bottom in the first column, the words, "In contrast to 'the new Jerusalem,' ...." should read: "In contrast to 'the now Jerusalem' ...."

It is God that worketh in you to will and to do. And He does so in the behalf of His own good pleasure, which in the ultimate sense means that the high and only purpose of our salvation is the glory of His grace in the beloved, even as it has its source in eternal election. Of Him, and through Him, and unto Him is all our salvation!

- H. Hoeksema, "The Wonder of Grace," p. 88



FROM HOLY WRIT—

# The Book of Hebrews

by Rev. G. Lubbers

## CHRIST LIKEWISE TOOK PART OF THE FLESH AND BLOOD OF THE CHILDREN - Hebrews 2:14 (continued)

For it ought to be noticed most carefully that in the original Greek a distinction is made between our partaking of the blood and flesh, and Christ's partaking of the same. The emphasis falls here on Christ's partaking of the same blood and flesh in which we are partakers. The emphasis falls on his act, his willing participation of our human nature. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Thus we read in John 1:14. And that is here emphasized by the writer. This emphasis is evident from the different verbs and the different tenses employed by the writer. With respect to our sharing in blood and flesh the writer employs the verb "*kekoinooneken*." The term here "marks the common nature ever shared among men as long as the race lasts (Westcott)." The perfect tense indicates a completed state up to the present moment. Ever since the time of our creation in Adam we are "all out of one blood!" Thus Paul says in his address on Mars Hill "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times afore appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." (Acts 17:26) However, in respect to the Son of God the writer uses a verb which emphasizes "the unique fact of the Incarnation as a voluntary acceptance of humanity." This is also crystal clear from the fact tense which the writer here employs in reference to Christ's voluntary acceptance of our human nature. (1).

Our Savior took part in the blood and flesh which we shared with the entire human race. He, therefore, truly became real man. He became like unto us in all things, sin excepted! Yet, he has a unique place in the human race. He is of the seed of Abraham as far as the flesh is concerned. (II Timothy 2:8) He was not born in any place. He is the end of the great Genealogical line of the Old Testament Scriptures. (Matthew 1:2-17) Thus was the birth (genesis) of Jesus Christ. His is really the genealogy of the human race, the tree of mankind. The dead branches may be cut out or fall off, but the human race is saved in him. Man is remembered in Him in such a way that God sets His glory above the heavens. It is from the vantage point that the gospel will be preached by Christ, and all

God's good-pleasure is in him, that we have the genealogy in Luke 3:21-38. Wherefore the line is traced from Christ back to Adam, the son of God. Christ thus came in the very center, the "navel" of humanity. It is confusing to speak of Christ having a "general human nature," and to say that Christ had a "central human nature" must not be misunderstood. The fact is that he had a *real* human nature out of the line from the first Adam to the last Adam. Thus he came and "took part" in the blood and flesh of the "children," the children of adoption, the remnant according to election of grace! Intrinsically the human nature of Christ was no different from any other man, born from Adam. However, since he is the eternal Son of God, he came "into this world" and thus took part in the flesh and blood as this was shared by the children with all mankind. But he came to stand at the head of the children. He came to stand within the smaller circle of the church, which was within the larger circle of mankind. Thus he occupies the central place in the human race, and by death thus exalts man to the pinnacle of the glory of the heavenly!

The emphasis seems to fall here on "blood" of the children as is evident from the order "blood and flesh" instead of "flesh and blood." No, he did not come merely to be a blood brother. He came to be the First-born among many brethren, to be exalted at the right hand of God in the way of suffering and death. Hence, he must die. His blood must be shed at Calvary. But he must, therefore, partake of the "blood" of the brethren. Only thus can he bring the many sons to glory. He is not interested in the "blood and flesh" except that the "brethren" who are called the "children" are sharers in the same. And thus he seals with his blood that he is not ashamed to call these "children" his brethren!

## CHRIST DESTROYS THE DEVIL THROUGH DEATH Hebrews 2:14b

The Devil is viewed in this passage by the writer as having great power. There are four words which are translated "power" in the KJV of the Bible. There is the term "*dunamis*" which means really: ability, while the term *exousia* emphasizes the idea of authority. Then there is the term which is translated power



which really means force. The last term is that of power which really means strength. This is the Greek term *kratos*. It means that things are in the *grip* of one who has such power. This is a power connected with death. It means to have the power of death. In this capacity the Devil, the accuser of the brethren, must be destroyed. And to bring about this destruction Christ must become most closely associated with the blood and flesh of the children, and through death destroy the Devil, who has the power of death. Christ must wrench this power from his hand, and claim the keys of death and of hell, so that he can say fear not, I am he that was dead, and, behold, I am alive forever more! (Revelation 1:17, 18)

That which gives the Devil this power of death is exactly that the children, by nature, are guilty, dead in trespasses and sins. The Devil is the *Diabolos*, the accuser, the calumniator. He is a formidable adversary. He has many snares in which he captivates men. (I Peter 5:8; I Timothy 3:7; II Timothy 2:26) He accuses the saints day and night before our God. (Revelation 12:10) And he has a good legal basis to make his accusations. We are indeed guilty of death; Satan can claim us legally as we are fallen in Adam and as we are in our actual sins. Besides, by his hellish assaults he can and does terrify the guilty sinner. We have but to look at the fear of all men outside of Christ, their superstition, their idolatry, which are all motivated by the fear of death and hell. It is ever an attempt to flee from the wrath to come. And the "children" are by nature one with the mass of the damned, the *massa damnati*. They are not only partakers, sharers in the blood and flesh of the damned, but they are equally sharers in the horrible wrath of God, and open to the powerful hold which the Devil has in their life and accusing conscience. No man can shake off this power, this grip of the Devil!

Hence, the Devil must be destroyed. The term in the Greek is *kata geeseei*, and it means: to make of non effect. When the Devil is destroyed he is not thereby annihilated; he continues to exist, but his power and his works are destroyed. They are loosed, dissolved of their effectiveness. He must no longer be able to terrify in our conscience before the law of God, nor must he be able to bring a formal charge any more against us in the Tribunal of God. The Lord God Almighty must rebuke him, since the hand-writing which was against us has been nailed to the Cross, and thereby Satan has been made an open shame, and has been publicly set forth as stripped of all his power when Christ said: it is finished! At that moment the Devil was destroyed, and Christ preached peace to them that are near and far. The Devil had nothing in him. (Colossians 2:14, 15; John 19:30; John 14:27, 30; Ephesians 2:14, 17)

Oh, what a deliverance it is to be no longer in the grip and power of this accuser, this murderer of man. For, let it not be forgotten, the saints, the "children" were all their lifetime subject to the fear of death. It is the roof, the fear of fears, to be filled with the fear of death. The writer uses a phrase which expresses that this fear is constant, it is something which dogs

the steps of the "children" as they are by nature, to wit, as they are children of wrath even as the others. Oh, sin and the Devil are such horrible realities. But the Cross of Christ is such that death is swallowed up in victory, and the Devil has been made a harmless foe! For the term "to deliver" in the Greek is a verb which refers to a being set free legally. (Luke 12:58) On the statute books of God and before the great white throne we are set free by Christ's death, so that the Devil is destroyed. Justice has been satisfied, the just demand of the law is fulfilled in us. (Romans 8:4) Hence, we cease to be debtors to the law to fulfil sin and the lusts of the flesh. The children have a right to life and glory! (Romans 5:19)

#### A MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST IN THE THINGS PERTAINING TO GOD - Hebrews 2:17, 18

Here we see the Son in our human nature in all his official capacity set before us. He is a "High Priest." He brings the sacrifice. He is the only one who can enter into the holy of holies before God. He is the appointed one before men. He has all the qualifications as the Mediator. He is in all things "like unto the brethren." No, he is not ashamed to acknowledge them as brethren, not even in the deepest reproach and suffering of hell. He "ought" to be made like unto the brethren, as Mediator and High Priest he can be nothing less. "The requirement lay in the personal relationship itself." (Westcott)

The first and chief requirement is that he be "a merciful" High Priest. The Greek text really says that he must "become" such a one. In every step of the way of his suffering, his *Via Dolorosa*, the element of mercy must become manifested. He is the manifestation and author of the rich mercy of God. Mercy reaches each of the sons in their helplessness. It is the mercy-seat where the blood of sprinkling was sprinkled. Yes, he is also "faithful." He is faithful in his calling to God, and he is trustworthy for all who place their trust in him. (2) Thus he brings the propitious sacrifice for the sins of the people. Yes, thus he is able to succour us in our needs. He understands the temptations of the saints, of the children. He has met the Tempter and, therefore, is able to understand. We need nothing more, and we need no one besides him. He is the perfect Savior, greater than all.

(1) "*kekoinooneeken...meteschen* are sharers in...He partook of...Vulg.: *communicaverunt (pueri)...participavit*; O.L. *participes sunt...paticops factus*. The Syr. makes no difference between the words which describe the participation in humanity on the part of man and of the Son of man. Yet they present different ideas. *Kekoinooneeke* marks the common nature ever shared among men as long as the race lasts; *meteschen* expresses the unique fact of the Incarnation as a voluntary acceptance of humanity...." The Epistle to the Hebrews, page 52, B. F. Westcott.

(2) "The verb *gignesthai* (become G.L.) suggests the notion of a result reached through the action of that which we regard as a law. Compare 1:4; 6:4, 12; 7:18, 26 etc." (Idem, page 57)



## THE CHURCH AT WORSHIP—

# The Office of the Elder

by Rev. G. Vanden Berg

(Treating the Form for the Ordination of Elders)

Of the various ordination forms used in our churches, the form for the ordination of elders and deacons is undoubtedly the most familiar to us. This stems from the fact that this form is read in the assembly of public worship at least once a year. Far less frequently is the form for the ordination of ministers read, and, in almost all of our churches, occasion has never arisen for the form for the ordination of missionaries to be read.

In spite of the frequency that the form for ordaining elders and deacons in the church is used, we dare to say that its content is not known well enough to most of us, and, further, that for all of us a more intimate acquaintance with this form is a thing to be desired. This is necessitated by several considerations:

First, there is undeniable evidence that these offices in the church of Christ have lost some of their rightful prestige and, by our present generation, are not esteemed as highly as they were in former times and as they ought to be according to the Word of God. Although several factors may be cited as contributing to this sad reality, the fact is that in part at least it stems from a lack of understanding the spiritual character and function of these offices as outlined in this liturgical form.

Secondly, the understanding of these forms by the congregation has an inevitable effect upon the selection of men by the church to fill these offices. If the members of the church are ignorant of the truth which is set forth in the ordination form, it stands to reason that such a church is going to be governed by ulterior reasons in their selection of men to fill the offices. On the other hand however, if there is a real, intimate and conscious knowledge of the truth concerning the offices of Christ's church, this knowledge will impel the church to seek men for the office who are best qualified according to the demands of the office, whether that be of elder or deacon.

Thirdly, a knowledge of the offices of Christ's church is indispensable for the proper maintenance of that important spiritual relationship that must prevail between members and office bearers for the spiritual health and well being of the church itself. No church can prosper in the true sense of the word if this relationship is neglected, and this stems from the fact that Christ Himself has ordained men in His church for "the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4:12, 13)

This is attained only in the way of and through the means which Christ has ordained and, therefore, it is most imperative that we give good heed to the things that pertain to that ordination. With this then in mind we purpose to discuss the Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons.

There is only one Form for this double purpose, and the practical reason for this is to be found in the fact that in most cases elders and deacons are ordained in their respective offices in the church at the same time. By combining these two the necessity of reading two separate forms on the occasion is avoided, and, in isolated instances where just one of the aforementioned offices is to be filled, the problem is readily solved by reading only that part of the Form that is applicable to the particular office. This is easily done since the Form is divided into two distinct parts, the first dealing with the office of elders and the second with that of deacons. This division we will also follow in our discussion of this Form, dealing first with the office of Elder and later that of Deacon.

Before we give attention to the description of the office of the Elder as found in the form of ordination, note is to be taken of that which some of our other Confessions have to say on this matter.

Article 16 of our Church Order, speaking of the office of the Ministry of the Word, states: "...with the Elders, to exercise church discipline and to see to it that everything is done decently and in good order."

A further description of this office is found in Article 23 of the Church Order which reads:

"The office of the Elders, in addition to what was said in Article 16 to be their duty in common with the Minister of the Word, is to take heed that the Ministers, together with their fellow-Elders and the Deacons, faithfully discharge their office, and both before and after the Lord's Supper, as time and circumstances may demand, for the edification of the churches to visit the families of the Congregation, in order particularly to comfort and instruct the members, and also to exhort others in respect to the Christian Religion."

Finally, Article 31 of the Belgic Confession, speaking of the offices of the Ministry, of Elders and of Deacons together, contains the following as applied to the office we are discussing: "...ought to be chosen to their respective offices by a lawful election by the Church.... must take heed not to intrude themselves by indecent means....and everyone ought to esteem them very highly for their work's sake and be at peace with them without murmuring, strife or contention, as much as possible."

In these various quotations both the function and



dignity of this holy office in the Church of Christ is stressed. It is well that this be kept in mind. The elder who takes his calling seriously must realize that the proper dignity of the office can be preserved only in the way of the faithful execution of the various mandates of Christ that pertain to the function of the office. If the latter are permitted to fall into disuse or in various ways neglected, the former is sure to go. It is not therefore the elder alone that must be zealously concerned about his office, but the entire church must understand thoroughly her confession and the Form of Installation and through insistence upon maintaining all that is contained therein preserve the dignity of the office. This is sorely needed in the church today.

To the various functions of the office of elders which are enumerated in the quotations we have given, we shall refer again in connection with the description of the office in the Form of Ordination. Space does not permit us now to quote all that is said in that Form about this office. Neither is that necessary now since we hope to discuss these various duties later. It may suffice for the present to but briefly present the skeleton of the Ordination Form as it concerns the office of elders. The Form begins by making a distinction between two types of elders as found in the Church of Jesus Christ. Since the term "elder," according to the Form signifies a person who is placed in an honorable office of government over others, this means that in the Church some are placed in such an office in the capacity of teachers, while others are rulers. There are teaching and ruling elders. Our concern at present is not with the former who are the ministers of the Word but with the latter. Even here, however, we must note that this distinction cannot be absolutely maintained, for even as we saw before, "it is the duty of the ministers of the Word, (with the elders) to keep the Church in good discipline, and to govern it in such a manner as the Lord hath ordained.....", so likewise must the elders in their governing the Church exercise themselves in the capacity of teachers. The Form stresses the closeness of the two offices, the interdependence of the one upon the other, and together the ministers and elders form a body or assembly, the council (consistory?) of the church.

In three separate paragraphs the Form of Ordination then describes the actual tasks of the elders of the church. Three terms may be used here, and under these headings we will proceed to discuss this office later. Elders are to be overseers, counselors and disciplinarians. Under the first heading they are to "look whether everyone properly deports himself in confession and conversation." The elder is one who

must and who does look after the souls of the sheep of Christ. They must watch over the flock, for they, as well as the ministers of the Word, are shepherds. This is indeed a most serious phase of their calling that may not be left entirely to the minister but must be faithfully executed by the elders.

As counselors in the church of Jesus Christ the elders must "be assistant with their good counsel and advice, to the ministers of the Word, yea, also to serve all Christians with advice and consolation." The ruling elders are also ministers of the Word and ministers of mercy. This function too is very essential to "the welfare and good order of the Church" and if this aspect of the holy calling is neglected, it can only be with dire consequences for the whole church. The elders of Christ's Church are not lords and tyrants who issue irrevocable decrees and make demanding impositions upon the sheep of the flock, driving them into submission with strong coercion, but they must be patient teachers who "in all occurrences which relate to the welfare and good order of the Church" are ready and willing to demonstrate in the light of God's own Word the soundness of the Consistory's judgment and the truth on which the counsel given is based. The significance of this aspect of the elder's calling may never be minimized. The successful enactment of this function of the elders will contribute, as much or more than any other work, to the welfare and good order of the congregation. Obvious it should then also be that elders must be well versed and skilled in the use of Scriptures.

The Form of Ordination concludes the section dealing with the office of the elders with the observation that as disciplinarians the elders must "have regard to the doctrine and conversation of the ministers of the Word." They must exercise supervision over the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. In doing this they must prevent the infiltration of "strange doctrines" and guard the Lord's heritage with all diligence against "wolves." To do this necessitates that they "diligently search the Word of God, and continually be meditating on the mysteries of faith."

This, in brief, we may expect from the elders of the Church. What a glorious and dignified office this is! Further implications of these things we hope, D.V., to discuss in future articles, but let us keep in mind that we may never desire our elders to be, as elders, in any way other than designated in this Form of Ordination. To this task alone they are appointed and called in their ordination and we pray to God that He will qualify them by His Spirit and grace unto the performance of this work. This then is good and conducive to the edification of His Church.

#### CALL TO SYNOD

By decision of the last Synod, the Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of 1580 Ferndale S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan notifies the churches that the 1967 Synod will convene on Wednesday, June 7, 9:00 a.m. in the above mentioned church, D.V.

The pre-synodical service will be held on Tuesday, June 6, at 8:00 p.m. at Hope Church. Rev. G. Van Baren is scheduled to deliver the sermon. Synodical

delegates are requested to gather with the consistory before the service.

Those in need of lodging are asked to contact Dewey Engelsma, 1310 Kenowa S.W., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504; telephone 453-2578.

Consistory of Hope Protestant  
Reformed Church  
Rev. J. L. Kortering, President  
Dewey Engelsma, Clerk



**TEACHERS**

Adams Street Christian School has need for six teachers for the 1967-68 school year. Four needed in lower grades, two in Junior High. Half day basis available for some grades. If interested, or for further details, call collect to:

Mr. Edward Ophoff  
Phone CH 3-5874  
1107 Boston St., S.E.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

**NOTICE**

The Protestant Reformed Christian School of South Holland, Illinois, is in need of a teacher in the lower room, to teach in grades 1 through 3. Please submit applications to:

Mr. Gise Van Baren  
16057 School Street  
South Holland, Illinois 60473

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Ladies Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses its sincere sympathy

to one of its members, Mrs. Harry Zwak, in the loss of her sister

MRS. MARY BLUMENSTEIN

May the Lord comfort her and grant her the assurance that the Lord, Who directs all our way, "causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose". Rom. 8:28.

Mrs. Gerald Vander Kooy, Sec'y.

**RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY**

The Congregation of the Protestant Reformed Church of Redlands wishes to express its most sincere and heartfelt sympathy to Mrs. Cornelius Hanko and her family in the loss of her father,

ARIE GRIFFIOEN

May our Covenant God comfort the family by His Almighty Word and Spirit, knowing our loss is his gain in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life.

Yours in the Lord,  
The Congregation of Redlands  
William Feenstra, Clerk

**NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES—**

Our South Holland Church has called Rev. D. Engelsma, of Loveland, to be their pastor. Hull's consistory has named the following trio, from which the congregation shall choose one: Revs. R. C. Harbach, D. Engelsma, and G. Lubbers.

\* \* \*

*Do you know* that Bibles and Psalters are sorely needed by the Protestant Reformed people in Jamaica? If you have a used (or new) Bible or Psalter to spare, the Mission Board would like you to send it to Rev. G. Lubbers, who has been delegated to care for this need. His address: 2612 Central Ave., S.W., Wyoming, Mich. 49509.

\* \* \*

Because of the classical reports which follow below, our regular news for this issue is severely abbreviated.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.

Report of the Meeting of Classis West  
Held on March 15, 16, 1967 in  
South Holland, Illinois

All twelve churches in the West were represented at the meeting of Classis West held in South Holland, Illinois on March 15 and 16. Rev. G. Vanden Berg presided over this meeting.

Classis made several decisions in regard to the vacancies in the West.

1) Classis adopted a schedule of classical appointments: ISABEL & FORBES: April 2, 9, 16 - R. Decker; April 23, 30 May 7 - D. Engelsma; July 2, 9, 16 - G. Vanden Berg; August 6, 13, 20 - G. Lanting; September 10, 17 24 - B. Woudenberg. PELLA: May - G. Lanting; June - D. Engelsma; July - R. Decker; September - G. Vanden Berg.

2) It requested Classis East to assist Classis West by supplying Randolph and South Holland, by supplying Hull with preaching, two Sundays a month, and by filling the pulpits of Isabel and Forbes (in conjunction) three Sundays in June.

3) On the condition that Classis East agree, Classis West decided to overture Synod to schedule appointments to the vacant churches from now on. The reasons for this decision are the large number of vacancies and the small number of ministers in the West and the



fact that the present method of setting up appointments has resulted in constant revising of adopted schedules.

4) It decided to begin a library of taped sermons for use in the vacant churches and in the other churches when their ministers are on classical appointments. We asked South Holland's consistory to take charge of this project.

5) Hull was given permission to call ministers again whom they have called within the year.

6) The ministers in the West again were given the task of composing reading sermons for use in the vacant churches.

7) Classis appointed Rev. Lanting counselor of Forbes and Rev. Engelsma counselor of South Holland.

Four appeals against decisions of the South Holland consistory and pertaining to actions of the South Holland School Board and School Association were judged by Classis to be illegally before the Classis because the matters were not finished in the minor assembly. Classis also noted that the error of treating a School Board and a School Association as if they were under the jurisdiction of a consistory was made in three of the appeals and in the treatment of the protests by the consistory.

Classis gave a document from the Oak Lawn School Board to a committee for study and for advice at the next meeting of Classis. This document contained an objection to the accuracy of a report given Classis in September, 1966, by a former committee of Classis.

Oak Lawn's consistory had a protest against decisions of the past Synod on the Agenda. They asked Classis to forward the protest to Synod - which Classis did - and to express agreement with the protest. Classis expressed that it could not agree with Oak Lawn that memorials in the name of a man are principally wrong. But it did express that it agreed with Oak Lawn in their contention that their overture to Synod in 1966 was properly before that body and that Synod therefore erred in rejecting it.

The voting done by Classis resulted in the following:

1) Delegates to Synod:

*Ministers*

<i>Primi</i>	<i>Secundi</i>
D. Engelsma	R. Decker
C. Hanko	
G. Lanting	B. Woudenberg
G. Vanden Berg	

*Elders*

<i>Primi</i>	<i>Secundi</i>
J. Blankespoor	G. Broekhouse
W. Feenstra	G. Gunnink
E. Hauck	H. Miersma
C. Vander Molen	A. Vanden Top

2) Classical Committee: Rev. G. Lanting and Elder G. Hoekstra.

3) Ass't Stated Clerk: Rev. R. Decker.

4) Church Visitors: Rev. C. Hanko and Rev. G. Lanting.

5) Delegates ad examina: *Primus*: Rev. D. Engelsma; *Secundi*: Rev. G. Lanting and Rev. B. Woudenberg.

This meeting of Classis witnessed the arrival in Classis West of Rev. G. Lanting and the departure to Classis East of Rev. J. Kortering and Rev. J. Heys.

Rev. Heys being present, Classis expressed to him its appreciation for his work in the past twelve years and its prayer that God bless him also in his new sphere of labor. Rev. Heys bade farewell to the Classis, as Rev. Kortering did also - by letter.

The next meeting of Classis West is scheduled to be held in Loveland, Colorado.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk  
Classis West of the Protestant  
Reformed Churches

Report of Classis East

April 5, 1967

at Southeast Church

Rev. M. Schipper, chairman of the last classical meeting, led in the opening devotions, and after the credentials were accepted he declared the classis properly constituted.

Rev. G. Van Baren then presided, while Rev. Schipper recorded the minutes.

All the churches were represented by two delegates each, and classis finished its work shortly after the noon dinner.

The routine reports of the Stated Clerk and the Classical Committee were filed for information. The Classical Committee was again mandated to come to the next classis with a Constitution.

The brethren H. Ophoff and G. Holstege were appointed to serve on the Finance Committee.

Classis West requested our classis to supply Randolph, South Holland, Hull, and the Dakota churches with classical appointments. Classis acceded to this request, appointed the committee; Rev. J. Kortering, and Elders H. Vander Kolk and R. Pastoor to make proposed schedule, which was later adopted as follows:

*Randolph*: Apr. 16 - H. Veldman, Apr. 23 - G. Van Baren, May 7 - R. C. Harbach, May 21 - J. Kortering, May 28 - M. Schipper, June 11 - R. C. Harbach, June 25 - G. Van Baren, July 2 - J. Heys, July 9 - J. Kortering.

*South Holland*: Apr. 30 - J. Kortering, May 7 - G. Lubbers, May 14 - G. Van Baren, May 21 - R. C. Harbach, June 4 - H. Veldman, June 18 - J. Kortering, June 25 - M. Schipper, July 2 - R. C. Harbach, July 9 - G. Van Baren.

*Hull*: Apr. 30, May 7 - M. Schipper, May 28, June 4 - J. Heys, June 25, July 2 - H. Veldman.

*Isabel-Forbes*: June 11, 18, 25 - G. Lubbers.

Classis received notice of two appeals to synod by two protestants.

Classis voted for Church Visitors, and Rev. H. Veldman and Rev. M. Schipper were chosen, with Rev. G. Lubbers as alternate for both.

Mr. T. Elzinga was appointed to thank the ladies of Southeast Church for their excellent catering.

Classis decided to meet next time in Hudsonville on the first Wednesday of July.

The Questions of Art. 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily.

Classis adjourned, with Rev. R. C. Harbach offering the prayer of thanksgiving.

M. Schipper, S.C.