

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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Desiring The Milk Of The Word

Editorials:

Is Common Grace Still The Issue?

Rank Universalism

The Abortion Issue

(see: All Around Us)

When The King Calls

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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Meditation

Desiring The Milk Of The Word

Rev. M. Schipper

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

I Peter 2:1-3.

Wherefore! . . .

This word indicates that there is a very close connection between the words of our text and the preceding context. In fact, it points up that our text is a logical conclusion to that of which the apostle had been

speaking in the preceding chapter, especially the last part. There the apostle had instructed the saints relative to the fact that they had been born again from above, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. He

also informed them that the Word whereby they were born again is also by the gospel preached unto them. And this is done in such a way that this new life of regeneration is brought to living consciousness in them.

In our text the apostle stresses the point that this new life must be fed. The new man, shall he continue, must be nourished. However, shall he be properly fed, he must feed on the pure milk of the Word. Moreover, shall we be truly ready to feed on the pure milk of the Word, all the wickedness mentioned in the first part of the text must be done away.

Desiring the sincere milk of the Word!

What does this mean?

You realize, of course, that the apostle here is speaking in a figure. The figure is that of a newborn child in the natural sense of the word whose first cry is for the natural milk which his mother is able to supply. Milk in this natural sense has in it all the ingredients for body building. It is an indispensable requisite to the physical health and well-being of the child. Naturally the newborn child is not able to masticate strong meat. It must be fed pure, unadulterated milk. However, when the text speaks of newborn babes and of milk it refers to spiritually newborn babes in Christ, those who have been born again from above, and by the Word of God which abideth for ever. And the milk to which the apostle refers must also be understood in the spiritual sense of the word. It is with good reason that the translators added to the term "milk" the phrase "of the Word." These words do not appear in the original text, but as indicated in the translation, they are properly understood. The spiritual milk which the spiritually newborn babes in Christ ought to desire can be nothing else than the divinely instituted means of grace, the Word of God, which is proclaimed in the gospel.

Furthermore, according to the original text, the apostle describes that milk in a twofold way. First of all, he speaks of *rational* milk. This expression does not appear in the translation, but it is important that we see the importance of this. When the apostle uses this term with relation to the milk of the Word, he does so to emphasize the fact that the Word has to do with the mind and heart. He is reflecting on the fact that the soul, in distinction from the mouth, must feed on that which is spiritual and rational. And this is precisely what the Word is able to do. It will feed the mind and heart of the spiritually newborn babe. In the second place, the apostle describes that milk of the Word as *sincere*, that is, unadulterated, without any foreign admixtures. As in the natural sense the child will spew out adulterated milk, so in the spiritual sense the child of God must have pure, unadulterated milk of the Word, lest it nauseate him and he spew it out.

This is what the newborn babe in Christ should desire!

To desire is to long for, to strive after with all the

mind, and heart, and being. It is to pursue after that which one knows is essential, is necessary to fulfill a great need.

Here it is imperative that the babe in Christ desire earnestly the pure, unadulterated milk of the Word. As the sucking infant zealously probes with his nose for the nipple of the breast of his mother to procure his food, so the child of God is to desire both breasts of the Word of God, the Word as contained in the Old and New Testaments, the whole inspired Scriptures.

As newborn babes!

Beautiful comparison!

The natural child before its birth is connected to his mother by the umbilical cord through which it passively is fed by the mother. But as soon as the child is born and that umbilical cord is cut, the child is on its own. And the very first cry of the child is that it may be fed from the breasts of his mother. He will not stop crying until he has found physical satisfaction in the milk his mother is able to supply.

So in the spiritual sense of the word the newborn child of God will desire the pure milk of the Word. O, do not misunderstand the Word of God here! The implication is not that when the child of God grows older that he should desire anything else upon which to feed. Or, when the born again child of God grows older that its desire for the pure milk of the Word weakens. Rather, we ought to see that the apostle here is simply drawing a comparison between the natural new-born infant and the spiritually new-born infant, and showing with emphasis what his desire ought to be and the eagerness with which that desire ought to be displayed. Always the regenerated child of God ought to desire the milk of the Word, as the natural new-born child desires the breasts of his mother.

Shall this desire for the Word be what it ought to be, it will also be necessary that the child of God lay aside all wickedness as described in the first part of our text. This list which the apostle enumerates is not intended to be exhaustive. Surely all sins, even those not mentioned in the list, must not stand in the way of his realizing the desire for the Word. However, all the wickedness here mentioned is peculiarly that which is found in the church of Christ, where one is to feed on the pure Word of God.

We have not the space to dwell on this list of wickedness the apostle sets forth. As suggested above, the apostle could have said: "all wickedness." He could have included in this such sins as: adultery, stealing, disobedience, profanity, idolatry, etc. But these are intentionally omitted, in order that he might especially mention those wickednesses which one finds especially in the sphere where the Word is preached, and which make it impossible to be rightly and spiritually fed by the Word.

Take note of the text! Malice, that is, the wickedness which takes delight in cruelty that is meant to

hurt others. Guile, that is, that wickedness which delights to set traps whereby oneself or others are deceived. In close connection with guile, hypocrisies, that is, to wear a mask as a stage player, in order to feign oneself to be other than he is. Envy, that is, that green-eyed monster that cannot allow another to be esteemed more than self, or that cannot stand to see another to possess more than self. And perhaps the most wicked of all, evil speakings, that is, those wicked utterances, done in the dark, whereby one murders another with the tongue.

These all are to be put away from us! Allowing them to remain can not only spoil the proper reception of the Word upon which we are to feed; but also make it impossible to zealously desire to be fed with the Word. All of these must be put away from us so completely through the grace of sanctification that not one of them can interfere with the longing of our hearts after the Word, nor rob us of its proper reception with our regenerated hearts and minds. All these are not only the common sins found in the Christian church, but they are the present evils found in our old nature, which always clings to us, and against which we daily have to fight.

Put them away from you, and desire with all the love of your regenerated hearts the pure Word of the gospel that is able to save your souls!

That ye may grow thereby!

Into salvation!

The apostle does not allow the figure of the newborn child to fade from the picture. The only reason why such a child seeks for and feeds on milk is that it may grow, develop. Such is also the significance of the purpose of the newborn babe in Christ. The only difference between the figure and the reality is that the newborn babe in Christ does this consciously, while the natural newborn babe does not realize what it is doing. The child of God must not only desire to feed on the Word, but also to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. The translation has omitted the phrase "into salvation"; but we see no reason why these words should have been omitted. It stands to reason that if the new birth of which the apostle has been speaking is spiritual, and the rational, unadulterated Word of the gospel on which the new life is to feed is spiritual, that the purpose of the feeding process should also have a spiritual aim, that is, to grow and develop in the Christian experience of the saving grace of Christ. This should be the aim of all sound Christian growth.

If so be ye have tested that the Lord is gracious!

This last is found in italics in the original text. And this indicates that this part of the text is in part a quotation. The reference is to Psalm 34:8, where we read: "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

The thought that should be projected here is the fact that the apostle does not add this part of the text as a condition which we are to fulfill, as the translation might suggest, but the words can better be translated, "seeing that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

The born again child of God has through regeneration received new spiritual taste buds, and along with regeneration also receives a new and living power of faith, whereby he is able not only to feed consciously on the pure Word of God, but also to taste subjectively how gracious that Lord Jesus Christ, presented in the gospel as the God of his salvation, is.

When we were children, occasionally we were given a box of Cracker Jack for a treat. On the box appeared a slogan: "The More You Eat, The More You Want." As far as we know, you may still read this slogan on the box. We are not so sure that we always desired more Cracker Jack simply because we ate some. More probably we desired more because of the prizes such a box contains. But, beloved reader, it is absolutely true, that when the regenerated child of God has tasted the goodness and grace of Christ Jesus his Lord and of His saving power, the more he will desire to feed on that Word and that grace continually.

Never will that child of God relish the preaching of the Word that is mixed with the philosophy of man. Nor can he endure false doctrines that militate against the Word of God. Should he continue to be fed with these admixtures, he will continue to spew them out, or pine away in hunger.

On the other hand, when he continues to feed on the pure, reasonable Word of God, he will not only taste how gracious the Lord has been to him, but he will grow into the fulness of that salvation which the Lord has prepared for him. He will be enabled to put away from him every sin that would hinder the proper reception of the Word, and feed on that Word, which has the power to cause him to grow into the fulness of the salvation which the Lord graciously has prepared for him.

O taste and see that the Lord is indeed gracious! For He with sovereign grace has redeemed you with an everlasting salvation!

REMEMBER THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE R.F.P.A.

SEPTEMBER 30, FIRST CHURCH

Editorials

Is Common Grace Still The Issue? (3)

EXHIBIT NO. 1 : THE "DEKKER CASE"

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

Some weeks ago we began our discussion of this subject — a discussion which was interrupted by necessary editorial attention to other matters. At that time we promised to demonstrate that common grace is indeed still the underlying issue, the issue which lies at the basis of many ills which plague the Christian Reformed denomination today — ills of which many complain though they do not seem to see their cause. While we recognize the fact of almost fifty years since the Three Points of Common Grace were adopted by the Christian Reformed Synod of 1924, and while we recognize the fact of the attendant progress and doctrinal development which have taken place since that time, it is our contention that there is a definite connection, a connection of cause and effect between 1924 and the state of affairs today. And it is, therefore, our contention that those who are or who claim to be interested in reformation in the Christian Reformed Church today must recognize this connection; and if they would achieve genuine and successful reformation, they must go to the root of the difficulties and repudiate the errors of 1924 and return to the true Reformed position with respect to the sovereign, particular grace of God. One may attempt to turn the clock of history back a couple of decades to a more conservative era in the Christian Reformed Church, when the fruits of the errors of the Three Points had not yet become as evident as today. One may attempt to ignore the issue and may imagine that somehow reformation may be achieved without going to the heart of the problems. Neither of these courses of action will make the problem go away.

For not only is there an intrinsic doctrinal connection between 1971 and 1924, and not only is there a clear line of development from 1924 to the present; but there is also a spiritual, ethical connection. God, the God of His church, the God Who calls His church to be His witnesses, the God Who calls His church to reformation, will not be mocked. He calls His church not to partial obedience to the truth of the gospel. He calls His church not to partial reformation. He calls His church not to partial repentance — and remember, reformation always implies repentance! But He calls His church to full and complete reformation and obedience to the truth of His Word. Nothing less will do before the face of God, Who is righteous in all His ways, also in His dealings with the church. This is pre-

cisely the seriousness of these matters. As long as you view doctrinal differences as mere differences between man and man, between theologian and theologian; as long as you view complaints concerning ills in the church as legitimate or less than legitimate "gripes" against a human institution; as long as you consider the church to be man's; so long you can take half-way measures, or you can find a solution that will satisfy all, and you can make accommodations. But as soon as you stand *coram Deo*, before the face of God, things are altogether different!

From this point of view, we must remember that there was fundamental departure from the Reformed faith in 1924. There was church political corruption perpetrated in 1924. There was ecclesiastical injustice committed in 1924. The Christian Reformed Church has never made the slightest move to correct this. And the Christian Reformed Church has continued down through the years to reap the evil fruits of its wrongdoings ever since. Be not deceived: what a man soweth, that shall he also reap!

From this same point of view, it is high time that those who are concerned about the present tendencies in the Christian Reformed denomination and who are interested in reformation should face up to the reality that no half-way measures will do, and that should half-way measures be attempted, the church will only find itself afflicted by the same sickness and paralysis which makes it impossible to keep out the poison of Arminianism and universalism and world-conformity which has for so long been eating at the vitals of the Christian Reformed denomination.

Whom do I have in mind when I write thus?

In general, first of all, whom the shoe fits, let him put it on.

More specifically, I have in mind a movement like the Association of Christian Reformed Laymen, a group who have recently come in for severe and fundamentally unjust criticism from *The Banner* and for whom I have deep sympathy, but whom I must nevertheless sympathetically criticize and counsel to change their ways. I have in mind, too, the movement of the Christian Reformation Church, which, as I suggested before, did not really accomplish reformation in the full sense. I have in mind, further, a considerable group of people (and these are from various denominations of the Reformed tradition) who are seeking refuge in

the working toward a kind of conservative fellowship of a generally Reformed and Presbyterian brand, who are satisfied to be evangelical, but who are not concerned to be purely and specifically Reformed. I do not know whether they are working toward or at least keeping the options open for the eventual formation of a new denomination, which would then be an amalgam of concerned and conservative elements from various apostatizing denominations of the Reformed and Presbyterian household. But I do know that I have seen no evidence of a willingness to return completely and wholeheartedly to the Reformed faith. These, too, I would warn that they should not be satisfied with half-way measures — especially not for the sake of size and numbers.

But now let me turn to my subject proper.

Exhibit Number 1 in evidence of the fact that the common grace doctrine of the First Point of 1924 is still the underlying issue is the “Dekker Case.” Perhaps I should not say the “Dekker Case,” but the sad conclusion to the “Dekker Case,” the failure and inability of the Christian Reformed Church, after long study and debate, to condemn the rank Arminianism and universalism taught by one of its seminary professors, Prof. Harold Dekker, and supported by many others.

It may be well, in this connection, that we remind ourselves of the First Point. It reads as follows:

Relative to the first point, which concerns the favorable attitude of God towards humanity in general and not only towards the elect, synod declares it to be established according to Scripture and the Confession that, apart from the saving grace of God shown only to those that are elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general. This is evident from the Scriptural passages quoted and from the Canons of Dordrecht, II, 5 and III, IV, 8 and 9, which deal with the general offer of the Gospel, while it also appears from the citations made from Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed theology that our Reformed writers from the past favored this view. (Note: The Scripture passages quoted in support of this point were Psalm 145:9; Matthew 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35, 36; Acts 14:16, 17; I Timothy 4:10; Romans 2:4; Ezekiel 33:11; and Ezekiel 18:23.)

Let us remind ourselves further, in this connection, that actually this First Point of 1924 contains two errors. The first is the error of the Kuyperian theory of common grace. For when this point declares that “apart from the saving grace of God shown only to those that are elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general,” it intends to express the Kuyperian view that God is gracious to all men in common, elect and reprobate, godly and ungodly, when He bestows on them the things of this present life, such as rain and sunshine, life and health, wealth and possessions, gifts and talents — all the good things of this

present time. And let me hasten to add that no one will deny that they are in themselves good things. All these good things of this present time, according to this view, are a manifestation of God’s gracious attitude to all men.

But we must not forget that when the Synod of 1924 attempted to support its view from the confessions of the Reformed churches, it unwittingly fell into the Arminian error of general grace. When in its reference to Canons II, 5 and Canons III, IV, 8, 9 and its appeal to such passages as Romans 2:4, Ezekiel 33:11, and Ezekiel 18:23 the Synod speaks of the “general offer of the gospel” as a manifestation of the grace of God to all the hearers, without distinction, then this First Point lapses into the Arminian conception that the saving grace of God is intended for all men individually. For it is evident that the *gospel* involves saving grace.

Hence, there are two theories involved in this First Point. The first we may designate by the term *common grace*. This is supposed to be a grace, not saving, which is common to godly and ungodly, elect and reprobate, manifested in the bestowal upon men in common of the good things of this present time. The second is the error of *general grace*, a grace of God which is saving and which is intended for all men individually, or at least for all men who hear the preaching of the gospel.

Both of these views are clearly implied in the First Point. And it would not be difficult to demonstrate from many writings subsequent to 1924 that this was indeed the way the defenders of the First Point understood matters. What they would never admit, of course, was that either of these teachings was erroneous and that neither of them finds support in Scripture and the confessions.

The opponents of the Three Points, particularly the late Revs. Herman Hoeksema and George M. Ophoff, not only criticized the explicit errors of these pronouncements; but they also repeatedly predicted that the Arminianism with respect to the preaching of the gospel which is expressed in the First Point would eventually lead to more Arminianism. More than once they prophesied that ultimately the error of the First Point would ultimately lead to a denial of particular atonement and the teaching of general atonement, for example. This can be shown from their writings.

What happened after 1924?

The Synod had directed that these doctrines be further studied and spelled out. However, after the initial post-1924 flurry of writings, Christian Reformed theologians were virtually silent about common grace. They avoided further polemics. They also failed to heed the injunction of their own synod to develop these doctrines. The Christian Reformed Church began to follow a two-track theology; and when confronted by the inconsistency of these two tracks, refuge was sought in the “mystery.” Even the discussion with the De Wolf

group in the late 1950s showed no fundamental change in position, either for better or for worse.

Then in 1962 Prof. Harold Dekker threw the denomination into mild turmoil by maintaining that God loves all men with a redemptive love and that Christ died for all men, so that it was proper to say to any man, "God loves you," and, "Christ died for you." In other words, he taught the errors of a universal redemptive love of God and of general atonement. I say "mild turmoil" because it is simply amazing that in an officially Reformed denomination a seminary professor could get away with such Arminian and universalistic pronouncements and not be promptly suspended and deposed. Instead, you will recall, discussion, debate, and study went on for several years. The conclusion in 1967 was that the Synod refrained from adopting certain recommendations of its own Doctrinal Study Committee which condemned Prof. Dekker's position and gave the professor an official light tap on the knuckles, not, mind you, for false doctrine, but for making *ambiguous and abstract statements*, (cf. *Acts of Synod of the Christian Reformed Church*, Articles 144, 177.) In other words, it has now become possible in the Christian Reformed Church to make pronouncements which are of the rankest Arminian character, and to do so with impunity. Prof. Dekker's doctrinal position concerning the love of God and the atonement stands today *uncondemned!*

Notice the development, both in corruption of doctrine and in perversion of discipline:

1) In 1924 officebearers were deposed and expelled because they refused to subscribe to the First Point, insisted that God's grace is always sovereign and for the elect only, both in the things of this present time and in the preaching of the gospel, while Synod itself gave testimony that those who were so disciplined were Reformed in the fundamentals.

2) In 1967 Synod not only failed to discipline but refused even to condemn the doctrinal statements of a seminary professor who proposed doctrines which are literally Arminian and directly in conflict with the Reformed confessions.

But is there a connection between 1924 and 1967? Consider the following facts:

1) No one who wrote about the so-called "Dekker Case" could do so without reference to 1924. Everyone would expect, of course, that from the Protestant Reformed direction reference would be made to 1924. But Prof. Dekker himself and those who supported him (notably Dr. James Daane, but also others) argued cogently that they were only carrying to its proper consequence the position of 1924. And Prof. Dekker's opponents immediately felt bound to defend the traditional, but inconsistent interpretation of 1924.

2) The Synod itself, in appointing a study committee and giving it a mandate, was aware that the pronouncement of the First Point was inevitably involved.

3) The Doctrinal Study Committee explicitly referred to 1924 at length, was at pains to defend the idea of a general well-meant offer of the gospel (without any general atonement basis), and maintained, too, the idea of universal, non-saving benefits of Christ's atonement (something which 1924 did not do: it failed to relate so-called common grace to the cross!), and even tried, but failed dismally, to present in harmonious relationship the general offer and the election of God.

4) Whenever, on the floor of Synod — and I was present, — the discussion turned to the doctrinal issues involved, 1924 and its doctrine of the general offer of grace inevitably became involved.

5) At the conclusion of the "Dekker Case," the Rev. Wm. Haverkamp wrote concerning Synod's decision: "One thing became indeed very plain from the entire history, namely, that among the participants in the discussion and in the reports about the case there was never any disagreement about the question whether Scripture teaches the well-meant offer of grace."

But is the connection between 1924 and 1967 an intrinsic connection? Was 1967 an inevitable doctrinal development of 1924?

To this question also the answer must be affirmative.

Consider, in the first place, that the principle of the First Point is that of *universalism*. True, in 1924 the attempt was made to say "both . . . and." But 1924 and its First Point principally contradicted the fundamental distinction of election and reprobation. It made God's grace common and general. From that point, once the principle of particularism was fundamentally contradicted, it was but a matter of time before it would be flatly denied. And when the time came, there was no way of stopping it. Principles work through, you see!

Consider, in the second place, that 1924 left a void which cried out to be filled. With respect to the error of the well-meant offer of salvation, the question was repeatedly asked: how can God offer to all men that which He does not have, namely, salvation? For in 1924, of course, no one yet wanted to say that Christ died for all men. But the question was left without an answer, except the wholly unsatisfactory answer that this is a mystery. Again, it was but a matter of time before someone would frankly face up to that question and fill that void, accepting the consequence of the Arminianism of the First Point with respect to the preaching of the gospel. This, in effect, is what Prof. Dekker did. He said, in effect: the general, well-meant offer of the gospel is possible because Christ died for all men. "There is neither need nor warrant for retaining the concept of limited atonement, as it has been traditionally used among us." And again, no one could possibly stop Prof. Dekker! Principles work through!

Do not make the mistake of thinking that I am concentrating on Prof. Dekker. I am not!

My point is that the Christian Reformed Church today is impotent and even unwilling to do anything at all about Arminianism. In fact, Arminianism is defended and supported. And there is little sensitivity for the beautiful Reformed truth of salvation and against the Arminian pseudo-gospel. This is, of course, also the reason why both officially and unofficially the churches can support all kinds of wildly Arminian evangelism movements such as that of Billy Graham and Campus Crusade. In fact, recently the *Reformed*

Journal, by carrying an article by a non-Christian Reformed writer, openly propagated not only Arminianism, but complete universalism. And to date no one has raised a voice against it!

What is the answer?

Repudiate 1924 and its First Point! Unless you do, you are fundamentally impotent to maintain the Reformed faith over against complete Arminianism, and, ultimately, total universalism.

Rank Universalism

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

Elsewhere in this issue we made reference to the *Reformed Journal's* propagating of rank universalism, be it through the pen of a non-Christian Reformed writer. The reference was to the July-August issue, in which an article by Gracia Fay Ellwood appears. The article is entitled "Birth of a New World." On page 2 it is introduced as follows: "The article "Birth of a New World" was originally a sermon preached in St. John's Episcopal Church, Los Angeles, on December 6, 1970. Gracia Fay Ellwood is the author of *Good News from Tolkien's Middle Earth* (1970), two essays exploring the mythical world of the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. She holds the M.A. degree in theology and literature from the University of Chicago Divinity School."

There is much in this so-called "sermon" which could be criticized. In fact, there is no gospel in the entire article. But here is the section, at the end of the sermon, to which we had reference:

"What sort of supernatural events shall we look for? Our creed says that Jesus will return in glory, and that his Kingdom shall have no end — that is, no limit, for he is Lord of all. I am not sure just what it means that Jesus will return, but we can be sure that it means more, not less, than the wildest and most beautiful thing ever imagined. If his Kingdom shall have no limit we can expect that every moment of past time will be transformed; that is, every human being that ever lived, every animal, every blade of grass will be revealed as transformed and charged with the glory of God.

"Let us hasten the great day! For he is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think!"

I have reference especially, of course, to the statement that "... every human being that ever lived ... will be revealed as transformed and charged with the glory of God."

Perhaps some would excuse such rank heresy from the *Reformed Journal* by means of the statement in the masthead, "The comments and opinions published in the *Reformed Journal* are not, by reason of that

fact, necessarily shared by the publisher, or every member of the editorial staff, or every non-staff contributor, or every advertiser. Moreover, no one, unless he expressly so states, presumes to speak in the name of any business firm, school, church, institution, person or group of persons." A very neat negative statement!

Yet the following facts remain:

1) On its cover the *Reformed Journal* calls itself "A Periodical of Reformed Comment and Opinion."

2) Someone, presumably the editorial staff (?) must have decided to place this article in this "Periodical of Reformed Comment and Opinion."

3) No member of the editorial staff anywhere expresses any disagreement with this or any other part of the article. The article is simply placed as a presumably worthy contribution in "A Periodical of Reformed Comment and Opinion." The conclusion would seem to be warranted that the article is placed as belonging in the category of "Reformed Comment and Opinion."

One tends to expect almost anything in the *Reformed Journal* — anything, that is, except Reformed comment and opinion

But this universalism is about the worst thing they have published recently.

I would like to see a repudiation by a responsible representative of the *Reformed Journal*, and, along with it, some thorough-going "Reformed Comment and Opinion" about the entire miserably modernistic article.

Or do the members of the editorial staff (Harry R. Boer, James Daane, Lewis B. Smedes, George Stob, Henry Stob, Nicholas Wolterstorff) agree with this modernism and call it "Reformed Comment and Opinion?" Let them say!

All Around Us

The Abortion Issue

Prof. H. Hanko

In the last issue of the *Standard Bearer* we were talking about the recent legalization of abortion and the controversy which is surrounding this issue. We discussed the fact that the central question involved in abortions is the question of a violation of the sixth commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." And we noticed that this question must be answered by defining the nature of the foetus. The question that is asked therefore is: When does the soul enter the body of the unborn child? Those who ask this question do so on the grounds that if the soul enters the body at the moment of conception, then the foetus is living and abortion is murder. If the soul does not enter the body until some time later, perhaps as late as birth, then abortion is not murder, but can be compared with an operation in which the tonsils are removed.

We suggested in our last article that this was a poor way of framing the question. It is alleged by some, also in the Church, (and we quoted in this connection somewhat at length from an article by Dr. Henry Stob) that there is no Scriptural data which indicates to us the time when the soul enters the body. We are inclined to agree with this. But the reason is that the question is wrongly framed. And when one asks wrong questions, one always gets wrong answers. To ask the question, "When does the soul enter the body?" is to make a false and anti-Scriptural distinction between soul and body which really makes more problems than it solves. The old idea, originating in Greek philosophy, is that the body is some sort of container into which the soul is put. In this container the soul resides for a bit; and, when death arrives, the soul escapes from its prison and is free from the fetters of the body. Scripture never speaks of man in this fashion. Already in connection with the creation of man, Scripture tells us: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Gen. 2:7.

We do not want to go into detail in a discussion of this important text in this article, for it would lead us far away from our subject. But it is certainly clear on the very face of it that man, as a complete creation of God, is called "a living soul." To ask the question, therefore, "When does the soul enter the body?" is to obscure the issue. No help can be expected from Scripture in seeking an answer to such a strange and unbiblical question.

Others have phrased the question in this way: When does the foetus become alive? This too, is a most peculiar

way to put the question; and it is of little help. The argument is, of course, that if the foetus is alive at the moment of conception, then abortion is murder. But if it is not alive until some later point in its development, then abortion performed prior to that time cannot be called murder. Physicians refer to this when they speak of the time when a foetus becomes "viable." And generally speaking, they refer to that time when the foetus can live outside its mother's womb. But, we are sure, this is not the proper approach to the question either. The all-important question is: What is here meant by "life?" From one point of view, there is no one who can deny (be he believer or unbeliever) that the foetus is alive from the very moment of conception. This is true because every cell is living. The cells which go to make up trees are living cells. The spermatozoa and the ovum which, when united, result in conception are living. And the resultant fertilized ovum is alive.

But if by this question of being alive is meant the time when a foetus is able to live outside its mother's womb (usually at about six months), there is little more help given to the problem. Just because a foetus is not yet able to live outside its mother, does not mean that this foetus is only a mass of tissue similar to an appendix. It does not even mean that this foetus is nothing else but a human-being-in-the-process-of-becoming, as Dr. Stob avers. This is a most foolish line of reasoning for it pleased God that people, human beings, men and women would be born through this process of development which begins at conception and continues even beyond birth until a person is matured physically and psychologically.

If one persists in asking these kinds of questions, it seems to me that no certain answers will ever come and no positive directive of Scripture will ever be found.

But Scripture takes quite a different view of the matter. It looks at man, above all, as a person. After all, the animals as well as man, are called in Scripture, living souls. The distinction between the two is finally that man is a personal being; the animals are not. And this is, after all, what murder is all about. Murder is not the killing of a tree. It is not the killing of a flower. It is not even the killing of a dog or a lion or an antelope. Murder is the killing of a *person*.

This, it seems to me, is the distinction that needs so badly to be made. It is not our intention either in this article to discuss at length the whole question of what is meant by "person" in Scripture. This would involve

us in spiritual and psychological discussions which would detain us in our discussion of abortion. Suffice it to say therefore, that in connection with the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, this is precisely the distinction which Scripture makes. Scripture is very clear on one fundamental point in connection with the birth of Christ. Jesus Christ united in the Second Person of the holy trinity the divine nature and the human nature. His human nature was a complete human nature both as to body and soul. The distinction therefore, in Christ's incarnation is a distinction between His divine Person and His human nature. And it is this distinction which is applicable also to men. It is far better and far clearer to distinguish between person and nature than to force on man some mechanical distinction between body and soul.

But if we phrase the question in this way, then it becomes immediately apparent that Scripture has a great deal to say about the question of abortion. That is, Scripture does not deal directly with the moral question of whether abortion is right or wrong. You will not find a single text which explicitly prohibits abortion. And this need not surprise us, for Scripture is not a codebook of moral precepts in which every moral contingency of life is completely discussed and moral directives explicitly set forth. Scripture deals with fundamental principles. And it expects that the regenerated and enlightened child of God will have the sanctified wisdom to apply these principles to his walk and calling in the midst of the world. In fact, that which is objectively set forth in the Scriptures by infallible inspiration is subjectively sealed upon the hearts of the people of God by the operation of the Spirit so that they may know the will of God in all things. Perhaps the unbelievers cannot understand these Scriptural principles. But Scripture does not bother about them. They are blinded by their unbelief. But the eyes and hearts of God's people are opened and they know the truth.

There can be no doubt about it at all that Scripture speaks of the foetus, as yet unborn, as a person. This is evident from many passages of Scripture. Let us turn to some of them to illustrate this point.

In the first place, in a general way, we may say that Scripture always speaks of a child as yet unborn as a person, a human being. This is always true. Whenever the birth of a child is announced, its conception and birth is spoken of as the conception and birth of a *child*. Scripture does not speak of the conception of a mass of tissue, of the conception of a human-being-in-the-process-of-becoming. It speaks of a person and talks of that child as a person from the very outset. This was true when God announced Isaac's conception and birth to Abraham and Sarah. The same is true of the announcement of Samson's birth, the birth of John the Baptist and many others.

In the second place, when Scripture speaks directly

of a child yet unborn, it always speaks of this child as being a person in a very real and literal sense. In Job 10:8, 11, 12, Job opines: "Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit." Notice that Job speaks of himself before the time of his birth as a person. Perhaps somewhat less clearly, the Psalmist does the same in Psalm 119:73: "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments." The same general idea is expressed in Isaiah 49:1, 5: "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength." It makes no principle difference whether the reference here is to Israel as a nation formed from Jacob, to the prophet Isaiah himself, or prophetically, to Christ. The point itself is clear enough. God deals with men as persons from the moment of conception.

More clearly, David expresses this very beautifully in Psalm 139:13-18: "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee." It seems difficult to imagine that David, in describing the wonder of his formation in the womb of his mother and ascribing it all to the mysterious work of God can refer only to a blob of tissue. He speaks emphatically that he personally was made in secret and wrought by God's hand.

From another point of view, there are some texts which speak of activities which can only belong to that of a person. In Gal. 1:15, Paul speaks of God separating him from his mother's womb. It might be objected that this means the moment of Paul's birth; but the preposition here means literally "out of" and could quite possibly refer to the fact that even before Paul was born, God had set Paul aside to be an apostle to the Gentiles. (cf. vs. 16) If this is true, then surely it means that God dealt with Paul as a person even before he was born. This essential idea is much more clearly

set forth in the case of the prophet Jeremiah. In explanation of His call to Jeremiah, God tells the prophet: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Jeremiah 1:5. It is expressly stated here that God sanctified and ordained Jeremiah before he was born. Surely God sanctifies and ordains persons only. The text seems conclusive in this respect.

The instance of John the Baptist is similar. The angel Gabriel told Zacharias in the temple that John would "be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb." Again the preposition is literally "out of", and the sentence reads: "... out of his mother's womb." But more importantly for our discussion, we read that when Mary, the mother of the Lord, entered the home of the pregnant Elizabeth, Elizabeth's babe leaped in her womb. Dr. Stob does not find this text in any way conclusive. But the fact of the matter is that John's leap in the womb of his mother was a response to the presence of Mary, the mother of Christ. And, as such, it could be the act of a person only. No doubt it was a miracle and served to announce to Elizabeth the presence of the mother of Christ not only, but the presence of Christ Himself. But the miracle was nevertheless performed in such a way that a personal action was performed by John before he was born whether he himself was conscious of it or not.

And yet, conclusive, it seems to me, is the fact that Christ Himself was personal from the moment of conception. This assertion is stated here as proof that the foetus is a person on the grounds that there is an analogy between the conception and birth of Christ and our conception and birth. But this analogy is justified on the grounds that Scripture itself tells us that Christ was like unto his brethren in all things — except sin. Although His birth was miraculous in that Christ had no earthly father and that conception took place by the operation of the Holy Spirit, there is no reason at all to conclude that there is a fundamental difference between Christ's conception and birth and our's with respect to the point we are here making. Surely Christ was a person from the moment of His conception. The Second Person of the trinity came to

unite Himself with our flesh; not at some later point in Christ's life after birth (as some ancient heresies in the early Church maintained), but from the moment of conception. He was the eternal Son of God in our flesh from the moment conception took place in Mary's womb. Paul states emphatically in Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." And Paul writes to the Philippians: "(Christ) made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Phil. 2:7. Indeed, it seems to us to border on the blasphemous that Christ was anything else but the eternal Son of God in our flesh from the moment of conception. And the Church has always confessed: "I believe . . . in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

What then is the conclusion of the matter? Scripture, after all, gives very clear and unmistakable guidelines in this question of abortion. Scripture never speaks in any other way of the unborn child but as a person. To take that life is to take the life of a person. And that is murder, nothing less. We have said before that there are surely instances when even taking the life of the unborn child is not murder. This is true, e.g., when the life of the mother herself is threatened. Then the life of the mother must be weighed over against the life of the child. No one in the Church of Christ so far as I know, with the exception of Roman Catholics in the past, have denied this. But these circumstances are different. One life is then set over against another.

But when unborn children are killed for reasons physical, social, psychological — all of which are ultimately selfish, then murder is indeed the crime committed.

But how fearful then becomes the legalization of abortion. Not only are thousands and hundreds of thousands of murders of unwanted children committed in this country every year; but these very murders are legalized. The law, instituted to protect human life, is turned against human life. Who can predict when this will end? Sanctioning coldblooded murder in one area of life will inevitably lead to the sanctioning of murder in other areas of life. God is not mocked. What a man sows that shall he also reap.

In His Fear

When The King Calls

Rev. John A. Heys

She had a beautiful voice, and she knew how to use it.

It was one of those voices that stands out and makes you aware of the fact that here is something truly

exceptional. Hearing a voice like it you hold on with your soul to each note, and then enjoy the next one fully as much, even when the words are not understood. Not that she did not pronounce each syllable as perfectly and clearly as she sent forth from her mouth notes that were perfectly in pitch. But the full, rich sound would so grip you that you often forgot to listen to the words.

Some would say it was prophetic. More likely it was a matter of wishful thinking that her parents, who likewise were skilled musicians, from the day of her birth called her Melody. It was to her, however, a matter of constant irritation to bear such a unique name; and early in those years when inescapably she became a teenager, she succeeded in getting her friends — and what was harder, her teachers — to call her Dee.

It hardly need be stated that she was often featured in the high school programs both within and without the school, except that this explains how she met Bill. Well, no, they would have met anyway, because they went to the same high school. And though they not only were members of different churches of denominations that differed greatly in their interpretation of Scripture, but also lived on opposite sides of the city, it was inevitable that they would be in the same class for various subjects. But because Bill was also a talented musician, who likewise could hold an audience spellbound, particularly when he played the organ, he was chosen to accompany Dee. He could make an organ talk. Give him an organ, large or small, he always managed to get something out of it that you were surprised was in that organ. This explains his role as accompanist for Dee, and why there sprang up a very intimate friendship between them.

You might call it a “natural,” and say that they certainly were meant for each other. You could not rightly call it a “spiritual.” Bill had a very sound, strict and Biblical training. He knew the truths of his church, was well versed in the Scriptures, and not only knew the attacks upon the truth but how to refute them. For this reason he would never have sought an intimate friendship with Dee. For he knew the doctrinal position of her church and believed it to be dishonouring to God, as all false doctrines are.

Dee, however, was not too particular about the words of the songs which she sang. The melody, the harmony and rhythm were the principal thing with her. It was the music, not the message, that determined for her whether she would sing the song or not. There was, for example, that song — to call it a hymn would not be correct at all — that has that terrible line in it that goes something like this, “Don’t spare me anything that you endured for me.” It made Bill shudder because he examined the words and tested them with Scripture. It was not simply that his church would not allow such words to be sung in or out of his church. Bill understood that Christ endured the awful torments

of hell for us, and that it was a great sacrilege to pray to God in song that He would *not* spare us that terrible woe. He understood that the work of Christ on the cross had for its purpose delivering us from that awful suffering. To his mind came the text of God Himself, “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?” Romans 8:32.

When he and Dee went out, they often had some very lively arguments about the teachings of their respective churches. Her training was quite superficial, and Bill was able to get a few points across, and to open her eyes to the truths that she had never been taught. One evening she bluntly said that she did not believe all this stuff about many being called and few chosen, and believed that the doctrine of election was a theory drawn up by some who wanted to deny the responsibility of man. That is, she believed this until Bill pointed out to her that Jesus Himself had said in Matthew 20:16 that many are called and few are chosen, and again in Matthew 22:14 as well as in other passages. He also pointed out that Paul speaks in Ephesians 1:4 of some being chosen in Christ *from before the foundation of the world*.

There were times when they broke up because of their inability to agree on the proper interpretation of Scripture. Yet musically they needed each other and were soon back together again. Bill did refuse to go to prison with her, after she persuaded him to do so that one Sunday afternoon with a group of other young people. That night he asked her why they went to those who had fallen the lowest, and why they went to murderers and the vilest and most immoral people to tell them that God loves *them* and to offer salvation to *them*, while they, on the way to prison, had not stopped to do this to those respectable, law-abiding but unchurched people that they had met.

At times — and this bothered Bill no little — Dee spoke very flippantly and derisively of the sovereignty of God, and drew the point of the responsibility of man so far that by implication the sovereignty of God was completely denied. Bill strove patiently until he got her to see that if we lose the sovereignty of God, we have no responsibility of man left. “Look”, he said, “If God is not sovereign, why do we have to give answer to Him?” Dee was honest to admit this point, and Bill assured her that he did believe the responsibility of man. He quoted Luke 22:22 which declares that Judas betrayed Christ *as God had determined it*, but Jesus also adds, “Woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed,” and this speaks of man’s responsibility.

But let’s face it, they were caught up in a natural love that always brought them together again. Bill’s parents sent many prayers to the throne of grace that Bill might not throw away the truth for a wife, and that he might remain firm in the truth. Dee’s parents were not that concerned. Being skilled musicians they

took to Bill even with his different views of Scripture. "We are all going to the same place," they said, "only on different roads." And they did rather like the strict discipline maintained in Bill's church. There was something good about that. "Better it is," they philosophized, "to see her in a stricter church than in one more broadminded than our own."

As the hymn has it, "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." The matter was quickly coming to a head. Bill and Dee were approached by a recording company and offered a contract to make a series of albums. At first both were quite excited and just as flattered. But then the old problem returned. Some of the songs that Dee thought did the most for her voice — the glory of God in song now was an afterthought, even though she claimed to be the "evangelical" type who loved to sing for the "saving of souls" — were those that denied the sovereignty of God in the sphere of our salvation and made Him dependent upon man and his "free will." When Bill threatened not to sign the contract, if she would sing any of these songs on the album, Dee remained adamant and said that her father could accompany her on those songs. But Bill let her know in equally clear language that he would not appear on the same record with such songs that exalted man above God, denying Him His glory to give it to a creature. Both of them went home with troubled thoughts.

It was not easy for Bill, but he held to his point. And it was Dee who broke down to call him some days later and arrange for a date the following evening to discuss this matter further.

"Bill", she said that night, "Why don't we accept that offer of a contract? If you will agree to this first album, and we establish a name in the record world, I'll promise not to sing any songs that you do not like on the subsequent albums. If we can just get people to listen to us on the first album, look at the field we will have for future albums. Didn't Paul write to one of the churches which he served that he caught them with guile?"

"No", Bill said, "I certainly would like to cut an album or two or three. But we do not have to do this. We do not have to accept this offer of a contract. If we do not, the recording company will be disappointed, and according to you, we will hurt ourselves. But surely we are not committing some kind of sin when we turn down an offer. The recording company cannot fine us, punish us, get court action against us for turning down their offer. We may hurt ourselves materially, but they will have no right to hurt us for turning down their offer."

Dee was ready to stamp her foot and unleash a barrage of hot words upon Bill, for this did mean so very, very much to her. It did to Bill as well, but he had

been taught to give up those things of the flesh which could be gotten only in the way of sin. And he did consider it sin to sing that which denies God His glory and corrupts the truth of God's Word. But Dee noticed that same strange look in Bill's eyes that she had noticed when earlier in the evening he came to pick her up for their date.

"Dee", he said, "I have news for you. I cannot accept this offer of the contract. I do not have to, as I just pointed out to you. But I cannot either. This noon in the mail came a notice from my draft board that I must appear for induction into the army. And, Dee, this is no offer for me to enter the army, it is a command. If I do not heed it, I sin, and I will be considered by our government to have committed a crime, for which I will be punished.

"Think it over once. Does my draft board have more authority than God? Is it more sovereign than He is? Is our government vested with more power and authority than God? Our government does not punish those who do not volunteer to serve in the army in answer to its call extended through advertising. It offers a place in the armed forces together with certain benefits in an effort to get a volunteer army. But it does not punish those who do not enlist. And it never calls them in to give an answer as to why they did not heed that call. In fact it often *rejects* those who do accept its offer of a place in the armed services. But once it has given you a physical, classified you, and called to you to appear for induction, it will haul you in for an answer as to why you resisted them and disobeyed their command.

"Is the *call* of the gospel a call or simply a desire like that of a government that wants a volunteer army but cannot punish those who do not volunteer? Or is it like the government when it sends the call of a military draft for one to appear for induction?"

"Consider God to be like the recording company that can be disappointed and that has no power other than to offer a contract, and you not only deny God's sovereignty but also man's guilt before Him when man rejects his "offer of salvation." See Him as the Scriptures present Him, see Him as the God Who remains sovereign in every step of our salvation, Who *commands* men to repent and believe, and you can understand the teachings of Matthew 11:21-24 and of John 12:48 that God will *judge and punish* men for not believing in His Son and for not receiving Him as their Saviour. When the King calls, *it is a command*, and the subjects have no choice. One day they will have to give an answer not only for their transgressions of His holy law, but also for not believing in His Son as the Saviour. Yea, for this is breaking the first commandment and dealing with Him in the call of salvation as though He is not God."

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

THE REFORMATION PERIOD

THE SYNOD OF DORDT

Rev. H. Veldman

Before we quote the Canons of Dordt in connection with the presentation of the doctrine of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is well to quote from the opinions as expressed by several delegates attending the great synod of Dordrecht of 1618-1619. These opinions are of great importance. We quote from the Acts of the National Synod of Dordrecht, and the translation is by the undersigned. We realize, of course, that these quotations do not constitute that Synod's official decisions. These official decisions are expressed in the Canons. But they are of importance, because they reveal to us the mind and line of thinking of these delegates and how these opinions finally led to the Canons. In our preceding article we remarked that not all the delegates at this Great Synod were equally staunch Calvinists. When, then, we quote also from these delegates who were sympathetic toward the Arminians, this is important, inasmuch as it reveals to us that this synod rejected these opinions when it finally formulated and adopted the Canons. It is for this reason that also these weak expressions or opinions are important for our understanding of the Canons.

First of all, we call attention to the opinions as expressed by the theologians of Bremen, Matthias Martinius and Henricus Iselburg. These men were not staunch Calvinists, especially the former, Matthias Martinius. We listen, first of all, to Matthias Martinius. He speaks of two matters: the death of Christ for all and also of the death of Christ as only for the elect. Speaking of the death of Christ for all, he presents the following propositions:

Proposition I: "There is a certain general love of God to men, whereby He has loved the entire fallen human race, and has earnestly willed the salvation of all."

Proposition II: "The execution of this love to men appears in the outward calling without distinction, which befalls the elect and reprobates, although God, according to the freedom of His disposition, nevertheless, always completely righteously, passes by many."

Proposition VI: "Therefore this (the external calling, H.V.) is a certain execution or setting forth (uitvoering), belonging without distinction to the elect and reprobates. Now, a general setting forth of grace depends upon a general Divine love. Which the most prominent and upright Theologians also acknowledge,

and is revealed throughout all the Scriptures."

Proposition VII: "But that external calling, which parts I have related, demands as necessary for itself these things: the promise and sending of the Son (which formerly should occur and now has occurred), and the redemption, that is, the payment of the price, to atone for sin and thus satisfy God, that He would not require another sacrifice for the sins of any man, being satisfied with that only and all-perfect; and that, to reconcile the people, no other satisfaction nor other merit be necessary; provided (which must be done in the remedies) that there be an appropriation of the general and salutary or saving medicine." — notice, please, that Martinius, speaking here of the one and only sacrifice of Jesus Christ, speaks of the appropriation of a medicine which is salutary or saving and also common or general.

Then, notice what he sets forth in Proposition VIII: "If this redemption, as a general benefit, shown to all men, is not presented as such, then the preaching of the Gospel, without distinction, and in general having commanded the Apostles to be administered to all peoples, would have no true foundation."

Martinius makes a two-fold distinction, as in Proposition XVII: "But those matters (concerning the death of Christ, H.V.) must also themselves be explained carefully. He has satisfied for all evil, and has merited all good, with a two-fold exception, the one referring to matters or things, the other to persons."

"The exception with respect to matters," he writes in Proposition XVIII, "is that Christ did not satisfy, neither willed to satisfy, for the continuing impenitence, much less for the continuing obstinacy, whereby that benefit is despised, or reproach is committed against the Benefactor, such as the wilful or wanton slander of all those who sin against the Holy Ghost, Heb. 10:26."

And then we have this dark and ambiguous statement by Martinius in Proposition XXI: "The Lord has also merited for all men grace, but not for all men that grace which is connected with the special election. Which then? that namely, which is promised under the condition of faith. For indeed, all men are promised forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, if they believe. Consequently we see here that the conditional forgiveness of sins and salvation belong to all men, but not the promise to give power and set in operation where-

by the condition is fulfilled. For these men must fulfill of themselves, by virtue of the power of the Divine commandment. Whoever cannot do this, they cannot do this through their own fault." Does this language not remind us of the struggle in our churches in 1953, when our churches were confronted by the statement that "God promises eternal life to everyone of you, provided that you believe?"

We conclude these quotations from Martinius on the general character of the death of Christ, as we quote Proposition XXV: "From what has been said, it seems to me, that upon all the questions which are presented by this Article, one can easily answer, and this is apparent, that the meriting and the obtaining (for often the old and the new viewed these as one, although the obtaining is a little less and more general than the meriting); and that it is not all in conflict with each other to say, that Christ died for all men, with the intention to save, and thus, in this manner did not die."

Martinius, we observed in the beginning of this article, did not only speak of the death of Christ as for all men, but he also speaks of this death of our Lord as only for the elect. However, speaking of the death of Christ as only for the elect, his propositions are few, only seven in number. How weak he is, is evident in propositions V through VII:

Proposition V: "And whereas faith, which is the means to appropriate unto oneself, is given to these, the other general benefits, which I have said come forth out of the fountain of general election, pass the unbelievers by, not remaining with them, and they flow over only into the elect, as being of profit to them only."

Proposition VI: "Whoever despises the sacrifice of Christ, accomplished upon the cross, loses all right which he could have to it; and consequently he increases his condemnation. Whoever also disdains the invitation, presented in the gospel, deprives himself of the same unto similar destruction."

Proposition VII: "Thus Christ, in Himself appointed unto resurrection, is unto some a fall; and the Gospel, which in itself is a savor of life unto life, becomes for the unbelievers a savor of death unto death, accidentally, through their own fault."

Mind you, these are the articles or propositions of Martinius on the death of Christ as only for the elect. Indeed, these articles no Arminian would hesitate to endorse. It is well to quote them, in the light of the fact that the Canons refused to endorse them. What does Martinius mean when he writes that whoever despises the cross of Christ loses all right to that sacrifice? Of course, the unbeliever despises the cross of Christ, and, so doing, renders himself unworthy and increases his condemnation. This the Scriptures abundantly testify. But what does he mean when he declares that that unbeliever loses all right to that cross?

Did he ever have that right? Does not the cross of Christ stand alone, as far as its power and efficacy are concerned? Does that cross earn for all men the right to be saved and the unbeliever loses that right through his unbelief, impenitence and obstinacy? In Proposition VII Martinius speaks of the gospel as in itself a savor of life unto life. Why does he not speak of the gospel as being also a savor of death unto death? Yes, he does speak of the gospel as being a savor of death unto death, but notice how he says this: he does not say that the gospel *is* a savor of death unto death, but that it *becomes* a savor of death unto death, and that it becomes a savor of death unto death for the unbeliever, and this, mind you, accidentally, through their own fault. Of course, Martinius must express himself in this manner. How can anyone believe in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ as for all men and also maintain that that death was accomplished only and exclusively for the elect? And this delegate also reveals his weakness when he speaks of the errors of several against this second article concerning the death of Christ. Mind you, he considers it an error to teach that "Christ did not die in any sense of the word for those who are lost." And he also considers it an error to teach that "the decree of the special election or reprobation of certain persons cannot be in harmony with the universality of the death of Christ"; he denies, therefore, that the one necessarily excludes the other. However, we repeat: the Canons of Dordt rejected this view of Martinius.

Next, we would call attention to the opinions as expressed by the theologians of Great Britain. Incidentally, also these delegates cannot be considered to belong to the group of the staunch Calvinists. In fact, we understand that one of these delegates later joined the camp of the Arminians. It will, therefore, be interesting to hear also from these men. These delegates presented to the Synod their views concerning the second article of the death of Christ in six propositions.

Their first proposition reads as follows: "Out of special love and intention, as of God the Father, so also of Christ, Christ died for the elect, in order that He should obtain for them the forgiveness of sins and everlasting salvation and bestow them upon them infallibly."

To this proposition they add the following comments: "The first proposition posits that the elect shall have infallibly forgiveness of sins and everlasting life, out of the death of Christ, and that out of the special love and intention of the Father and of Christ. This is established by the Scriptures which prove the power of the death of Christ, as it concerns the elect: John 11:51, That Christ should die for the people, and not only for that people, but also, in order that He should gather the scattered children of God in one. Eph. 5:25, Christ has loved the Church and given Himself for it, in order that He should sanctify it, etc.; with which

words the intention of Christ as offering Himself is set forth, insofar as it concerns the infallible or sincere (onbedriegelijke) bestowal of salvation." To this statement, of course, we cannot object. We can make the

remark that the theologians, in this statement, do not say that this love and intention of the Father and of Christ concerns only the elect.

From Holy Writ

Exposition of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

ENOCH'S TRANSLATION THAT HE SHOULD NOT SEE DEATH (Hebrews 11:5)

The Bible states that it is appointed unto man once to die. (Hebrews 9:27) That is the rule for every man since the Fall of Adam in Paradise. Through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and death passed on to every man. (Romans 5:12) All men must go into the grave of corruption, either awaiting the resurrection unto life or to receive their body to enter into the destruction and desolation of hell. There are a few exceptions to this rule of dying and to being raised in immortality of life. Paul calls this a "mystery." Writes he in I Corinthians 15:51, 52 "Behold I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed!"

There were two saints in the Old Testament that did not "see death," that is, they did not die as other men and women, and then be buried awaiting the resurrection. Abel was the first thus to die, be it then as the first blood of all the saints under the altar. But not so was the case with Enoch, Elijah and perhaps Moses. These did not see death. The phrase "not to see death" we find also in the New Testament Scriptures. In Luke 2:26 we read that it was revealed to Simeon by the Holy Ghost "that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." In the Genesis account of the generations of Adam that we read "Noah was not found, for *God took him*." It was an act of God different from the common way in which God removes men from the earth. It was not through death! There was not a funeral for Enoch. And there was no burial of his body. And no one went about to announce his death. The text gives the impression that evil men sought for Enoch as well as the righteous, even as men did in the case of Elijah. (II Kings 2:16-18)

This translation was a wonder of God's grace, a prefiguration of the changing of those, elect, who will be still living on earth when Christ returns in the glory of His Father. The term "translate" is used only of the elect, in the bringing about of their salvation in Christ.

In Colossians 1:13 we read "Who (the Father) hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and *hath translated* us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Here the apostle is referring to the act of grace in Christ whereby we are completely brought from sin and death, by means of regeneration, calling, justification in the hope of the final glorification. Christ is the first-born of the full harvest, and we shall, therefore, with him arise in the blessed resurrection. That too is "translation!" However, here is a translation in which a regenerated saint, who has already been translated from death to life in Christ, is so changed from the earthly house of this tabernacle that he is completely translated without needing to pass *through the act of dying*; he did not see death.

We agree with Calvin that we need not speculate here as to details. We have but to accept the Scripture account, and try to understand from the text somewhat of the reasons for it. In a word: it was a reward of the Lord for faith!

ENOCH HAD RECEIVED TESTIMONY THAT HAD BEEN RIGHTEOUS (Hebrews 11:5)

Surely this testimony which Enoch received cannot merely refer to the fact that the Scriptures give Enoch this testimony. There are those who would thus interpret and limit the meaning of the phrase "before his translation he received testimony." We believe that this does not do justice to the phrase "before his translation." In that case this phrase must mean that the Bible states that he was righteous before he was translated. Now this is true enough in itself, but it does not do justice to the tremendous life's struggle of three hundred years of walking with God. Besides, the form of the verb is perfect passive tense. It means that Enoch had testimony all through his weary years that he was righteous up to each present moment. He was truly righteous in the sense that he was justified by faith in the blood of the Lamb. However, the emphasis here seems to fall on the fact that Enoch was subjectively righteous by the Spirit of sanctification and life. His life was such that he walked with God. He was not perfect in the sense of the teaching of perfectionism. But he had a great delight in the law of God

after the inward man. He sought out diligently to do the will of God and confessed all his sins and shortcomings and failures. He preached in his day and exemplified his own preaching in an exemplary godly life. No, he was not a recluse, a man who withdrew himself from the affairs of life and the problems of the church of Christ in his day. He stood in the forefront of the battle, wielding the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. With the shield of faith he quenched all the fiery darts of the Evil One. And having done all he stood! Yes, he stands in the battle also when he has run the race, and has fought the good fight, he stands!

For the day in which Enoch lived was a very evil day!

It was a day in which the church of God began to commit spiritual whoredom with the world, the sons of and daughters of Cain. The waves of worldly-mindedness swept over the earth and would engulf the faithful church. No, it was not yet persecution which Satan used. It was seduction of the sons of God by the daughters of men. It was the sin of amalgamation of the church and the world.

And in this world, both in the church and in the world, the name of Enoch was well-known. His voice was heard far and wide. And the testimony in the hearts of both the righteous and of the wicked was that Enoch was a righteous man, who stood for the cause and the kingdom of Christ in the world. This was all "before his translation." Enoch was a faithful witness, and he preached, according to Jude, against the wicked. And his preaching has a very eschatological note. Writes Jude "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied to these, saying Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment and to convince (convict) all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." It was preaching that spoke of a day when Christ will judge the living and the dead. Such was the preaching of Enoch. Enoch was a prophet of God who spoke in God's name, and he championed the cause of the LORD of hosts, who dwelleth between the Cherubims. And this judgement will begin at the house of God. (I Peter 4:17; Jude 14, 15)

Thus preached Enoch!

And preaching for three hundred years, and walking in godliness, he did not simply have a good reputation and name, but he had the testimony of God, all through his life and in this present time, through the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament, that he was righteous.

He was righteous by faith! This point the churches of the Hebrews must clearly understand, lest they in their battle should slip back into perdition. Rather they must believe to the final obtaining of the redemption in Christ. Thus did Enoch gain the victory!

ENOCH'S TRANSLATION WAS A REWARD FOR HIS FAITH (Hebrews 11:6)

The text uses a very strong statement here. It is true and solid at the Rock of Ages Himself. It is this: that without faith it is *impossible* to be well-pleasing to God. Enoch has the testimony that he was well-pleasing to God every step of the way. He was in a completed state up to the present that he was well-pleasing to God. This is indicated by the perfect infinitive "*euaresteekenai*" which is best translated "that he *had* pleased God."

But how could a sinner like Enoch be well-pleasing to God? That is the question which is not merely academic; it is a practical consideration every day in the life of every Christian. Only by faith can a man be just. The just shall live by faith. And apart from faith, saving faith, it is impossible to please God. This is exemplified in the lives of the entire cloud of witnesses here singled out one by one in Hebrews 11, but this must have been true of Enoch in a singular way, that the Lord translated him that he should not see death. For faith was brought to a mighty test in the case of Enoch. He lived in evil times in which men were not heavenly minded, but more and more there was a falling back into perdition.

Now the faith of Enoch was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen! Enoch walked by faith and not by sight, in regard to the coming of the Lord and the judgement of both the righteous and the wicked. When the Lord comes, the righteous shall be raised from the dead and taken up into glory. Enoch lived as Paul, who writes concerning his hope and trust upon the living God, while he labors and suffers reproach. Enoch looked for the reward.

And thus, by faith, Enoch is translated. His faith is rewarded, his hope is realized, his earnest expectation of the Eschatological is pre-figured in his own translation. Enoch's end on earth is the great "Amen" of God to his servant's life and preaching. It was more sure than even Enoch felt in his heart all his life-long. And it is a picture of the church lifting up her head even in these last days, looking for the coming and blessed return of Christ!

For Enoch life can be cast into a syllogistic form of reasoning. It is as follows:

1. No one can please God without faith.
2. Enoch was well-pleasing to God.
3. Enoch had faith, as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Enoch believed that God is. This was for him no philosophical inquiry concerning the meaning of Deity. No, it was for him a childlike trust in His heavenly Father, in His providential care. He believed that God, who cares for the sparrow on the roof-top, was his Father, who would not allow a hair to fall from his head without his will. He dwells in the secret-place of God, under the shadow of the Almighty, calm and

secure amidst the rising floods which lift up their heads. Thus Enoch seeks out God's will in the safety of confidence in God. And this faith trusted that God would reward him, take all his tears in His bottle, and wipe away all tears from his eyes.

And the answer to this life of faith is that it was a life placed on the altar of consecration here, which, in a twinkling of an eye, was continued in the *Vision Dei* in glory forever!

Studies in Election

Its Exemplification

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

6. Its Exemplification

Election and reprobation are plainly evident throughout the Old Testament. In the case of Abraham, who is the father of all them that believe, before God called him out of Ur, he was of an idolatrous stock which worshiped false gods. There in that heathen environment "the God of glory appeared unto our father, Abraham," but not to the other citizens of that city. The Lord reminds us, "I called him alone, and blessed him."

Then there is the case of Jacob. He and his brother, Esau, were born of the same father and mother, twins. They stand as the classic example of election and reprobation in the words, "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'" (Rom. 9:11-13). Why did the Lord choose Jacob in preference to Esau? He was not particularly winsome, whereas Esau was of a much more attractive personality. Jacob proved himself deceitful and could lie a string of lies five times in nauseating succession. Yet God came to him when he had nothing, deserved nothing but condemnation, only to promise him everything and to protect him everywhere he went.

Consider next the case of the nation of Israel. God chose that nation. He set His love and favor on it, to the exclusion of all other nations. He provided the passover lamb for that one single nation. There was no lamb of God for the other nations. To the Israelites God had declared, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2), i.e., *I have*, from the beginning of the ages, *known* you with a knowledge of love—you, only you, have I so loved. But all the other, heathen nations I would that they should walk in their own ways. They shall be My battle axes, My weapons of war, that with them I may break in pieces and destroy the kingdoms of this world. Why did the Lord choose Israel, and not the other powers? The Chaldeans boasted the advantage of antiquity. The Egyptians were experts in the whole range of worldly

wisdom. The Canaanites had the fulness of number. But what had Israel? What, apart from Jehovah, was the excellency of Israel? Would we think to choose a nation, hard-hearted, stiff-necked, carnal, unappreciative and rebellious? Was it because Israel had one milligram of goodness? Was it because Israel had an atom of "common grace?" Or was it not rather that God chose Israel in absolute sovereignty? Is it not rather that God never works from the point of view of what is in the creature, but from what is found in Himself, in His own will?

Then in the New Testament, why did the Lord choose angels to deliver the message of the birth of His Son? Why not have kings or emperors make the glorious announcement? Why did He choose poor shepherds to first receive the news? Why not the representatives of government, or the ecclesiastical leaders in Jerusalem? If angels must bring the glad tidings, why not have them do so in the temple? This is what we would think, but our thoughts are not God's thoughts.

The Lord himself, at the beginning of His ministry in Nazareth preached His first sermon on the truth of election and reprobation. "But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian" (Luke 4:25-27). Moses and Paul preached the same predestination: "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. Wherefore He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth." But the people, unwilling to tolerate this great truth, "When they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city" (vss. 28,29). Take note of the fact that not the people off the streets manifested this hatred of the truth and its unique Proclaimer, but "all they in the synagogue"! In this connection, remember that the servant is not greater than His Lord. What, conceivably, would

Christ's attitude to such a response be? Certainly this: "Jesus rejoiced in spirit and said; I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." What should be our attitude to the preaching of this truth? This: "In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

In the early history of the church, we have the oldest of the evangelical confessions, the Waldensian, which says of election, "God saves from corruption and damnation those whom He has chosen from the foundations of the world, not for any disposition, faith or holiness He foresaw in them, but of His mere mercy in Christ Jesus, His Son, passing by all the rest according to the irreprehensible reasons of His own free will and justice" (from *The Doctrines of Grace*, G. S. Bishop). Also from *The History of the Churches of the Valley of Piedmont*, by Samuel Morland, London, 1658, we have the following Waldensian statements of faith. "Christ . . . died for the salvation of all those that believe" (p. 33). "We believe that there is one holy Church, which is the congregation of all the elect and faithful ones from the beginning of the world to the end" (p. 37). "All those that have been and shall be saved have been elected of God before the foundation of the world" (p. 40). "It is impossible that those that are appointed to salvation, should not be saved. Whosoever upholds free will denieth absolute Predestination and the grace of God." "God so loved the world, that is to say, those whom He has chosen out of the world" (p. 65). "The Church is the company of the faithful . . . having been elected before the foundation of the world." "All the elect are upheld and preserved by the power of God. . . they all persevere in the Faith unto the end" (p. 67). The first statement quoted at the head of this paragraph is also found on p. 64 of this book. "By the holy catholic Church is meant all the elect of God, from the beginning of the world to the end, by the grace of God through the merit of Christ, gathered together by the Holy Spirit and fore-ordained to eternal life, the number and names of whom are known to Him alone who has elected them; and in this church remains none who is reprobate" (p. 79). Compare that first statement with our own Canons of Dordt, which say, "This election was not founded on foreseen faith, the obedience of faith, or any other good quality or disposition in man as the prerequisite, cause or condition" of election (I, 9). The Canons were especially written against the philosophy of Arminius. His rotten errors were rampant long before he was born, as implied by the Waldensian creed.

The humanist we call an Arminian has always said, "God chooses people because he foresees their good, their faith and good works." But in the whole

human race, who has this good? "There is none good, no, not one." Then if there is none good, where are the good works God is supposed to see? If by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified, neither can any works be the basis of election. Then the reason God chooses people is because He chose to choose them. He chose them because it was His will to choose them. He did not choose them on the basis of their foreseen faith (there is no such 'faith'). He chose them on the basis of His own eternal grace. "Not according to our works (not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth), but according to His own purpose and grace which was given us before the world began." God does not elect men on the ground of faith. For faith is a gift of God. But that does not mean that God bestows faith on those He foresees would take it. What God foresees, if He foresees anything, is that man will not take it; that he must be given grace so that he will want to take it. Election is not on the basis of something seen in man, but on something in God-grace.

Arminian radio preachers, every so often, will admit that there is an election in Scripture, but then they proceed to becloud the scriptural election, and present one of their own, which is not a sovereign election, but one entangled with free will. Their parroting of some few favorite Bible texts no longer conveys the aura of scholarship. Nor is the way they often quote Scripture fair or complete. They frequently quote the words, "him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." Why is it that they repeat and repeat this misquote? Why do they not also quote the first part of the text, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me"? Why is it that we never hear them repeat, much less preach, on such texts as, "No man can come unto Me except the Father. . . draw him," or "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit," or "I speak not of you all, I know whom I have chosen" or Christ's words from His high priestly prayer, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me"?

That unconditional election is the doctrine taught in Scripture is apparent from the intense hatred Satan has always had against it. He attacks the truth, not error. The people of Nazareth were enraged against this truth. Many of Jesus' disciples refused to walk further with Him because He preached this truth in His bread of Life discourse. Romanism, seed-bed of Pelagianism and Arminianism, opposed this truth in England, France and the Netherlands with murder and massacre. Today, Rome still opposes this truth under the guise of an angel of light, as the leading unifier of the ecumenical, world church. Modern churchmen despise it under the pretense of zeal for God's honor, ridiculing the truth as that which makes God a cruel monster. Next time, D.V., we will show how apostate Presbyterians have done this. (To be continued)

ATTENTION, MEMBERS!

The Annual Meeting
of
The Reformed Free Publishing Association
is to be held, the Lord willing, on
September 30, 1971.
at 8:00 P.M.
at the
First Protestant Reformed Church
in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Classis East will meet in regular session on October 6, 1971 at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated in this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least ten days prior to the convening of the session. Consistories will please consider this as an official announcement in the appointment of their delegates.

J. Huiskens, S.C.

NOTICE!!

An Office Bearer's Conference is to be held, the Lord willing, Tuesday evening, October 5, 1971, at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church, at 8:00 P.M. All past and present office bearers are urged to attend. Prof. H. Hanco will speak on the subject — "Is it proper to use the Office of Deaconate to collect funds for the various causes we represent, such as the schools, THE STANDARD BEARER, etc."

P. Knott, Sec'y.

IN MEMORIAM

The members of the Ladies' Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan express their heart-felt Christian sympathy to Mrs. J. H. Kortering, Miss Lafern Kortering and Miss Erma Kortering in the death of their daughter and sister,

MRS. KEN SCHUITEMA

May our covenant God comfort them by His Word and Spirit." "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Philipians 1:21.

The Ladies' Society of the
First Protestant Reformed
Church, Holland, Michigan

Mrs. J. A. Heys, Pres.
Mrs. P. Dykstra, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. Floyd Jansma, her husband and children in the loss of their infant granddaughter
SHARI LYNN JANSMA.

May our God comfort the bereaved in their sorrow and grant them His peace. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21.

Rev. J. Kortering, Pres.
Mrs. Nellie Brummel, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to our President, Rev. J. Kortering and his family in the death of his sister,

MRS. KEN SCHUITEMA.

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved and sustain them in their sorrow.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust." Psalm 91:1,2.

Mrs. Egbert Gritters, Vice Pres.
Mrs. Nellie Brummel, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mothers' Circle of Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School of Grand Rapids, Michigan mourns the loss of a faithful member,

MRS. KENNETH SCHUITEMA

whom the Lord took home on Monday, August 9, 1971 and hereby express our sympathy to the bereaved family. We believe and are comforted with the greatest assurance that, in life or in death, we are not our own, but belong to our faithful Savior Jesus Christ.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Psalm 116:15.

Mrs. Jake Kuiper, Sr., Pres.
Mrs. Gerald Cnossen, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, extends its sincere sympathy to one of its fellow members, Deacon Ervin Koertering, in the recent death of his sister

MRS. ELOISE SCHUITEMA.

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4).

Rev. J. A. Heys, Pres.
M. Haveman, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The congregation of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hull, Iowa, herewith expresses their sincere sympathy to their Pastor, Rev. J. Kortering and family in the passing of his sister

MRS. KEN SCHUITEMA.

May the bereaved be comforted in the Word of God found in Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Mr. Tim Kooima, Pres.
Mr. Bert Van Maanen, Clerk

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If the Social Gospellers were in business in the Prodigal Son's day, they would have given him a bed and a sandwich — and he never would have come home!

News From Our Churches

The August 29 bulletin of Southeast Church had a section entitled "Church News." It very nicely took care of the news concerning calls, so we'll borrow it. "Candidate R. Miersma has accepted the call extended to him by our church in Isabel, S.D. Rev. C. Hanko has received the call to Hudsonville, Mich. Rev. Harbach has declined the call to be Home Missionary."

Actual bulletin quotations are often more interesting than summaries thereof. Something is lost in a summary — the immediacy, perhaps. So we'll present a few more quotations, this time from a couple of August bulletins of our Redlands' congregation. They read as follows:

"A pulpit exchange has been arranged between Rev. Woudenberg and our pastor for the next two Sundays. Rev. Hanko plans to take his family with him, and also plans to do church visitation in Lynden at the same time."

And from another: "Rev. Hanko has a classical appointment next Sunday in Forbes, N. Dakota. He plans, at the same time, to do church visitation in the mid-west, and also to attend classis in Isabel on the 1st of September."

It's at that meeting of Classis West, incidentally, that Candidate R. Miersma was to be examined, prior to his ordination as minister of the Word, and installation as pastor at Isabel.

The radio broadcasting of one of the worship services in our church at South Holland, Illinois, was begun August 1. The service will be broadcast weekly, over station WLNR-FM, on Sunday afternoon, from 5:30 to 6:30. The prayer of the congregation was that "by this means we may give witness to the truth of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

From South Holland we have this "advance notice," which is advance even for *The Standard Bearer* (though just barely): "Professor Herman Hanko will lecture September 17th on the subject 'The Christian and the Film Arts.'"

The Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention was held in South Holland this year, on Aug. 17-20. The convention theme was "Disciples of Christ." The three speeches, "Mark of Discipleship," "Costliness of Discipleship," and "Freedom of Discipleship," were given by Rev. Kortering, Rev. Schipper, and Rev. Van Baren, respectively.

Recreational activities included an outing at Lake of the Woods, boat cruise on the Chicago River, and a view of Chicago and vicinity from the top of the John Hancock Building.

The "Federation Board Message," in the Convention Booklet, included these lines, written by Gary Bouwkamp, the Board president: "... it is our calling as host and visiting societies to stand out as true disciples of Christ, in all activities, from sports to discussion groups, from business meetings to banquets and speeches, constantly reminding ourselves that everything must be done to God's honor and glory." If that attitude was characteristic of the conventioners as a whole, then the experience must have been what South Holland Young People's Society tried to make it — a truly great convention.

The doors of our day schools have opened for the 1971-1972 season. Notice was made, in the "Highlights" of Hope School, that this year "marks a quarter-century of the operation of Hope School." The school administrator, Mr. John Buiter, goes on to write that "with thankful hearts we can look back and to the future, thanking God for His faithfulness in making this school possible. By the Grace of God the school has been maintained and has grown much over the past twenty-four years. There have been changes and growth over these years, but one factor has remained constant, God has allowed us as parents to maintain instruction based on His Word, which changes not."

Mr. Buiter adds that, "One change in the school building this year will be the remodeling of the old furnace room, office, and kitchen into a central library room."

The students of our Seminary have also reached the end of their summer vacation — though four of them might question the use of that term, "vacation." Mr. Van Overloop spent the first part of the summer preaching in Forbes, the second part in Doon. Mr. Bekkering spent the first part in Doon, the second in Forbes. Our church in Randolph was supplied till July 18 by Mr. Slopsema, and after July 18 by Mr. Kamps.

Our "vacant" churches must certainly appreciate the work of these students, and we have no doubt that the students not only benefit from the experience, but also enjoy this foretaste of the work for which they are diligently preparing.

D.D.