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A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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The King of Glory Enters!

Editorials:

**The Gereformeerde Kerken Repudiate the Canons
The Marks of the True Church**

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*Meditation***The King of Glory Enters!**

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Psalms 24:7, 8

Picture to yourself a grand and joyful procession of the thousands of Israel. Leading the procession are members of the house of Levi, bearing the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah. With them are all their brethren, priests and Levites, singers and players on musical in-

struments. David the King, the sweet psalmist of Israel, clothed with a robe of fine linen and an ephod of linen, is a leading member of the joyful throng. The elders of Israel and the captains over thousands are there. "Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the cove-

nant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps," I Chron. 15:28.

They approach Mount Zion, formerly the fortress of the Jebusites, where David had prepared a tent for the Ark of God.

And as they reach the foot of Zion's mount and sweep up the slope, you can hear them singing, — singing of the power and glory of Jehovah, and of them who only may ascend His holy hill, to dwell in His presence, those who have clean hands and a pure heart, the covenant generation of them that seek the God of Jacob.

But as they reach the gate of Zion's city, formerly the stronghold of the enemy, their song changes.

One of the approaching procession sings like the herald of an approaching king, addressing the gates of the City of Zion. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in!"

And from within the gates someone asks the question: "Who is this King of glory?"

From the approaching procession comes the glad and triumphant response: "The Lord strong and mighty! The Lord mighty in battle!"

Jehovah of Hosts is ascending to Zion, the Mount of His holiness!

* * * * *

A glad and joyful occasion that was!

The Lord Jehovah, Israel's glorious King, had chosen Israel as His people. He had given them His precepts and statutes. Out of the house of bondage He had delivered them with a mighty hand and with a stretched out arm. He had saved them and protected them from all the power of their enemies. A place, a place of covenant rest, he had prepared for them in the land of Canaan. Moreover, He had chosen Jerusalem as the city of His habitation among His people. More particularly, He had appointed Mount Zion, one of the hills of Jerusalem, as the place of His throne. There He would establish His power and majesty and sovereignty. From Zion He would rule over all His people. From Zion would go forth His law, and from thence would proceed the Word of His blessing.

This is the Kingdom whose realization is celebrated in this psalm.

Or rather, the coming of this glorious King into His kingdom is celebrated with music and song of praise!

It is the time when Jehovah takes His place on Mount Zion!

For a long time a large part of the land of Canaan had remained in the power of the enemies, enemies who dwelt particularly in the cities and strongholds of the land. There had even been times when it appeared as though the children of Israel might be dispossessed. Yea, there were times when it appeared as though Jehovah had forsaken His people, times when the Ark,

that mighty and holy and glorious symbol of God's presence, was resting far away.

But now, at last, in David's time the Lord of Hosts had given to His people the complete victory. The boundaries of the kingdom had been extended to their promised ideal. All the enemies of God's people were subjugated. Even the strong fortress of the Jebusites in the heights of Jerusalem had been captured.

Jehovah, the I AM, Whose counsel shall stand and Who doeth all His good pleasure, had proved Himself faithful to His covenant. Plainly He demonstrated that all His promises are sure.

The Lord strong and mighty He had shown Himself to be!

The Lord mighty in battle!

For He it was — not an arm of flesh, not horses and chariots — but He, Whose name is Jehovah, Jehovah of Hosts, Who had given His people the victory over all their enemies!

As the King of glory He had revealed Himself indeed! For is not His glory the radiation of all His infinite perfections? And were not those perfections — His truth and faithfulness, His lovingkindness and mercy, His righteousness and justice, His power and might — revealed when He fought for His people and gave them the victory?

And now He enters in. For the Ark which is being brought from the house of Obed-Edom is nothing less than the visible representation of His throne, of His sovereignty, of His divine majesty.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates of Zion!

Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors!

God, Jehovah, the King of all the earth, Whose earthly representative is David, the man after His own heart, doth enter into His kingdom, doth establish His throne on Mount Zion!

Our God and our King is He!

For that Ark is the heart of tabernacle and temple. It was made first in the holy mount; and around it were constructed the most holy place, the sanctuary, and the court. And thus it is also on Mount Zion. True, there is only a tent, a temporary habitation, when Israel brings the Ark to Zion's hill. But essentially God's habitation is there, His dwelling-place among His people. And before long the entire temple will arise around that Ark, in order that the Lord God may dwell among His people.

The King Who enters into His kingdom, therefore, is our Covenant God. King is He, indeed; but the King Who dwells among His people as their Friend, communing with them and blessing them. He rules them in His love and favor. And He rules over all their enemies by His mighty power for the sake of and for the benefit of His people. Moreover, His people are His subjects, obeying His law, doing His will, serving Him; but even as He is their Friend-Sovereign, so they are His friend-servants. All their service of His is from friend-

ship, covenant friendship, and in love.

Thus joyous Zion sings: Lift up your heads, O ye gates!

Let the kingdom, the glorious kingdom in which our God is our Friend-Sovereign be established!

The Lord mighty in battle stands before you!

* * * * *

All of this, however, was but a shadow of things to come.

Surely, it was also real. In a very real sense God dwelt among His people Israel. He blessed them with the blessings of His covenant of friendship; and they served Him as His covenant people.

But the reality was still veiled in shadows. Mount Zion was after all a shadow of God's right hand, His place of glory in the heavens. The most holy place was but a shadow of the heavenly sanctuary. The ark was but an earthly shadow of the throne of God. The temple was only a type of His heavenly tabernacle with men. David was but a shadow of Him through Whom the Lord mighty in battle would reveal Himself and give unto His people the real victory and the real inheritance.

On the same basis, the ascent of the Ark of the Covenant was also typical. That occasion was not the only, not the full, not the final realization of the truth expressed in this song of Zion.

And if even the shadow was so glorious that it caused all Zion to shout with a voice of triumph, how much more glorious must the reality be. . . .

Lift up your heads, O ye gates! Let the King of glory come in!

Who is this King of glory?

Our Lord Jesus Christ!

He is the King of glory. For He is Jesus, Jehovah-Salvation! He is the real King. He is the Lord and David combined in one. He is Immanuel, God with us. He is the Lord Himself, and yet the perfect Servant of Jehovah. He is the King under God, and yet God Himself. And He is the King of glory: for He has been exalted at His resurrection. The mortal has put on immortality. The weak has put on strength. The earthly, now, at the moment of His ascension, is clothed with heavenly glory!

He is mighty in battle!

The strong fortress of sin and death and hell He entered. And all our foes — sin, death, the prince of darkness, the wicked world — all of the foes of His Kingdom of righteousness and truth and peace and life eternal and glory He has completely overcome. Yea, He has overcome them by His death and the shedding of His blood! For the real battle of the ages is a spiritual one; and that spiritual battle He has fought to the very end, and gained the victory!

Lift up your heads, O ye everlasting doors!

The King of glory, our Lord Jesus Christ, has the right to enter in.

Ye everlasting doors of heaven, which were closed to us, closed to our human nature, by reason of sin: remains not closed! He has opened you by His death!

Sing, O Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!

With a voice of triumph!

Open, ye gates of heaven, that the King of glory — our King and our God — may come in and be seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high!

For He is Jehovah, mighty in battle! He has conquered all our foes!

Open to Him, and through Him to us! For through His blood and Spirit, in faith's union with Him, we are of clean hands and a pure heart! He is *our* King, and we are *His* people. He, and through Him God, reigns among us, over us, in us. He reigns as our Covenant Friend over us, His covenant people!

Open, ye gates!

And remain open — until every last one of His friends, every member of His royal priesthood, has entered after Him!

Do ye hear, O everlasting doors?

* * * * *

Sing, O daughter of Jerusalem! Shout, O Zion, with a shout of triumphant hope!

For There is still a prophetic note in this song of Zion. Though in principle and centrally the glorious Kingdom of grace is established in Christ, the King of glory, Who is in heaven, Who has all power, and Who rules over all; though, too, His kingdom is established and realized in our hearts, so that the power of sin and death in us is overcome, so that He is our Lord and we His friends, and so that we are partakers of His heavenly resurrection-life; yet all is not finished. We, His subjects, are still imperfect, both spiritually and physically. In the world the enemy still raves and causes God's people to suffer. Besides, the whole creation has not been finally delivered from the curse; the new heavens and the new earth are not yet.

But lift up your heads, O ye gates!

He is coming! He, the King of glory!

He is coming all through this dispensation — even as He opens the seals, causes the trumpets to be sounded, and the vials to be poured out! He is coming through all the events of this present time, and they all must be subservient to His coming!

He is completing His kingdom and calling His elect subjects by His Spirit and Word!

He is coming, finally, on the clouds! Then shall the King of glory enter into the full manifestation of His covenant and kingdom. Then shall all the enemies be destroyed forever. Then shall the tabernacle of God be with men forever!

Shout it in hope, O Zion! Lift up your heads, O ye gates!

And, O Bride of Christ, let your shout be accompanied by prayer and supplication: "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"

And, praying, watch! Watch, that ye may keep yourselves pure as He is pure. For who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in His holy place? He that is of clean hands and a pure heart. Outside, forever, will be they that love iniquity.

Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors!

The King of glory is approaching, coming quickly!
He will enter in!

And He will bring us, His people, with Him — with
out spot or wrinkle!

Shout it, O Jerusalem!

With a voice of triumph!

Editorials

The Gereformeerde Kerken Repudiate the Canons

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Some time ago it was reported in *The Standard Bearer* that the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in a synodical decision reminded the churches that the confessions have binding authority upon all as an accepted basis of fellowship. Even this decision was a qualified and ambiguous one: for the Synod "recognized that the manner of expression and the method of argument in the creedal standards should offer no obstacle to officers of the church to express their complete agreement" (*RES News Exchange*, Nov. 18, 1969). Besides, the Synod also appointed a committee to investigate whether and how a new contemporary confession of faith should be made.

Since that decision was made, there have been further developments. The Synod accepted as its own a complaint against the Heidelberg Catechism, Question 80, particularly the statement referring to the popish mass as "an abominable idolatry." But because, according to the Synod, there are other expressions in the Catechism which are objectionable, all of these matters were referred to the committee mentioned above.

But now the Synod has struck a blow at the very heart of the Reformed faith. *RES News Exchange*, March 24, 1970, carries the following report:

The Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands has declared that certain passages in the Canons of Dordt concerning the teaching of eternal reprobation are not based upon the clear givens of the Holy Scripture. The Synod reached this decision after considering a protest of a Dr. B. J. Brouwer in the Hague. He had raised objections in principle against the statement in the Canons which state that God decided by an eternal decree not to give to some men the gift of grace, but to leave them to their hardness and evil.

The Synod declared that these passages in the confessional standard of the church stand in the way of a complete agreement with the three Forms of Unity. The declaration was referred to a commission which is making a study of the present creeds of the church. Although I do not have any more details of the

above decision in my possession, it can easily be ascertained which articles of the Canons of Dordrecht are at stake. They are the same articles which have been criticized for some years already by the same representatives of the so-called "new theology" who have been busy criticizing many important elements of the Reformed faith. One of these articles is Canons I, A, 6:

That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it proceeds from God's eternal decree, "For known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Acts 15:18. "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will," Eph. 1:11. According to which decree, he graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe, while he leaves the non-elect in his just judgment to their own wickedness and obduracy. And herein is especially displayed the profound, the merciful, and at the same time the righteous discrimination between men, equally involved in ruin; or that decree of election and reprobation, revealed in the Word of God, which though men of perverse, impure and unstable minds wrest to their own destruction, yet to holy and pious souls affords unspeakable consolation.

Also involved is Canons I, A, 15:

What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election, is the express testimony of sacred Scripture, that not all, but some only are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but permitting them in his just judgment to follow their own ways, at last for the declaration of his justice, to condemn and perish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins. And this is the decree of reprobation which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous judge and avenger thereof.

Necessarily involved is also Canons I, B, 8:

(The Synod rejects the errors of those) Who teach: That God, simply by virtue of his righteous will, did not decide either to leave anyone in the fall of Adam and in the common state of sin and condemnation, or to pass anyone by in the communication of grace which is necessary for faith and conversion. For this is firmly decreed: "He hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth," Rom. 9:18. And also this: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given," Matt. 13:11. Likewise: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight," Matt. 11:25, 26.

The above articles constitute the substance of what the Canons say directly on the subject of reprobation. And while, as I stated, I do not know the details of the gravamen brought to the Dutch synod, nevertheless it is certain that, either directly or indirectly, all three articles are involved.

What shall we say about this?

In the first place, it should be evident to anyone who has the least understanding of our confessions — and especially of the Canons — that this is a matter of utmost seriousness. It concerns the very heart of the Reformed faith. This is true, first of all, in general, because an aspect of the doctrine of sovereign predestination is involved, namely, the doctrine of reprobation. But, in the second place, it is true because reprobation and election are inseparably connected. Tamper with the former, and you necessarily tamper with the latter. This is unavoidable. Deny the sovereignty of the former, and you necessarily deny the sovereignty of the latter. Make the former conditional, and you necessarily make the latter conditional. This, by the way, has also been true historically. And, besides, it has traditionally been that doctrine of sovereign reprobation primarily which has been distasteful to men and which has been the object of attacks. As long as one spoke of election, and even of sovereign election, not many objections would be raised. But as soon as one began to speak of *double* predestination, *praedestinatio gemina* — including sovereign reprobation, therefore — then a storm of opposition would rise. This, you understand, is not because the doctrine of sovereign election is acceptable, while that of reprobation is not. It is rather because the crucial test of whether one actually believes the truth of sovereign election is in the question whether he believes the truth of sovereign reprobation. You see, when one wants to say, "Jacob has God loved, and Esau has He loved, too," he has no election left: for there is no distinction left. This is the issue. Thirdly, this whole matter is of the utmost seriousness because this doctrine is of key importance. When you tamper with

reprobation and predestination, you tamper by unavoidable implication with total depravity, definite atonement, irresistible grace, and the perseverance of the saints. No one, surely, saw this more clearly than our fathers at the time of the Arminian conflict and the Synod of Dordrecht.

In the second place, this synodical decision only serves to emphasize the sad state of affairs in the Dutch churches. Think of it! In the very cradle of the Canons those Canons of Dordrecht are now repudiated! And let no one say that the *Gereformeerde Kerken* have not repudiated the Canons, but only a *part* of the Canons. This is not true. For the Canons, more than any of our confessions, stand or fall together. Besides, the Dutch churches can no longer say that they subscribe without reservation to the Canons — not in their entirety. It has become a fact that they do not mean the same thing by the "Canons of Dordrecht" as we and other Reformed churches do.

But this is not the only sad aspect. For there is a history behind this decision, a history of doctrinal liberty. For, you understand, this repudiation did not come about suddenly. On the contrary, certain theologians have been criticizing the Canons on this score for several years. They have been doing this in writing and speech. They have been propagandizing the churches — not subversively, but openly. And they have done so with impunity. No one took them to task for it ecclesiastically — though it is completely contrary to the Formula of Subscription. And now, at last, when they have gained a majority sentiment in the churches, they have made their criticism official, with the result that the ecclesiastical stamp of approval is now placed upon this repudiation of the Canons. Here is a clear illustration of the dire results which accrue to any church which allows theologians to flout the Formula of Subscription, the dire results of so-called doctrinal liberty. In this manner the doctrine of Scripture is being undermined in those same churches. In this manner the entire heritage of the Reformed faith is being subjected to re-examination already. In this light, too, the decision of the Dutch churches about the binding authority of the confessions, weak as it is, is nothing but a hypocritical farce!

Yet, in the third place, there is at least something belatedly frank — hardly would I say "honest" — about this decision. For at least the *Gereformeerde Kerken*, though apparently they have not yet composed a substitute confession on reprobation, are "telling it like it is." Everyone may now know that they openly and officially repudiate the Canons' teachings on reprobation. And this has the "virtue" of frankness. It is not so hypocritical as doing lip-service to the Canons and meanwhile criticizing and denying them. And make no mistake about it: there are others, both in America and in Australia, who entertain similar sentiments about the Canons. It is not my intention to

go into the intricate details of this criticism of the Canons at this time. Suffice it to say, for the present, that in my opinion it all comes down to this, that they wish to substitute a *conditional reprobation* for sovereign reprobation. Perhaps at a later date we can present a study of the subject. My point is now that it would be the part of frankness and honesty, as well as the proper ecclesiastical way, if *all* those who entertain these sentiments would cease their propagandizing and their unofficial criticism and would openly and *officially* declare themselves. Then all will know where they stand.

In the fourth place, what haughty conceit and proud high-handedness it is on the part of the Dutch churches to take it upon themselves to pass judgment on the Canons. For, mark you well, the confessions are not the exclusive possession of the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. With haughty disregard of all the other churches to whom the Canons belong, they have all by themselves declared that "certain passages in the Canons . . . are not based upon the clear givens of the Holy Scripture." It is, of course, the perfect right of the Dutch churches to declare that *they* no longer wish to adhere to the Canons. But it is definitely *not* their right to tamper with the Canons of Dordrecht independently of all other Reformed denominations. This might be a proper item on the agenda of a Reformed ecumenical

synod (not the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, which is neither ecumenical nor a synod). But it is not the right of a single denomination.

This brings me to a concluding observation. The *Gereformeerde Kerken* are placing all the churches with which they have correspondence before a clear choice: will they, or will they not, maintain correspondence with the *Gereformeerde Kerken* as churches with whom they share a common confessional heritage? As far as this writer is concerned, this action of the GKN is just one more reason why our coming Protestant Reformed Synod should heed the advice of its committee for foreign correspondence to break off even the seeking of limited correspondence with the GKN. If my memory serves me correctly, the Orthodox Presbyterian Churches have already broken off relations — to their credit! But what about the others? What about the unity of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod? What about the fraternal relations between the Christian Reformed Church and the GKN? Officially, at least, no denomination which acknowledges the Three Forms of Unity stands any longer on the same confessional basis as the *Gereformeerde Kerken*. It is a time of decision. Will those concerned have the courage to face the issue? Or will they try to avoid it? Or ignore it?

The Marks of the True Church (concluded)

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

The Distinguishing Marks

We may mention three commonly given answers to this question which will lead one inevitably to move toward and to serve in the cause of the false church.

The first is the answer of the *ecumenicist*. He wants to forget about ecclesiastical and denominational differences. The walls of separation must be broken down, he claims. Churches must unite on a broad platform. Once you start down that path, of course, there is no stopping. Nor do those who take this position want to stop! They want to go right on, until they have achieved the world-church. And remember: the world-church is the great whore of Revelation 17! It is, of course, impossible for the child of God who takes his confession seriously to assume this attitude.

The second is the answer of the *traditionalist*. He takes the stand that the church in which he was born and baptized, the church to which his parents belonged, is for him the church. And frequently his attitude becomes one of "my church, right or wrong." He

holds to that church slavishly, trusts in it, frequently maintains that it cannot err. He puts his trust in an institution of men. Or he may simply be personally unconcerned about the course his church follows, leaving it to the "leaders" to chart that course, while he ignorantly and rather apathetically follows. This is an attitude which is fundamentally idolatry. It is both erroneous and dangerous, and that, too, not only for one's self, but for his children and children's children. Any particular church in the midst of the world is able to err, and even to become wholly corrupt! It is able to become like the church of Laodicea in Revelation 4. Jerusalem can become in the process of history spiritually like Babylon or like Sodom and Gomorrah. This is precisely what happens, in fact, when in the process of time the false church develops.

A third answer is that of *indifferentism*. After all, the indifferentist says, it does not really make any great difference what one believes. We all believe in the same God and the same Christ; and we are all going to

the same heaven. And our salvation does not depend upon what church we belong to; people in all churches will be saved. And in this day of the social gospel, the indifferentist likes to stress, besides, that it isn't so much a question of what you believe, but of how you live! But we should remember, in the first place, that ultimately our salvation does indeed become involved. You and I cannot deny the faith and be saved! Our Confession of Faith stresses this too: outside of the holy congregation which is an assembly of those who are saved there is no salvation. Secondly, from a spiritual point of view this attitude of indifferentism (which frequently manifests itself as bitter intolerance toward those who desire to be faithful to the Word of God) betrays an altogether wrong approach. It is not the attitude expressed in the words of Psalm 137 which were quoted at the beginning of this pamphlet, but a selfish attitude, concerned only about one's individual salvation and about how little Christianity is necessary for that salvation — not concerned about the church, about the truth, about the cause of Christ and the glory of God. In the third place, it is frequently exactly such neglectful indifference which more than anything else helps in the direction of the false church. When people do not care, when a church is not on guard, then the way is open for false prophets to introduce all kinds of error into the church with impunity, and thus to lead the church in the wrong direction.

The Reformed and Scriptural answer to this question is furnished in Article 29 of our Confession of Faith. It is the bounden duty of the believer to join himself to the true church; and there are three marks by which that true church is recognizable. Those marks are described in our Confession as follows:

"The marks by which the true Church is known are these: if the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin: in short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church. Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself."

A few explanatory remarks are in order.

In the first place, we should notice that in a sense all three marks are comprehended in the first mark. The sacraments and Christian discipline have no meaning without the preaching of the Word. The sacraments depend on the Word because the sacraments do nothing else than represent and seal visibly and tangibly that which is set forth in the Word. And Christian discipline depends on the Word because the very content and power of Christian discipline is the Word of Christ. Besides, the preaching of the Word is chief because where the Word is purely preached, there neither the sacraments nor Christian discipline will

very readily be corrupted. There is instruction; there the will of Christ is made known; there the truth is proclaimed. And where this is done, the sacraments are not likely to be profaned, nor Christian discipline neglected. Principally, therefore, we may reduce these three marks to the one, all-important mark of the preaching of the Word. And we may say that where the Word is preached, there is Christ and His church. Where the Word is not preached, there the church is not present and there Christ is not. And where that Word is adulterated in the preaching, there the church is faced by the alternative of either repenting or dying!

In the second place, notice how our Confession describes that first mark, in language which is almost strange in our day: "if the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached." This emphasizes that the very structure of the gospel is *doctrine*, teachings. The true church is not characterized by the preaching of a "thumb-nail" gospel. It is not marked by preaching which is in a broad and loose sense evangelical — whatever that may mean — or evangelistic in the popular "soul-saving" and crusade sense. It preaches *the pure doctrine of the gospel*. Lose that, and you lose the gospel! And lose the gospel of the Scriptures out of the preaching, and the preaching has lost its fundamental character. We must not have mere preaching, as to form. We must not only have some doctrine. We must have the *doctrine* of the *gospel*, and that, too, the *pure doctrine* of the *gospel*. Preaching is basically exposition of the Word of God, proclamation of the whole counsel of God according to the Scriptures.

In the third place, we can only rightly understand and apply these marks when we understand that they are fundamentally antithetical. That is, we must consider them and apply them in the light of what are the marks of the false church. Of this Article 29 speaks also:

"As for the false Church, she ascribes more power and authority to herself and her ordinances than to the Word of God, and will not submit herself to the yoke of Christ. Neither does she administer the sacraments as appointed by Christ in his Word, but adds to and takes from them as she thinks proper; she relieth more upon men than upon Christ; and persecutes those who live holily according to the Word of God and rebuke her for her errors, covetousness, and idolatry."

In other words, the basic, either-or issue is: the Word of Christ or the word of man!

The reason why these are the marks is connected with the very nature of the church. The church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone. There simply is no other foundation possible — not for the true church! If the church is to be built, it must be built on that foundation. And whoever proclaims anything else than the pure doctrine of the gospel is not building upon that foundation; he builds on another founda-

tion, and he builds a mere human institution. It pleases Christ to call and to build His church through the preaching of the Word. Men may raise all kinds of objections against preaching and against sermons — as they do nowadays. They may devise various glamorous substitutes for the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel. The fact remains that it pleases Christ to gather His church through the preaching of the Word! You can never change that! Where the Word is preached, there is Christ; there is the voice of the Good Shepherd; there the sheep hear His voice; there they follow Him; there He gives them eternal life! Don't ever forget that!

For remember: the church needs *Christ!* It is only in living connection with that Christ that the church *is* the church, and that the members possess the life of Christ. And the only contact which we have with Christ as long as we are in this present world is through *His* Word (not man's word), through *His* sacraments, and through *His* government and discipline. Where these are missing, Christ is missing. Where they are corrupted and to the extent that they are corrupted, there I am being separated from contact with Christ my Head! This is the life-and-death seriousness of this entire question of the marks of the true church!

A Matter Of Easy Discernment

While the believer today faces a complex ecclesiastical scene, the difference between the true and the false church is nevertheless a matter of easy discernment. Our Confession of Faith emphasizes this: "Hereby the true Church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself." And again: "These two Churches (that is, the true and the false, H.C.H.) are easily known and distinguished from each other."

Why is this true?

In the first place, it is true because God has given us a clear and infallible standard by which the true church can be known and distinguished. That standard is the Word of God. That Word of God is perspicuous, clear, so that the simplest child of God can understand and discern the truth of the gospel. In the light of that Word the simplest child of God can discern the truth from the lie. That Word of God is unambiguous: it is not capable of two meanings. It does not teach, for example, that God loves all men and that He does not love all men, or that Christ died for all men and that He died only for His elect. God's Word is clear, crystal clear, as to the truth and the lie. This is the objective reason why it is possible to distinguish when a church begins to depart in the direction of the false church, and why it is possible to discern when that primary mark of the preaching of the pure doctrine of the gospel is corrupted. We have an infallible, objective guide! And the second, subjective reason is that every believer, as a member of the body of Christ, has the

Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of the church, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of discernment. By that Spirit and in the light of His Word he may view the ecclesiastical scene today and may easily discern the true from the false church.

Judged in the light of these marks, that ecclesiastical scene today is, negatively, one of appalling apostasy. One need not look far afield to notice this. Look at the Reformed scene, at those who are generally classified as belonging yet to the tradition of the Reformation. There is tremendous doctrinal apostasy, frequently under the guise of theological freedom: all kinds of error is increasingly tolerated and allowed to go unpunished and unrebuked, while what has always been the faith of our fathers is lightly set aside. There is apostasy as to the preaching: preaching as proclamation of the pure doctrine of the gospel, expository preaching, has largely become a rare article. Topical preaching, moralism, the social gospel are the replacements. Besides, people become tired of preaching and busy themselves with devising new and glamorous substitutes for the simple and pure preaching of the Word of God — hippy services, dialogues, dramas, modern, revisionistic liturgicalism, and every new and different thing imaginable. Then, too, there is the encroachment of the ecumenical movement, at the expense of true unity and at the expense of the truth of the gospel. Or there is the modern striving after the so-called "de-institutionalization" of the church: the cry that the church must break out of its instituted form, the cry that the church must "be where the action is," the emphasis on "doing" rather than "believing." In brief, there are all kinds of adjustments and adaptations today which have but one goal: to make the church according to man and pleasing to man.

Along with all this, there is decay and degradation as to the very standards of Christian living. The keys of the kingdom are no more employed, or they are totally corrupted. Regardless of the requirements of faith and repentance, of uprightness in doctrine and walk, anyone is welcomed into the membership of the churches. The table of the Lord is opened to all, and thereby profaned. The Sabbath is desecrated. The church pews become empty. Members of the church seek their enjoyment elsewhere. They become friends of the world, singing and dancing and carousing with the world, speaking and acting and looking like the world. Christian morality and sanctification according to the precepts of the Lord have become old-fashioned, and the devilishness of situation-ethics has found its way into the church. Church and world, believer and unbeliever, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, are made to walk hand in hand in almost every sphere of human life. For the most part, that which calls itself church today presents but a sad caricature of the holy, catholic church of Christ.

All these phenomena have come about gradually, almost stealthily, though especially in recent years with rapidly increasing tempo. And they are sad realities today in churches which by name are of Reformed persuasion!

At the same time, do not forget, the true church is also present in the world. And it also is easily discerned, discerned by its distinguishing marks!

Where is it?

We of the Protestant Reformed Churches claim and testify that we represent that true church, represent the purest manifestation of the body of Christ on earth. We make that claim in all humility, without boasting, without a holier-than-thou attitude, in humble acknowledgement that we are what we are only by the sovereign grace of our God. But we make this testimony also without hesitation. You can discern this and test it by the marks of the church. And is it not a striking thing that whatever opponents have said or still say about us — and admittedly there have been a good many unflattering things said — they cannot deny that those marks are present in the Protestant Reformed Churches. They are not able to say that in the Protestant Reformed Churches, according to the standard of Scripture and the creeds, the pure doctrine of the gospel is not preached. Small though we may be, by the grace of God we preach the pure doctrine of the gospel, administer the sacraments purely, and exercise Christian discipline faithfully.

The Calling To Observe The Marks

What is involved in our calling to observe and to apply the test of these marks? Briefly, we point to the following:

1) The faithful church must not only hold fast that which it has, but must positively increase in knowledge, must become stronger in the truth, must grow in the faith, and must thus become more firmly rooted in Christ. Besides, the church must faithfully instruct the covenant seed, the future church, in the faith of the gospel, lest God's people be destroyed for lack of knowledge. Moreover, the faithful church must always watch and be on guard against the enemy. This is the calling of the watchmen on the walls of Zion, first of all; but it is the calling of the entire congregation with them.

2) What is the calling of the departing church? That calling, at the very first sign of departure and unfaithfulness — not when that church has already gone a few miles down the road of error, which historically has always been too late — is in one word: repent! You have only to read the Lord's letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 to confirm this.

3) What is the calling of the faithful church toward the unfaithful? Of the seven churches in Asia Minor,

two were without rebuke; three were departing in various respects; and two were almost dead. What must the faithful churches do with respect to those who depart? They must not give them up; neither must they ignore them; surely, they must not amalgamate with them and become corrupt like them. Their calling is, first of all, to remain faithful; and, secondly, no matter how distasteful this may be to the unfaithful, to call all the rest to repentance! And if this fails, they must call the faithful remnant to separate themselves from the apostate church. Is not this what the Lord Christ Himself does?

4) As far as the individual child of God is concerned, he may place nothing before his duty to seek and to join himself to the true church. To this end, the believer must become spiritually equipped and prepared and thoroughly established in the knowledge of the truth of the Word of God. And for *no reason* may he turn away from this sacred calling to seek the true church. This may bring on various practical problems. It can be a problem when employment opportunities open up to you which will be closed to you if you insist on joining yourself to the true church. Or, for young people it can create problems at the time of courtship if they insist that the "church question" has priority. And, in general, insistence upon seeking the true church frequently involves being reproached and despised and ostracized by church and world. But remember: there is no shame in being despised for the sake of faithfulness to the Word of God and love of His Zion! And: the yoke of Jesus is easy, and His burden is light! Let your stand be that of Psalm 137: "I prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy!"

5) For the individual child of God when he comes into contact with corruption in the church, this calling implies that he must strive for reformation. He must do so either in cooperation with the institution of his church, or in protest against it. But reformation is his sacred duty! Moreover, if protest fails, and the carnal element begins to dominate in a church, and the institute will not listen, his calling is not to protest endlessly and at the same time to bemoan the frustrations of protest. In such a case his duty of reformation means, in obedience to the will of God, that he must separate and institute the church anew if necessary. This is a very painful and also a very serious matter, a step which may not be taken for any carnal considerations. But for Christ's sake, for the truth's sake, for the love of Zion's sake, if he prefers Jerusalem above his chief joy, he will do it. He will refuse to promote the false church, and he will seek and join himself to the true.

Always we are called to be faithful unto death. In that way we have the sure promise of the Lord: "I will give you a crown of life."

Feature

The Love of God, Wholly Particular (concluded)

Rev. H. Veldman

In the second head of doctrine in these Canons, the fathers, dealing with the doctrine of the death of Christ upon the cross, set forth the doctrine of limited or particular atonement, and they emphatically (please note this emphasis as we underscore) endorse this manifestation of the love of God in Christ as only for the elect. We quote Art. 8:

For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them ALONE the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is; it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, AND THOSE ONLY, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to Him by the Father; that He should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He purchased for them by His death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved them even to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever.

And in the fifth and final head of these Canons, dealing with the perseverance of the saints, calling attention to the work of the Holy Spirit, which preserves God's people even unto the end, the fathers declare that this takes place in the elect and is to be ascribed solely to the rich and free mercy of God. Please note how the fathers emphasize this. We quote, in support of this, Articles 6-9 of this fifth head of doctrine:

Art. 6: But God, Who is RICH IN MERCY, ACCORDING TO HIS UNCHANGEABLE PURPOSE OF ELECTION, does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from His own people, even in their melancholy falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption, and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death; nor does He permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction.

Art. 7: For in the first place, in these falls He preserves in them the INCORRUPTIBLE seed of regeneration from perishing, or being totally lost; and again, by His Word and Spirit, certainly and effectually renews them to repentance, to a sincere and godly sorrow for their sins, that they may seek and obtain remission in the blood of the Mediator, may again experience the favor of a reconciled God,

through faith adore His MERCIES, and henceforward diligently work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.

Art. 8: Thus, it is not in consequence of their own merits, or strength, but of GOD'S FREE MERCY, that they do not totally fall from faith and grace, nor continue and perish finally in their backslidings, which, with respect to themselves, is not only possible, but would undoubtedly happen; but with respect to God, it is utterly impossible, since His COUNSEL CANNOT BE CHANGED, NOR HIS PROMISE FAIL, NEITHER CAN THE CALL ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE BE REVOKED, NOR THE MERIT, INTERCESSION AND PRESERVATION OF CHRIST BE RENDERED INEFFECTUAL, NOR THE SEALING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BE FRUSTRATED OR OBLITERATED.

Art. 9: Of this preservation of the ELECT to salvation, and of their perseverance in the faith, true believers for themselves may and do obtain assurance according to the measure of their faith, whereby they arrive at the certain persuasion, that they ever will continue true and living members of the church; and that they experience forgiveness of sins, and will at last inherit eternal life.

Now we turn to our Heidelberg Catechism. Of course, we cannot quote from this entire book of instruction. Nowhere do we read in this Catechism of a universal or common love of God. We will limit ourselves to only one passage, Question and Answer 10, which we consider very striking and pertinent. We quote:

Q. 10. Will God suffer such disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished?

A. By no means; but is terribly displeased with our original as well as actual sins; and will punish them in His just judgment temporally and eternally, as He hath declared, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

Please notice the following in this quotation. First, we should note Question 10 and its immediate answer: "By no means." Will God ever suffer, allow disobedience and rebellion to go unpunished? Is there ever a moment when the Lord is not punishing the wicked sinner (the wicked sinner outside of Christ, of course); does God love him; does He delay or postpone punishment upon his sin until the Judgment Day? Is this life for that sinner a dispensation of grace and favor, in distinction from the hereafter which is an endless dispensation of Divine wrath and indignation?

And the answer is immediate: By no means! Secondly, God is terribly displeased with our original as well as our actual sins. Of course, our actual sins are constant. The sinner is never without them. Never does he do anything but sin. He cannot love God or the neighbor; hence, he always hates the Lord and his neighbor. Never allowing sin to go unpunished, the Lord is always punishing sin, also his actual sins. So, this punishment is constant. Thirdly, God punishes temporally and eternally. Temporally must not be identified or confused with temporarily. Temporarily means "for a time," is not constant, comes to a stop. But the word "temporally" refers to this time, in distinction from "eternally," the hereafter. That God punishes temporally and eternally means, therefore, that He is punishing all the time, now and forever. There is never a let-up in this Divine punishment. And, fourthly, notice, please, the quotation of Gal. 3:10 in this tenth answer. We read: "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them." All the emphasis in this text must be laid upon the word, "is." We do not read that he will be cursed, but that he *is* cursed.

This is the language of our Reformed Confessions; we read of no love or mercy of the Lord to anyone outside of Christ Jesus. And, incidentally, this particular keynote characterizes all the Protestant Reformed Confessions.

Turning next to the Scriptures, we remark, in the first place, that Scripture surely designates the objects of the Lord's love and also of His hatred. On the one hand, the Word of God uses a synonym for love, namely: to know. We read in Ps. 1:6: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Do not minimize this particular Scripture. This Word of God is a key text, gives us the keynote to all the psalms. The psalms are full of this very thought; never do we read anything else throughout the one hundred and fifty psalms. And in Romans 8:29-30 we read: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Indeed, this "foreknowledge" of this text must not be confused with the Arminian conception of the foreknowledge of God. His conception of this foreknowledge is that the Lord saw beforehand who would believe and who would not believe; the believers He elected and the unbelievers He rejected. This surely does not make sense in the light of the rest of this passage. But this knowledge of the Lord is foreknowledge because it is before all things, in the eternal counsel of the Lord; and therefore this foreknowledge is mentioned first in the text and is the Divine source of all that follows in this particular Scripture.

On the other hand, the love of God is particular. Again and again, this particular love and grace of the Lord are emphasized at the beginning of the various epistles, in the apostolic greetings to the various churches, as, for example: Grace, mercy and peace be to all the saints in Christ Jesus, to the elect, etc. And this we also read in I Thess. 1:4: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." They are addressed by the apostle as "brethren beloved," and the meaning is that they are beloved of God. These elect beloved of the Lord must know their election. How often this particular love of God is mentioned in the psalms! Many, many passages can be quoted. We will quote the following:

Ps. 5:5: "The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity."

Ps. 11:5: "The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth."

Ps. 34:16: "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

The same sentiment is expressed in the Book of Proverbs. We again limit ourselves to only a few passages. Many could be quoted, but we quote only the following:

Prov. 3:33: "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but He blesseth the habitation of the just." Note well: the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, and this means that this curse rests upon him and all that he has.

Prov. 11:20: "They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the Lord: but such as are upright in their way are His delight."

In Deut. 7-8 we read of the love of the Lord upon Israel as in distinction from all other nations: "The Lord did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."

In 1 Cor. 10:5 we read: "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

And in Romans 9:13 we read: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

Besides, this particular love of God is particular because it is sovereignly, unconditionally particular. To be sure, we read in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now it is certainly true that any student of Holy Writ knows that the word, "world" does not always have the same connotation in the Word of

God. We cannot, of course, treat this passage this evening. We do wish to remark that the expression, "that whosoever believeth" does not merely express God's purpose in the sending of His Son, but also its result. Were it not for God's sending of His Son it would be impossible for anyone to believe unto salvation, and we do well to remember that "believing" in the Scriptures always stands opposed to our works. But, we read in John 17:9: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine." God should love the whole world, head for head, send His Son in order to save that entire world, and Christ should pray only for some, and, mind you, not for them who would come unto Him, but for them whom the Father had given Him? How strange this would be!

Indeed, the Lord chose Israel, but why did He choose Israel, according to Deut. 7:7? Did He choose them because of any superior qualities He found in them? But this word of God informs us that He chose them, not because they were more in number, but only because He loved them and would keep the oath which He had sworn unto their fathers. Surely, the love of the Lord upon Israel is solely of the Lord's sovereign good pleasure.

The Lord chose Israel to be His people. He loved them in distinction from all the other nations and peoples of the earth. But does this mean that He loved all within Israel? To the contrary, we read in 1 Cor. 10:5: "But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

And this love of God, which rests only upon some within Israel, so that not all that are called Israel are the beloved of the Lord, is strictly sovereign and unconditional. How clearly this truth is set forth in Romans 9:10-13, and we quote:

For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth:) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Permit me in this connection to ask you two questions. First, why was Esau born first? He did not receive the blessing of the firstborn. Surely God caused him to be born first, sovereignly. This none will dispute. That Esau was born first was surely solely of the Lord. But why? Imagine all the misery and grief that could have been spared Rebecca and Isaac and Jacob had Jacob been the firstborn! Esau did not receive the birthright blessing anyway. So, why was Jacob not born first? Secondly, why must Rebecca and also we be told before these twins are born that "the elder must serve the younger?" Imagine if this had not been revealed to Rebecca and Isaac and to us? Had this not

been revealed to her and us, would it not have been possible, in the light of Esau's subsequent profanity, to conclude that he had been rejected and denied the birthright blessing because of his profanity and that he had rendered himself unworthy of it? He surely was profane, as we read it in Heb. 12:16: "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." Of course, the Lord had never given him the birthright, had never intended that the birthright would be his. But, viewed subjectively from the viewpoint of Esau, he, as the older of the two brothers, sold it. And he sold it for a morsel of meat, and thereby revealed his profanity, his complete and utter disdain and contempt for the blessing of the firstborn. But, was he rejected and reprobated because of his profanity? Esau is born first, and Rebecca and we are told before they are born, that "the elder would serve the younger," because God loved Jacob and hated Esau before they did good or evil, in order that the purpose of God according to election might stand. And Jacob surely did not reveal himself particularly worthy of the birthright blessing. Hence, the love of God is solely particular, and it is sovereignly and unconditionally particular. God, Who loves Himself, only Himself, loves only His own, whom He has sovereignly loved, eternally; only in them does His soul delight, and this only for the sake of Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord.

III. GLORIOUSLY EFFICACIOUS

In connection with the truth that the love of God is gloriously efficacious, we wish to quote the following Scriptures, some of which we have already quoted:

Deut. 32:11-12: As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: So the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange god with Him.

Rom. 8:29-30: For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.

1 John 4:10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 4:19: We love Him, because He first loved us.

Romans 5:5, 8, 10: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

What are the implications of these passages, and

many more in the Word of God? Negatively, the love of God is wholly unconditional. This is not love, that we loved God. Love never proceeds from us, always from God. Nothing we do can ever prompt the love of God to us. Its success or failure is never dependent upon the will of a sinner.

And what are the positive implications of these passages? As the apple of His eye He leads us, all the way, and He leads us ALONE. There is never any strange god with Him, never anything of man. HE LEADS US ALONE! Esau He hated and from this follows all his misery; Jacob He loved, and, therefore, he is the first-born in the counsel of the Lord. Whom He has fore-known, loved, eternally, He finally glorifies, and there is nothing, absolutely nothing that can possibly frustrate or thwart this. In His love He redeems us, while we were sinners; because of that love hope maketh not ashamed, never disappoints, never falls short of our

expectations; in fact, arriving in the city that has foundations, we shall exclaim that the half was never told us. We love Him, only because He loved, and loves us first. Of course! God is God! His love is eternal, unchangeable, wholly irresistibly and efficacious! Loving God, by His grace and Holy Spirit, we know that He loved us first; and being the apple of His eye, whatever life's trails and vicissitudes may be, we shall be loved even until the end, even as we read it in John 13:1 ("Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end"). And this wonderful love of God will surely guide us and keep us even until the end, and will surely lead us into everlasting and heavenly glory and immortality. Indeed, how wonderful is the love of our God!

Mission Feature

A Memorable Day In Jamaica

Mr. Henry Meulenberg

(Editors' Note. By special request, we present this report on the work in Jamaica. The snapshots, courtesy of Mr. Meulenberg, show the three groups of Jamaican brethren present at the meeting described in the article.)



Rev. Frame and Elders



Rev. Ruddock and Elders



Rev. Elliott and Elders

On March 11, 1970 a meeting was held in Lacovia, Reading, which brought us to a milestone in the history of our mission activities on this island. For the first time since we began our labors here, these churches, as represented by their delegates, elders or deacons, met together as a body to consider forming an association in order to incorporate as the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica. You ask, perhaps, why this is such a unique experience? Consider for a moment the problem of transportation alone: the place chosen for the meeting was the most central geographically, yet so distant that all delegates except those of

the host church spent from 2½ to 4 hours on the way. The brethren came from east and west, north and south, by car, by bus, leaving home early to arrive for the meeting to start at 11 o'clock.

Seventeen churches were represented at this gathering to hear the advice of our Mission Committee regarding organization and to receive copies of a proposed constitution on which to base their request for incorporation with the Jamaican government.

Consider also that these churches have always existed independently, having no church order to unite them, and also having no fellowship, except for the

sharing of their ministers. Rev. Frame has 4 congregations, Rev. Ruddock has 5, and Rev. Elliott has 8. To them it means a different way of life to be united as an association of Protestant Reformed Churches. Many of the delegates were unknown to one another, and now met for the first time.

The meeting was opened with singing of Psalter No. 69, after which Rev. Frame read Psalm 133 and I Peter 5:1-11, and Rev. Ruddock led us in prayer. Rev. Frame addressed the meeting briefly on the purpose of the gathering, and then gave the floor to Rev. Heys, who spoke at some length, as follows:

"With Rev. Frame, I, too, want to say that I like to address you and look upon your faces today as beloved brethren. The more I work among you, the more I have that confidence that we are one, that in spite of different races and different colors, we have been born again with the same life.

"I'd like to speak a few words of explanation and give you a little history of what has happened that brings us to this very, very important meeting which we have this afternoon. I looked forward to something like this for a long time — to have representatives of all the churches at such a meeting. Just think of all the churches represented here; and, as I said a little while ago, I would like to have you outside pretty soon for a couple of pictures. I borrowed a camera at Mobay that takes black-and-white pictures, instead of our colored pictures; and then we can probably have them printed in the *Standard Bearer* if they turn out well. Maybe we can all have a picture.

"Let me begin by calling attention to the fact that in 1965 the Synod of our churches, through our mission committee, sent Elder H. Zwak and myself to work with you for a month. Some of you remember that. I was not in all of your churches. Some of them we could not reach: for we were here only one month. But one of the things that we were told to do was to go and look at all your buildings, see what they needed, and see how we could help you as far as your buildings were concerned, as well as to teach the truth. But we were interested, too, that you had good and comfortable church buildings; and so Elder Zwak and I did a lot of travelling back and forth. In fact, we came on a Tuesday, landed in Mobay, and right away on Wednesday went to Lucea and preached there. Then on Thursday we went to see the Friendship Hill Church, which we don't have any more. We saw Piper's Corner, which we don't have any more; we saw Shrewsbury, Withorn, Galloway, and Waterworks; and I think that was about all we had time for on that day. We spent a lot of time going back and forth through your churches, and took note of what your churches would need and what we should recommend to our churches that they should help you with. Well, when we came back home and gave our report to the Synod, the Synod agreed that you needed help with these

buildings; and we wanted to do that. Our churches asked all of the congregations to take collections to build up a fund, so that we could give to each church. Oh, I don't know how much we could give you; but we would try to give you as much as we could, to buy your land or to help build your churches, whatever we could do in that line. That was 1965; and I think the collections began to come in during 1966.

"Nobody came here in 1966; and in 1967 we were sent here again, to see if any progress had been made in building your churches, and also to investigate those churches which we did not see before. Then we got to Hope Hill once, and also to some of the other churches which we had not seen. Now I don't know exactly how much money is in that fund; but we like to spend it. There is no use in keeping it in the bank. It doesn't do you any good there. But there is one thing that came up and that spoiled our plans. One of our churches we lost because the church was built on the land of a man who did not even belong to the church. Elder Zwak and I went to that man and asked him if he would give a fifteen-year lease on that land; but he refused and said that he might sell it tomorrow. If we would give you several hundred dollars to build a church there, and then that man would sell the land, the church would be gone. So we didn't want to do that. Then there was another church that was built on two pieces of land belonging to one lady who was a member of the church; and the other lady, a member who soon left, insisted on having meetings in her end of the church and said our people could meet in the other end. Of course, this was impossible. So our people in the States said that we had better make sure that the properties were secured in the name of the churches, not in the name of individuals. We must have it all legally arranged, so that it belongs to the congregation. So we did that. Then we went to a retired judge — not just an ordinary lawyer. Judge Graham, who was formerly in Kingston, worked with us in this matter. And though it may appear as if not much was done in the last few years, the last time I was out here in 1968 with Elder Feenstra, we had a long talk with Judge Graham and started the ball rolling. Then Rev. Lubbers and Elder Meulenberg came last spring and worked further on it.

"When Mr. Feenstra and I went, then Judge Graham said that it would cost about \$400 for each church to incorporate, which would take so much money that very little would be left in the bank for you to help to build or to buy any land, because all of the money would have been used to make your churches secure. So then, when Rev. Lubbers and Elder Meulenberg were back here last spring and especially when Rev. Lubbers came back in November, he went and talked to Judge Graham once again; and Judge Graham said he had been giving this a lot of thought, and thought he knew a cheaper way. He said that if you would have all the churches form an association, and call that associa-

tion the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica, and then if you will draw up a constitution of the association, we will bring it to the house of representatives in Kingston, and they will accept it, and then you will become a corporation. Your association will be a corporation and be recognized by the government of Jamaica; and they will recognize you as the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica. Then if anybody wants to leave your church, he cannot take your property away; it stays with the congregation. And that is why we brought you here this afternoon. We would like to explain this to you — that if you will decide to form an association and call it the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica, then draw up a constitution which is your rules and regulations, your doctrinal basis and teachings, etc., and which explain a little bit about your association, then, we are told, the representatives in Kingston will not even argue about it. Some things they argue about for days, you know; but they will take it without even arguing and say, ‘All right; that is their constitution, and we accept it, and they are a corporation, and the land belongs to each congregation, not to any man in the congregation who can take it away’. I said a little while ago — Rev. Frame knows — that the first Tuesday I was here in 1965 we went to Friendship Hill on the land of Elder Johnson. Well, Elder Johnson was dissatisfied with something and took the whole congregation, and said, ‘It’s my building and my church; you can’t have it’. So we had to get out of it; but that cannot happen if you are incorporated as an association. I would say that there are three things you could do. Not today; we are here only to explain and to have you ask any questions you like. Now, I’m not a walking dictionary and cannot answer every question; but maybe Elder Meulenberg can help along a little bit to get the answers. If you have any problems, if you have any questions about it, ask them after I get finished. But I think the first thing you should do is to go home to your own congregation — your minister, your elders, your deacons — and they ought to be made aware of what this is, and you ought to explain it to all your people and get your people behind it, so that they say, ‘Yes, we want to join that association’.

“The next thing is that you must decide on that constitution. And the third thing is that you should do everything in your power to see to it that you get a deed or some kind of document which expresses that the land and the building on that land belongs, not to such-and-such an individual, but belongs to the congregation of Lucea, or Reading, or Belmont, or whatever it may be. Those three things, I think, have to be done. Now the biggest problem of them all — but I don’t think you are going to have any trouble — is getting your people to form an association, or denomination, calling themselves the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica. Because you all do it already, don’t you?

You call yourselves the Protestant Reformed Church of Lucea, or Cambridge. So that is not going to be hard. Your people are willing to be a Protestant Reformed Church, I’m sure. So they will all agree to join with all the other churches. We’re brothers! Rev. Frame read that a little while ago, how good and pleasant that brethren meet together. Then if we can all get together as an association — you all feel there is a tie all right and feel toward each other as brethren in Christ — but that official tie, or union, has not been made yet. So I’m sure that you are all going to agree. I don’t think there is a problem there, to agree to form a Protestant Reformed Church of Jamaica. The big thing is a constitution. Now, Rev. Lubbers has drawn up such a constitution. And I would like to read it to you; and we will have copies made of this, I suppose, so that each congregation can study it. Now let me say this, that we are not here — Elder Meulenberg and I — to tell you what to do. We haven’t any right to do that. Elder Wright is the elder in this church. I have nothing to say in Reading Church. I have nothing to say in any of your churches. If you don’t want me to preach in your churches, you tell me to stay home. The elders rule in the church, let’s not forget that. The elders have the whole say. Rev. Frame read that to you a little while ago, ‘The elders that are among you I exhort. Feed the flock, not taking the oversight by constraint or for filthy lucre’s sake, but of a ready mind’. So the elders rule; and you should in your congregations. Work with your congregation to see that they understand this document and agree to it.”

Rev. Heys read the articles which follow at the end of this report, and made comments, speaking of the Three Forms, on their importance to the church life as Protestant Reformed Churches, and of the benefits which obtain through incorporation and the securing of the title to their properties.

Elder Wright, of Belmont, attended this meeting, and while there showed us a deed for the church property which he and his two sisters were giving to the congregation of Belmont. To say the least, we were happy to be witnesses of the generosity of this brother and his sisters.

There are also other congregations who received their properties by gift, which we feel are also responses to the preaching on the island and the correspondence courses of which many took advantage.

The meeting adjourned at about 2:30 P.M., and then began the long trek home. Rev. Heys had four passengers and took one route home over the hills, arriving home about 6 o’clock. I had five passengers and took a slightly longer route, driving a rented car; suffering a flat tire delayed us somewhat, and we arrived home at approximately 5:30 P.M. Another group with Rev. Ruddock had obtained a private car and driver, and took another direction. Under God’s protecting care all arrived safely.

A long day, a fruitful day, a memorable day.
Thanks be to God.

Here follows the document referred to in the above article:

We the Protestant Reformed Church at _____ as represented by the undersigned officebearers, hereby declare that our congregation desires with all likeminded congregations in Jamaica to form an association of churches which will be known as the Protestant Reformed Churches in Jamaica.

We likewise testify by this document that we desire to be incorporated and to have the Jamaican Government recognize us as a corporation.

We, therefore, subscribe to the attached document as the constitution of our church, promising to study the Church order mentioned therein and the three Reformed Creeds, which will become the rules and regulations, and the basis and doctrinal teaching respectively of the churches in this association, and to submit ourselves to further instruction in these matters by the Protestant Reformed Churches in America.

We also, therefore, will at once seek to have all the church properties of our congregation registered under the name of the congregation by a proper deed or document, indicating that the land and buildings belong to the congregation.

Minister _____

Elders _____

Deacons _____

Copy of *Draft of ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION* for the churches called "Protestant Reformed Churches in Jamaica"

Articles of Incorporation made and adopted according to the statutes and ordinances for the incorporation of churches in the republic of Jamaica, who maintain the historic Christian religion.

Article I

The name of this church shall be (is) the Protestant Reformed Church of Jamaica at _____.

Article II

The rules and regulations of this church are those embodied in the *Church Order* of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, which is substantially the *Church Order* (Constitution) of Dort, Netherlands of 1618-19.

Article III

The basis and doctrinal teaching of this church is that which is the teaching of the Bible, the infallible Word of God, contained

in sixty-six Books, and as interpreted in the three historic Reformed Creeds, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort.

Article IV

This church, as herein aforesaid, is a member of the churches known as the Protestant Reformed Churches of Jamaica; they are recognized as indigenous churches by the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, whose Synod is incorporated in the United States of America under the rules and regulations for non-profit organizations in the State of Illinois, U.S.A.

Article V

The offices in this church shall be the resident minister, elders and deacons, who are duly chosen from time to time according to the rules of the Church Order. Only male members, members in full communion, are eligible to serve in these offices in accordance with the plain teaching in Scriptures in I Timothy 2.

Article VI

The resident minister, elders and deacons shall be the acting trustees in behalf of the congregation as duly organized and incorporated; these shall have the power of attorney to execute the wishes of the congregation as decided by legal vote. All matters, which are to be decided by the congregation, shall be announced by the office-bearers, two successive Sundays in advance of the meeting. No matters shall be brought to a vote by the congregation except matters which are officially submitted by the consistory.

Article VII

All property, real estate, gifts, grants and bequests shall belong to the congregation; they shall in no case be on the name of any individual, a minister or otherwise; the archives and records of the congregation shall be kept in a safe place, and in a manner which is conducive to avoid suspicion and distrust.

Article VIII

Only ministers who are recognized by the Protestant Reformed Churches in America shall be duly installed and ordained in office in this church.

Article IX

Upon any dissolution of this church corporation the monies and assets, real-estate, and otherwise shall be given to a reputable church, or to some institution of mercy.

Article X

As long as monies are being given by the Mission Organization of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, the Chairman and Secretary of the Mission Committee shall be fellow-trustees over such real-estate, church buildings, etc., which have been given to this church.

Come Ye Apart... And Rest A While

Rev. C. Hanko

"Behold, he prayeth."

This was said by the exalted Christ to the prophet Ananias about Saul of Tarsus, who was sitting blind in

Damascus and praying to God without ceasing day and night.

But imagine that! Saul had been brought up as a

Pharisee. He himself tells us that he was circumcised on the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee. Speaking of zeal, he persecuted the church. In regard to the righteousness of the law he considered himself blameless. In one word, he had, according to his own estimation, been praying all his life.

And now it is said of a man like that: Behold, he prayeth!

That sets one to thinking, and even gives reason for some serious self-examination.

Saul, as you know, met the living Christ on his way to Damascus.

No, he had not been searching for Him, nor even inquiring about Him. Quite the opposite was true. Here was a man who had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, being taught of him, while Jesus was carrying out His earthly ministry. Saul had heard much of this Jesus, and had some strong convictions that this man was an imposter. He had agreed that the chief priests and rulers had done their duty when they condemned this blasphemer to be crucified outside of Jerusalem. He had believed the wild stories of the guard, who said that the body of Jesus had been stolen. He preferred to leave it at that, rather than to accept the word of Jesus' disciples that He was risen. Who had ever heard of anyone rising from the dead?

His blood had boiled when he saw the schism that was created in Jerusalem. He seethed with rage when he heard that those followers of Jesus talked about the risen Lord pouring out His Spirit into the church. He took no stock in all those miracles which these disciples were supposed to be performing on the sick and the crippled. It was hard for him to understand that gullible people would join the ranks of these imposters, and that by the thousands. And when Stephen was stoned, the least he could do to express his approval was to stand by and hold the garments of those who were taking up stones to snuff out this fanatic's life.

Zealously he had organized his own attack on Jesus. He made havoc of the churches, entering into every house, and brought out men and women to commit them to prison. Still breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1), he had desired letters from the high priest, granting him permission to go to Damascus, in order to search out those who were of that "WAY," and to bring them bound to Jerusalem. The "cause" of Christ must be wiped out once and for all.

But he never carried out his plan.

The Lord stopped him on the way. As he tells it: "And it came to pass that, as I made my journey and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?'"

And I answered: Who art thou, Lord?

And he said unto me: 'I am Jesus of Nazareth Whom thou persecutest'!

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid: but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

And I said: What shall I do, Lord?

And the Lord said unto me, 'Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do'.

And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came in to Damascus." (Acts 22:6-11)

That was the day Saul became the slave of Jesus Christ, no more following his own whims, but obeying the will of Him Who called him.

That was the day the Spirit took mastery in his heart. And he, humbled, broken to the dust, prayed; prayed as he never before had prayed. He stormed the throne of grace, sought God's face, bowed in worship in His presence, poured out his soul without ceasing.

Have you ever prayed like that? Recently?

What did he pray? Actually Scripture does not tell us. Yet it is not difficult to surmise the content of his prayers.

Humbly he must have confessed that he was the chief of sinners, for he had persecuted the church of God and thus persecuted Christ Himself.

In bitter contrition he must have confessed his stubborn kicking against the pricks, defending his own self-righteousness and refusing to confess Jesus as Lord.

Shamefacedly he told the Lord how blind he had been in his spiritual rebellion; a blindness that was evident to him now as physically he groped about with scales on his eyes.

In sincere repentance He confessed Christ as his Lord. Had he not unwittingly already done that when the great light of the glorified Christ had appeared to him on the way? Now he did it deliberately, praying: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

"Behold, he prayeth"

What makes this statement so much more significant is the fact, that Saul is not saying this about himself, nor is any other mere man saying this about him. But the risen Lord in heaven is saying this about one of His sheep for whom He died, one of his chosen vessels whom He called out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Christ Himself had created that prayer in Saul's heart by the Spirit of Christ. And the fruit of the Spirit arises as a well-pleasing sacrifice to God. It was better than all the smoke and blood of steers and bullocks.

Still more, Christ stands in heaven as Saul's High Priest and Intercessor. He takes that prayer and presents it to His Father. He even adds His own prayer to it: "Holy Father, sanctify him through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the

world, even so send I him into the world. Neither pray I for him alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through his word. . . . Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am: that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.” John 17.

And God heard Christ.

Thus Christ received the mandate to send Ananias to Saul.

His prayer was answered even while he was praying. Before we call He is ready and waiting to answer.

What a beautiful prayer that was!

O, I know that in Paul’s epistles we can find prayers that appear to us to be much more beautiful. I am thinking of this one: “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or

think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout the ages, world without end. Amen.”

But actually the angels rejoiced in heaven when they saw Saul in Damascus groping in blindness and praying incessantly.

And Christ said to God, and in turn to Ananias: “Behold, he prayeth.”

That’s enough. Even more than enough for me.

Prayer is coming to God, believing that He is, humbling ourselves before Him, pouring out our souls in sorrow and contrition, clinging in faith to Christ, with a boldness that knows that we shall be heard.

Prayer is all that. But even more, it is fellowship with God, experiencing His smile of approval flooding our hearts with peace and joy, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

All Around Us

Popular Views of Death Abortion

Prof. H. Hanko

POPULAR VIEWS OF DEATH

In a recent issue of *Newsweek*, under its “Religion” section, the editors carried a long article on the subject of death. After noting that the largest proportion of people in the country are afraid of death, the article went on to discuss the fact that there are scarcely any these days who still overcome the fear of death by means of a faith in the resurrection from the dead. Especially since science has completely disproved any possibility of life after death, people, according to the article, must seek some solace from the fear of death in other directions than in the hope of a final resurrection. Scoffingly, the article took note of a few scattered “fundamentalist” sects who even maintain the resurrection unto life of an “elect few.” But an educated citizenry no longer looks to such vain and empty dreams.

In discussing the matter of how people cope with their personal fears of death, the article had this to say:

Test-tube babies, organ transplants and the cracking of the genetic code — these and other bio-medical breakthroughs — lend such seemingly unfounded predictions an aura of can-do optimism. “The time has come for men to turn into gods or perish,” announces novelist Alan Harrington in his bold manifesto, “The Immortalist.” At the moment, hundreds

of Americans are putting their faith in cryonics, an expensive method of freezing fresh corpses until such time as science can discover some method of bringing the frozen dead back to life. Americans, Harrington maintains, “must accept as gospel that salvation belongs to medical engineering . . . that our only messiahs will be wearing white coats, not in asylums, but in laboratories.”

Whatever miracles science may provide, a technological “final solution” to death is at best a distant dream. In the meantime, many of those who want immortality now — and they include not only the young — are turning to the occult for some assurance of survival. From suburban seances to witchcraft to astrology, Americans are exploring psychic phenomena as never before. More significant, psychic research is rapidly gaining tolerance among intellectuals — and in some circles, academic respectability. . . .

In our own increasingly apocalyptic age, . . . the search for eternal life seems more desperate than ever. Death crowds our vision and renders old ideologies meaningless. But Lifton (clergyman referred to in the article), for one, is hopeful that today’s disinherited youth may discover in their preoccupation with death “an equal capacity for rebirth.” A “myth” of death and rebirth, he believes, is necessary for every culture, but it requires the rekindling of man’s symbol-making consciousness. . . .

It was just out of such a symbolic understanding

of actual events that the Easter idea of resurrection emerged. The Old Testament offers no theories of personal immortality — only the hope that God will one day establish his Kingdom and thereby vindicate the just. To those who first preached the Christian message, Christ's bodily resurrection was taken as a concrete sign that God's kingdom was at hand. In the radical vision of both Judaism and Christianity, the image of resurrection and ultimate transformation of human history merge. If, as Lifton suggests, the idiom of personal immortality no longer moves us, perhaps it is because we have robbed death — and rebirth — of their larger, social dimensions. The paradox of Easter is that in freely laying down his life for others, Jesus was raised up again. In his lonely freedom, man today still has that option.

Now the gist of all this is, in the first place, that while science has disproved the truth of the resurrection, science has also demonstrated the truth of evolution. And, so it is claimed, man has developed by evolutionary processes to such a high rung on the evolutionary ladder that he can now, himself, take hold of these evolutionary processes and manipulate them in such a way that he can control his own evolution. By controlling his own evolution, he will gradually overcome death and produce the never-ending man. Or, in its most blasphemous form, man will (as the article states) turn into god. Salvation is medical engineering and man's messiah is the scientist in a white coat.

But, in the second place, what is man to do in the meantime as he faces death today? He can, the article asserts, live by a symbol. This is what men have always done. In fact, it was just such a desire for a symbol that led, in the first place, to the formation of the myth of the resurrection of Christ. Now we have to search for another symbol. And the symbol that can very well serve this purpose is the symbol of laying down our lives for others: for this will give true meaning to both death and rebirth. And this, after all, is what Jesus is said to have done.

There are several things striking about all this. One is, surely, that the fear of death lingers on in men regardless of the promises of science. The real reason for this is that deep in his heart man knows, whether he will admit it or not — to himself or to others, that death means standing before the face of the Judge of heaven and earth. God sees to it that this testimony remains in the hearts of men. Nothing men do or say will be able to obliterate that testimony. This is most frightening, for it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Secondly, brazenly the advocates of evolution speak of it as being the only hope of salvation and utopia. Indeed, so brash have they become that they dare to speak of evolution, under man's manipulation, as a power to produce God Himself.

Thirdly, how precious is the comfort of the believer

who can indeed say with Job: "I know that my Redeemer lives. . . ." How futile and empty and even ludicrous is a "symbol" which must somehow bring comfort when one dearly loved is snatched away by death's cold and unrelenting hand. How utterly ill-at-ease must a minister feel who must stand at the bedside of one writhing in the anguish of death and try to bring meaning and solace by means of a symbol. How little peace can one have who vainly clutches a symbol when he is called at last to walk that last, long mile through the valley of the shadow of death. Let science mock, and let the unbeliever scorn the faith of God's people. They have, after all, something more precious than all the treasures of the world and all the powers of science. They have a living Redeemer who has conquered death for them.

ABORTION

One of the most widely discussed issues today is the subject of abortion. This is chiefly because there is a lot of talk concerning the revision of current abortion laws. Revision of abortion laws is euphemistically called "reform." For most of the history of this country laws permitted abortions only to save the life of a mother. Within the last decade, however, these laws have been relaxed in several states; and new laws permitted abortions for termination of a pregnancy when the life or physical or mental health of the mother was in danger; when the child to be born might have serious physical or mental defects because of use of drugs or because of pre-natal disease such as measles; when conception resulted from rape or incest. But, as was predicted at the time, these new laws did not satisfy the proponents of abortion. Already one state (Hawaii) has passed a new law which leaves the question of abortion a matter of discretion between a woman and her doctor. Other states are considering similar legislation. But most worrisome of all is the fact that the whole question of the legality of existing abortion laws is being tested in the courts. The argument is that present abortion laws deprive women of their rights under the Ninth Amendment. If the courts should sustain this argument (and there is some reason to believe they will — especially in the light of the fact that the current view of "law" is that the law must merely reflect the changing social ideas of the country), then it would be legally established in this land that one of a woman's inalienable rights is to have children or not to have them as she decided.

There are several reasons why revision of abortion laws is being considered. The first is the incidence of illegal abortions which are presently being performed in this country. Some estimate the number to be as high as one million. And because abortions are illegal, many are performed by unskilled people who are responsible for between 500 and 1,000 deaths per year resulting from poorly performed operations.

Secondly, there are what are called sociological reasons for revision of existing laws. Among these are a growing laxity in all matters sexual; a growing movement to emancipate women in various so-called "woman-liberation movements"; a need to improve the quality of life for individual families and to improve the quality of life for all through population control.

But most basic to the argument is the contention that the unborn fetus is not a viable person in the early part of pregnancy. According to *Newsweek*:

Most Protestant and Jewish theologians, in contrast, share the belief that the fetus doesn't acquire a human soul until it has developed sufficiently to exist outside the body — usually not before the 24th week.

It is in this way, of course, that the charge of murder is avoided. If the fetus is not a personality until it is able to live outside the womb then an abortion cannot be called murder.

The Roman Catholic Church has taken the position that human life begins at conception. With this we agree. Scripture assumes throughout that the unborn child is indeed a person from the moment of conception. While the forming of a child in the womb of its mother is a great mystery, prompting the ancient Psalmist of Israel to exclaim: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," the thesis that an unborn child is not a person is based on evolutionary presuppositions. Hence, the proponents of abortion cannot escape the charge that abortion is an act of murder.

All the arguments raised in favor of abortion are, on the surface, irresponsible and irrelevant. If it is true that there are one million illegal abortions performed every year, this horrible evil is not rectified by legalizing abortions. One does not do away with one evil by introducing another. It is undoubtedly correct that the clamor for abortion upon personal choice is closely connected with the growing laxity in morals. But this is no argument in favor of abortion. This simply points out how true Scripture is when it speaks of a departure from God's law as being followed by yet greater and greater sins. It may be that the world does consider

abortion in the light of the population crisis; but there is only really a population crisis for those who deny the return of Christ. To those who believe that Christ is coming again, the threat of an overpopulated world holds little fear.

But to legalize abortion is certainly a very evil thing. The whole conception of law in our day is wrong. No longer do men consider the fact that the laws which men make ought to reflect the will of God and God's laws which He has made; men look upon law as nothing else but sociology — a reflection of the current thinking of the majority of the citizenry. Then the laws of God are violated with impunity.

The Roman Catholic Church has traditionally maintained that abortion is wrong even when the life of the mother is threatened by a continued pregnancy. We realize that here is a difficult point. But, in general, it must be maintained that there are other considerations which enter in when such a problem arises. When a mother's life is itself at stake by the continuation of a pregnancy, then the wellbeing of her entire family must be considered. And it is entirely possible that if it is really a question of the life of the mother or the life of the unborn child, the life of the mother must be considered the most important.

Nevertheless, we maintain that this reveals an entirely different motive. Almost always abortion is recommended for an *unwanted* pregnancy. Where the life of an unborn child is sacrificed to preserve the life of the mother, the pregnancy is not unwanted for its own sake. It is to do away with unwanted pregnancies that is inspiring the present clamor for change. This is murder. It can be nothing else. Nothing man says or does will alter that. It is as brutal a murder as the murder of any infant. And those who break God's law will have to pay a terrible price.

Forgotten are the Psalmist's words: "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them."

ATTENTION STAFF MEMBERS

The Standard Bearer Staff will hold its annual meeting the Lord willing on Monday, June 8, 1970 at 8:00 p.m. at the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich. All department editors please take note of this meeting and reserve this evening. Included in the agenda will be the report of the survey committee. If unable to attend, please contact the undersigned.

Rev. J. Kortering, Secretary

BOOK REVIEWS

Do You Understand What You Read?, H. M. Kuitert (Translated by Lewis B. Smedes); Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.; 111 pp. (paper), \$1.95.

This is the notorious little book by the notorious Dutch theologian which has already created no little stir among Reformed people in the Netherlands. It embodies in rather concrete form the deviating views concerning the doctrine of Holy Scripture for which Dr. Kuitert has become notorious. Yes, I mean "notorious," not "famous." For, in my opinion, no truly Reformed man can classify Kuitert as anything but a heretic, in spite of all his avowals to the contrary.

Because I have offered extensive critique of the views of Dr. Kuitert as expressed in his lectures in Grand Rapids a couple years ago, and because the views underlying this book are the same views, I will not offer an extensive critique of this little book.

However, this reviewer wishes to add to his previous criticism of Kuitert's views this thought, that the thesis underlying this little book and the views previously criticized is a *proud* one. It is proud, in the first place, because it implies that now for the first time the church is at last learning how to read and understand the Scriptures. This evinces disdain not only for the church of the past and all its labors, but, what is worse, disdain for the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in the church down through the centuries. It is a proud thesis, in the second place, because it really places all the ordinary members of the church, ordinary believers, in the class of nincompoops who cannot understand the Scriptures without the assistance of theologians and learned men of science. This is also essentially a disdain of the work of the Holy Spirit, Who has been given not only to theologians, but also to the entire church. Is it not the attitude of the Scribes and Pharisees, who spoke of the common people as "this people who know not the law (and who) are accursed?" Admittedly, this criticism is severe; but it is my firm belief that it is deserved. And the sooner the churches realize that the stakes in the current battle against the so-called "new theology" in the Netherlands (and, by import, on this side of the ocean) are not some abstruse theological questions which can safely be debated within the confines of the confessions, but the very heritage of the faith itself, and that, too, at one of its most crucial points, the truth concerning Holy Scripture, — the sooner we realize this, the better.

I recommend this book in a negative way. I recommend it not for the value of its teachings. But I recommend that it be read, by those who cannot read the original Dutch version, in order that those who read may understand what is going on in the Reformed community. Read it — and condemn it.

H.C.H.

Interpreting God's Word Today, Edited by Simon Kistemaker; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 313 pages, \$6.95.

This book is essentially a symposium, not a unified work by one author. It consists of seven chapters by as many authors, and all the chapters have to do more or less with the subject expressed in the title of the book. All of the authors are of the Reformed tradition, and all would be classified as "conservative" or "orthodox." They are G. Van Groningen (Australia), who writes on "Genesis: Its Formation And Interpretation;" M. H. Woudstra (U.S.), who writes on "Even and Interpretation in the Old Testament;" S. Kistemaker (U.S.), who writes on "Formation and Interpretation of the Gospels;" J. C. De Young (U.S.), who writes on "Event and Interpretation of the Resurrection;" M. J. Arntzen (The Netherlands), who writes on "Inspiration and Trustworthiness of Scripture;" L. Praamsma (Canada), who writes on "Authority and Interpretation of Confessional Standards;" and M. H. Smith (U.S.), who writes on "Interpretation and Defense of the Faith."

This is not a book for every reader, but a rather technical work. As the dust jacket "blurb" has it, "the pastor, the teacher, the seminarian and the theologian" will value this book.

As is evident from the wide variety of chapter headings, this is neither a unified dogmatical treatise on the doctrine of Holy Scripture, nor a hermeneutics. The subjects treated in this book are of both a dogmatical and a hermeneutical nature, and partly of an apologetic nature.

It is impossible in the space of a brief review to offer a summary of the entire contents, much less to offer a detailed criticism. A few general comments must suffice:

- 1) The book suffers from its lack of unity, a lack which is due to the fact that it is only a symposium.
- 2) The book contains, in some chapters, far too much material about the views of others and frequently very little positive development of whatever views the writer himself may hold.
- 3) The book claims "to understand the past, evaluate the (new) insights, and build upon them." In the opinion of this reviewer, in some instances of an attempt to "build upon" the new insights, a break with the past is committed — or at least a compromise. And in some instances the book evinces a rather sterile, traditionalist view. Thus I consider, for example, M. J. Arntzen's attempt to maintain the old, traditional idea of a divine and a human element in Scripture. In the opinion of this reviewer, this distinction — though sometimes well-meant — is neither safe nor correct.

All in all, however, I would recommend that the theologian or budding theologian who wishes to keep abreast of current developments in respect to the doctrine of Holy Scripture would do well to study this book. It does indeed, require more than a superficial reading.

H.C.H.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy and that of the Congregation to our fellow elder and brother, Mr. John Dykstra, Jr., in the death of his father

MR. JOHN DYKSTRA, SR.

"The Lord knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever." Psalm 37:18.

Rev. J. Kortering, Pres.
Dewey Engelsma, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Senior Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church extends its sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. John Dykstra, Jr., in the passing of their father

MR. JOHN DYKSTRA, SR.,

whom the Lord called home on March 29, 1970.

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved family by His Word and Spirit.

Rev. J. Kortering, Pres.
Mrs. Dale Mensch, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church expresses deepest sympathy to two of its members, Miss Julia and Miss Ruth Dykstra, in the loss of their father,

MR. JOHN DYKSTRA

May the bereaved family be comforted with the word of God found in II Tim. 7&8 — "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

Mrs. G. Bol, Pres.
Mrs. R. Ezinga, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to two of its members, Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Meulenberg, in the passing of Mrs. Meulenberg's father,

MR. JOHN DYKSTRA.

"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." John 11:25.

Rev. M. Schipper, Pres.
Mrs. H. W. Kuiper, Sec'y.

OBITUARY

Our Heavenly Father called unto himself our beloved husband, father and grandfather,

JOHN DYKSTRA

into his eternal rest. Our comfort is found in the words of Jeremiah 31:3 "... Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

Mrs. John Dykstra, Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. Herman Dykstra
Mr. & Mrs. Christian Vander Stel
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Dykstra
Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Dykstra
Mr. & Mrs. Ernest Pluger
Miss Julia Dykstra
Mr. & Mrs. Boreas Dykstra
Mr. & Mrs. John Dykstra, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Dykstra
Miss Ruth Dykstra
Mr. & Mrs. William Hofman
Mr. & Mrs. H. P. Meulenberg
and his dear grandchildren

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church expresses deepest sympathy to its Bible Leader, Mr. John Faber, in the loss of his sister,

MRS. RICHARD ONDERSMA

May the bereaved be comforted with the word of God found in I Cor. 15:49 — "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Mrs. G. Bol, Pres.
Mrs. R. Ezinga, Sec'y.

NOTICE !!!

According to the decision of the Synod of 1969, the Consistory of The First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby notifies the churches that the 1970 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene, the Lord willing, on Wednesday, June 3, at 9 A.M. in the above mentioned church. The pre-synodical service will be held Tuesday evening, June 2, at 8 P.M., at First Church. Rev. C. Hanko, president of the 1969 Synod, will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service. Delegates in need of lodging should contact J. M. Faber, 1123 Cooper Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich., 49507.

J. M. Faber, Clerk

News From Our Churches

The last in a series of lectures in the Grand Rapids area was held in First Church on April 9. Rev. G. Lubbers, the chairman of the meeting, mentioned that the committee was happy with the subject chosen. We find ourselves living in the last hour — that is, between the cross and the return of Christ. Since we are a church of hope, the topic, “The Return of the Glorified Christ,” is of utmost importance and of very real interest to us. Rev. Lubbers also mentioned that the committee was happy to have as a speaker, Rev. G. Van Baren. That these feelings were justified was made abundantly clear in the course of the speech. Rev. Van Baren tried to impress on the minds of his listeners an awareness of the *nearness* of the end. We, too, are often so involved with worldly affairs that we ignore the fact that it won’t be long before Christ returns — possibly, even *likely*, in the lifetime of some of us. All the signs of the times point to the fact that the end is rapidly approaching. The Word of God emphasizes in connection with all these signs to *watch*, and in watching, to look up, for our deliverance is at hand.

Since we’re dealing with church extension work, anyway, we could quote this from Hudsonville’s bulletin: “The congregation is urged to cooperate with the consistory in submitting names for the distribution of Protestant Reformed Literature. The church has no other calling than to preach the gospel. All our members must be led by the desire that the truth we love reach others. Again, the congregation is urged to submit names.”

Along these same lines we find that in First Church of Grand Rapids a “mimeographed bulletin is available on the table at the front entrance. This is entitled ‘The Inspiration of Scripture’. This, too, can be used as a means of showing others what we confess to be the truth of God’s Word.”

The Sunday School Pamphlet racks in this same church are going to have to be replaced. The old ones don’t have enough compartments. The three latest additions are pamphlets on labor unions, creation, and ecumenicity by Revs. Heys, Van Baren, and H. Hanko respectively. Requests for these pamphlets come from as far away as England and Australia!

Concerning our missionary efforts in Jamaica which have obviously captured the interest of the young people: On Friday evening, April 24, the Young People’s Society of Southwest Church planned to sponsor a program featuring Rev. Lubbers and his pictures of his recent labors in Jamaica.

And on April 26 the Holland Young People’s Society planned a “Welcome Home” Singspiration for their pastor, Rev. J. Heys. Rev. Heys was due to arrive home about April 21. He writes that even though there have been, understandably, some disappointments and griefs, “it has been an enjoyable stay here.”

It seems that First Church of Grand Rapids was finding it rather difficult to continue financing a large share of the radio broadcasting of our denomination. When that became apparent, plenty of help was immediately forthcoming from other churches. We find proof of that in Hudsonville’s bulletin which contained a note of appreciation received from the consistory of First Church. It was an expression of “joy and gratitude” for the generous gift to “help us carry out our program of Radio Broadcasting.” It also noted that this gift, “plus the promised collections to be taken in our other churches, will quite likely care for the deficit in our budget for this work.” It’s noteworthy that there’s seldom, in our churches, a lack of support when a real need exists.

This note, yet, from Rev. R. Decker and family to the South Holland congregation, as found in that church’s bulletin. “We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to all of you for the warm reception we have received. We appreciate, too, our parsonage and the work that has been done to make it a comfortable home. The Christian hospitality and kindness of the congregation have made us feel a part of the congregation. Under the blessing of our Covenant God we look forward to a fruitful pastorate in your fellowship.” This bespeaks an already warm relationship between Pastor Decker and his new congregation.

D.R.D.