

# The Standard Bearer

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

***IN THIS ISSUE***

**Editorials:**

**The OPC and the "Free Offer"  
That Insane Amusement-Notion**

**Meditation:**

**With Christ In Paradise**

**All Around Us:**

**Continuing Presbyterians Creedal Authority**

**The Day of Shadows:**

**Distinguishing Grace**



## CONTENTS

Editorials —	
Editor's Notes .....	290
The OPC and the "Free Offer" .....	290
Guest Editorial —	
That Insane Amusement-Notion .....	293
Meditation —	
With Christ In Paradise .....	295
Question Box —	
Some Pertinent Questions About	
Our Reformed Position (3) .....	297
As To The Ethics Of Criticism .....	299
All Around Us —	
Continuing Presbyterians .....	300
Creedal Authority .....	301
Tax Credit For Tuition .....	302
Contending For The Faith —	
The Doctrine of Atonement	
(Reformation Period) .....	303
Studies in Election —	
Its Value .....	305
From Holy Writ —	
Pure and Undeified Religion (10) .....	307
The Day of Shadows —	
Distinguishing Grace .....	308
News From Our Churches .....	312

## THE STANDARD BEARER

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## Editorials

## Editor's Notes

*Key 73 — What Must We Think About It?* This will be the subject of a lecture in the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, to be delivered by the Rev. David Engelsma. In this note I not only want to call attention to this forthcoming lecture, which ought to be of interest to many Reformed people. But I call attention, too, to a change of date. Originally this lecture was scheduled for May 3. It has now been changed to May 10, the Lord willing. Circle this date

on your calendar, and plan to attend!

*Progress Report — Theological School Building.* The committee had planned to present a progress report with complete building plans more than a month ago. In fact, the article has been written and the sketches are all ready. However, there has been a delay, due to legal technicalities in clearing the title to the site. As soon as this matter is cleared up, there will indeed be a complete — and exciting — report.

## The OPC and the "Free Offer"

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

In connection with our discussion of the proposed merger of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, we have begun to

discuss the matter of Arminianism. And in connection with this discussion of Arminianism, we earlier mentioned both the OPC's treatment of the Clark



Case, beginning in 1944, and the booklet by Dr. Murray and Dr. Stonehouse, "The Free Offer of the Gospel." Both, we said, were evidences of Arminianism in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. And these evidences we propose to discuss now.

Parenthetically, we may remark that there seems to be a revival of interest in the subject of the so-called free offer. Just recently I read two references to it in religious magazines originating in the United Kingdom; and one of these references promises to be an extensive discussion which will eventually appear in booklet form. This furnishes additional reason, therefore, for our discussion.

It will not be necessary in this connection to review the Clark Case and its treatment in detail. For any who may be interested in some research on this subject, there was an extensive discussion of that case in Volumes 21 and 22 of the *Standard Bearer*, in a series of articles entitled, "The Text of a Complaint." It will not be necessary for us to review this case, however, because the issue of the so-called free offer as it was part of that case is precisely the same as the issue of the booklet, "The Free Offer of the Gospel." In fact, the latter had its origin historically in the Clark Case. According to the introduction of the booklet itself, "This study was prepared by the Rev. Professors John Murray and Ned B. Stonehouse of Westminster Theological Seminary, and presented as the report of a committee to the Fifteenth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church" in 1948. But all this began with the Clark Case in 1944.

What was the Clark Case?

It began in 1944, when a special meeting of the Presbytery (classis) of Philadelphia was held for the purpose of examining Dr. Gordon H. Clark with a view to his licensure and ordination to the ministry. Against the fact that this meeting was called, as well as against its proceedings and decisions, a complaint was directed. Among the dozen signatures to this complaint are such familiar names as R.B. Kuiper, N.B. Stonehouse, and C. Van Til. The second part of the complaint (a lengthy, printed protest) dealt at length with four alleged errors in the theological views of Dr. Clark, errors which became manifest, according to the complainants in the course of Dr. Clark's examination by the Presbytery and in spite of which the Presbytery decided to license him and proceed to his ordination.

What were the four alleged errors?

The first charge of the Complaint alleged erroneous views on the part of Dr. Clark concerning the incomprehensibility and knowability of God, pp. 2-6, "The Text of a Complaint." This, at first glance, does not seem to be related to the issue of the free offer. But it appears that there nevertheless was a relation in so far as the issue of the "logic of revelation" is concerned. Perhaps we shall have occasion to refer to this later.

The second charge concerns Dr. Clark's "view of the relation of the faculty of knowledge, the intellectual faculty, to other faculties of the soul." (pp. 6-10)

The third part of this section of the Complaint alleges that Dr. Clark is guilty of maintaining "that the relationship of divine sovereignty and human responsibility to each other presents no difficulty for his thinking and that the two are easily reconcilable before the bar of human reason." (pp. 10-13) In this connection, the charge against Dr. Clark was really that of *rationalism*, a charge all too familiar in our Protestant Reformed history, but as false in Dr. Clark's case as in ours. But again, this third allegation was closely connected with both the first one (concerning God's knowledge and ours) and the fourth one.

The fourth charge was that "in the course of Dr. Clark's examination it became abundantly clear that his rationalism keeps him from doing justice to the precious teaching of Scripture that in the gospel God sincerely offers salvation in Christ to all who hear, reprobate as well as elect, and that he has no pleasure in any one's rejecting this offer but, contrariwise, would have all who hear accept it and be saved." (pp. 13-15)

Those familiar with our Protestant Reformed history will recognize at once the similarity between the position of the Complaint and that of the First Point of 1924 and its general, well-meant offer of salvation. This was, of course, not mere coincidence: there was a definite Christian Reformed influence in the complaint, an influence which came about through the presence of men among the complainants who had their origin in the Christian Reformed Church.

I will not weary the reader with a detailed account of the proceedings in the Clark Case. Eventually the case went to the General Assembly (roughly equivalent to our synod), a committee was appointed by the Twelfth General Assembly to examine the doctrinal aspects of the Complaint, and this committee reported (with a majority and minority report) to the Thirteenth General Assembly. Although Dr. Clark's licensure was upheld, neither the majority nor the minority of the committee entertained Dr. Clark's views on the matter of "apparent contradictions" in Scripture on the matter of the offer of the gospel. Another committee was appointed which was to report to the Fourteenth General Assembly and which was to clarify these doctrinal matters. And, to make a long story short, eventually the booklet, "The Free Offer of the Gospel" came out of this history at the time of the Fifteenth General Assembly in 1948.

The strange thing was that while Dr. Clark's licensure by the Presbytery of Philadelphia was upheld by the Thirteenth General Assembly, it was the views of the Complaint, especially with respect to the so-called offer of the gospel, which prevailed in the OPC as the final result of this history.



This appears very clearly from a comparison of the booklet, "The Free Offer of the Gospel" with the following description of the differences between Dr. Clark and the complainants by Rev. H. Hoeksema in the Standard Bearer (Vol. 21, pp. 384, ff.):

"Let us try to define the difference between the complainants and Dr. Clark as sharply as we can.

"The difference is not that the complainants insist that the gospel must be preached to all men promiscuously, while Dr. Clark claims that it must be preached only to the elect. This would be quite impossible, seeing that no preacher is able to single out the elect and separate them from the reprobate in this world. They are agreed that the gospel must be preached to all men.

"Nor is the difference that the complainants openly deny the doctrine of reprobation, while Dr. Clark professes to believe this truth. We read in the 'Complaint': 'He believes — as do we all — the doctrine of reprobation.' p. 13.

"Again, the difference does not consist in this that the complainants characterize the gospel as an 'offer' of Christ or of salvation, while Dr. Clark objects to that term. If the term 'offer' is understood in the sense in which it occurs in the confessions, and in which also Calvin uses it (*offere*, from *obfero*, meaning to present), there can be no objection to that term, though, to prevent misunderstanding, it would be better to employ the words *to present*, and *presentation*.

"Again, even though Dr. Clark objects to the word 'sincere' in the sense in which the complainants use that term, afraid to leave the impression that he preaches Arminianism, even this does not touch the real point of difference between them. That God is sincere in the preaching of the gospel no one would dare to deny. As the complainants rightly ask: 'Would it not be blasphemy to deny this?' p. 13.

"But the difference between them does concern *the contents* of the gospel that must be preached promiscuously to all men.

"It is really not a question *to whom* one must preach, or *how* he must preach, but *what* he must preach.

"According to the complainants the preacher is called to proclaim to all his hearers *that God sincerely seeks the salvation of them all*. If this is not their

meaning when they write: 'in the gospel God sincerely offers salvation in Christ to all who hear, reprobate as well as elect,' their words have no meaning at all.

"According to Dr. Clark, however, the preacher proclaims to all his hearers promiscuously *that God sincerely seeks the salvation of all the elect*. The elect may be variously named in the preaching: those who repent, they that believe in Christ, that hunger for the bread of life, that thirst for the water of life, that seek, knock, ask, that come to Christ, etc., etc. But they are always the elect.

"We may define the issue still more sharply, and limit it to God's intention and attitude in the preaching of the gospel *with regard to the reprobate*.

"For it is more especially about the reprobate and their salvation that the complainants are concerned. Strange though it may seem, paradoxical though it may sound, they want to leave room in the preaching for *the salvation of the reprobate*. For the sake of clarity, therefore, we can safely leave the elect out of our discussion. That God sincerely seeks their salvation is not a matter of controversy. To drag them into the discussion of this question simply confuses things. The question very really concerns the attitude of God with respect to the reprobate. We may limit the controversy to this question: *what must the preacher of the gospel say of God's intention with respect to the reprobate?* And these, too, may be called by different names, such as: the impenitent, the wicked, the unbelievers, etc., etc.

"The answer to this question defines the difference between Dr. Clark and the complainants sharply and precisely.

"The complainants answer: the preacher must say that God sincerely seeks the salvation of the reprobate through the preaching of the gospel.

"Dr. Clark answers: that is not true, the preacher may never say that in the name of God.

"And, in the light of Scripture, he should say: God seeks His own glory and justification in preparing the reprobate for their just damnation even through the preaching of the gospel."

It is plain from the above description that the views of the complainants prevailed in the booklet, "The Free Offer of the Gospel," and in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

## Principles of Education

### Principle of Education, No. 1

The Bible is from beginning to end the written Word of God, given by infallible inspiration. All school administration, instruction and discipline shall be

based on it and permeated by its teaching, for we acknowledge that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom.



## Guest Editorial

# That Insane Amusement-Notion

*(Editor's Note. The following editorial from Volume IV of the Standard Bearer is dated, as will be evident from some of its references. But in its main thrust it is very much up-to-date, both for the young and the not-so-young. Why do I place it? I have in mind not only the amusement-craze in general, whose inroads have been all too large among us – if we will only examine ourselves. But I have in mind specifically the basketball-game craze which has swept our constituency; and more specifically still, the craze which even the secular press has dubbed the "March madness," – tournament time. I would consider myself derelict in my duty if I did not raise my voice in unqualified protest against this saddening phenomenon. The following reprint is one contribution of protest. The "H.H." who signed this editorial was, of course, the late Rev. Herman Hoeksema.)*

It is amazing how quickly one becomes accustomed to insane ideas.

What is essentially foolish and, at first, appears absurd, is repeatedly brought before our attention as really good and expedient and practical and indispensable and necessary and very desirable; gradually it turns our head, changes our judgment, our valuation of things and soon has captivated us entirely.

Let a new fad only be adopted by a few, let these few advertise it, persistently bring it before the attention of the public. It will certainly be victorious. The masses will follow. The fad will win.

Thus it is in the business-world. If you want people to discard an old article and adopt a new product, no matter how much better the old may be than the new, all that is necessary is that you put your new article in the limelight, paste pictures of it on billboards, extol its virtues in full-page advertisements, if possible throw samples of it in every home, and you will win.

No different it is in society-life. If you want to change old and age-worn customs, that have stood the test of centuries, and introduce new habits, all you need is publicity. Long hair is certainly more beautiful than the bob. And every young lady knows it. But if there are too many barbers in Paris to live on the man-trade, and if you are a genius to invent new modes, and if you conceive of the ingenious idea of luring all the ladies of the land into the barber's chair, all you need do is to send a few bobbed Paris-specimens into every town and village of the world, let them parade the streets, appear in every conspicuous place of public life, and though they must often part in tears with their God-given beauty, you may depend on it, that before long the majority of the female world will go bobbed.

Thus it is with many notions, absurd if you will think again.

One of these insane ideas, that have gradually but

quickly and surely turned our minds is that our covenant-young-people need amusement.

Think seriously, think again, and you will agree that it is only a crazy notion.

Only refuse to believe all that is presented to you and to be dragged along with every new movement under the sun, only maintain that you have the unction of the Holy One and that you have no need that any teach you, and then judge of the statement: *young people must amuse themselves*, and you will agree in the light of Scripture, that the notion cannot have its origin in The Church of Christ, but must have originated in the world, that its source is not to be traced to Jerusalem but to Babylon.

Surely, in the world, where God's covenant is unknown, one expects such a view of life. Life is brief! One lives only once! And youth is the springtime of life. In his youthful days one cannot be expected to look serious all the time. It is the time of joy and pleasure and hilarity! The time of fun and amusement! Soon enough comes the more serious time of life. Let the youth folk, therefore, eat and drink and be merry. And especially the youth of today, in the modern world, needs enjoyment and amusement.

One is not surprised at such language from those that seek the things that are below.

But in the Church?

Among the people of God?

How come that similar language is heard among them today and that the problem of the amusements of the young folk has become a very serious one, that even appears and looms large in Synodical Agenda?

Well, you see, it has been constantly preached.

Social reformers, pedagogues, wise men and learned, and even divines look very serious and profound, learnedly speak of the special characteristics and needs of modern youth, of the Problem of the Age of Adolescence, etc.



People begin to listen. Who is bold enough to reveal his ignorance by gainsaying men of learning with D.D.'s, Ph.D.'s and other mysterious tokens of wisdom and learning behind their names?

Solutions of the serious problem are offered.

Seeing that young people are naturally full of life and surely will have fun; seeing further that the world beckons them on every side and provides all sorts of much wanted enjoyment for them; seeing finally, that they will surely be led into the world if we do not introduce something into the life of the Church that will counterbalance the tempting power of the world, we must provide for them amusements ourselves.

Thus, gradually, the Church begins to practice the precepts of the wisdom of the world.

First, instead of edifying and instructive programs, silly socials and hilarious banquets are introduced, where one fairly bursts with laughter, opened with prayer and closed in the same manner, to ask the Lord for the forgiveness of premeditated sins, for which the participants prepared themselves weeks in advance!

Next come very imperfect imitations of the theatre, pageants, dramas, moving pictures and the like, carefully introduced by some specimens that present a religious appearance, not to give the more serious-minded in the Church too sudden a shock.

Soon it is argued that the body of our young people must have careful attention and athletics, ball-games, swimming-pools, bowling alleys and pool-tables are introduced, all for the development and enjoyment of the covenant-youth.

And presently you will find that people have accustomed themselves so thoroughly to the notion that young people must amuse themselves and fun of some sort must be provided for them, that the Church in its largest gathering, the Synod, sits wise and discusses the very serious problem: how can we provide wholesome amusement for the young folks?!

And it is, by then, forgotten that the whole idea is insane, never originated in the Church of Jesus Christ, finds no item of support in the Word of God, but was originated by the powers of darkness to lead the youth of the covenant straightway into the world and to hell!

I would appeal to our young folks not to listen to this false philosophy.

If you will think again, you will deem it an insult to your Christian young manhood and womanhood, that the Church actually considers your chief ambition to follow after vain amusements.

Do not misunderstand me.

I do not mean, that you must pass through the world with heads bowed low, eyes closed and faces so long "that you could eat oatmeal out of the end of a gaspipe," as Billy Sunday has it.

There is undoubtedly a place in our life for means of relaxation, for real enjoyment.

But I mean in the first place, that it is surely contrary to the Word of God to present matters as if amusement and fun were the chief thing in your young lives, so that it becomes a serious problem how to satisfy the craving for entertainment. That is not true. It is certainly contrary to Scripture, contrary to your calling as covenant-children of Jehovah, contrary to your relation to Him and to the world in which you have been placed to be children of light.

And I mean in the second place, that our joy must be Christian, that even in moments of entertainment and relaxation our calling remains to be children of light. Our pleasures must be able to stand the unchangeable test of the Word of God.

Young men! thus Scripture says, you are strong! You have overcome the evil one!

That means, that the world is no theatre and no playground, but a battlefield, and that we have our fight not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, against the spiritual wickedness in high places. That means, not that you are strong in body and have a well-developed muscle. That is very good. I like to see a young man that is also in the physical sense of the word strong. But it is not the main thing. Physical exercise is for that reason worth but little. It can have but a small place in our lives. It does not prepare you for the main battle. You cannot fight the devil with your powerful fist. But it means that you are strong in spirit. It signifies that the fear of God is in your hearts, that the love of God is poured forth in your souls, that your minds are enlightened by the grace of God, that you are well founded in the truth, in the principles of the Word of God, that you understand the world in which you live and are well able to discern between the powers of darkness and light in Christ, that you have put on the whole armor of God and are able to stand in the evil day.

Young women, you must adorn the truth! It is your calling, in the light of the Word of God, not to follow after the vain fashions of the world, to become transformed according to the manifestations and form of this world, but to be an example of true Christian modesty and beauty and virtue!

What you need?

Not chiefly amusements, but edification. Instruction in the Word of God. Being well-founded in truth, you will be able to fight the good fight unto the end that no one take your crown.

You need the Word of God.

By giving heed to your way according to that Word you will cleanse your way.

The times in which we live are serious, in many respects more serious than any former age. The world develops in its own direction. It opposes the light not with open persecution, with sword and fire, but it introduces itself to you in many of its forms as



Christian. We have Christian plays and Christian movies, Christian ball-teams and Christian athletics. There is a good deal of Christian deviltry in our day which is deceiving.

All the more reason, why you must be strong.

Youth is above all the time for preparation. The thing you must prepare yourselves for is not to be able to win in a game, but to have the spiritual victory in the battle of faith.

Hence, instead of giving your chief attention to amusements and fun, I pray you search the Scriptures!

Development in truth of the Word of God must be the chief aim of your societies.

Study the Word!

Study it for Catechism. Study it in your societies. Study it at home. You need it more than ever.

And free yourselves from that insane amusement-notion that is in the air and keeps thousands under its spell.

Then, by the grace of God, you will be able to stand.

And gain the victory.

H.H.

## Meditation

# With Christ In Paradise

*Rev. M. Schipper*

*"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."*

*Luke 23:43.*

The second word of the cross!

Spoken by the Lord in answer to the plea of a penitent malefactor!

One of two malefactors who were crucified with Jesus, on either side of Him one, and the Lord in their midst. So the Scripture was fulfilled "and he was numbered with the transgressors." While Pilate evidently intended by this arrangement of the crosses to heap ridicule upon His head, God so providentially governed the arrangement that the Lord might understand that He was the one of whom the prophet wrote.

Undoubtedly the crosses were so arranged that both of the malefactors could look upon the Saviour, and at the same time study the superscription that had been written and tacked above His head. Written in three different languages, so that no one reading it would fail to comprehend what it stated: "This is Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews." A little Bible, so it appeared, evoking conversation of the passersby, and especially of the two sinners in the same condemnation with the Lord.

Not long after the three crosses had been erected did this conversation begin. One of the malefactors railed on Him, and said, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." But the other rebuked him, saying, "Dost thou not fear God? seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" In the eleventh hour of his earthly existence he begins to show evidence that a change has

taken place within him. For he continues, "And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss."

Election and reprobation!

And Jesus drawing a sharp line of demarcation between them!

All through the long hours of trial and abuse the Lord endured He had no one who came to His defense. All had made themselves guilty of profaning His blessed Name. All of them had derided Him and cursed Him. All were crying bitterly in devilish hatred for His death. Even in their tender mercies, which were so cruel, they gave Him gall to drink. And now, even one who is crucified with Him railed on Him, challenging Him to exercise His powers, if He had any, to free Himself and the dying victims. He, too, read the inscription, which did no more for him than to arouse in his wicked and unbelieving heart the thoughts which rose to his lips whereby he castigates the Name of His anointing. Indeed, here was evidence of the Word which worketh death.

On the other hand, only one, a very precious one, comes to His defense. Only one, in the midst of all that rabble, who summons the last efforts of his dying strength to voice his allegiance to the crucified Saviour.

Listen to him rebuke his fellow sufferer!

Dost thou not fear God? Implying, of course, that he who issues the rebuke did. But whence, then, came that fear? Surely, not of himself. For does he not



admit that he is no better than his companion in crime? He knows that he is a despicable sinner who has been justly condemned to die, not only under the sentence of Rome, but evidently also under the sentence of God. Such knowledge of one's sins as being not only an offence against the State, but an offence against God, one does not have of himself, but of the miracle of grace. His rebuke of his fellow in defense of the Lord was at the same time an acknowledgement of his own sin and unworthiness. The confession of his sin, and the penitence of his heart were expressions of his godly fear.

But the penitent malefactor has much more to say!

After he had declared to his companion in crime the truth concerning Jesus' innocence, he turns his head to the Lord, and prays.

Jesus, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!

How thoroughly the Holy Spirit had dinned into his heart the truth he read in that little Bible above Jesus' head!

Over and over he must have read the inscription: Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews! The Holy Spirit, opening the eyes of his heart, must have convinced him that, in spite of the mockery the title had been intended to convey, and in spite of the humbled appearance of the central figure on Golgotha, this was indeed Jehovah-salvation out of Nazareth, Who by His death was laying the very foundation of His kingdom.

How much the penitent malefactor understood concerning that kingdom, it would be difficult to say. That His kingdom was not of this world, he must certainly have surmised: from the fact that the Lord was about to die, and from the fact that he did not agree with the wicked malefactor who called for Christ to come down from the cross to deliver Himself and them. Whether he believed that the Lord would enter His kingdom immediately upon His death, or that he believed that Christ would come with His kingdom at the end of the world, we have no way of knowing. The latter idea is expressed in a second reading of the original text. And if this is the significance of the text, then the answer which the Lord gives to his plea is all the more amazing.

"Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise!"

Though it is true that His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, given unto Him from before the foundation of the world; though it is true that when He came into the world at His birth He was already King; though it is true that He lays the very foundation of His kingdom through the blood of His cross, and that after His victory on the cross He would ascend to the throne of His kingdom; and though it is true that at the end of the world He shall come again in connection with His kingdom; the penitent malefactor need not be concerned about some far distant realization of a

kingdom in which he would be remembered by Jesus. This very day, he will be with Jesus in Paradise!

Who shall say what that is? Who shall describe its glory?

Undoubtedly it takes its name from that first paradise in the creation of God, that beautiful garden of delights; where man dwelt in creatural perfection that was only earthly, but where nevertheless he dwelt with his God, and walked with Him in blessed fellowship. So long as he remained in the state of righteousness, close to the tree of life, in the very center of the garden man walked in covenant communion with his Creator — God.

That paradise passed away when man through his sin and rebellion against God was banished from His presence. It is lost forever. God having something better, heavenly and eternal, in mind.

Of the grandeur of the latter we can speak only by comparisons with the former, but comparisons which cannot fully portray to earth-bound creatures the sublimity of the heavenly. In the one God was known only as He revealed Himself in the works of creation and providence; in the other it will be as the God of our redemption, as the Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In the one the tempter could and did enter; from the other he shall forever be shut out. From the one sad exiles were driven out, never to return; in the other the inhabitants shall remain forever. But all such comparisons, we know, cannot satisfy your questions: where and what is paradise?

Paradise is where Jesus is. And if you would know what paradise is, it is to be like unto Him, and to be with Him. There the light has dawned and the shadows have forever fled away. There is no night, for the Lamb is the light of that place. There is perfect holiness, and nothing can enter which loveth or maketh a lie. It is the state and condition of perfect blessedness; for no tears shall fall there, and all sighing and groaning shall be done away. Paradise is a spiritual condition of glory into which the souls of the redeemed enter immediately upon their departure from the body of this flesh, and in which they consciously abide in the house of mansions to await the day of the resurrection.

Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise!

Amazing reply!

For though the plea of the penitent was projected to the day when Christ would come with His kingdom, the Lord informs him that that very day when his eyes would close in death, he would be with Christ in the glory of His kingdom.

Verily I say unto you . . .!

Not only will the Lord remember him, but this very day He will do even more, — He will take him to glory!

O, it brings tears of rejoicing to my eyes, as it must also have filled the eyes of the penitent, — today they together, the penitent with His Lord, would enter with



the victor's song upon their lips into the paradise of God!

The promise of glory to a penitent sinner!

To a sinner who was supernaturally changed in the last moment of his earthly existence!

No preacher was there at the cross to plead with him to accept Jesus before it was too late. No siren call of the gospel offering him a proffered salvation, which he could accept or reject at will, was heard above the din of the rabble that milled about the cross. No warnings of hell-fire were held over his head. This man had no preacher, no offers, no mother's prayers, no last rites by a priest, no book of common prayers, no nothing. All he was was a poor, miserable, lost, hell-bound sinner by nature; but who suddenly, supernaturally, was regenerated and converted by the pure and sovereign grace of God. Here was a case where no preacher could boast that he had saved another soul for Christ; but it was clearly a case where Christ saves His own souls, the soul of one who was given unto Him of the Father. Here was clear evidence that He did see His seed, as the prophet Isaiah long before had prophesied that He would.

O, do not misunderstand! We do not mean to say with all this that the sinner is saved without any divinely appointed means. Nor would we ignore the preaching of the gospel as the divinely ordained means whereby Christ saves His people.

But we do mean to say that all that was necessary for the malefactor to know concerning the God of his salvation was right before him. That little gospel, that inscription above Jesus' head, proved to be all that was necessary to bring the spiritual life which God had

planted in his heart to true consciousness. Every word in that little gospel, as it was applied by the Holy Spirit to his heart, began to spell out salvation for him.

Jesus! That is Jehovah saves!

Of Nazareth! Signifying that this Jesus, Who is truly Jehovah Who saves, was come in the flesh!

King of the Jews! Thus pointing him to His regal status as God's appointed and anointed King; but then, too, as the Messianic King that was to come out of the Jewish race.

And as the Spirit began to interpret the words in his heart, the words of the inscription he read with new meaning. Now they did not only say that Jesus of Nazareth was the King of the Jews, but this Jesus was his Saviour, and this King of the Jews was his Lord and King. Now all the cross was for him, and He Who is innocently hanging there and condemned to die was the One Who was dying also for him. How could he remain silent with such a revelation? O, Lord Jesus, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom!

When the elect cry unto Him, verily He will hear them, and surely answer their petition!

Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise!

The penitent malefactor, the first fruits of a veritable harvest!

For they shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, who are ordained to eternal life, and they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with Jesus and the malefactor.

Sinners they all are, who are saved by grace!

Who shall fill the paradise of God!

## Question Box

# Some Pertinent Questions About Our Reformed Position (3)

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

### Question

Our readers will recall that one of our Canadian readers sent in a series of questions, of which we have thus far answered only the first. We are now up to the second question, which was put as follows: "In view of I Tim. 4:10, can we not say that there is common grace, or a favor from God for all men, believer and unbeliever alike?"

### Reply

First of all, let us get the text before us: "For

therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

Perhaps we should point out immediately that the Dutch rendering is slightly different: "Want hiertoe arbeiden wij ook en worden gesmaad, omdat wij gehoopt hebben op den levenden God, die een Behouder is aller menschen, maar allermeeest der geloovigen." The chief differences are: 1) The word *Behouder* (Preserver) instead of Savior. 2) The



insertion of the word *maar* (but) in the last clause: "but especially of those that believe."

This difference in translation also serves to focus our attention on the various possibilities as far as the meaning of the text is concerned.

Among those who choose the translation "Preserver" there are two groups of interpreters. One group simply refers the text to the preservation of God's providence. In this present time and this present life God preserves all men. He upholds them, keeps them in existence, provides for them with respect to the things of this present life and with respect to all their earthly way, day by day and step by step. He does this by His almighty and omnipresent power. But, so the explanation runs, God cares for His children in a special sense. He protects them and delivers them out of trouble and provides for them in all their needs, also as far as the things of this present earthly life are concerned, in a special sense of the word. In this sense, God is "a Preserver of all men, but specially of them that believe." There is another group of interpreters who explain the first part of the text (God is a Preserver of all men) to the general preserving power of God's providence, and then explain the last part as referring to the grace whereby God preserves His people in Christ Jesus unto everlasting salvation, so that they persevere unto the end. In other words, the last part of the text refers to preservation and perseverance as the Canons of Dordrecht speak of it in Chapter V.

As far as either of these interpretations is concerned, we may point out that they do not lend support to the theory of common grace, that is, to the idea of an attitude of favor on the part of God toward mankind in general, including the reprobate. The mere fact that God providentially upholds and preserves men in this present, earthly existence is not *grace*. To be sure, when God preserves men, He displays His own goodness, also before the eyes of the ungodly. His work is always good; and He always makes Himself known in all His works as the good God. There is no question about that! But when you talk about "grace," you are talking about the *attitude* of God, about His will to bless, to show favor. And then we must remember that there is no such thing as *bare providence*, a naked power to uphold and preserve and govern. The motive of God's providence is either love or hatred; the operation of God's providence is either in grace or in wrath. When God providentially preserves the ungodly, gives him earthly existence, gives him a house, gives him food and drink, even gives him prosperity and wealth and abundance, then it always remains true that "The curse of Jehovah is in the house of the wicked," Prov. 3:33. And when God providentially preserves the righteous in the same sense, then it always remains true that "He blesteth the habitation of the just." His grace is never common.

However, for various reasons neither of the above

interpretations appears to me to be the idea of the text. In the first place, the text uses the usual word here for "Savior." And while it is possible to use the term as above, there ought to be good reason for such an interpretation — good reason which I believe is lacking. For one thing, the term "Savior" is not used elsewhere in I Timothy in the sense of "Preserver." For another, the context seems to me to point to the fact that the apostle has in mind *salvation*. Notice that in verse 6 the apostle speaks of being "a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine." Notice, too, that in verse 8 he speaks of "godliness" as having "promise of life that now is, and of that which is to come." It would be very strange, I believe, if in such a context the apostle would use the word "Savior" (*Soter*) in the general sense of God's providence. In the second place, the word "but" must really be inserted in the text by these interpretations in order to make a contrast between God's preserving of men in general and His preserving of believers. And, in the third place, I do not believe that under these interpretations the text furnishes a sufficient reason why the apostle and others "both labour and suffer reproach." About this last point later.

Hence, we prefer the English translation: "who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

But this must not be misinterpreted, then, in the Semi-Pelagian and Arminian sense, as though the text teaches that God is the Savior of all men, head for head, but that this is realized only in believers. This is a very common perversion of the text. And I say intentionally "perversion." I refuse to call this an *interpretation*. And there is one very obvious reason why the above cannot possibly be true. One does not have to go outside of the text itself to see this. If God is said to be the Savior of all men, head for head and soul for soul, but only the believers are actually saved, then it is perfectly obvious that the text *lies*: for if only believers are actually saved (and they are), then God is only the Savior of them, not of all men. One can change the text and say: God is the possible Savior of all men, or, God is willing to be the Savior of all men. But this is not what the text states. And you must come to the conclusion that God is not the Savior of anyone: even for believers, then, He is only a possible Savior; and it is up to them whether they want to be saved or do not want to be saved. I say again: this is a perversion of Scripture, and no Reformed man will ever accept this view. Nor is it anywhere supported in our Reformed creeds; in fact, it is pointedly contradicted by the creeds.

How, then, must we understand the text? Let me briefly draw the following lines.

In the first place, God is the *Savior*, the One Who *saves*. To save means to deliver from the greatest



misery (sin, death, damnation) and to make partaker of the greatest possible glory and blessedness. It implies that we are dead in trespasses and sins, that we are lost in ourselves, that we are hopelessly guilty, that we are chained by nature in the bondage of sin and corruption — incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all evil. But God is the Savior! He saves! He provides the atonement for all our sins, and thus provides the right to be delivered from the bondage of sin, the right to be called sons of God, the right to eternal glory — all through the perfect righteousness of Christ His Son. And He also actually delivers us, by irresistible grace, by His Spirit and Word, regenerating, calling, bestowing faith, justifying, sanctifying, preserving, and glorifying us. And all this He does sovereignly and for reasons which He has taken out of Himself! His work of salvation is grounded in and proceeds from the fountain of eternal and sovereign election.

Notice: God *is* the Savior. Not: He wants to be. Not: He offers to be. Not: He is partly the Savior. But: He *is*. He actually saves! And He saves to the uttermost! As such He has revealed Himself in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the second place, it is the “living God” Who is the Savior. The text makes a point of this: “. . . we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men . . .” God is the living God. He is the life in Himself. He is the source of all life, and He is the only source of life. As such He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ our Lord, “the way, the truth, and the life.” It is this living God Who is the Savior. He is able to bestow life on dead sinners; and He does indeed bestow life upon dead sinners when He saves them. When He does so, then they become partakers of His life, become godly, and have “promise of life.” (vs. 8)

In the third place, the living God is the Savior of *all men*, according to the text. We have already shown that this cannot mean *every individual man*. This is simply not true; and thus to misinterpret the text would require that we change God from Savior to

would-be Savior. God does not save all men, head for head, nor is He their Savior. He is the Savior of His people, and of them alone. But He is indeed the Savior of all kinds, or classes, of men. He is the Savior of rich and poor, bound and free, male and female, kings and subjects, masters and servants, Jews and Gentiles. But from among all kinds and classes of men, He is specifically the Savior of *believers*. And this is the teaching of the text. Paraphrased, the text then is as follows: “. . . Who is the Savior of all (kinds of) men, more closely specified, (or: namely) of believers from among all (kinds of) men.” Thus understood, the text is in harmony with the current teaching of Scripture concerning particular salvation. Thus understood, the text presents a thought which is familiar in this epistle to Timothy (cf. I Tim. 2:1-4). And thus understood, the text indeed maintains that God is the Savior, Who actually does save His people.

Finally, if we understand the text in this way, we can also understand why the apostle connects this with the fact that “we both labour and suffer reproach,” and connects it as a *reason*, “therefore.” Why does he labor — and who labored as the apostle Paul did in the cause of the gospel? Why does he suffer reproach — and who suffered more than he in the cause of the gospel? Why did the apostle (and his fellows) not simply give up, rather than labor strenuously and suffer reproach? The answer is: our labor is never in vain in the Lord! We trust not in a dead God, not in one whose work is doubtful, not in one of whom we must stand in doubt whether he can save anyone. No, we trust in the living God! And the living God is the Savior. Moreover, He is the Savior of all men, that is, of believers from among all kinds of men. God surely saves His own! Nothing can hinder that! And therefore we labor confidently, not hopelessly. We labor and suffer reproach in the confidence that God will surely grant fruit upon that labor.

(Note: My Canadian questioner has more questions; but these must wait until the next issue. HCH)

## As To The Ethics Of Criticism

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

### Question

From a reader in California I received a question via — this is a new one for me — long distance telephone. The question is as follows: “Is it ethical for a minister to criticize or to approve of a tape-recorded sermon of a minister of another denomination?”

### Reply

Some of our readers will probably remember that

upon occasion I have done this. For example, I did this with a sermon preached by Dr. S. Woudstra which was furnished me on cassette-recording by a reader of the *Standard Bearer*. The reference of my questioner, let me say, was not to that event. Nevertheless, this is an example of what is referred to by the question. And I want to assure my questioner and our readers that if I had considered this to be unethical, I would not have



done it. I considered it to be perfectly ethical to adduce this as evidence and to warn the Reformed Churches of New Zealand against the teachings of the professor-elect of Geelong.

Now as to the question in general, the following:

1. A sermon is public, and, in fact, through recording devices is made even more public. Some of our Protestant Reformed sermons and radio sermons and lectures go all over the world.

2. If such a recording is not copyrighted, or if there is not a note of any kind strictly prohibiting reproduction or transcription into printed form, I see no reason why this may not be done.

3. A recording is a very accurate way of obtaining the material of a sermon or lecture to be criticized either positively (approval) or negatively (disapproval). I would certainly trust a recording better than my memory, better than my long-hand notes, and better than most shorthand records. I would hesitate to criticize (or to approve) in public print a sermon which I merely heard and for the criticism of which I would have to rely solely on my memory.

4. One who breaks out into the public eye and ear, whether in speech or in print, must expect to be criticized. I would almost add, "If he can't stand the heat, let him get out of the kitchen."

5. One who criticizes should be honest and fair, and

he should above all quote accurately and completely, taking care especially not to quote out of context. These are general rules of criticism, applicable to the printed as well as to the spoken word.

6. As to someone from one denomination criticizing the sermon of a minister of another denomination? Why not? I consider it to be not only my right, but also my duty to uphold the truth and to condemn heresy.

7. I take it that most preachers would not mind approval of what they say. The shoe pinches, as a rule, only when the criticism is negative.

8. The *Standard Bearer* is open. Within the limits of propriety and decency and courtesy, he who is criticized may reply. One limitation on this, however, would be the case of someone who himself has access to a religious journal. Then the ground rules would be different. For example, if the *Standard Bearer* would criticize an editor of the *Reformed Journal*, then the editor of the *Reformed Journal* would be welcome to reply in the *Standard Bearer*, provided the *Reformed Journal* would also publish the articles from both sides.

9. Finally, I have this advantage, if such you want to call it. In the instance cited by my questioner I would not have to file a protest if I accuse such a minister of heresy. Someone of the same denomination is duty bound to follow the ecclesiastical way.

## All Around Us

### Continuing Presbyterians

Prof. H. Hanko

We have, from time to time, made mention in these columns of the struggle going on in the Presbyterian Church US over the liberalism and doctrinal apostasy present in that denomination. Last year, four different conservative groups within that denomination banded together for the purposes of making plans to preserve the true Presbyterian confession in doctrine and church polity. There was some question about whether this conservative group should remain in the denomination until the merger with the United Presbyterian Church went through, at which time the so-called "escape clause" would be used to retain church property; or whether to secede from the denomination earlier and bring a new denomination into existence.

The latter course of action has recently been the one decided upon. The "Steering Committee for Continuing Church" voted unanimously to bring the new Church into being this year. The details of precisely what course of action will be taken have not yet been

made public, but the conservatives have committed themselves definitely to secession. I use the word "secession", although this is probably not a word which the conservatives themselves would choose to employ. They insist, and correctly so, that they are the "Continuing Church" which intends to maintain a Presbyterian Church which has always been faithful to the heritage of the Westminster Confessions. Nevertheless, secession from the existing denomination is necessary to accomplish their goal.

There have been other congregations which already have severed their relations with the Southern Presbyterian denomination in the past years. And recently 20 congregations in Alabama severed their relations with their presbytery and with the denomination. These congregations will eventually go along with the new denomination which will be formed.

We are happy for this decision and wish the new



Church well. We add, however, the hope and prayer that this new Continuing Church will recognize the fact that all Arminianism is also at odds with the Westminster Confessions and that, therefore, faithfulness to these creeds requires a rejection of such

Arminianism. This is essential, too, for Arminianism is, after all, the kind of departure from the truth which inevitably leads to the modernism and liberalism which is now the cause of trouble in the Southern Presbyterian Church.

## Creedal Authority

Practically every denomination which has a creedal basis demands a promise of its officebearers that they will be faithful to the Confessions which that denomination has adopted as its doctrinal foundation. This, all denominations affirm, is necessary to preserve doctrinal purity and the unity of the faith. These denominations recognize the fact that there are constant threats of false doctrine, for heresy always creeps in by one means or another. And a denomination which loses her doctrinal heritage, loses her right to call herself by the name of the Church of Christ.

But strange things happen within the Church. For various reasons a denomination may lose her doctrinal integrity and harbor within her denominational walls men who no longer believe nor teach what the creeds of that Church profess to be the truth of God's Word. They make the promise of loyalty to the Confessions, but they do not keep their promise; and, indeed, in some instances, they make the promise knowing at that moment that they cannot and shall not keep the vow they have made.

And so a situation arises in the Church in which a plea is made to revise the Confessions, to mitigate somewhat their binding force, or to dispense with the creeds altogether as authoritative within the Church. It happened in the past, and it is happening today.

And, quite naturally, where a situation exists in which ministers and officebearers are no longer faithful to the doctrinal truths of the creeds, sooner or later those who protest the binding character of the creeds will get their way.

In the Reformed Churches such allegiance to the creeds is promised by officebearers when they sign a Subscription to the creeds which dates back to the Synod of Dordrecht. This Subscription is used in this country by The Reformed Church of America, the Christian Reformed Church, and the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Recently, a couple of articles have appeared in the *Church Herald*, the official organ of the Reformed Church in America, which discuss a proposed revision of the Subscription to the creeds which officebearers are required to sign. The adoption of the proposed revision is presently being discussed on the classical level. We quote it here in full.

I \_\_\_\_\_ in becoming a minister of the Word of God in the Reformed Church in America,

within the Classis of \_\_\_\_\_, sincerely and gladly declare before God and with you that I believe the Gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments and as expressed in the Standards of the Reformed Church in America. I accept the Scripture as the only rule of faith and life. I accept the Standards as historic and faithful witnesses to the Word of God.

I promise to walk in the Spirit of Christ, in love and fellowship within the church, seeking the things that make for unity, purity and peace. I will submit myself to the counsel and admonition of *Classis* always ready, with gentleness and reverence, to give an account of my understanding of the Christian faith. I will conduct the work of the church in an orderly way and according to *The Book of Church Order*.

Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I pledge my life to preach and teach the Good News of salvation in Christ, to build up and equip the church for mission in the world, to free the enslaved, to relieve the oppressed, to comfort the afflicted and to walk humbly with God. I ask God, and you his servants, to help me so to live until that glorious day when, with joy and gratitude, we stand before our great God and King.

We will not quote here the original Form of Subscription. The one which is presently used in the RCA is almost identical with the one in use in our Churches. And only a cursory glance will show how radically this Form is being changed by the proposed version.

An article in the February 2 issue of the *Church Herald* defended strongly the old subscription and pointed out very clearly that the new proposed version would not protect doctrinal integrity in the Church and maintain loyalty to the Confessions, but would leave room for the teaching and preaching of doctrines contrary to the Confessions.

But an article in a later issue of the *Church Herald* came to the defense of the proposed revision. While maintaining that the proposed subscription would indeed retain confessional integrity, it nevertheless pointed out that the new subscription had one distinct advantage. That advantage, as the author sees it, is the change in the conception of the ministry which the new subscription embraces. He writes:

First, the proposed Declaration sees each minister as not merely the judge and arbiter of every other



minister's beliefs and actions, but as a brother and co-worker in the vineyard of God . . .

Second, the proposed Declaration affords the minister a response of joy and gratitude appropriate to his divine calling.

Third, the work of the ministry is seen within the full and real context in which we know it . . . Here is the minister not only in preaching, teaching, and writing, but as pastoral counselor, as chaplain in the military service, the prison, or the psychiatric hospital, as friend to the needy, as one who incites to mission, as prophet of justice, and as parish administrator . . .

There are a couple of remarks about this which ought to be made. We make these remarks because of our deep concern for doctrinal integrity in the Church of Christ and to underscore the importance of loyalty to the Confessions.

In the first place, the author of the above quotes is, no doubt, correct when he claims that the new subscription alters rather radically the conception of the ministry. What about this?

This is one aspect of the new Declaration which is so striking. It barely touches upon the whole matter of subscription to the creeds. And this is a major change indeed. The original Formula of Subscription was deliberately and consciously drawn up with only one purpose in mind: to be used as an instrument by means of which ministers promise to be faithful to the creeds. It was not intended to define a minister's calling in the Church. It was not intended to deal with the question of loyalty to the Scriptures. It was not drawn up to elicit promises to "walk in the Spirit of Christ, in love and fellowship." Not that these things are unimportant. But they belong elsewhere. The work of the ministry is defined in the Church Order and in the Form for Ordination. Loyalty to the Scriptures and faithfulness in one's walk is promised when one takes his ordination vows. It was intended to be a vow of loyalty to the creeds. Nothing else. This is barely

mentioned in the proposed subscription. Instead, as the author of the above quotes makes clear, this introduces a rather novel concept of the Christian ministry and changes radically the whole purpose of the Declaration. Why should this be thought necessary?

In the second place, there is a radical change in the vow with which one promises to be faithful to the Confessions. The only statement in the proposed Declaration which deals with this matter is: "I accept the Standards as historic and faithful witnesses to the Word of God." Compare this with the promises made in the old Declaration. In the latter a minister declares that the Confessions contain the truth of the Word of God. He promises actively to teach and to defend these doctrines; to reject all heresies opposed to these doctrines; neither directly nor indirectly to contradict them either in public preaching or in writing. He promises that, if he should have any disagreement with the Confessions, he will be honest and upright before the Church; he promises not to propose or teach or defend any differences he may have, either publicly or privately, neither in preaching nor in writing and to follow the ecclesiastical way in bringing these differences to the attention of the Churches. He promises to remain silent about these differences and submit himself to the judgment of the ecclesiastical assemblies. And all this he promises to do, with the penalty for failure to do this being *de facto* suspension from office.

Let the reader judge if there is not a great difference between these two promises which one makes.

The Confessions are very precious to the Church, and very important in the preservation of the faith. They must be defended and preserved, for they are a bulwark against error. But they can only be defended when these Confessions are the *living* confessions of the officebearers not only, but also of all the people of God.

## Tax Credit For Tuition

Once again the whole question of relief for parents who send their children to private schools is in the air. Wilbur Mills, long an opponent of any kind of aid to private schools, has now reported that he favors a new bill which will give parents tax credits for the children they have attending private schools. The details of the bill are not yet known with certainty, and we refrain from commenting on the matter until such a time as

the bill is reported out of committee. But the supporters of the bill are convinced that it will meet all the objections which the Supreme Court has recently made against any aid to private schools. Whether it will meet the objections of those who fear any kind of federal control of their Christian Schools remains to be seen.



## *Contending for the Faith*

# The Doctrine of Atonement (Reformation Period)

### THE SYNOD OF DORT THE CANONS

*H. Veldman*

The seventh and final article of the Rejection of Errors of Head II of our Canons, relative to the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, reads as follows:

Who teach: That Christ neither could die, needed to die, nor did die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life, and did not die for these, since these do not need the death of Christ. For they contradict the Apostle, who declares: "Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me," Gal. 2:20. Likewise: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ Jesus that died," Rom. 8:33, 34, viz., for them; and the Saviour who says: "I lay down My life for the sheep," John 10:15. And: "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend," John 15:12, 13.

According to the fathers of Dordt, the Arminians taught that Christ neither could die, needed to die, nor did die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life because they do not need the death of Christ. So, according to our Fathers, the Arminians taught that Christ did not die atoningly. They denied the atonement of the cross. Is this true, what the fathers here allege to have been taught and as being taught by the Remonstrants? Is this accusation of the fathers not too severe? Is it true that we must not be too harsh in our condemnation of the Arminians and their view of the sufferings and death of our Lord? True, they may differ and do differ from us with respect to the atonement of Calvary. But this does not mean, does it, that they deny the atonement? They simply have a different conception and view of the redeeming work of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, they certainly mean well. It was not too long ago that the undersigned talked with a man who belonged to a church where the preaching is Arminian. And when I said to him that his church denied the atonement of Christ he was very vehement in his denial of this charge and insisted that his minister surely believed in the atonement. I have been told that Arminians believe in all the fundamental truths of the Word of God as do the Reformed. Most Arminians, then, believe the same

way we do on every part of the Apostles' Creed. In all the important things they agree with us. If this be true, then this judgment of the fathers of Dordt is surely too severe. And the undersigned has also heard that the Arminian believes in man's need for salvation and that the blood of Christ alone is payment for our sins. But this is exactly what the fathers deny in this seventh and last article of this Rejection of Errors in Head II of our Canons. According to them, the Arminians teach that Christ neither could die, needed to die, nor did die for those whom God loved in the highest degree and elected to eternal life, inasmuch as they do not need the death of Christ. Are the fathers of Dordt correct here? But we do well to bear in mind that this seventh article constitutes a part of our Confessions, and also that we subscribe to these confessions.

The fathers here do not "suck this charge against the Arminians out of their thumb." In this seventh article we have the clearest expression of what the Remonstrants really mean and want. They begin with the denial of election and of the sovereignty of the grace of God. This denial they express in their first point of the Remonstrance, in which they set forth their conception of conditional predestination, that God elected those of whom He foresaw that would believe and reprobated those of whom He foresaw that they would not believe. And now they end with the denial of the necessity of the death of Christ as a payment of the debt of sin and an atonement for the guilt of the elect. They do this openly here. They were compelled to come to this denial. We must bear in mind that we are dealing here with Arminianism. Arminianism teaches this denial and must teach it. Any Arminian, if he be consistent in his view of Arminianism, must come to a denial of the atonement of the cross of Calvary. It is impossible to maintain that Christ died for the whole human race and every man, head for head, and then to insist that he also believes in that death of Christ as atonement. Both cannot be maintained. And the history of doctrine verifies this. This explains why the Arminians, having denied the particular character of the cross of Christ, came with their view of this death of Christ, namely



the governmental theory of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We will presently call attention to this theory of the cross. But we should certainly understand that the Remonstrant was compelled to come to this view. To this we have called attention several times in preceding articles. It is not amiss to call attention to this again. If Christ did not suffer and die for a definite people and pay their debt, then His death cannot be an atoning death, cannot be a satisfaction of the justice of God. To this we have called attention repeatedly in the past. One often hears that the distinction between the Arminian and the Reformed believer is that the former believes in a universal atonement whereas the latter believes in a particular atonement. This, however, is not correct. One cannot really speak of a universal atonement. Atonement is always particular. There is no such thing as a universal atonement. This became very clear at the time of the Arminian controversy at the time of the Synod of Dordt. The Arminians, instead of speaking of the cross of Christ as atonement, advocated a theory of the death of Christ which is known as the governmental theory of the cross.

However, in this seventh article they not only openly express this serious error, namely the denial of the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ, but they also attempt in a way of reasoning to show that it could not be different. One can easily understand their reasoning. First, they speak of those whom God has loved from before the foundations of the world. From eternity God has elected and destined them for eternal life. From this it follows, according to the Arminian, that therefore in God's thoughts they never were children of wrath. Before God they were eternally beloved children of the Lord. So, if therefore no wrath rested upon them, how could Christ then ever have to suffer for them in order to remove that wrath that never existed? And therefore the Arminians concluded that the death of Christ was for this reason no payment for guilt and no removal of the wrath of God, but an example of meekness and love, or also a demonstration of what God could justly have done with us. And this is the governmental theory of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The governmental theory of the death of Christ is that theory of the cross which sets forth the death of Christ as a public demonstration of the justice and righteousness of God, a demonstration of what God could justly have done with us. Perhaps we are acquainted with an example that is often used. A regiment of soldiers has incurred the righteous wrath of its commander. That regiment has deserved death. But, if the commander were to punish his regiment, this would mean the death of this entire body. But now a soldier of that regiment steps forward and offers his life as payment for the sin which the regiment has committed. And the commander accepts this offer,

executes this soldier as a demonstration of what he justly could have done to the entire company of soldiers. This is the governmental theory of the cross of Christ, the Arminian version and presentation of the cross of Calvary. All mankind has sinned against the Lord. If the Lord were to execute His justice upon this sin, then all mankind would be executed by the Lord. But then nobody would be saved. But now Christ steps forward and offers Himself to God as a sacrifice to God for the sin man has committed. This death of Christ will serve as a demonstration of the justice and righteousness of the Lord. And if we, viewing this death of Christ, will only acknowledge our sin and the righteousness of God we will be saved. However, this governmental theory of the cross is a fallacy for two fundamental reasons. In the first place, no demonstration of either the love of God or the righteousness of God can possibly induce a single sinner to turn unto the Lord. The sinner hates the living God. He despises the communion and fellowship of the Lord. And, he is dead in sins and in trespasses. If a sinner is to be saved, then something must happen in his heart. He must be changed by the almighty and irresistible power of the grace and spirit of the Lord. No demonstration of either the love or the righteousness of the Lord could possibly induce him to turn from his wicked way and to turn unto the Lord. But there is also another reason why this governmental theory is a terrible fallacy. This theory is supposed to maintain that the death of Christ is a demonstration of the justice and righteousness of the Lord. However, this is exactly what this theory fails to do. We must bear in mind that, according to the Remonstrants, Christ died for all men, head for head. This means that, according to them, Christ did not pay for sin and the guilt of sin. Had He paid for the guilt of sin, and for the guilt of the whole world, then all men would surely have had to be saved. Then nobody could possibly perish, inasmuch as all their guilt had been paid and everlasting life had been merited for them. This means that, according to the Arminians, God executed an innocent man upon the cross of Calvary. And this is not true. God does not execute innocent people. He is just and righteous in all His ways. And the Lord did not execute an innocent man upon the cross of Calvary. Christ was indeed guilty, the guiltiest man throughout the history of the world. Only, we understand, He was guilty, not because He bore His own guilt, inasmuch as He Himself was holy and without sin, but because He bore the sins of all the elect throughout all the ages. The cross of Christ is indeed a demonstration of the justice and righteousness of the living God, but only when we maintain the Scriptural truth of particular atonement, that God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, of all the elect whom God has loved from before the foundations of the world. The governmental theory,



however, teaches that God executed an innocent man upon the cross of Calvary. This is not a demonstration of the righteousness of the living God, but it is a travesty on the justice of the Lord, a perversion of His righteousness. And how can a perversion of God's righteousness of the Lord ever serve as an inducement to the sinner to acknowledge God's justice and to turn unto the Lord? This theory destroys the very

foundations of the church of God. This theory makes the salvation of a sinner forever impossible. For unless sin is paid according to the unchangeable righteousness of the alone living God, no sinner can possibly return into the favour of God and be saved. And this governmental theory must inevitably lead to modernism, the denial of all sin; it must lead to humanitarianism.

## *Studies in Election*

# **Its Value**

*Rev. Robert C. Harbach*

### *17. Its Value. Conclusion*

The truth of the election has very practical value in the certainty of the true Christian's salvation. It is a folly to attempt having assurance of Salvation not founded on the basis of election. It makes no sense to acknowledge the effect while the cause is denied. No true assurance comes to the Christian until he can believe that the glorification of the elect is so infallibly fixed in the eternal purpose of God that it is impossible for any of them to perish. Nor will his faith be firmly strengthened until he believes that he belongs to the company of the elect. For him to do so is not presumption, for the regenerated person has the right to regard himself as a member of the household of faith. For the Spirit renews only those predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son.

The Apostle Paul pointed back to this unshakable basis of assurance when he taught, "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called, and whom He called, them He also justified, and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:30). Begin on that foundation of divine, sovereign predestination and the end, glorification, is guaranteed. God loved the elect with an everlasting love. Then He is for them, and "if God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" What mighty streams flow from this fountain of election! But what folly to attempt choking the stream! There is no eternal security of the sheep except on the foundation of God's decree. The sheep need this firm foundation as they are naturally timid and often beset with doubts concerning their final perseverance. They therefore find great comfort in discovering in themselves the marks of election. Then they rejoice in the certainty of their eternal life!

It is the apprehension of this truth which enables the true minister of Christ to hold his spiritual balance, continuing firmly to his ministry's end. What discouragements he meets! Few attend a faithful ministry of the Word. Visible fruits are rare. He is frequently warned that if he continues preaching along the lines of divine sovereignty he will have no one to whom to preach. He is tempted to think that the seal of God's approval is not on his ministry, that he is a colossal failure and ought to give up. There is enough in his circumstances to fill him with dismay, to tempt him to go along with popular opinion or to enter a more lucrative ministry. This is the rocky path all our ministers have trod.

What is it which revives the drooping spirits from all such temptations? What keeps a servant of the Lord sure that he has not drawn a bow at a venture, but that he is an ordained instrument in God's hands to accomplish His eternal purpose? It is his faith in the whole Counsel of God. He is commissioned to preach a general proclamation of a particular gospel, knowing, that in my age, it is not God's purpose that all or even many be saved. The Lord taught His church that His flock is a "very little" one (Luke 12:32), and there is only "a remnant according to the election of grace." The disciples were, on one occasion, somewhat curious as to whether there are "few that be saved." In the Sermon on the Mount He stated that many would take the Broad Way to destruction, but that *few* would course the Narrow Way that leads to life. The servant faithful to his Lord's word knows and understands this. He knows that some believe because it was *given* to them in behalf of Christ to believe in Him (Phil. 1:29), and that the rest believed not because they are not Christ's sheep (Jn. 10:26). He knows that God is using him and other such servants to gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad, in fact, to



gather together in one all things in heaven and in earth in Christ (John 11:52; Eph. 1:10). It is this purpose of God according to election, which always stands, that keeps him in perfect tranquility and garrisons his heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

There is no peace of mind like that which rest upon the sovereignty of God brings. He who is sure that God's decrees cannot fail, that His eternal counsels must come to pass, and that whatever God has ordained for Him to do must be accomplished, is a triumphant conqueror. There may be many adversaries, appalling ruin all around, thousands falling on his right hand, his own many failures emphasizing his own weakness and inadequacy. Yet he is sure that the plan of God is being realized as ordained. He is sure that those ordained to eternal life will believe, that the sheep given to Christ must be saved, and that of their neither to be increased nor diminished number He should lose nothing. He is confident of this very thing, that God who began the work of election, salvation and regeneration, will complete it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

The ministry characterized by election preaching is perfectly cognizant of the promise, "My Word . . . shall not return unto Me void, but it *shall* accomplish that which *I* please, and it *shall* prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11). The preached Word may not accomplish that which the preacher desires, nor prosper as the saints had hoped, but the good pleasure of God shall most certainly be done. If God has ordained that the sheep and the lambs shall be fed, then nothing in the world can prevent the giving them the true Bread from heaven. When so many have nothing whatever to do with the church, the Lord's servants find comfort where He did, in the truth that "all that the father giveth Me *shall* come to Me" (John 6:37).

"But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call unto Him" (Ps. 4:3). Spurgeon, in his great *Treasury of David* (I.K. Funk & Co., NYC, 1882, I, 38), wrote "But know." Fools will not learn, and therefore they must again and again be told the same thing, especially when it is such a bitter truth which is to be taught them, viz., the fact that the godly are the chosen of God, and are, by distinguishing grace, set apart and separated from among men. Election is a doctrine which unrenowned men cannot endure, but nevertheless, is a glorious and well-attested truth, and one which should comfort the tempted believer. Election is the guarantee of complete salvation, and an argument for success at the throne of grace. He who chose us for Himself will surely hear our prayers. The Lord's elect shall not be condemned, nor shall their cry be unheard. David was king by divine decree, and we are the Lord's people in the same manner; let us tell our enemies to their faces that they fight against God

and destiny, when they strive to overthrow our souls."

In this day of unbelief there is denial of every article of the faith; no surprise then that men deny the gospel and election. The modernist denies the gospel. The Arminian fundamentalist denies election. In that way, he, too, denies the gospel, for there is no gospel apart from election. (Simple proof: Genesis 3:15). A worse enemy there can hardly be than the modernist. Yet his denial is more open. It is like denying the whole house — all its structure. The Arminian's denial is a denial of the foundation. For election is basic; the gospel is founded thereon. Successfully deny the gospel and man is ruined; but so deny election and God is ruined. His sovereignty is denied. His will to do what He pleases with His own is denied. Denied is His government, His right to punish evildoers. Denial of election, in effect, forces God to universalism and the salvation of all men. He not only must save them, but do *their* will, not His will. He is governed by the overriding principle of *their* will. They run the universe, not He. The denial of election in effect breaks down the bulwarks of heaven, the walls of salvation, cracks the foundations of God's kingdom, splits His throne, crumbles His sceptre and hurls them all to the ground in smithereens, while the violent godless trample God prostrate under their detestable feet. Deny election and God is a "God" with His hands tied; that is, He is no God. Election is based on the attributes of God, on His infinity, eternity, simplicity, immutability, independency, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth and love. Denial of election, then, is denial of all God's attributes. It is atheistic. It robs God of His Godhood. Put aside election and the question is, "How man shall handle God." But with election the question is, "How God shall handle man." A God without election is a God without omnipotence. Election honors God, saves His justice and manifests His eternal power and Godhead.

The spirit of the gospel honors election. The spirit of the gospel puts us down in the dust before God's footstool. There man in that spirit learns to cry, "If He slay me, it would be just. I am of no account, nor is the whole human race of any account anyhow — merely the small dust of the balance. Yet though He slay me, still I will trust Him." This is no fatalism. The believer comes to know his election (I Thes. 1:4), yet he examines himself with the question, "Do I trust in the Lord? Do I have faith in His blood, the faith of God's elect? Do I seek salvation by grace only? Do I see more power in the blood of Christ to save me than evil in all my sins to damn me? Do I belong to Him? and that because God gave me to Him (John 6:37)? Do I hate sin and love righteousness? Do I live and walk in the light? Then I am elect!" The gospel does this for a man because election is the very content of the gospel. With election removed the gospel becomes a species of humanism. Election puts first things first. It puts God



first because it puts Christ first. It puts Christ first, for not election but Christ is first. It leads to despair of self (a main step to true happiness) and trust in Christ alone. He himself saw all things in the light of predestination, election and reprobation. He prayed, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even

so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." When any are saved and numbered among the elect, the whole of heaven sings, "Grace be unto God for His unspeakable gift!" And when the wicked come into eternal judgment, heaven responds, "Holy! holy! holy! Amen! Hallelujah!" (Rev. 4:8; 19:1-6). To Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

## *From Holy Writ*

# Pure and Undeified Religion (10)

*Rev. Robert D. Decker*

*Chapter 1:22-25, Doers of the Word and Not Hearers Only*

Are you ready for judgment day? It's coming soon! Jesus said, "Behold I come quickly." Indeed, the "end of all things is at hand." The events of today's world in the light of the Scriptures speak clearly of Jesus' swift return in judgment. There is the obvious, gradual moving together of the nations, the awakening of primitive peoples, as for example on the African continent. The Gospel is being preached all over the world. There are signs in God's creation: earthquake and famine in divers places. The false Christs and false prophets — some even doing signs and wonders — saying, "here is Christ or there," are on every side. There is abounding lawlessness. All this means, the Bible tells us, Jesus is coming. Are you ready to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ?

Perhaps you wonder what all this has to do with the passage we are treating. The answer is, it has everything to do with what James speaks of here. The sacred writer speaks of being doers of the word and not hearers only. That is, of course, a further explanation of what was said before concerning our calling to receive the implanted word with meekness; but, what is more, only doers of the Word will enter the Kingdom of God. The Bible everywhere emphasizes that all men shall be judged according to their *deeds*. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John 5:28, 29). In the parable of the last judgment, Matt. 25:31ff., the sheep are judged worthy of life; "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." The plain fact of

the gospel is: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat, to receive the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad." (II Cor. 5:10, cf. also Rev. 22:12, 13). Is it any wonder then that the inspired writer says: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves?"

James speaks of being doers of the Word. The Word is the "word of truth" (vs. 18) as well as the "implanted word" (vs. 21). These concepts we have already expounded in previous articles. In brief, the Word of which the text speaks is the Holy Scripture as preached. That Word is further defined in these verses as "the perfect law of liberty." Now, James is not merely referring to the ten commandments, but to the entire Word of God from the point of view of its being the law of liberty, i.e., the revelation of the will of God for His redeemed children. That law described as "perfect." We met this term in verse 4 and saw that it means; "complete" and comes from a root which means, "goal or purpose." The idea is that the Law (Scripture) was not complete in the Old Testament age of type and shadow. It was no more than "the schoolmaster to lead Israel to Christ" (Gal. 3:24). But now the Law is complete having been fulfilled in the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the cross and exaltation of Christ the Law has reached its purpose or goal.

This is why the Scripture describes the Law as, "the Law of liberty." Jesus said it to the believing disciples: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31, 32). The Law of liberty then is the Word of truth, the word of Jesus Christ which proclaims the glad news of freedom to



God's elect. It is the Word which proclaims Christ crucified and raised. The freedom from guilt of sin and from the prison of death — the freedom to love God and the neighbor and thus to live in the Spirit rather than walking in the works of the flesh (cf. Gal. 5), that is the Law of liberty.

Of that Word, the Law of liberty, we must be doers and not hearers only. James describes the one who is a hearer but not a doer by using a simple figure. He is like (or pictured by) "a man beholding his natural face (the face of his birth) in a glass" (vs. 23). This man gazes intently or fixes his eyes upon the face of his birth in that mirror, "and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." (vs. 24). Applied the figure is obvious. This man beholds himself in the mirror of the Word, the Law of liberty and this means that he considers himself attentively, he perceives himself. In other words, he knows what he sees in that mirror. He knows that the mirror of the Word pictures him as a depraved sinner with no worth before God. He knows that he needs the grace of God in Christ Jesus to be saved. He hears the Word preached and he understands it also as it applies to himself. But looking into the mirror and seeing himself he goes his "merry way." He takes repeated looks at himself in the mirror, hears sermon after sermon "and goeth his way" — he simply leaves.

And, *straightway* — this word speaks volumes! "Immediately," he forgets what manner of man he was — literally translated, "what manner of man he was continuing to be." He deliberately, wilfully, wickedly leaves the mirror of the Word. The point is, he rejects the Word in unbelief. That's the meaning of "forgetteth." It means, "neglecting to care." He knows the truth, he can even detect heresy in its most subtle forms, but he does not care. It's in his head but not in

his heart! When the Word calls him to repentance and faith toward God, admonishes him to seek his refuge in the cross of Christ, lays before him the way of freedom and exhorts him to love God and the neighbor, seek the Kingdom first, deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Jesus — this hearer who is not a doer neglects to care! He is a CARE — LESS hearer and not a doer. He goes his way of disobedience and sin and leaves the Word where he heard it, within the four walls of the sanctuary. He couldn't care less!

But, and here's the contrast, the doer of the Word is different. He, "looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein" (vs. 25). This man looks, i.e. he takes a long, serious, careful look into the Word. "And continueth therein," that means "remains near" to the Word. When he goes his way, leaves the house of God to go out into his work-a-day world, he remains near to the Word. He carries that Word in his heart wherever he goes. This man, says James, "being not a forgetful (careless) hearer" is "a doer of the work." He is a performer of the work of the Word, the perfect law of liberty. He performs those works which are the fruit of a true and living faith, performed according to the law of God, and thus are to the glory of God. He is the spiritual man, born again with the Word of truth, the one who receives the Word with meekness. And, what does he do? The first work of the law of liberty which he does is repent, and he does that daily. He knows that the doctrine of total depravity means that he is the sinner, that the doctrine of sovereign, gracious election means that he has been set apart by God to reveal His glory in all his life. The Word of God really governs his everyday living. He thinks according to that Word, acts out of that Word. His desires and decisions are motivated by the Word. The Word guides him in his home, his work and his play.

*(To Be Continued)*

## *The Day of Shadows*

# Distinguishing Grace

*Rev. John A. Heys*

Someone some years ago said, "Grace is God giving everything for nothing to those who deserve nothing."

There is truth in this statement, although it could be stated more strongly by saying, "Grace is God giving



everything for nothing to those who are good for nothing." Still better it would be to say that grace is God giving everything good to those who deserve only the bad. Grace is God paying the wages of righteousness to those who deserve the wages of sin. Grace is not simply God giving everything for nothing to those that deserve nothing. It is God giving every good thing for nothing to those *who deserve the very opposite*. That element is so often overlooked, and when it is, men do violence to the truth of God's grace.

The Arminian with his offer of salvation to all who hear the preaching, with his lie that God loves everybody and has a wonderful plan for everybody, goes out from the position that man has a right to have salvation offered to him. He closes his eyes to the fact that no man in himself has a right even to hear the preaching of the gospel. All deserve to be cast away from God's presence and only to hear words of condemnation and curse. It is not simply that we deserve nothing. The fact is that we deserve to be destroyed, and in God's grace receive the very opposite of what we deserve.

Another definition of grace, which uses the letters in the word in the order in which they appear, and then forms new words beginning with those letters is "Grace is God's Riches At Christ's Expense."

This is better in that it explains how that grace of God can come upon those who deserve the very opposite, how He can give life to those who deserve death, can bring into the glory of heaven those who deserve the torment of hell, deserve to be robbed of everything good and still receive the riches of God. Christ bought that riches by His blood. He took on Himself what they deserved. Their wages were not simply forgotten and unjustly overlooked. God paid them upon His Son; and because of this they may now receive everything good. However, this definition also overlooks the fact that the one enjoying this riches of God at Christ's expense deserves the very opposite.

This truth we must bear in mind and not overlook when we read Genesis 6:8, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." We cannot appreciate that statement unless we confess that Noah deserved the same destruction that came upon the whole old world. Genesis 6:5 must not be changed to read, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was very great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *had become* only evil continually." Instead we must read it as it is and understand that this is a statement concerning the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of every man from the moment he comes into this world. And it includes Noah and his family as well as those who perished in the flood. All are conceived and born in sin. All come into this earthly life

spiritually dead. And God did not find something good in Noah. *Noah* found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Noah, as one of these who deserve nothing, as one of these good for nothings, as one of these who in himself deserved the very opposite of the riches of God, at Christ's expense received the opposite of what he deserved.

This does not mean that man cannot and does not develop in sin. He certainly does. He becomes bolder and bolder in manifesting openly the formation of the thoughts of his evil heart. He seeks and finds greater opportunities to put into practice the evil imagination of the thoughts of his heart. He becomes more clever in his deeds of rebellion against the living God. He finds it possible to seize more and more of the creatures of God's earth (and even of the moon) to seek for himself and wherewith to fight to obtain God's glory.

Before the flood there was abundant opportunity for man to develop in sin with these totally depraved hearts. They lived to be nine hundred and more years old, and they were able not only to become more cunning in their wickedness but also to teach it to generations that followed them. The old pros had many amateurs to coach, and the amateurs had many idols of wickedness to worship and to imitate. Let it be a warning to us today when we have the same situation, not due to the lengthening of man's life but due to the preservation of the imagination of his thoughts in books and magazines, and to the means of communication which are ours today, as well as means of swift transportation to go and see and learn how the other part of the world sins. But in that day death did not put an end to their development in sin after threescore and ten years, even as today the sinfulness of men is preserved for coming generations after the death of the sinner, so that the present generations can develop in it at a more rapid pace than in former years.

There were also the inventions of Jabal, Jubal and Tubal-cain wherewith the highway of sin was paved. Added to this was the unholy marriage of the sons of God with the daughters of men, resulting in a race that, preferring the ways of sin of their mothers, and of going the way of least resistance, brought a new dimension to sin, and a new threat to the faithful children of God.

How wonderful then, upon that background, to read, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." And, as we said, to appreciate this we must put Noah in the class of those whose every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually. We miss the whole point here, if we do not do that. We lift the statement out of its whole context, if we try to find something in Noah that made him deserving of the riches of God and everything good.



What is more, we change the word of God here to read, "But Noah found righteousness, a righteous judgment in God's eyes." Yea, we so twist the text that it is God finding something in Noah rather than Noah finding something in God.

And these words do not simply look forward to what will happen some one hundred twenty years later when Noah is saved in the ark and through the waters of the flood. It does not look forward simply to the day when his soul entered the glory of God's kingdom, nor to the day when he will with body and soul experience the riches of God at Christ's expense. Noah found it in the day when all that wickedness was being practiced left and right, openly and boldly, and when it became quite evident that there is no "common grace" of God that gives to those deserving the torment of hell a little restraint of sin to make life possible for man. There were no such restraints in the heart. Every formation of thought in the heart of man was only evil continually.

Wherein, then, did Noah find grace in the eyes of the Lord?

The question is not, "What did that grace of God do for Noah? What blessings came upon him because of that grace?" The question at the moment is, "How did Noah become aware of the fact that he was the object of God's favour?" When you find something, you have it to enjoy. What truth did Noah enjoy in the midst of all this world that so openly manifested the evil imaginations of thoughts of evil hearts?

The answer is that he found himself to be spiritually different. He found something in his own life that made it plain to him that he was the object of God's favour. He found in himself the life of Christ, a heart that had imaginations of its thoughts that were pleasing in God's sight. He found that in his heart he hated all this wickedness, that he was a pilgrim and stranger in the midst of this world, that although he did not deserve this and deserved the opposite, he was a saint among sinners, a seed of the woman amidst a world full of the seed of the serpent.

Of course, as the object of God's grace Noah will not enter into that destruction which God predicts in the verse preceding the statement that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God's grace is God giving *everything* good to those that deserve the very opposite. He will be saved from the waters of the flood. He will be saved from the holy wrath of God that sent those waters. And we will be saved from death and the grave, from hell and from the condemnation we deserve before God's judgment seat. But in this life, while we have all of our aches and pains, and while we walk through this valley where the shadow of death is cast, we taste that grace of God, know that we are the objects of His favour when we find that we are spiritually different from the world.

All men suffer and die, the righteous with the unrighteous. And the possession of good health (for a time), the abundance of this earth's goods, and a good position in the world are not assurances that we are the objects of God's grace. The unbelievers usually have more of these than we do. What we are *spiritually* assures us that we are the objects of God's love, His mercy and His grace. In this we find that we live under His grace.

God's grace distinguishes us, makes a distinction between us and the world. God's grace sets us apart from the world. When we see the world in its sin, when we see the neighbour in his ways of unbelief and transgression of God's law, when we see him in his idolatry and immorality, we surely can and must say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." God's grace made the difference, and even made us see the difference.

It is not that we or Noah do something and therefore become the objects of His grace. He does not find good in us — and Genesis 6:8 does not mean that because Noah did something on his own and of himself, he obtained God's favour — but we find Him to be good. We find out that His grace is upon us when we see what spiritual miracles He performs in us to change us and give us a heart that has imaginations of its thoughts that every time are only righteous continually. Look at that beautiful verse in I John 3:9, where John speaks of the new man in Christ, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

The grace of God does that. On the one side of the "But" is all that evil in which the world was developing because it was devoid of the grace of God, and on the other side is Noah who was spiritually different, because he was the object of that grace. Grace made the difference, not Noah.

We do not distinguish ourselves in this world by becoming believers. God's grace causes us to become believers, and so He distinguishes us from the rest of the world. We find grace in His eyes when we find that He has made us to be believers.

As believers hang not your head in shame before the world of unbelievers, cower not before them in their bold wickedness and speech of ridicule. You are the most distinguished people in the world. You are the sons of God among the children of the devil. Lift the head high and shout it out that you are more than conquerors in Him that loved us.

Be careful not to boast as though this were your work. God's grace makes the difference. And that grace also gives us the humility to sing,

All that I am I owe to Thee,  
Thy wisdom Lord hath fashioned me;  
I give my Maker thankful praise,  
Whose wondrous works my soul amaze.



*TEACHER WANTED*

Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School has need of one teacher, in an elementary grade, for the 1973-1974 school year. Interested Protestant Reformed teachers should address inquiries to:

Mr. John Van Baren  
2860 52nd St.  
Grandville, Michigan 49418

*NOTICE!!!*

According to the decision of the Synod of 1972, the Consistory of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church was appointed the calling church for the 1973 Synod. The Consistory of Hudsonville Church here-by notifies the churches that the 1973 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America will convene, the Lord willing, on Wednesday, June 6, 1973, at 9 AM, in the Hudsonville church. The pre-Synodical service will be held Tuesday evening, June 5, at 8 PM in Hudsonville Church. Rev. C. Hanko, President of the 1972 Synod will preach the sermon. Synodical delegates are requested to meet with the consistory before the service. Delegates in need of lodging should contact Henry Boer, 7871 Emberly, Jenison, MI 49428.

Henry Boer, Clerk

*CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY**Seminary and Pre-seminary Students*

All young men desiring to begin their studies this fall in either the pre-seminary or seminary department of the Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches are requested to appear before the Theological School Committee at its meeting which is to be held on Friday May 4 at 7:30 P.M. in the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church located at 1854 Porter St., S.W., Wyoming, Michigan.

The qualifications requisite to enrolling in the seminary course are:

1. You must present a letter from your consistory certifying that you are upright in walk and pure in doctrine.

2. You must present a certificate of health, signed by a reputable physician.

3. You must be a graduate from high school and be able to show you have completed the required subjects listed in the Bulletin on The Pre-seminary course. This Bulletin can be obtained from the Secretary of the Theological School Committee or the Rector of the Seminary.

The qualifications to enter the pre-seminary department are the same as the above except "3" should read "a graduate of high school."

In the event you cannot be present at this meeting, please notify the undersigned secretary of your intentions, prior to the meeting.

R. H. Teitsma, Secretary  
1659 Shangrai La Dr., S.E.,

*NOTICE!!!*

Secretaries of Synodical standing committees and special committees, as well as clerks of the Classes, are reminded that all reports to be included in the 1973 Agenda must be sent to undersigned on or before April 15. If necessary, supplemental reports may be submitted later, but this material will not appear in the Agenda.

Stated Clerk Synod  
Rev. D. H. Kuiper  
1314 Main Street  
Pella, Iowa 50219

*NOTICE!!!*

The Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School of Loveland, Colorado, is in need of a teacher to teach Grades 1-4 for the 1973-74 school term. Any of our Protestant Reformed teachers who are interested should address inquiries to:

Clyde L. Campbell  
1021 East 57th street  
Loveland, Colorado 80537  
(Sec'y. of the Board)

*RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY*

The Consistory and the Congregation of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses their sincere sympathy to our beloved pastor, Rev. C. Hanko, in the death of his sister

MRS. JENNIE BOLT.

May our God comfort the bereaved by His Spirit and His Word. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." (Psalm 116:15).

Consistory of the Hudsonville  
Protestant Reformed Church  
Henry Boer, Clerk

*RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY*

The Adult Bible Class of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses their sympathy to members Mr. and Mrs. Otto Kamminga in the loss of her mother

MRS. H. ZWAK.

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

A. Karsemeyer, Pres.  
N. Van Overloop, Sec'y

*RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY*

The Adult Bible Class of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses their sympathy to members Mr. and Mrs. LaVern Schut in the loss of her father

MR. G. SCHROTENBOER.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." (Romans 8:28)

A. Karsemeyer, Pres.



## News From Our Churches

From a January bulletin from Doon we learn that Rev. Kortering and Rev. Moore conducted church visitation, during the week of January 28th, in Lynden, Redlands, and Loveland. "In order to make this trip more profitable for our churches," the announcement continued "(the two ministers) will preach or lecture in each place. Rev. Moore will preach in Lynden and lecture in Redlands, and Rev. Kortering will lecture in Loveland." From the January 28 bulletin of our Redlands congregation, we learn that the topic of Rev. Moore's Tuesday evening lecture there, was "The Antithesis and Our Christian Walk." And from a Loveland bulletin we gather that Rev. Kortering delivered a public lecture, dealing with Christian Education, in the church auditorium. The program was sponsored by the Board of the Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School.

At the time of \*this\* writing, the March 29 congregational meeting of our new church in the Jenison area is still two weeks in the future. By the time you read this, however, the congregation will have already chosen a minister, to be called from a trio consisting of Rev. Engelsma, Rev. Van Baren, and Rev. Woudenberg. In addition, a name for the new congregation will have been chosen. As we mentioned before, suggestions were dropped into the collection plates on March 4. From those suggestions the consistory selected the names Bethel, Faith, and Jenison, which will be submitted to the members of the congregation for their vote at the meeting on March 29.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our news last time included some reference to the efforts of our mission committee, through the work of Rev. Veldman, in Florida. More recently the Committee has directed its attention, also, to the state of Pennsylvania. It seems that a number of individuals in Philadelphia encountered us through the *Standard Bearer* and through various writings of Rev. H. Hoeksema. They contacted our Mission Committee, requesting a preaching supply so that they might have an opportunity to become better acquainted with our views, with which, incidentally, some already feel they are in complete agreement.

The Mission Committee, anyway, determined to send Rev. Engelsma, who was subsequently released by his consistory in Loveland, to labor for a one month period in Philadelphia. Rev. Engelsma planned to fly to Grand Rapids, where he would lease a car, which would be driven to Philadelphia, and which would then be available for his use during his four-week stay in that city. Our minister from Colorado expected to

leave on Friday, March 16, and spend four successive Sundays in Pennsylvania, during which time he would preach twice on each Sabbath, hold mid-week meetings of some sort, and make contact with various interested families there.

\* \* \* \* \*

The preceding news item reminded me of a "Pastoral Letter regarding Key 73" which I had been storing in my box since the early part of January. The letter, addressed by the consistory to the congregation of Loveland, included a reprint of the consistory's reply to an invitation "to participate in Key 73 and to cooperate with Key 73 task force."

Hardly surprisingly, the reply included a statement to the effect that the Loveland congregation could not, "in faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ, participate in this endeavor." Among the reasons submitted was the fact that "participation in Key 73 would involve us in a certain union with other churches and groups with whom, in fact, we are not united in the truth of the gospel. Key 73 would have us unite with these churches and groups in *evangelism*, that is, preaching the gospel. But the gospel that must be preached is the very thing that divides us, since some of these churches and groups have perverted and forsaken the gospel . . . As a result of their apostasy from the truth of the gospel, some of these churches and groups employ methods of evangelism that are dishonoring to the glorious Name of God and abhorrent to us, e.g., the high-pressured efforts to get quick, easy decisions for Christ; the use of 'gospel rock'; the emotional non-doctrinal approach of the 'Jesus movement'; and other methods that do not consist of preaching Christ crucified to guilty sinners."

The positive note, at the conclusion of the reply, is especially noteworthy. "The Protestant Reformed Church of Loveland takes seriously Christ's command to her to preach the gospel. We preach the gospel to the members of the Church for the feeding of the flock and to those outside the Church for the gathering of all those whom God has eternally ordained unto eternal life. We wholeheartedly support genuine evangelism, even as we hold dear the true unity of Christ's Church. By God's grace, we intend to carry out our high calling to preach the gospel to everyone to whom God sends us in 1973 . . ."

That was at the beginning of January. As you read this issue of the *Standard Bearer*, Rev. Engelsma is laboring in Philadelphia. May we conclude with the closing words in that pastoral letter: "Pray that God may give us an open door and that we may be faithful in our calling."

D.D.