

The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

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Diligent in Sanctification

A New Year's Survey

(see: All Around Us)

Confessing Our Faith

(see: The Strength of Youth)

An Help Meet

(see: The Day of Shadows)

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Meditation**Diligent in Sanctification**

Rev. M. Schipper

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

II Peter 3:14

Wherefore, beloved . . .

Seeing that ye look for such things . . .

And the question is: What things?

The answer, of course, is to be found in the immediately preceding context. There the apostle refers to the coming of the day of the Lord, which He has

promised. While it may appear to some that he is slack concerning the promise of His coming, He is really not slack at all; but longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any of us should perish, but that all of us should come to repentance. That day of the Lord will surely come. As a thief in the night will it come. This is what

we must expect.

And when it shall come, there are two things we look for. When that day comes, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the very elements of which they are composed shall melt with fervent heat; and the earth also and the works that are therein shall all be burned up. And, secondly, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Such are the things we are looking for!

These are the things which He has promised!

And His promises shall not fail! Our hope is well grounded!

We expect this old world to pass away. Pass away it shall, not in the sense of an annihilation, so that nothing of it remains; but in form and fashion it shall pass away. All the elements of which it is composed shall be burned into a molten mass. The heavens, that starry firmament in which now resides the heavenly luminaries, shall be set on fire, and shall be melted with fervent heat. The earth with all that it contains shall also be burned up. Nothing in its present form shall abide in that day of the Lord. All the works of man, in which he now so proudly boasts, upon which now he sets his heart, which required all of his ingenuity and skill to build, shall perish. What fools they are who imagine that their houses shall stand for aye!

As another year passes, never to return, and a new year has begun, so the cycle continues until the last year and the last moment that shall bring an end to time and development as we know it. In the last moment of the last hour all history shall have run its course, according to the counsel of the Most High. Then the world will have reached its highest achievements, and sin and corruption will have reached its apex in the Man of Sin; and then God's covenant will have been realized in the salvation and repentance of every last one of God's elect. Then the present cosmos, which has served as the stage upon which all these things will have been worked out to the end which God has determined, may be done away. Then the new world, new heavens and new earth where righteousness shall dwell, may be ushered in. Out of the molten mass shall He bring it forth.

This is what God has promised!

This is what we are waiting for, and, with hearts filled with living hope, expect!

As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the coming of the Son of Man!

In the days before the flood, men were wilfully ignorant, and mocked with the truth that God was coming in judgment to destroy the world that then was; and to purge the world with the waters of the flood, so that in it the righteous might dwell. Noah, the righteous, alone found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

In the days before the final conflagration, men will be eating and drinking, marrying and giving in mar-

riage, living in the vain hope that nothing shall change, and that they can go on in their sin and corruption without fear of judgment. In those days they shall mock those whom they call "the prophets of doom," who warned them of the coming day of the Lord, a day of judgment and retribution. Until they shall see the sign of the Son of Man, and begin to call on the rocks and the mountains to fall on them, and vainly hope that somehow they can be annihilated and not have to stand before the great white throne.

Not so, however, shall it be with God's beloved!

Who have found grace in the eyes of the Lord!

With hearts filled with hope, and eyes filled with holy expectation, they look for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and in which the righteous shall dwell.

Wherefore, beloved . . .

Because this is true, because ye look for such things . . .

Be diligent!

That ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless!

Diligent in sanctification!

And sanctification, you know, is that work of God's grace in you whereby He delivers you consciously from the pollution and dominion of sin, and renews you in conformity with the image of Christ, and enables you to walk faithfully in all good works, which He has before prepared, in order that you should walk in them. Sanctification is that operation of the Spirit of Christ in you whereby a new spiritual-moral direction is given to you, according to which out of a regenerated heart your thinking, willing, desiring, yea, the action of your whole being, are brought into harmony with His truth and His commandments. Sanctification is that work of grace in you whereby you in principle begin to mortify the old man of sin in your members, and to put on the new man, which is the beginning of the new creation for which you now look in hope.

In this be diligent!

That is, be earnestly desirous of it, and with all haste follow after it!

So that ye may be found of Him in peace!

Without spot and blameless!

Oh, the blessedness of them who shall be so found by Him when He shall come to renew all things!

To be found of Him in peace is the positive way of stating what is negatively expressed in: without spot, and blameless. To be found in peace means that you are so discovered by the Lord when He comes again as being in perfect harmony with Him and His will. All the natural enmity, the rebellion and hatred of your old nature is removed. It means that you will be found of Him with all the love of your heart going out to Him, as being righteous as He is righteous, and holy as He is holy. It means that you will be living and walking as His covenant friend in the world, and expecting the

judgment of His favor, which shall declare unto you: "Come ye blessed, inherit the kingdom which I have prepared for you." And to be without spot and blameless means that He will find you unsullied from the world, free from all vice, wholly unblemished, pure in His sight. It means that you will appear before Him irreprehensible, beyond all censure.

Oh, beloved, make no mistake about it, and do not fall in the blundering error that somehow you can of yourself bring about this relationship of peace, and that you can of yourself be so found as to be without spot and blameless. You must remember that sanctification, as is true of all of our salvation, is entirely God's work of grace in us. You must remember, too, that this work of grace is preceded by another work of grace in us whereby He has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. We have been regenerated unto a living hope.

Regeneration is the first principle, the beginning of the life of the new creation which we expect Him to bring out of the old which shall pass away. It is this grace that cannot perish, while all else, even your old nature, passes away. And it is this grace of regeneration that is the causal ground of His work of sanctification within us. It dwells in our hearts, motivates our entire life, connects us with the living Christ Who is the Head of the coming new world. Out of the regenerated heart, from which proceeds all your thinking, willing, and desiring, yea, all the issues of your life, comes the holy expectation, the longing for the new.

Therefore, because we are expecting the new, we will also be diligent, that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless!

As the man who is expecting presently to move into a brand new house will not be so foolish as to spend his time and money in fixing up the old in which he dwells; so, in the spiritual sense, one who is truly ex-

pecting the renewal of all things will not continue to seek after and to pamper the old. He will be living always in the desire to be found by the Lord in His coming as ready to enter the new. Like the wise virgins in the parable, he will be watching and sober, with oil in his lamp, and see to it that it is burning.

Oh, surely, the admonition to be diligent that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless, we will heed, but with much difficulty. The Scriptures always approach us as still living in the flesh and as we are so often overcome by the flesh. That is precisely why we need to be continually admonished. The Lord also knows how in much we so often fail. And we know also how strong the motions of the flesh in us are. We have the new life and expectation of the new in an old man that does not want to go to heaven, that does want to be found in peace, that has delight in corruption, that is not concerned with perfection. Living in the present evil world, we are often more concerned with the reproach of the world than we are of being found of Him in peace. And because our flesh loves the corruption of the world, and has no delight in a sanctified walk, while the new man in Christ delights in the Lord, there is a constant strife, a strife which becomes the more intense as we are able by grace to head the admonition of our text.

Be diligent, therefore . . .

Beloved!

Also in this new year!

Which you will find has really nothing new in it at all, except a new period of time. All the rest is really an old world, a world, since the flood, that is rushing to its final destruction, the conflagration.

In that world, in which you are expecting the new, make haste to be holy as He is holy . . .

That you may be found of Him in peace!

At His coming!

All Around Us

A New Year's Survey

Prof. H. Hanko

The Church of Jesus Christ enters today into the year of her Lord 1972. It is well for us, through our periodical, to pause for a few moments and ponder some significant events which relate so directly to the history of the Church of Jesus Christ. For the history of the world is God's history; and, because it is God's history, it is the Church's history — above all else. What has history been saying to us who are called to walk as pilgrims and strangers in the earth? What can we learn which will enable us to continue our sojourn

with steadfastness in the year which lies ahead? There is some value to be gained, it seems, in attempting to look at the past year as a whole. We see only snapshots as we pass from one day to the next. It is well that we sit alongside of the road for a few minutes and try to see the sweeping panorama of the past year in its whole and in its relationships. We must be sure, however, that we look at the way we have traversed in the light of the unfailing Word of God.

It is, in the nature of the case, impossible to discuss

all that has happened. It has been a momentous year with countless events crowding in upon us from every side. There are too many things which have happened and we are still too near the year to weigh it all and put it all together into a coherent whole. But some things stand out with clarity and sharpness. And these we do well to ponder.

Casting about in our minds to recall the events which particularly made a deep impression upon us as we read the daily newspapers and news weeklies to learn of what was happening in the affairs of the nations, we are impressed with the steady and relentless drift into moral chaos which characterizes the lives of men. Crime rises steadily; disrespect for authority grows by leaps and bounds; lawlessness is the order of the day both in our own land and abroad; principle is sacrificed daily on the altar of expediency; cynical disregard for principles of right and wrong mark indelibly the actions of men in high places and low. Paul writes to the Thessalonians: "And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity (better, "lawlessness", cf. the RV) doth already work: only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed (again, "Lawless One" is the better translation), whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." II Thessalonians 2:6-10.

While wars continue throughout the world (signs, according to the Lord Jesus, of His return, Cf. Matthew 24:6), major breakthroughs have been accomplished to bring the world into one universal empire. The European common market flourishes. President Nixon is going on a trip of peace to America's arch-enemy in the Orient. Peace talks seem to be bearing some fruit between America and Russia. Harbingers of the universal kingdom of Antichrist remind the oftentimes weary pilgrim that grim days lie ahead.

One development of tremendous importance which cannot help but fill the soul of the Christian with alarm is the devastating attack which has been launched against the home and which reached alarming proportions in the past year. As the whole relationship of authority and obedience breaks down in every area of life, this pillar of the home is also undermined. Rebelliousness, disregard for authority, disobedience, failure to exercise authority — these are the things which have invaded the home and brought it nigh to ruin. What contributes to it? A host of things. Women working, woman's liberation, youth protest, anti-establishment sentiment among the young, immature youth given the responsibilities of adulthood and con-

sidered legally to be adults, permissiveness, materialism and pleasure-seeking. The sanctity of marriage is mocked openly as divorce laws are liberalized. The home is subjected to an incessant bombardment of sex — as if sex is the end-all and be-all of life. Abortion is made legally acceptable in a world which cannot be bothered with the responsibilities of child-bearing and child-training. The pilgrim must see all this and resolve, by the grace of Almighty God, to fight with every ounce of his strength against the corrosive and eroding influences which threaten his home and family.

But the pilgrim is eminently a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. And, as he stands at the beginning of another year and another stretch of road which lies yet between him and his eternal destination, he cannot but consider what is happening in the Church about him.

It is easy to see that things are not well in the Church. Apostasy has always characterized the history of the Church; this is no less true today. Apostasy has made deep inroads into every denomination, and the pilgrim sees that churches which were once strong are not such any longer. They have capitulated in whole or in large measure to the enemy. They have become like frail ships on the seas of history tossed about by every wind of doctrine. There are, however, a couple of errors which seem especially significant in the light of apostasy which has raged throughout time. The most important is that the devastating work of the higher critics in the 18th and 19th centuries is bearing much fruit in the church. And this results in the severest and most reprehensible attacks on the sole authority of Scripture. It is Scripture itself which is under attack. This has not happened heretofore — at least in the measure in which it is happening in our day. There are many ways in which this can be done and is being done; and the pilgrim scarcely has the time or inclination to keep up on them all. But he knows with an unshakeable certainty that his Bible which he carries in all his pilgrimage as his dearest treasure is being snatched from the hands of many; and that he must cling to it with all his might if he is to preserve it and walk in its light. What was it Jesus Himself said? The words bring a chill. "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8b.

But the relentless attacks on the authority of Scripture, he notices, are closely intertwined with a growing confidence in the authority of science. The Christian is not fooled by this. To ascribe final authority to science is to ascribe authority to man. It is a particularly deadly kind of rationalism and humanism; and the ungodly have so many products of science and technology which make life so pleasant and with which they prove, to the destruction of many, the mighty power which science has. But when such authority is ascribed to science, then evil philosophies rush in to take the

place of sober Scriptural truth. The teachings of creation and the miracles of Christ and His atoning work are discarded as outmoded beliefs of a superstitious and unscientific past in favor of fables and myths of modern invention. And along with this goes that terrible perversion of the Christian's calling. It is a perversion which denies the very heart of the pilgrim's life — that he is called to be a stranger in the earth. It teaches, with a conviction that tugs at the heart of many, that this life is all we know now or ever shall know. It propagates the vain philosophy that there is no life beyond death, that our calling is to make this world the kingdom of Christ, for that is all we can expect. It becomes a social gospel in an age in which "sociology" is considered a science and which distracts completely the minds of men from the "city which hath foundations."

The pilgrim resolves, by the grace of the Lord Christ, to give serious attention to his calling to be a stranger in a strange land. He must spend some time, and very shortly, in rereading I Peter, for it is the handbook of the sojourner.

Yet there is another element which came to the fore in the past year which deserves more than passing notice. He who journeys to the new Jerusalem has noticed that there are many within the Church who speak of revival in the world and a return to the principles of Christianity. Such news is to be taken with utmost seriousness and ought to be investigated closely. What constitutes the reason for such optimism on the part of so many? Why is it that normally sober men in the Church can suddenly become very excited about a resurgence of religion and a revival of national and international proportions?

The answer to this question is disappointing. For, upon closer study, one finds that the excitement is about very strange movements which are different from anything the Church has ever seen. There is the Jesus-movement so-called. The name already arouses suspicion. The pilgrim senses that His Lord and Master would not like it to have a true religious movement called by that name. But, we cannot be misled by names always. It is a movement which sweeps especially over the youth and which has so many different forms about it that it is hard to get a good hold on what it is all about. There is a lot of slang involved in it. There is a lot of excitement and noise. There is a lot of religious fervor and unusual zeal. Is the excitement about the right things? Is one, to use the words of Paul, zealous about the good things? Here is where the movement falls so far short. It defines religion in ways quite contrary to the Word of God. It defines religion in terms of "feeling," of "a high" like a man on a drug trip; it speaks of religion in terms of emotions and uncontrolled passions. But lacking so very badly in the movement is the solemn and sober call to sound doctrine which Scripture so often urges upon the people

of God. It ignores the church institute and runs roughshod over the solemn injunction of the apostle to do all things decently and in order. It cuts the heart out of true religion for it forgets the words of the Lord: "They that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth." It is a religion of hypnotic suggestion; of Jesus Christ, Superstar; of a substitute for drugs and sex while preserving the same kind of fleshly thrills. It is a religion which reduces revelation to experience and the knowledge of God to an emotional roller coaster.

And closely related to all this is what goes under the catch-all name of Neo-Pentecostalism. The sober-minded pilgrim is disturbed that ordinarily sober-minded people are so taken in with this sort of thing. Cannot they see that Scripture never reduces religion to such things as tongue-speaking, faith-healing, prophesying, hypnotic enthrallment with the inexplicable?

The trouble is that these things have great appeal and the temptation is strong to leave the narrow path which leads to life and to follow the road of those whose way is so easy. There is something in all of us, the pilgrim muses, which likes to capture thrills and be excited. And if religion can be made to do this, one can have his thrills and heaven too. And indeed, so often we are responsible for making religion as Scripture characterizes it, a grim and distasteful thing. The danger is ever lurking of dead orthodoxy; and the devil is adept at holding up the bug-bear of this evil to frighten us into sensationalism.

But, the Christian ponders within his troubled soul, life is not a toboggan slide where the air is rent with the screams of excited people having a good time. Life for the pilgrim is a battle, and the noise is the shouting and din of life-and-death struggle. Ecstasy is out of place here and distracting.

The pilgrim reminds himself that he shall have to be at pains to remind his children and his fellow saints that it is well, in the year ahead, to emphasize the true joy of salvation and the knowledge of God and to speak more of the true and abiding fruits of the Spirit. He shall have to see that his sword and shield are in his hand and that his armor is firmly buckled into place. For his weapons are the Word of God and the lofty and eternal truths of the Scriptures. And the battle is very fierce. It will, beyond doubt grow worse. He shall have to remind himself and his fellow travellers that he cannot afford to miss, even once, the meeting of God's people in worship services; for these are oases in the wilderness.

But there are also rays of hope and reasons for joy in the things which have transpired. For the pressures of false doctrine and the threatening tides of false ecumenism have served to remind the faithful that their calling to be steadfast is very urgent. He hears from many parts of his own country and the world, that there are pilgrims like himself who are set upon the path of a sojourner, who are content to live in

spiritual tents, whose eyes are lit, not with the fanaticism of emotional kicks, but with the light of the Jerusalem above. And these pilgrims are prepared to engage in the battle at whatever the cost. They are weary of their denominations and the silly subterfuges of their leaders. They are desperately tired of the hopeless drift towards evil philosophy in their churches. They are determined to stand fast.

And these faithful, wherever they may be, see increasingly the need of seeking out those who are of a like mind and who are faithful as they are. The calls go out throughout the world. They are not large in number. But they are there — in many places. And they see, increasingly, the need of each other. For them there are no lofty dreams of a super church. They are content

to know each other and encourage each other and help one another in the difficulties of the way. The words of Paul to Timothy ring through his soul: "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." II Timothy 2:19.

And so he turns to the future, to the year of his Lord, 1972. The events which he has pondered all speak, after all, one truth: Christ is coming! His journey will soon be over and the reward of life will be his in the kingdom of his Father. What shall we say to all these things? "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

Contending for the Faith

The Doctrine of Atonement

THE REFORMATION PERIOD
THE SYNOD OF DORDT

Rev. H. Veldman

In our preceding article, calling attention to the opinions of the delegates from Emden to the Great Synod concerning the doctrine of atonement, we noted that these delegates were prompted in their writings by the power of logic. This does not mean that they permitted their logic to dictate to them the truths of the Word of God. The human mind, or reason may never rule over the Scriptures. These delegates surely based their conclusions upon the Word of God. But the Word of God does not teach nonsense. The Scriptures are not in conflict with each other. They do not teach contradictions. God is one and His truth is one, never in conflict with itself. The Word of God surely bases one aspect of the truth upon another aspect of that truth. The logic of these delegates is surely based upon the Word of God. Now we understand that we are now merely quoting these opinions of these synodical delegates. What matters, in the final instance, is what the synod decided. However, it is nevertheless interesting to note the reasoning of these delegates and also how they based their findings upon the Word of God. We will now continue with these quotations.

VI. Whether Christ, through the merit of His death, reconciled God with the human race in such a way that the Father, because of the merit of it, without prejudice to His righteousness and truth, might and willed to establish a new covenant of grace with the sinners? The Remonstrants say Yes.

We answer, in the light of many hidden things which lie concealed here, which cannot be examined

in a short time, which we do not intend to do at this time, so we place over against this proposition of the Remonstrants, these contra-distinctions.

1. God has established the covenant of grace, not only with all peoples in these last times, but also with Abraham and his descendants in the Old Testament, and long before him with our first parents. Consequently, the covenant with Abraham, as far as the essence of the covenant itself is concerned, is not different from the covenant established with all peoples in the New Testament, but it is one and the same.

2. This covenant encompasses everywhere two very important benefits, in the Old as well as in the New Testament, namely the gracious forgiveness of sins, and the writing of the law of God in our hearts, Jer. 31:32.

We must bear in mind that these delegates, in these propositions I and II, touch upon a critical point of dispute between the reformed view and that of the Arminians. The Remonstrants contended that the Lord established a covenant of grace in and with Christ. God willed several ways to save His people. In Paradise He willed to save all men in the way of the obedience of Adam. Then, in the Old Dispensation, He prescribed as a way of salvation the way of works. With the coming of Christ, God established a covenant of grace, and the way of faith in Christ as the way of salvation. But in these propositions it is set forth that God established the covenant of grace not only with all the peoples of the earth, as in the New Dispensation, but also with

Abraham and his descendants and, long before him, with our first parents. Then, we read that this covenant encompasses two very important benefits, the gracious forgiveness of sins and the writing of the law of God in our hearts, in the Old as well as in the New Testament. So, in these words the oneness of God's covenant as throughout the ages is established. We now continue with these quotations. In this following proposition the Remonstrants declare that Christ obtained by His death for the Father the possibility and desire to establish a covenant of grace with all sinners.

4. And consequently Christ by His death did not at that time first obtain for the Father a possibility and desire, in order that He, without prejudice to His righteousness and truth, might and willed to establish a covenant of grace with sinners; but Christ Himself is with all His benefits, merited by His death, exactly the proper and most important gift of the New Testament, in the light of the fact that He Himself, Who is the true Jehovah, has established this covenant with His death.

5. The conditions of the New Testament are not only commanded but also promised. Thus namely, that God, the author of the gracious covenant, has promised that He will also give faith and repentance, which He demands of His members of the covenant, and what He promises He also fulfills.

6. They who ascribe life and salvation to the fulfillment of the condition of the New Covenant rob God and Christ of His glory, and deprive the anxious consciences of the living of comfort, yea, cast down the manner to save sinners, which is presented in Holy Writ, and which is asked under the disguise of words set forth in the second transmitted proposition.

VII. Whether it be the will of God, to ascribe the merit of Christ, by subject to a condition, namely if man fulfill the conditions of the New Covenant. This the Remonstrants say repeatedly; they declare: As often as man neglects this condition, then God does not obtain that which He has set before Himself.

Contra-Distinction

Although it is true that God demands the faith and repentance of the members of His covenant, nevertheless this does not mean that His will is subject to a condition; neither is the will of God respecting the application of the merit of Christ dependent upon the fulfillment of the same; in the light of the fact that the fulfillment of this condition is a pure gift of God, Who gives the willing and the fulfilling, and which in no sense of the word can and must be ascribed to man. Here these delegates emphatically affirm the unconditionality of salvation as bestowed upon the sinner. — H.V.)

Reasons

1. If the will of God be dependent upon conditions, which must be fulfilled by man, then His works are not known to God from eternity, Acts 15:18.

2. Thus God would be impotent and weak. For He wills, and that seriously, so they say, that something be done and be fulfilled which nevertheless does not happen.

3. Thus God would be dependent upon man, not man upon God. For God wills, so they say, that all men shall fulfill these conditions, in order that they all may be saved. Why, then, are they not saved? Because, so they say, they have not willed to fulfill the conditions of the New Covenant. Consequently, thus all things are dependent upon the willing or unwilling sinner.

4. This is in conflict with the order and cause of causes. For where is here the first cause, which appoints and controls the second? Yea, in this manner the second causes appoints the first, and the first is dependent upon the second.

5. Thus man chooses himself, accepting the sufficient grace offered to him; or he rejects himself, rejecting the same.

6. Thus the honor is not of Him Who has mercy, whom He wills, but of him who accepts the offered condition or rejects it and despises it.

7. Thus the decree of God is dependent upon His foreknowledge, not the foreknowledge on the decree.

8. Thus God's goodness is conquered by human evil; and man, Satan, the world and the flesh are mightier than God. For, they say, God would have all men be saved, but man does not will it.

9. Thus God gives man no other grace than that which is in the power of man to accept or to reject.

10. Thus the will of God is permitted to remain uncertain and it hangs in the balance, until the condition is fulfilled by man.

VIII. Whether the reprobates are bound to believe, that Christ died for them. It is this question which the Remonstrants present in their fourth proposition. We answer shortly: Whereas the elect and reprobates are together in this life; Matt. 24:40, Two shall be in the same field, the one shall be taken, the other shall be left; and whereas to both together the Word of God is preached, hence no man can know who are reprobated, and, therefore, according to the judgment of love, we hope the best of all; consequently, let the Remonstrants show us who are reprobated, and then we shall see what the reprobates must believe.

To this they object: But God commands all, to whom the Word is preached, that they shall believe.

We answer that there is a certain command of obedience and a certain command to prove. The elect, then, are obedient to God when He commands them, having been drawn of God unto obedience. But the reprobates, whether they are disobedient at once, or believe for a short time, with a temporary faith, afterwards they again depart from it; thus they are tried in order that it may be revealed what lies hidden in their hearts. Consequently, they reveal their unbelief and corrupt nature, with which they were born but in no sense implanted into them of God.

But, whereas this beast, the one head having been cut off, gets many others, so it shall be necessary to show and examine other erring opinions of the Remonstrants, arising from the above mentioned or living out of the same.

Of interest is all the following, in which these dele-

gates refute the contention of the Arminians that they present a far richer interpretation of the atonement of Christ:

IX. Consequently, whereas they repeatedly and in many places, often make mention of their explanation of the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God, and therefore deceive the simple minds, as if they ascribe very much to Christ and His merits, by which He should have reconciled the entire world with God, so they must be drawn out of their hiding-places, in order that their deception may be known more and more and people see what they mean when they speak of "having obtained for all men the forgiveness of sins."

When, then, they say, that Christ has obtained for all the forgiveness of sins through the merit of His death, then their meaning is not at all, which they

appear to present, that Christ should have paid fully for the sins of men through the merit of His death, and have furnished for us the ransom money. Not at all; for everywhere they deny that Christ satisfied fully for sins.

How true! The Arminians claim that their presentation of a universal atonement is so much richer than the conception of the Reformed. They teach a Christ for all; the Reformed teach a Christ only for some! The reality of the matter is, however, that, whereas they teach that Christ died also for those who perish, they actually teach an atonement which really is no atonement, inasmuch as having died also for those who perish Christ therefore did not pay for their sins, and therefore did not die for the sins of any.

Feature

The Concern of the Reformation for Christian Education (9)

Rev. David Engelsma

Whether believers realize the importance of Christian schools or not, the Devil and the antichristian world are well aware of it. An event in the early history of the post-apostolic Church illustrates this. In the early years of the 4th century, Emperor Constantine the Great made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire, thus delivering the Christian Church from the severe persecution which she had been suffering. But in A.D. 361, Constantine's nephew, Julian, became sole ruler of the Roman Empire. Julian renounced the Christianity which he once professed and manifested himself as a bitter, implacable enemy of Christianity. He determined to eradicate Christianity from the Empire and to restore the old paganism. For this reason he is known as Julian the Apostate. One aspect of his all-out attack on the Christian religion was the edict that prohibited Christians from teaching in any of the schools in the Empire.¹ All teachers had to be pagans. They were encouraged, in all their classes, to inculcate the idolatry of old Rome upon the students. Julian had a two-fold purpose with this law. He intended to corrupt the Christian children that might attend his pagan schools. At the same time, knowing that the Christians would abhor such schools, he intended to drive the Christians out of the schools and, thus, deprive them of an education. This, he foresaw, would have a disastrous effect upon the Church in the future. "Julian had reason to expect that, in the space of a few years, the church would relapse into its primaeval simplicity, and

that the theologians, who possessed an adequate share of the learning and eloquence of the age, would be succeeded by a generation of blind and ignorant fanatics, incapable of defending the truth of their own principles, or of exposing the various follies of Polytheism."² In justification of his action, Julian derided the Christian faith much as the learned heathen in the universities do today, remarking that "the men who exalt the merit of implicit faith are unfit to claim or to enjoy the advantages of science and . . . if they refuse to adore the gods of Homer and Demosthenes, they ought to content themselves with expounding Luke and Matthew in the churches of the Galileans."³ The almost universal reaction of the Christian parents was the withdrawal of their children from the Empire's schools. As the historian, Gibbon, remarks: "The Christians were *directly* forbid to teach, they were *indirectly* forbid to learn; since they would not frequent the schools of the Pagans."⁴ But they were not of a mind to permit their children to remain ignorant. They established their own schools and even wrote their own textbooks. Julian's attack on the Church in the realm of the education of the Church's children was abruptly ended by his death, after a reign of only eighteen months. We would be foolish to suppose that Satan's attack in the sphere of education ended at that time also.

An evaluation of the Reformation's concern for Christian education must also emphasize that the

Reformation viewed Christian education as grounded in the covenant. Christian schools are schools in which the children of believing parents are instructed in the fear of the Lord, because these children are included by God in the Church of Christ. For this reason, the Reformers proposed that the girls also be educated, a thing almost unheard of at that time. In this view of Christian education, the Reformers were right. A Christian school, therefore, differs radically from those educational institutions today that are set up to give instruction to a few brilliant children of wealthy parents, even though these institutions may call themselves Christian. A Christian school is no aristocratic center of learning for the intellectual elite. This smacks of the *hubris* of the Greeks, not of the lowliness of Christ. A Christian school exists, and is called by God, to give Christian instruction to all the children of believers, the dull as well as the bright, the future farmer, carpenter, or wife and mother as well as the youth that intends to become a doctor, minister, or teacher. Indeed, if any child is to receive special attention, it must be the slow learner. It is a fundamental law of the Kingdom of Christ that "those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need" (I Cor. 12:23, 24a). The Christian schoolteacher may not drive out, neglect, or discourage the intellectually inferior students, whether in assignments, in marking, or in the attitude shown them. He must abstain from doing this *on principle*: Christian education is *covenant* education.

Because it viewed Christian education as covenantal, the Reformation had a practical, ethical goal in all its efforts on behalf of Christian education. The goal of the Reformation was not intellectually brilliant students who would astound the world with their erudition and achievements. The Reformers wanted men and women equipped by their schooling to occupy their positions in the Church and in the world as capable, faithful, obedient servants of the Lord. In harmony with this goal, they required schools which were free from licentious behavior, schools which would rear the children in the fear of the Lord also morally. The Reformation, as a spiritual movement, intuitively knew the message of the book of Proverbs, that the beginning of knowledge and wisdom is the fear of the Lord and that this true wisdom is characterized, through and through, by reverence for the Lord God and a holy walk in His ways. As far as the Reformers were concerned, any school that fostered or permitted wickedness on the part of the students could sink into the abyss, and the quicker the better, no matter how high the academic standards of that school might be. One of Luther's basic objections to the existing schools from the beginning was his simple aversion to the moral environment of the schools. They were institu-

tions, he wrote, "in which loose living prevails."⁵ He excoriated "the scandalous and immoral life there in which many a fine young fellow was shamefully corrupted."⁶ Luther had quite a different view of the Christian school from that which sees it as exclusively academic, as the institution for educating minds. He saw it as the sphere of rearing the child in the fear of the Lord — an extension of the home! Therefore, he called schoolteachers to concern themselves also with the virtue and honor of their pupils. He speaks of "honest, upright, virtuous schoolmasters and teachers offered . . . by God" who raise our children "in the fear of God, and in virtue, knowledge, learning, and honor by dint of hard work, diligence, and industry."⁷

As soon as the Christian school is no longer controlled by this practical, ethical purpose, it ceases to be Christian. The abstracting of the education of the mind from the ethical calling upon the heart, love the Lord thy God, produces educated devils, of which we now have a world full. Ethical, or moral, training of the children in the Christian school is not something tacked on to the other instruction. Rather, it lies in the nature of the school. The school as a whole, and every subject in the school, serves the glory of God. It does this, not secretly or secondarily, but openly and primarily. By the grace of God, the effect that such education has is to lead the student to take his place in the world under God and for the sake of the glory of God in every sphere. This "moral influencing" of the child is simply inherent in the Christian school. On the other hand, the non-Christian school also has an inevitable, moral effect. That effect is not only the immorality of the hippie and the revolutionary. It is also the immorality of Machiavellian politicians; of doctors who gouge their patients for their services, mere robbers; of lawyers who unscrupulously manipulate the law and toy with justice; of common, ordinary people who live and work and play in God's world for themselves, exactly as if it were true that man is the end of evolution, the goal of all things, and god. This is the fruit of education that leaves God out. As we now have painfully impressed on us by all that is taking place in our wretched society, this fruit is very bitter indeed, bringing misery, chaos, and destruction.

In addition to the ethical training inherent in its nature as a God-centered, God-glorifying institution, the Christian school will also engage in moral training of a more deliberate, overt kind. The Christian school will exercise discipline. It will insist upon obedience and purity of life on the part of the students while they are at school. The standard to which the students are required to conform will be God's law as revealed in the Bible. The school will rebuke and chastise the students for sin, so that the students will not walk in sin in the school. The Christian school will concern itself, not only with pupil's academic advancement,

but also with his attitudes, his diligence, and his behavior. The Christian school will be alert to give good, spiritual counsel to the students who show fears or weaknesses.⁸ All of this belongs to the task of the Christian schoolteacher. This implies, first, that parents and school boards must be interested in the spiritual, as well as academic, credentials of the Christian schoolteacher. It implies, secondly, that the labor of the Christian schoolteacher is demanding. It implies, thirdly, that the calling of teaching in the Christian school is of great worth in the Kingdom of heaven. Let Luther say it:

I will simply say briefly that a diligent and upright schoolmaster or teacher, or anyone who faithfully trains and teaches boys, can never be adequately rewarded or repaid with any amount of money, as even the heathen Aristotle says. Nevertheless, this work is as shamefully despised among us as if it amounted to nothing at all. And still we call ourselves Christians! If I could leave the preaching office and my other duties, or had to do so, there is no other office I would rather have than that of schoolmaster or teacher of boys; for I know that next to that of preaching, this is the best, greatest, and most useful office there is. Indeed, I scarcely know which of the two is the better. For it is hard to make old dogs obedient and old rascals pious; yet that is the work at which the preacher must labor, and often in vain.

Young saplings are most easily bent and trained, even though some may break in the process. It surely has to be one of the supreme virtues on earth faithfully to train other people's children; for there are very few people, in fact almost none, who will do this for their own.⁹

(to be concluded)

¹The account of this event is found in Edward Gibbon's classic work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, The Modern Library, New York, Vol. I, Chapter XXIII.

²*Ibid.*, p. 784

³*Ibid.*, p. 783

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 783

⁵*An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate* (1520)

⁶Luther's Works, Vol. 45, *The Christian in Society II*, "To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools" (1524), Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1962, p. 252

⁷Luther's Works, Vol. 46, *The Christian in Society III*, "A Sermon on Keeping Children in School" (1530), Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1967, p. 218

⁸On the calling and competency of the Christian schoolteacher to counsel his students, see chapter XI of Jay E. Adams' excellent book, *Competent to Counsel*, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1970

⁹Luther's Works, Vol. 46, *op. cit.*, pp. 252, 253

From Holy Writ

Exposition of Hebrews

Rev. G. Lubbers

THE CITY PREPARED FOR THE PATRIARCHS (Hebrews 11:13-16 continued)

We are concerned in this little paragraph with what the writer states in Hebrews 11:16b, "for he hath prepared for them a city."

This subordinate clause states the reason why God is not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It speaks of a Divine preparation which is of such a nature that it behoves God to be called with the surname: God of Abraham etc. We do well to inquire into the meaning of this clause under consideration.

The question is whether the verb "hath prepared" (Greek: "eetomasi") refers to the actual finishing of the city historically or whether it refers to a city which God has preordained to be inhabited by the numberless throng of Abraham's spiritual seed, the church of God. After some study and reflection we are of the conviction that this clause expresses the completed act of God's preparation in his counsel. This is evident

from the current usage of the verb "hath prepared" when used to refer to the outgoing works of God in Scripture. Thus we read in I Cor. 2:9 where the apostle Paul quotes Isaiah 64.4. The apostle, quoting from the Septuagint Version, writes "the things which eye hath not seen, and ear hath not heard, and hath not risen in the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them who love Him." What is he here proving from this Scripture? He is asserting that the Christ, the Lord of glory, was crucified by the hands of evil men. They were not aware of the deep import of what they were doing. It never entered into their heart that they were nailing the Lord of glory to the accursed tree. Had they known this they would not have crucified Him. But now we begin to see the things which God *prepared* for those who love him. God is here uncovering, revealing that mystery which had been completely hid but which is now revealed by the Spirit. God had prepared a "good" in the Lamb which is slain from the foundation of the world. Besides, we ought to notice

that Jesus tells us that to sit on the right hand or on the left hand of Christ is determined by God, *prepared* of my Father in heaven. (Matt. 20:23) And in the last day when the Son of Man shall come in his glory with all the holy angels . . . then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared* for you from the foundation of the world."

Wherefore we hold that here, too, the term "prepared" refers to this preparation of the city as God has it in His counsel of peace, in readiness for the heirs of the kingdom of heaven. And in view of this city and all the inhabitants which are elected before the foundation of the world in Christ, God is not ashamed to be called historically and to all eternity: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the God not of the dead but of the living!!

THE FAITH OF SARAH (Hebrews 11:11, 12)

The discerning reader will have noticed that we by-passed these two verses in our former essays. We did not tarry to interpret this passage when finished with the foregoing verses concerning Abraham's sojourn in faith, but went on to the verses 13-16 to see the deep motif of these patriarchs in their pilgrimage. Now we must return to see what the writer has to tell us concerning the faith of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, the mother of Isaac in whom the Seed is called.

It will become abundantly evident that Sarah has the same faith as all the elders had, who walked in faith and obtained a good report. Also here faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Faith ever deals with two things: the things hoped for, and the things not seen. Here, too, we must remember that without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God. No one can place his life as a sacrifice of thanksgiving upon the altar of God without faith.

And Sarah also is another example of the faith which we need to press forward unto the salvation of our souls. That is the intent of the writer. The readers must not fall back into the unbelief of Jewry, who call Jesus accursed, and count the blood of Christ a common thing. Since we have a great high priest and have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, we must draw near with true hearts in the full assurance of faith!

Sarah has the singular place of being a mother by faith. The text says "by faith even Sarah herself." She is one of whom it would never have been thought that she would be a mother of children. For the first notice which we read concerning her is that she "was barren; she had no child." (Gen. 12:30) She became a mother "by faith." God wrought a miracle in her "by faith." She pleased God by faith. The power which transformed her was by faith. And from so very little, yea, from nothing came a multitude as the stars of the heavens for multitude. Don't ask me to explain this

wonder of God. God's ways are past tracing out. Here in the nether parts of the earth (poetry!) Isaac was formed in a most wonderful way. We see it but do not comprehend it. But it is so very true; it is no myth but it is a fact of history!

SARAH RECEIVES ABILITY TO CONCEIVE SEED. (Hebrews 11:11)

No, I do not understand, I do not comprehend this. I do not comprehend the birth of a child which is born from the will of a man and born according to the flesh, as was the case in the birth of Ishmael from Hagar. Much less do I understand this mystery and miracle of God here disclosed. The writer puts it very simply. Sarah received power, ability to conceive seed. A two-fold miracle transpired in her. The natural barrenness was overcome and taken away. All her life Sarah, in the inscrutable providence of God, had been barren. It was wonderful wisdom of God. It was a wisdom of God which is foolishness with men. It must have been a difficult cross for Sarah and Abraham to bear. But God took away her barrenness. However, He did more. He took away her deadness. It had ceased with Sarah to be after the manner of women. She was past the age. She was simply an old woman. Was she not ninety years old? And now God will rejuvenate her. She will be a young woman again. God will work in her "Dunamin" power, ability, life-producing energy and strength. She will have pleasure again. It is so laughable, but it is true. (Gen. 17:15) She will be a mother of nations. Says the Lord, who cannot lie, to Abraham "And I will bless her, and give a son also of her: Kings of people shall be of her." And when the Angel of the LORD comes to her tent and informs Abraham of the birth which will be next year at this time Sarah laughs in her heart. It is too ridiculous. Such are the ways of the LORD with His people. And then Sarah is rebuked with the stern yet loving "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." (Gen. 18:14) Yes, Sarah laughed. Had Sarah not in hope against hope done everything possible to have a child, even if she must have it through an Egyptian handmaid? Small wonder that she was afraid when she hears "Is anything too wonderful for the LORD?" And in this trembling before the Lord she submits to the LORD. She submits to the name Sarah: mother of nations. That was faith! It was the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Here is life out of death. It is the miracle, the wonder of God. It is grace breaking through all sin and death. Such is the birth of the church.

SARAH ACCOUNTS GOD FAITHFUL WHO PROMISED. (Hebrews 11:11b)

Now there is but one thought that lives in the soul

of Sarah who had laughed but now believes. It is that the Almighty God is not only able to do all things, but he is also a faithful Father who cannot lie. She takes God at His Word. That is faith. It regarded that the same LORD who had visited her tent would also visit her and perform his wonders. She believed this *while* she was still past the age of child bearing. She walked by faith and not by sight. The dead Sarah believed that in the very next year she would have a child. The fact had not only been told Abraham and Sarah, but also the time when it would come to pass! Sarah "lead" this thought out before her mind. Such is the meaning of the Greek verb "*eegeesato*." She simply regarded it as being true that the promise of God would stand, and that not one of His words would fall to the ground. Over and over it went through her heart and mind, and it set her soul on fire: God is faithful, God is faithful! He will perform his own promise to me!

SARAH'S FAITH NOT PUT TO SHAME (Hebrews 11:12)

No, Sarah's faith is not put to shame. It is rewarded. She will be a mother of nations. The promise to Abraham concerning the multitude of the people as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is by the seashore is fulfilled in her. (Genesis 15:5)

When Abraham's faith needed to be bolstered and strengthened God came to him and said "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." It was then that Abraham had cried to the LORD that he was childless. Then he was told to go out under the stars of heaven, and the LORD said "So shall thy seed be." That was a long time before this, at least some fifteen years earlier. But the promise was

not fulfilled.

This is indeed a great and precious promise. It made clear that Abraham would have a son from his own bowels. And now this is become a reality. No, not in the birth of Ishmael from Hagar, but in this son which is born from the promise. The text here refers to this "One out of whom" this multitude becomes a reality. It becomes history!!

And it becomes history with a rich meaning and import. For this multitude refers to the great nation which comes forth from Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the twelve tribes of Israel. It is really the Israel of God from both the Old and the New Testament.

At Mount Moriah the Lord repeats this promise by swearing by Himself when he could swear by none greater. (Gen. 22:17) And when Israel worships the golden calf and God will destroy Israel, Moses appeals to this promise of God that Israel shall be as the stars of the heaven in multitude. And then we see that this "multitude" is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy! This is the truth and reality which David forgot when Satan tempted him to number the people. Do we not read in I Chronicles 27:23 that very obscure notice "But David took not the number of them from twenty years old and under: because the LORD had said he would increase Israel like the stars of the heavens." He numbered only the army and the plague killed 70,000, the number of God's election as God numbers the people.

Yes, by faith Sarah conceived and she becomes really allegorically Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all. For the church after Babylon will be greater than before. (Gal. 4:27) And thus the city four-square shall be full of Sarah's children.

The Strength of Youth

Confessing Our Faith

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."

Matt. 10:32, 33

Rev. Robert D. Decker

One of the most joyful experiences for elders and pastors is the occasion of the periodic confessions of faith by the youth of God's church. This joy is shared by the entire congregation when those confessions are made public in one of the worship services of the church. Joyous is this event because it provides concrete evidence of the saving grace of our Covenant God as He through the Holy Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ brings the children of His covenant into the consciousness of their faith, their unbreakable union with Jesus

Christ. Pastor, consistory, and the entire congregation see the visible fruit of covenant instruction in the home (and Christian school) and the visible fruit of the means of grace — the preaching of the gospel and catechetical instruction by and in the church. God says, as it were, through these occasions: "I am thy God and the God of thy seed after thee."

For this very reason the occasion of the confession of faith is of no less significance and joy for those young people who by God's grace stand before the

church to express agreement with the doctrine of the Old and New Testaments as taught in the Articles of the Christian faith "here in this Christian Church," and to express their resolve to live a new and godly life in harmony with the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and under the gracious discipline of Jesus Christ exercised by His Body, the Church. The keen joy of salvation thrills the hearts of godly young people as they confess their faith. A new sense of consecration to the cause of Christ often grips their hearts as they publicly say: "I belong to Jesus in life and in death." And because of this the church properly devotes the entire service and sermon to this occasion.

Because of the tremendous significance of this act for the church and especially for the youth of the church we wish to devote an article or two to this subject. The writer (and no doubt all our pastors and elders share this experience) is aware of the fact that there is a measure of misunderstanding concerning the idea and necessity and significance of confession of faith in the minds of many young people. Most wonder just what is involved. Some have the mistaken notion that to confess one's faith means that we join the church. For a few it's just the proper thing to do when we reach our middle or late teens. For a very few (thank God) it is a way to escape the tedious routine of attending weekly catechism classes. And still others lack a proper understanding of the utter seriousness of taking this step. These in some cases (altogether too many!) confess that the doctrine of Old and New Testaments, which is contained in the Articles of the Christian faith, as taught in the Protestant Reformed Churches is the true and complete doctrine of salvation, only to leave those churches for one reason or another (usually for a wife or husband from another denomination) a short time later. Assuming that the youth of God's covenant are vitally interested in this subject we will address ourselves to some of these things. In the interest of providing Biblical instruction and with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will bless these efforts we set ourselves to this task.

In the brief course of this writer's ministry he recalls an incident in his pastoral work which brings this whole subject of confessing our faith to mind. A young person once said to him "Confession of faith?, that doesn't mean much! All you do is say 'yes' to three little questions. What's the big deal about that? That doesn't mean someone has faith, and that's not much of a testimony." Is that true? Is that really all that's involved? Just saying "yes" to three questions, is THAT what it means to confess our faith? Oh, no! That is only the FORMAL aspect of confessing our faith. Just what does it mean then to make confession of faith?

In answer we may say that the Scriptures speak of faith in two senses. We mean this quite in general, for the Bible speaks of faith from many points of view and

in so doing reveals many aspects of what we call faith. But generally speaking, the Bible reveals faith in an objective sense and in a subjective sense. (We hear these terms often — Prot. Ref. preachers use them frequently.) What do we mean? In the objective sense the term faith indicates the contents of the Word of God, the doctrine or teaching of Scripture, or that which the Scriptures reveal to us. We find an instance of this use of the term in Jude verse 2 where the Word of God admonishes the Church to "contend earnestly for *the faith* which was once delivered to the saints." Here faith means the doctrine of the Scriptures which was delivered (through prophets and apostles and the other inspired, holy men of God) to the saints. The Church is called to fight for the faith, the truth of God's Word, because of the false teachers who creep in unawares and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (vs. 4). In the subjective sense faith is the actual believing in God and His Christ. It is the conscious knowing of God as our Father for Jesus' sake and the confident clinging to Christ. In this sense faith is trusting, hoping, believing in Jesus as MY Lord and Savior! Now then, the idea of confession of faith includes both of these.

What is it to CONFESS that faith? The word uses in the New Testament conveys a rich and beautiful idea. It means "to say the same thing as another or with others." Thus our confession of faith is an expression of the unity of all the saints of God in Jesus Christ. We are ONE in Christ. And that means the entire Church of Christ: the Old Testament Church as well as the New, the saints of God gathered out of every nation, tribe, and tongue. The members of the universal Body of Jesus Christ all confess the same faith in the same Lord, through the power of the same Spirit. They say the same thing together.

Still more, the child of God *says* that! That is, he expresses that which the Scriptures teach and which he believes. He gives conscious expression to the faith, the truth. He acknowledges before the Church, before the world, and before the face of God that he believes the faith once delivered to the saints to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation. And he is acknowledging that this faith is the conviction of his heart, or the principle that governs his whole life. He is really saying, "Jesus died for me; He's my Savior; He is for me the way, the truth, and the life! I know He loves me with the love of His Father and, therefore, I love Him! His will is MY law. Him I serve always and everywhere. All my joy is in Him and in His service! To live with my Lord in the fellowship of God in the glorious Kingdom of Heaven is the goal of my life!" Joining the saints of all the ages we say when we confess our faith: "By grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8).

The Scriptures make perfectly obvious that this is the calling of every child of God! Have you confessed your faith? Do you know the truth of the Word of

God as taught in the confessions and in your church? Do you hear the voice of Jesus through the preaching of the gospel convicting you of sin and assuring you of pardon in His shed blood? Does the Spirit witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? "Yes," you say? Then confess that! Say that in God's Church and before His face! That is our calling! The contents of the Word of faith which is preached by the Church is according to Romans 10:9,10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, (that Jesus is THE Lord) and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Faith is believed in our hearts but also confessed with our mouths! Jesus said in that text quoted above this article: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 10:32, 33. Denial of Christ can be by silence as well as by actual expression!

Perhaps you react at this point and say, "But I'm

not ready." "I don't know enough." Be assured of this: we never know it all! The Scripture is a mine of infinite treasures of truth. One of the writer's former pastors, the late Herman Hoeksema often expressed the sentiment in his later years that if the Lord gave him another fifty years to preach he still would not be able to plumb the depths of the Word of God. That we confess our faith does not mean that we "have arrived." With respect to our knowledge of the truth as well as with respect to living the new and godly life we have but a small beginning. For that reason the Scriptures admonish us more than once not only to continue in the Word, but also to "grow in grace and knowledge."

If you have not yet confessed your faith perhaps it is because the Spirit has not yet brought you to the consciousness of your salvation in Jesus. Perhaps that's true. But be sure that that is the case with you, lest you deny your Lord by failing to confess His name before men. Pray about this. Talk to your godly parents about this and to your pastor or elders.

(to be continued)

The Day of Shadows

An Help Meet

Rev. John A. Heys

So often when we read or use the phrase that forms our title, we do so as though it were another way of writing An Help Mate. In fact, it is exactly for this reason that we can use it as our title without creating a discordant sound for most of our readers. It would grate upon our ears to write A Meet Help, although this would be good grammar. And it would certainly sound very strange if we would substitute a synonym for meet and write An Help Fit, or An Help Suitable. We would by far prefer then to write it A Fit Help, or A Suitable Help. We have used this phrase so long and often in the sense of helpmate that we have become dull and insensitive to its real meaning in Genesis 2:20 when God says that He will make for Adam "an help meet for him." In fact you can even find in your dictionary that we coined a new word, and now we have the word helpmeet.

God created Eve as an help that was fit or suitable for Adam. And that is what this word meet says in that phrase. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the seas God created in pairs. He called male and female into being at the same time. Adam He created alone. And then out of one of his ribs He created

Eve. Doing this He did not simply make a mate for Adam. He did not simply bring forth a companion. He made a creature that was in every respect fit and suitable for helping Adam as God's royal priest and steward, and as His prophet who was called forth to confess and praise His Creator.

Adam needed a companion. That we will not deny. He was alone with no creature that was fit and would serve to give him companionship and fellowship; of this he saw a picture in the lives of the animals that God had brought before him to name. He could not exchange thoughts and desires, he could not communicate with the birds and beasts. He did talk with God to a degree. But he did not have a creature on his own level with which he could communicate in a fellowship of mind and will. There was something missing in his life. And the procession of the animals before him for him to name brought this out very clearly to Adam himself. These animals and birds and fish all had mates. Adam stood alone!

God gave him thereafter more than a mate, more than a companion. Before the sixth day was over, and before God's work of creating was finished and God

could say of all that which He did that day, "It is very good," He brought forth an help meet for him. The angels have companions. Do we not frequently read of them in company with each other? Were there not three that came to visit Abraham? Do we not read of two of them at the open and empty tomb of Christ? (They are not male and female, though they are companions.) They do not, however, have helps meet for them, as God gave Adam an help meet for him.

Consider that the phrase implies that Adam needs help. Women may forget that today and marry for money, for prestige and honour or some personal ambition they may have. A man may look for a companion — and all too often for a playmate — without concern for character and qualifications that will help him in his very serious calling before God. But man needs help in that threefold office of being God's prophet who must confess and praise Him, His priest who must be dedicated and must dedicate all to God, and His king to rule and subdue all things in the service of God. And consider further that for help he needs one who is fitted for that work, one suitable because that one is designed with a view to that work, and so created that this one is adapted to man in that need and in that work.

The woman created by God out of Adam's rib was adapted to him as his counterpart. She was not and is not his opposite. She supplemented him — being taken out of him — and supplied that which he lacked. Together they made one whole that was able to subdue the whole earth from every point of view, so that all of God's earthly creation would return to Him in praise and glory.

Physically and organically the woman resembles man, for and from whom she was made, except for that change wrought by God so that she might assist him in bringing forth seed that *he* might multiply, replenish the earth and subdue it all. And let it be remembered in this adulterous age, this world of free sex in which we live, that she was made to be an help and not a hindrance to man, to serve him in his calling and not in his carnality, to assist him as God's image bearer and not as just another beast of the field with powers that drive without direction, and without thought of the Creator. And man must seek a wife only in order to have her help to fulfill his calling before God, and not to help Satan in the development of sin!

But even then, when it pleases God to give a man a barren wife, she still is there to be an help to him. She still has something to contribute to him in his calling. The woman is not a man that physically and organically is constructed somewhat different from the male she resembles. She is not a variation of man. She is not some higher or lower form of a male. For psychically as well as physically she differs from man, because God made her to be man's psychical as well as physical counterpart and supplement. There is, you know, that

which we call a woman's intuition. And a woman's viewpoint is not the same as a man's. In a spiritual sense, of course, the sanctified husband and wife see eye to eye. But the woman was created by God to see in creation what man would not see, and to have her point of view to assist man in getting the whole picture. Indeed, since the fall she is often man's downfall because spiritually she sees differently than he does. Paul, in I Timothy 2:12, does not suffer a woman to teach in the church and thus usurp authority over the man. And his reason in verse 14 is that Adam was not deceived, but the woman. But Eve was perfect and was created as a perfect help for Adam. She fell, but so did Adam. And God made her so that the appeal to the senses was stronger in her than in man. The beautiful to the eye, the pleasing to the ear, the softness to the touch, the delightful to taste and smell was so much stronger in her. All this, of course, without sin, which will again be our spiritual condition in the new Jerusalem when we are neither male nor female but as the angels of God. Then we will not have female helps or be female helps as now. Instead all together will be the bride of Christ and to serve Him and with Him in the new creation.

With a view to supplying Adam with this help God caused him to fall into a deep sleep. Adam had not yet taken one wink of natural sleep, but he and Eve would do so during the hours of darkness which would soon fall upon the land of Eden. Their need for sleep does not imply an imperfection in them. They were creatures, and all creatures have needs. Whether these needs be food and drink, or oxygen and rest makes no difference. The perfect creature will have needs exactly because he still is only a creature. Therefore Adam, who was created to serve a very definite and special purpose in creation, and was created on the sixth day as one fully able to serve that purpose, was a perfect creature with his needs. Let us not say, "A perfect creature in spite of his needs," for all creatures, as we pointed out, have needs by virtue of being creatures. Only God is self-sufficient, and independent, having in Himself all His life.

The sleep into which God placed Adam before He took one of his ribs for the creation of Eve, however, was not an ordinary sleep, but a very special and unusual one. Genesis 2:21 calls it a "deep sleep." It was one out of which Adam would not waken while his rib was being removed to be formed into a woman. A sleep it was during which he would sense nothing of what God was doing in his body. He could not watch God remove his rib. He was not given to observe the formation of Eve. Later on he will in amazement watch the birth of his firstborn. But the creation of his wife he is not given to see. Nor did he suffer any pain during or after this "operation." Only after it is all finished and God brings the woman to him does God reveal to him her origin out of his bone and flesh. Then Adam can

say, for God Himself informed him, that she is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, and that she shall be called woman.

This means that she *is* woman. She is not simply called bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, but *is* all this. This is carried out in the word *ishshah*, which Adam uses, and which at its very beginning contains the element of *ish* which is the Hebrew word for man, or husband. We have that somewhat in our word woman, but you note that in *woman* the element of *man* comes at the end while Adam places this element first. And he who is *ish* calls that which was formed from his flesh and bone *ishshah*.

Now let us understand that no matter how wonderful and beautiful all this is, no matter how real and actual the fact of it is, this is still only the picture — we mean, of course, before the fall — of that intimate and wonderful relation between Christ and His Church, wherein that Church is His bride, His wife, yea we may say His help meet for Him.

In Mark 4:11 Jesus says that the things of the kingdom are done in parables. In John 15:1 He says, "I am the true vine. . . ." That which we see in the field, then, and call a vine is a real vine, but it is not the *true* vine. It is a picture of Christ and His Church. He is the true vine and we are the branches. All that which we see round about us in this creation — though we may not yet be able to see it that way — is a picture of the truth as it is in Christ. All creation revolves around Him. Not only by Him but also for Him were all things created. See Revelation 4:11. All is leading to the day when The *Ish* is united with His *Ishshah*, the Bridegroom with His Bride. And a picture of this we have in the creation of Eve as an help meet for Adam.

However, His bride is not taken out of Him, as is the case in the picture. Yet His bride does receive her life from Him. And she is meet for Him by the power

which He exercises in and upon her. He will reign with her and through her over all the new creation. She will be His companion in a covenant fellowship that will be wonderfully sweet. But we need not fear to say also that she will be an *help* meet for Him, designed by God for His service and glory.

When we say that she will be an *help* meet for Him, we are not, of-course, denying the self-sufficiency of God, Who He needs nothing and no one. We are speaking here of His human nature, which also needed an earthly mother, food and drink and all that which our bodies need. Besides there are those needs and those events which must come to pass because God decreed them. There are no needs which the creature imposes upon God, or on His Christ. But there are those events and objects (such as the cross) which are necessary because God decreed thus to bring the kingdom of Christ into being. And the church is an help perfectly meet for Christ when He reigns over the new creation, because God decreed this and formed her for Christ and gave her to Him.

In this life she is meet only in principle and with a small beginning of that new obedience. Therefore today she "helps" Him but little, and the day is yet coming in which she shall fully be meet for her role over all the new creation with Him as God's Royal Priest, Who shall show forth God's praises.

You do find in yourself a beginning of being made fit for all this, do you not? Then rest assured that you will in perfection be meet to reign with Him by His covenant faithfulness. Adam was in a deep sleep and did not assist God. Neither do we help Him cause us to be helps meet for Christ. He does all the work of salvation. And that will be our praise also when as the bride of Christ we are brought to Him with glorified bodies in His day.

Editorials

Repudiation--Reformed Journal Style

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In our issue of September 15, 1971, page 488, we called upon the *Reformed Journal* to repudiate the rank universalism from the pen of Gracia Fay Ellwood in its July-August issue. We referred especially to the following paragraphs of the Ellwood article:

What sort of supernormal 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!

We commented that the entire article was gospel-less

and that there was much in this "sermon" which could be criticized. But we called special attention to the rank universalism which appears in the above paragraph in a magazine which purports to be "A Periodical of Reformed Comment and Opinion."

We concluded our comments with the following call for repudiation:

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 . . . agree with this modernism and call it "Reformed Comment and Opinion?" Let them say!

Somewhat to our surprise, the *Reformed Journal* responded to this call for repudiation, and in its editorial columns in the December, 1971 issue it published a repudiation.

A repudiation, that is, *Reformed Journal* style!

Or should I say: Dr. James Daane style? For true to style, Dr. Daane is again right — or, at least, half right this time — but dead wrong.

Here are the pertinent paragraphs of the repudiation proper:

Gracia Fay Ellwood's "Birth of a New World" (July-August issue) was a beautiful, sensitive piece. Its conclusion, however, brought me up short: "If His Kingdom shall have no limit we can expect that every human being that ever lived . . . will be revealed as transformed and charged with the glory of God." Ellwood writes more as a poet than theologian (But it was called a "sermon," not a poem; i.e., proclamation and exposition of the Word of God. HCH); nonetheless I wondered about this apparent expression of universalism.

Professor Homer Hoeksema, editor of the *Standard Bearer*, the voice of the Protestant Reformed Church, (should be: Churches, HCH) wondered too. In an editorial, "Rank Universalism," he challenged some responsible editor of the *Reformed Journal* to declare that this journal does not endorse one possible implication of Ellwood's statement, that is, that all men will be saved. I herewith, at the request of the editorial staff of this journal, do so declare. For what follows, I alone am responsible.

To "what follows" we shall call attention later. But what about the above repudiation?

This is what I characterized as a repudiation, *Reformed Journal* style.

It leaves one with the distinct expression that the *Reformed Journal* does what little repudiating it does only very reluctantly. In fact, one almost gets the impression that they do their repudiating only because someone caught the *Journal* with its hand in the cookie jar, that is, because the universalism was so brazenly obvious that even the *Reformed Journal* could

not very well escape its implication. *Some* measure of repudiation was necessary.

But by all means the repudiation must be minimal! It must be tempered and qualified and carefully circumscribed. It must not be understood as a repudiation *in toto* of the Ellwood article. In fact, it must not even leave the impression of a total and flat repudiation of Ellwood's universalism.

Notice how the *Journal* hedges.

First of all, in the editorial comments (unsigned) on the contents of this issue Dr. Daane's article is introduced as follows: "James Daane, *Journal* Editor and Director of the Pastoral Doctorate Program at Fuller, responds to a response to an article in the July-August issue, whose conclusion ought not to have appeared, according to some, in a journal that calls itself Reformed. Daane finds a certain irony in that charge." Notice two things: 1) The concern is only with the *conclusion* of the article, as though all the rest were good. 2) Already here the *Journal* does not say flatly and objectively that this universalistic conclusion ought not to have appeared, but only that "according to some" it ought not to have appeared. I ask: does the *Journal* repudiate, or does it not?

In the second place, Dr. Daane qualifies his repudiation also. He calls the Ellwood article "a beautiful, sensitive piece," as though all of the article with the exception of this one element of universalism was sound and Scriptural. Fact is that the article in its entirety was devoid of the gospel and thoroughly modernistic. Fact is, too, that even in the short quotation made by us there were other obviously bad statements. For example, "I am not sure just what it means that Jesus will return. . . ." And again: "Let *us* hasten the great day!" (emphasis added) Fact is, too, that the *Standard Bearer* did not ask only for a repudiation of the one element of universalism, but also for "some thorough-going 'Reformed Comment and Opinion' about the entire miserably modernistic article."

In the third place, also Daane (and the editorial staff for whom he is the spokesman) fails to state that this was an instance of rank universalism, and therefore fails wholly to repudiate the error. He speaks of "this apparent expression of universalism." I say: Not true; the universalism is *obvious* and *literal*. He speaks of "one possible implication of Ellwood's statement, that is, that all men will be saved." I say again: Not true! It is neither an *implication* nor a *possible* implication. The statement is as plain as the sun in the heavens. It has only one possible meaning for anyone who can read the English language. It is as brazenly and literally and totally universalistic as possible. Just read it again for testing purposes: ". . . every human being that ever lived . . . will be revealed as transformed and charged with the glory of God." I ask: Why does Dr. Daane hedge?

In the fourth place, Daane evinces absolutely no

sensitivity for the truth of the Word of God and of our confessions and no sense of the horribleness of denying that truth and teaching men to do so when, in the second part of his article, he minimizes Ellwood's heresy still further, and, by comparison with Protestant Reformed theology, makes it come out smelling sweet as a rose. Writes he:

Ellwood's "universalism" is an overextension of the grace of God, a version of "the triumph of grace." It is, therefore, at worst heretical, heresy by definition being a distortion of a Christian truth. But Protestant Reformed theology, as this article clearly demonstrates (reference is to Rev. J. A. Heys's "A Perfect Beginning," in our October 15 issue, HCH), makes sin, indeed every moment of history, "perfect" and is, therefore, a universalism more demonic than heretical. It makes the fall as perfect as God's creation, for each is said to be equally useful to "God's purpose of uniting all things in Christ." The clue to Ellwood's universalism lies in God's grace; the clue to Protestant Reformed theology's universalism lies in sin. If one had to choose, it were better to choose Ellwood's kind of universalism than that of Protestant Reformed theology, for God is on the side of grace, and with his whole being in creation and redemption and every moment of history against sin.

Again, we shall comment on Daane's main thesis in this part of his article later.

At present we want to point out his insensitivity to the Reformed faith, the truth of God's grace.

Notice that he characterizes Ellwood's universalism as "an overextension of the grace of God, a version of 'the triumph of grace.'" Again, if faced by a choice, "it were better to choose Ellwood's kind of universalism . . . for God is on the side of grace." Notice, too, that Ellwood's universalism, according to Daane, is only doubtfully heretical: "at worst heretical"

(emphasis added).

Does not Daane understand at all that universalism is not an overextension of the grace of God, and surely not a version of "the triumph of grace," but a *denial*? Does he not realize that universalism strikes at the very heart of the truth of God's grace: sovereign predestination? Does he not realize that a Reformed man ought to cringe at the very thought of universalism? Is he not horrified that he and his fellow *Journal* editors became co-responsible for spreading abroad such a wicked denial of the beautiful truth of sovereign, particular grace? Does he not have the grace to repudiate this wicked lie wholeheartedly and forthrightly and with an expression of sorrow and repentance?

When one takes all this into account, he can only be left with the impression that Daane's repudiation is at best partial, and at worst not genuine.

And this impression can only be confirmed when Daane launches his vitriolic and hateful attack on Protestant Reformed theology, once he has gotten the technicality of repudiating Ellwood's universalism out of the way. To say the least, it surely is no sign of genuine repentance when one immediately turns about and points an accusing finger at someone else, to say, "But your sin is even worse than mine!" But this is what Daane does, and that, too, in a totally unjustifiable way.

It would seem that Ellwood must be insulted by this kind of partial repudiation and half-hearted support.

But a Reformed man, who will surely love and embrace the truth of sovereign, particular grace, can only be offended by this style of repudiation.

And Almighty God? This is an abomination to Him! And He is the Judge!

Attack--Dr. James Daane Style

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

As already indicated, to his semi-repudiation in behalf of the *Reformed Journal's* editorial staff Dr. James Daane adds to his article something for which he alone takes responsibility. We quote this section of his article in full:

Protestant Reformed theology has its own version of universalism. It came to expression in the October 15th issue of the *Standard Bearer* in an article written by one of its writers, a minister in the Protestant Reformed Church, entitled, "The Perfect Beginning." In it we are told that God made a perfect Adam because he made Adam fallible. Adam was "very good," because "the first Adam must fall . . . lose his righteousness so that through the cross of the Last

Adam God might display His perfect righteousness." So, "the beginning was perfect." But not only the beginning: "so is every step of the way from that moment of the beginning onward through all time." Not only creation as it came from the hand of God, but the fall, and every sinful moment that issues from the fall is also "very good," and indeed "perfect." Hence says the writer, "Of the cross God also said, as He looked down from heaven, 'Behold it is very good.' Of the fall of man He said the same thing."

This, too, is a kind of universalism, one which has sin at its core. It makes sin "very good," and "perfect" because sin makes possible, as the author of this article says, the realization of God's purpose of uniting all things in Christ.

Ellwood's "universalism" is an overextension of the grace of God, a version of "the triumph of grace." It is, therefore, at worst heretical, heresy by definition being a distortion of a Christian truth. But Protestant Reformed theology, as this article clearly demonstrates, makes sin, indeed every moment of history, "perfect" and is, therefore, a universalism more demonic than heretical. It makes the fall as perfect as God's creation, for each is said to be equally useful to "God's purpose of uniting all things in Christ." The clue to Ellwood's universalism lies in God's grace; the clue to Protestant Reformed theology's universalism lies in sin. If one had to choose, it were better to choose Ellwood's kind of universalism than that of Protestant Reformed theology, for God is on the side of grace, and with his whole being in creation and redemption and every moment of history against sin.

This raises an interesting question that has long fascinated me. Why is it that in conservative Reformed churches heretical expressions about God's love and grace bring forth immediate response and sharp criticism, but worse than heretical expressions about God in terms of sin evoke only silence, no matter how often and how loudly proclaimed as Reformed orthodoxy. The answer to this question would be a moment of revelation.

It is not my purpose in this article to defend the beautiful and sound and clear article of the Rev. Heys to which Daane refers to these paragraphs. If Rev. Heys feels inclined to write in detail on Daane's criticism, the columns of the *Standard Bearer* are open to him, as he well knows. I believe, however, that the *Journal* owes Rev. Heys a genuine apology for this unethical attack.

Nevertheless, a few remarks of a general nature are in order.

In the first place, Dr. Daane ought very earnestly to examine his *ethics*. I am referring to the totally unethical manner in which he deliberately distorts the article in question by misquoting. For one thing, Daane yanks a few sentences and parts of sentences completely out of the context of a carefully written article in order to make that article say exactly what it does not say. For another thing, Daane, at the end of the first paragraph quoted above, presents as a complete sentence from the article what is only part of the sentence without indicating in any way that he omitted an entire clause. Just compare the two. Daane writes: "Hence says the writer, 'Of the cross God also said, as He looked down from heaven, Behold it is very good. Of the fall of man He said the same thing.'" But the Rev. Heys wrote: "Of the cross God also said, as He looked down from heaven, 'Behold it is very good.' Of the fall of man He said the same thing with a view to the higher glory that man will have in that universal kingdom of Christ." There is a vast difference between the statements, as anyone can see. This kind of misquotation characterizes all of what Daane writes here. This is unethical. It is dishonest. I wish I could say that I believe that

Daane doesn't know better. But he is a man of better than average intelligence; and therefore I can only come to the conclusion that Daane is *deliberately dishonest* in his treatment of the article in question.

In the second place, this is all the more wicked because Daane proposes to present the God of Protestant Reformed theology as a dreadfully immoral monstrosity, who delights in sin. Although Daane does not use the expression, the Thrust of his wicked attack is the same as that of those who have frequently attacked Reformed theology with the charge that it makes God the author of sin. Now all this is terribly wicked! Daane knows very well that even in the very article which he criticizes God is presented as an awful and irreprehensible Judge of sin and the sinner. Daane, I say, knows this because it is stated in the very paragraph from which he misquotes. Two sentences later we read: "So often His judgment will be, 'Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity!'" To misquote Rev. Heys is unethical. But to misquote in order to present the God of Reformed theology as an immoral monster is terribly wicked!

To this he adds the sin of calling this theology "more demonic than heretical." Now I confess that I do not fully understand the disjunction between "demonic" and "heretical." To me, heresy is of the devil — even as all lying and slander is the proper work of the devil. But Daane evidently sees some kind of disjunction between the two; and evidently, to him, to be demonic is to be something worse than heretical. Well, let that be. The point is that he calls the beautiful conception of God which is embodied in our Reformed (not only Protestant Reformed) theology devilish!

I sincerely wish that Daane would repent of this dreadfully sinful attack.

In the third place, — and this makes matters worse — this kind of attack from Daane's pen is becoming habitual. He cannot leave Protestant Reformed theology alone. And when he attacks it, he always attacks it on this central point of the absolute sovereignty of God, especially of God's counsel, and more particularly in relation to sin. Not long ago we had an exchange about the doctrine of reprobation in the Canons. I recall, too, that when he was supposed to be reviewing *Therefore Have I Spoken*, he devoted by far the larger part of his article not to a review of the book, but to a critique of Herman Hoeksema's theology. And again, he concentrated on this same fundamental issue. More over, everytime Daane gets on this subject he bases his criticism on his own distorted presentation of Protestant Reformed theology, his own caricature of it, just as in the present instance. In the article under discussion, Daane knows very well that he has to stretch a point or two to connect his vitriolic attack with the subject of universalism. He understands theological language too well to imagine that what he is writing about in con-

nection with Protestant Reformed theology can be classified under the dogmatic name *universalism*. But Daane cannot stand the thought of Reformed particular grace. He cannot stand the true concept of a sovereign God. Especially can he not stand the Reformed doctrine of sovereign reprobation, which is inseparably connected with the truth of sovereign, particular grace. And so, too, he cannot stand the thought that God's sovereignty means that the event of the fall and the fact of sin have a subservient place in God's eternal and sovereign decree. This is the reason why even when he has to concede error on the part of the *Journal*, he cannot do so without venting his spite against the the-

ology of one who calls attention to that error. This is why, after all, he would choose universalism to Protestant Reformed theology, if faced by the choice. The reason is that he is at heart a universalist himself.

It will indeed be "a moment of revelation" when Daane learns to understand and acknowledge this.

In conclusion, I will make Dr. Daane an offer. Let us debate these matters in print. Here are the conditions:

1) The debate will take place on the basis of Scripture and the Reformed confessions. 2) Both sides of the debate will be carried in full in both the *Reformed Journal* and the *Standard Bearer*.

How about it, Dr. Daane?

Studies in Election

Its Character

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

8. Its Character

The last paragraph of the previous article really began this new turn of our subject. There we said election is solely an act of God. God does the electing and the choosing. Men and angels are the chosen ones. Election is further characterized in Scripture as absolute. It is entirely free, independent of everything outside of God himself. Why did He write some names in the Book of Life, and eliminate others from that register? Paul would say it was the good pleasure of His will to do so (Eph. 1:4,5). Why does God save some and condemn others? Because salvation is through faith, and some believe, while some believe not (Acts 28:24; John 3:18). Why do some believe? It is because they were ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48). Why do some believe not? It is because they are not Christ's sheep (John 10:26), and because they could not believe because God sovereignly hardens them (12:39f). Why did God decree to choose some and to reject others? There is no other answer than that of His sovereign pleasure!

Election is immutable, because founded on nothing in man, but on the unchangeable God alone. His decree is before all things, before His so-called foresight. God does not decree because He foresees. He can only foresee and foreknow what He has decreed. There is nothing else to foreknow. He cannot possibly foresee something not ordained in His decree. Whatever He foresees is certain. God cannot foresee an uncertainty. Therefore, if He foresees anything, it is certain, and certain because He decreed it. So His purpose according to election stands.

What follows is also most important as to the character of predestination. God's purpose to have an elect people was prior to His consideration of anything rela-

tive to sin. God viewed His people first of all as perfect and glorified in Christ, and therefore as vessels unto honor, made so from an unfallen lump. In this view, election is first and primary. Everything else, including the fall and reprobation, is subservient to it. The end does not serve the means, but the means serve the end. What is implied here is that election is of a supralapsarian character. This means that the decree of predestination, in the order of the decrees, is above, beyond and preceding all the other elements in the divine system of redemption. The view which puts election after the fall, and so with a view to the fall, is called the infralapsarian view. According to it, total depravity is made the basis of election. That is, God elects a people for himself out of the total mass of fallen humanity. Infralapsarians were known as low Calvinists and Supralapsarians as high Calvinists.

Although he does not enter into the supra-infra issue, J. H. Thornwell in his *Election and Reprobation* nevertheless slashes at the supra view, not only calling it an "extreme of squeamish timidity" (p.4), but also accusing the supra view relative to the decrees of God as amounting "to a downright denial of their certainty and sovereignty" (ibid.), and as "excesses . . . no more to be regarded as the genuine doctrines of Calvinistic churches" (p.8). These statements are not in harmony with the history of the Reformed and Calvinistic churches, to say nothing of not being in harmony with Scripture and reason. For, although the Canons of Dort, for example, are infralapsarian, there never was a formal, synodical condemnation of supralapsarianism. Supra men were always accepted as Reformed and always found a place in the church. There is no credal repudiation of supralapsarianism. In those Reformed and Calvinistic creeds which are admittedly and defi-

nately *infra*, the matter of *infra* was not made binding, not at least in the sense that it is the only view of predestination which may or is to be maintained, and that to the exclusion of supralapsarianism. Toplady tells us that the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles are, strictly speaking, *infra*, "though with such moderation as not to exclude the" *supra* view. The *supra-infra* question was never ecclesiastically or confessionally resolved at any point in the history of the Reformed and Calvinistic churches. Neither does it seem likely nor desirable that it ever should be. Besides all this, history reveals that supralapsarians were nothing like a Mr. Timorous, Little-faith, Faint-heart, Mr. Feeble-mind or Mr. Ready-to-halt. They were lion-hearted men — like Great-heart and Valiant-for-truth. Then it is more than ridiculous to regard the views held by such men as Calvin,* Gomarus, Voetius, Beza, Zwingli, Twisse, John Gill, Thomas Goodwin, Arthur W. Pink and H. Hoeksema as "squeamish timidity."

The *infra* view might seem to be the easier to maintain because we perhaps the most often think of our redemption from the point of view of our sin, misery and lost condition. It is a little more difficult to think of the original glory, perfection and excellency of the Church of Christ as comprehended in the eternal thought and counsel of God. But it will be found to be the presentation of Scripture that God conceived of His people in a *supra*-creation with Christ prior to their creature-union with Adam. God had blessed all His people with all spiritual blessings in heaven in Christ before the creation of the universe (Eph. 1:3,4), and so before they fell in Adam and under the curse.

In God's decree and purpose of election, we are to distinguish what is the end He has in mind, and what are the means He has ordained and will use to that end. The end God planned was to glorify His Son with the gift of a people, and that for the praise of the glory of His grace. The means, by which His eternal purpose is put into execution and brought to fulfilment, are also ordained from the beginning. We are to determine, then, what in the divine purpose is end and what are means. The end concerns the glorification of a people in their elect Head. The means include the purpose to create those people, ordain their fall, recover them from it *via* redemption and sanctification. The end and the means are not two separate determinations, but two parts of the one eternal purpose.

The end in mind is naturally first before the determination of the means, so that "what is first in intention is last in execution." The converse is also true: "The last thing in execution is the first thing in purpose." The glory of God is that "chief end," that "chief and only good" which He always keeps in view. He works all things to that end, so that it is the last thing in execution; but it also follows that it was always first in His intention. Wherefore, God's *purpose* beholds His glory revealed in Christ and His church,

with the church viewed as yet neither created nor fallen, since the creation and the fall belong to God's counsel concerning the *means*. It is the *infra* view which tends to deny the "certainty and sovereignty" of the decree of God, for it is on that score difficult to see clearly any purpose of God. For if God first determined to create men, next permitted their fall, then out of the fallen mass to choose some to salvation, did He not purpose to do all this without any end in view? This conception of the decrees leaves God with less wisdom than man, who first determines his *purpose* and end, say, in the making of a journey, then decides ways and *means* to realize his end. How else, even for a moment, could God determine and act?

This distinction of God's purpose and God's means (to secure His purpose) is supported by the Word of God. We read, "For it became Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). The decree of His purpose is first in that God ordained many sons unto glory. Next is His decree of the means in which He ordained that the Captain of our salvation be made perfect through sufferings. So it was with Christ in the decree. There He stands at its head, first, "The Lord said unto My Lord, 'Sit Thou at My right hand'" (Ps. 110:1). It was God's purpose to exalt the Mediator to the place of highest dominion. Yet in order to that intention, it was ordained that "He shall drink of the brook in the way" (v. 7). Christ's main purpose was indeed to drink of the fulness of the pleasures which are at God's right hand forevermore, but the way He would take to that end would be to drink the bitter, black, Kedronic waters of woe and anguish. So His people were destined to Canaan, but the wilderness was also appointed as the way through which they were to attain to the higher ground.

9. Its Supralapsarian Character

It is to be doubted that anyone can understand how that going to the supralapsarian view is going to the "extreme of squeamish timidity." For it, more than the *Infrascheme*, elevates the certainty and sovereignty of the decrees of God. It was nothing to do with "timidity," either, that the *Supra* view had never been confessionally condemned, not in the Anglican churches, not in the Presbyterian churches, not in the Reformed churches, nor in any churches calling themselves Calvinistic. But what is important to see, in the main points at issue, is the distinction between the *end* God has in mind, and the *way* He keeps in mind to take to that end.

God foreknew His people with a knowledge of everlasting love. Then, according to the foreknowledge of love, He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son all these people. Finally, whom He predestinated, He also glorified. Certainly, it must be plain

from Romans 8 that this foreordination of God puts His people in glory definitely prior to His prescience of their fall in Adam. Certainly this understanding of the truth is also in better agreement with the cases of Jacob and Esau mentioned in Romans 9:11 than the infralapsarian view, which has the divine decree regard them as fallen creatures. (To be continued)

*Schaff says Calvin "must be classed rather with the Supralapsarians" (History of the Christian Church, VIII, 553). See in Calvin's "Institutes," Bk. III, XXIII, VIII, concerning which Schaff says, "Here we have Supralapsarian logic combined with ethical logic." — (His. of Chr. Ch., VIII, 555). Also in the "Institutes," Bk. III, XXI, V, VII; XXIII, XI; XXIV, XII, especially in the last place mentioned, there is strong supralapsarian language.

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RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. George Hoekstra, in the passing of her step-mother,

MRS. EDWARD VANDER WERFF.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 16:15).

Rev. J. Kortering, Pres.
Mrs. John Hoekstra, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Men's Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church extends sincere sympathy to Mr. Peter Lubbers in the death of his son,

JAMES E. LUBBERS

whom the Lord took home on November 28, 1971.

"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8)

H. Kuiper, Pres.
H. Boer, Sec'y

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church extends its sincere sympathy to our President and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lubbers and their family in the loss of their son and brother,

JAMES LUBBERS.

May our covenant God comfort them by His Word and Spirit.

"And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; —". (Malachi 3:17a).

Donald Dykstra, Vice Pres.
Kae Miedema, Sec'y.

NOTICE

An Office Bearer's Conference is to be held, the Lord willing, Tuesday evening, January 4, at the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, at 8:00 P.M. All past and present Office Bearers are urged to attend. Rev. C. Hanko will speak on the subject — "What is the deacons' responsibility toward those who cannot pay school tuition?"

P. Knott, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to our Vice-president and one of our members, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lubbers, in the sudden loss of their son,

JAMES LUBBERS.

May our heavenly Father comfort the bereaved in the knowledge that He doeth all things well. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21.

Rev. C. Hanko, Pres.
Mrs. J. Lubbers, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Choral Society of Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses its sympathy to the Karsemeyer Family, in the passing of Mrs. Karsemeyer's step-mother,

MRS. EDWARD VANDER WERFF.

May they find comfort in the following words of scripture, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." (II Cor. 5:1)

Paul Schipper, Pres.
Betty Haveman, Sec'y.

News From Our Churches

As a follow-up to our rather extensive list of trios and calls in the last issue, we can report the following: Rev. Van Baren has declined the call extended to him by the Redlands' congregation, and the call from Grand Rapids' Hope Church has gone to Rev. Decker, who, as you probably recall, is also considering the call from Randolph, Wisconsin.

There was a special "Announcement" in the December 1 issue of the *Standard Bearer*, to the effect that Seminarian Joostens has been "licensed to speak a word of edification in the Protestant Reformed Churches." In connection with that, we could pass along the following little item from the November 28 bulletin of Southwest Church: "We welcome Prof. H. Hanko and Sem. M. Joostens to our pulpit today. We are especially happy that Seminarian Joostens, a member of our congregation, will deliver his first sermon to us. We pray that the Lord may continue to bless him (and all our students) as they study to attain this high and holy office of minister of the Word."

We learn from Hull's bulletin that the consistory of Rev. Kortering's congregation has decided to increase its size by one elder and one deacon. Probably of even greater interest than the *decision*, is one of the *grounds*, namely, that "the increase in the size of the congregation warrants it."

In other news from Hull, the consistory there, at the request of the Hudsonville diaconate, took a collection to help defray expenses involved in shipping to Jamaica the used clothing collected in the recent drive.

In glancing through the stack of bulletins received during the last several months of 1971, I was impressed by the variety of interesting topics for discussions and/or speeches in the various societies throughout our denomination. With the hope that you'll find them as interesting as I did, I'll mention a few, along with the name of the church in which they were considered. "Proper Sabbath Observance," by a Hull society; "Separation of Church and State," in Loveland; "Speaking in Tongues," in Grand Rapids' Hope Church; "Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism," in Southeast; and three rather lengthy titles from Southwest, "If it is wrong for a Christian to let out a child for adoption, is it also wrong to adopt a child?"; "How must we evaluate the missionary work of those who

are not Reformed?"; and "How does God reveal Himself in the animate and inanimate creation?" A couple of League Meeting topics were "An Evaluation of the Jesus' Movement," and "Campus Crusade and Modern Evangelism"; and, for an Office Bearers' Conference, "Is it proper to use the office of the Deaconate to collect funds for various causes we represent, such as, the schools, the *Standard Bearer*, etc."

Sunday bulletins from our Kalamazoo Church give, almost invariably, plenty of evidence of having been thoughtfully written, in order to make them thought-provoking. Take, for example, the following item from the December 5 bulletin? "Last Thursday morning the pastor was again invited by Rev. H. Minnema, instructor in 'Reformed Doctrine' at K C H S, to speak at three of the morning classes. When the class in 'Ref Doc' gets to the lesson on 'Common Grace,' Rev. Minnema usually has the pastor over to debate 'Grace Always Particular' vs. 'Common Grace.' Very lively and good-spirited discussions took place in all three classes. Common Grace trends show that there is no more Kuypertian common grace, no more Berkhofian common grace. It is all Heynsian, thoroughly Arminian common grace now at K C H S."

The "pastor" is Rev. Harbach, of course.

We would like to thank the *Standard Bearer* business manager for furnishing this column with the following interesting and most welcome report:

"It might prove of interest to our readers to learn that more than 25 new subscriptions have been added to the mailing list of our STANDARD BEARER during the past three months. We are growing, and that's a sign, a healthy sign, that much 'good food' for thought and study appears on the pages of our publication!

"The majority of the new subscribers reside here in 'the States.' One of the exceptions is the following: A regular subscriber, residing in Nova Scotia, Canada, was sent his renewal notice a month or so ago. He (a Scotsman) promptly sent in his renewal payment of \$7.00. He also included with his remittance an equal amount for a one year's gift subscription to a person residing in The Netherlands. A transaction such as this creates a great deal of interest in the Business Office of our magazine. (If the subscriber in Canada reads this column, perhaps he would give our readers an explanation as to how this came about. We will be most happy to insert his answer in a future issue)." DD.