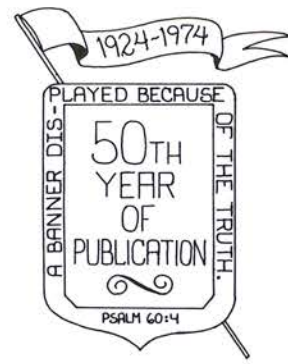


# The STANDARD BEARER



A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

For, surely, this poor babe of Bethlehem, for whom there was no place in the inn is destined to have room in the world. But it is room, not given Him by the world, but created for Him by the very wonder of His own grace. The glory is all His. From the very edge of the world in the humiliating stable, He pushes His way into the world. Over the cross and through the grave He steadfastly advances till He is received in the highest heavens, angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto Him. Thence, as the Lord of heaven and having become the quickening Spirit, He edges His way into the hearts of thousands from all nations and tongues and tribes, exposing sin, breaking sinful pride, making humble publicans of conceited Pharisees, cleansing and justifying and dwelling in them even as the Father dwells in Him. And thus, by the irresistible power of His grace He realizes the spiritual temple of God's covenant: "I in them and Thou in Me, that we may be perfect in one."

And presently all things will be united in Him, things in heaven and things on earth, and God shall spread His tabernacle over all. [From the Christmas Meditation in Volume I]

December 15, 1973

## MEDITATION

# Jesus - Saviour

*Rev. M. Schipper*

*"And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."*

Matthew 1:21b.

Such was the word which the angel of the Lord had declared unto Joseph the carpenter, who was engaged to a virgin whose name was Mary, and who was to become the mother of the long awaited Messiah.

All through the Old Dispensation there was the promise of His coming. Beginning already with the prot-evangel, pronounced in the Garden of Paradise to Adam and Eve, our first parents, reaffirmed in all the patriarchs, reiterated by all the prophets, foreshadowed in all the sacrifices and ritual, and brought to fulfillment in the birth of Christ in the cattle stall of Bethlehem. It is the purpose of Matthew's gospel to show this fulfillment. Clear this is from the verses that immediately follow our text. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

Marvelous revelation to Joseph, and to all those who look for salvation in Israel!

Joseph was engaged to Mary, a virgin of the lineage of David. And Mary was great with child, of which Joseph knew that he was not the father. The only thought therefore that could cross his mind was that Mary must be considered an adulteress. Jewish law required that such cases should be publicly dealt with, and would serve as legal grounds for divorce or separation. And before the law engaged couples were as good as married. Consequently were he vindictive enough, he could legally and publicly be separated from her forever. But he was a just man, and one who feared God, and besides he loved Mary so much that he would spare her this publicity, and therefore he was of a mind to have this separation done secretly, which, according to some was also permissible.

Just at the moment when his soul was heavy with these thoughts, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, exhorting him not to do this

contemplated thing; saying unto him: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary to be thy wife; for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Ghost." This should allay all his fear. And in our text besides being informed that she shall surely have a Son, he is commanded to call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.

Jesus, Saviour!

No more fitting theme for meditation in this season in which we celebrate the Saviour's birth! Theologically these words contain profound truths. Practically there lies hidden in them the faith and hope of many hearts. The Apostle Paul puts it this way: "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!"

That's what Christmas is all about! Yet, in the midst of all the tinsel, bell-ringing, and frivolity, this is precisely what is forgotten in our modern manner of celebration. O, indeed, there is room for joy and thanksgiving on this occasion. For did not the angel say: "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people"? But remember, that joy rests only on the fact that we rejoice in the fact that He Whose birth we celebrate is the Saviour from sin!

He shall save His people from their sins!

And their sins are many and great! For not only are they conceived and born in sin, burdened with the original sin and guilt of their first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise; but from the moment of their birth to the day of their death, they constantly add to their sin and guilt. As an insurmountably high mountain has the pile of their sin become, crying out as it were for the judgment of God's holy wrath.

When man sinned in the beginning he missed the mark, the goal that God had set up for him; namely, to love the Lord God with all his heart, mind, and strength. And ever since that first sin, man's nature has become so corrupt that all he does is miss that

mark. And God Who is unchangeably good and holy, cannot rescind His law, remove the goal, relinquish His demand, lest He deny Himself. Consequently, all men are pronounced sinners and guilty before God, and subject to His righteous judgment. Scripture pronounces all men sinners. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The natural man is foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving diverse lusts and pleasures, hateful and hating one another. All have gone astray. There is none righteous, none that understandeth and seeketh after God. There is none that doeth good, no, not one. Such is the undisputed declaration of the Word of God.

And not only so, but because of sin man is also subject to all the attending miseries of sin. For with sin came also death. Man is not only desperately wicked, but he is also desperately miserable. He is pressed down under the curse of God and the Divine law. God shackles him in the prison of sin and death. In that confinement he is a slave of sin. He lost his real freedom, which is the privilege to do the will of God. He became by nature spiritually blind, deaf, and dead. As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

From such a plight, no mere man is able to extricate himself. From such a prison-house of death, no mere man is able to deliver himself. No more than a dead man can rise up from physical death, much less can a spiritually dead man make himself alive. He does not, neither can he will to save himself. He is without God, without hope in the world.

But God, Who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, while we were His enemies, sent His Son, made of a woman, without the will of man, born under the law, in order to redeem them who all their life time were subject to bondage.

Jesus, Saviour! That is His Name!

That name Jesus signifies: Jehovah is salvation, or Jehovah saves!

There is no other Name given among men whereby we must be saved. Salvation is only in Him, and He only can save. And salvation is that act of Jehovah-God whereby He delivers from the deepest woe and brings us to the highest bliss, from the deepest hell unto the highest heaven.

Jesus-Saviour!

Jehovah saves!

None other than the living God Himself, the eternal and unchangeable One, saves!

This He does through the sending of His Son into the world, Who is united to our nature through an operation of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary, the last of the royal line of David, the

end of the covenant generations that must bring forth the promised Saviour. This He does by the miracle of grace which causes the Person of the Son to be conceived without the will of man. This He does by causing this Son to be born under the law, and under our sin and guilt, while He remained the sinless One. This He does by sending this beautiful Saviour to the cross of Calvary laden with our sin and guilt, where He bore all the vials of Jehovah's holy wrath overagainst our sin, until no more wrath remained for us. This He did when He made Him sin for us Who knew no sin, in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. This He did when He washed us from all our guilty stains in His precious blood, the blood of atonement. But even so, the gospel of salvation is not complete. He does much more to save us!

Jehovah causes Jesus, our Lord, to be raised from the dead. And He was raised in order to show to us that we are now justified before God and acquitted from all our unrighteousnesses. Yea, He even exalts the Saviour to the highest heavens, and gives unto Him all power in heaven and earth, and fills Him with His Spirit by which He returns to our prison and opens its doors, and liberates us from the bondage of sin and death. O, indeed, He is Jehovah Who saves unto the uttermost! He makes us who once were His bitter enemies, to become His covenant friends. He calls us from darkness, and makes us to walk in His marvelous light. He makes us His sheep who will follow Him whithersoever He leads, and at last into the realm of everlasting glory.

Beautiful Saviour!

Whose salvation cannot fail! For He SHALL save His people from their sins!

Jesus, Jehovah saves, is the Saviour of His people!

Contrary to the popular belief that He is the Saviour of all men, or that He makes salvation possible for all men, the text specifically teaches that He saves His people, and His people only. Jehovah, which is that Name of God whereby He revealed Himself to His people as to none other, has made a covenant with His people in Christ from before the foundation of the world. With them He established this covenant, and for them He maintains it. The purpose of that covenant is that He may bring to Himself through the way of sin and grace this people, whom He has predestinated to be conformed to His image. Jesus called them His sheep, for whom he lays down His life. These He efficaciously calls out of darkness into His marvelous light. These He justifies in the blood of atonement, and sanctifies by His Spirit. In them He implants saving faith, and gathers them by His Spirit and Word. And them will He also at last present without spot or wrinkle in the

assembly of the elect in life eternal. This people He forms for Himself and they shall show forth His praise.

Indeed, this is not a popular doctrine, and modern evangelism will not have it so. In this Christmas season a different doctrine will be proclaimed, that contradicts the truth of our text. But understand it well, a Jesus for all is a Saviour of none!

The gospel in our text, is not a gospel of man, but it comes directly from the throne of God. It speaks to His servant Joseph, and through him to all His people: Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His

people from their sins.

And with the grace of salvation in our hearts, we will embrace this gospel with a true and living faith. Yea, we will embrace Him Who is of God our only Saviour.

The good work which He had begun in us He will finish it unto the end!

And when His work of salvation shall be finished, we with all His people shall exclaim:

Beautiful Saviour!

Gracious God!

## EDITORIAL

# The OPC and the "Free Offer" (4)

*Prof. H. C. Hoeksema*

In this concluding article of the fourth section of our critique of the offer-theory we call attention, first of all, to one more article of the Westminster Confession of Faith with which the offer-theory is in conflict. We refer to Chapter VIII, Paragraph 5:

The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father (Rom. 5:19; Heb. 9:14, 16; Heb. 10:14; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 3:25, 26); and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the father hath given unto Him (Dan. 9:24, 26; Col. 1:19, 20; Eph. 1:11, 14; John 17:2; Heb. 9:12, 15).

In this article on the atonement the Westminster Confession plainly teaches, first of all, that Christ by His sacrifice objectively accomplished something in behalf of others. He fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and He purchased reconciliation and an everlasting inheritance. And, in the second place, the article plainly stipulates who are the beneficiaries of that objective work of Christ, namely, "all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." Now it is true that in this article there is no negative and no limiting phrase such as "and those only" or "and for no others." But, in the first place, this does not justify any assumption that Christ might also have purchased these benefits for others, perhaps for all

men. This, of course, would make the above statement of VIII, 5 useless and nonsensical. Besides, this would make the Westminster Confession Arminian and contradictory. What we have in this article is what is popularly known as the doctrine of "limited atonement" but more correctly known as particular, or definite atonement. But, in the second place, if there should be any doubt as to whether the Confession here means the elect, *and them only*, I refer the reader to Chapter III, 6, which we quoted earlier. There you find a definite limiting clause: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only." And I submit that if there is any doubt about the meaning of the article now under consideration, that doubt is dispelled when we read VIII, 5 in the light of III, 6. The Westminster Confession definitely holds to limited, or particular, atonement.

But then the remarks which we made in connection with III, 6 also hold true here. This article makes a general, gracious offer impossible. He who would attempt to hold on to both particular atonement and the free offer becomes guilty of making God out to be a dreadful, mocking monster. God invites all men to be saved, genuinely wills and desires their salvation, but does not have salvation for all? What is more, He does not even make salvation

possible for all? He does not provide payment for all? What kind of God is it who thus teases men, who thus toys with men's souls? No one has ever made it clear how the offer-theory can be harmonized with the veracity of God, nor with the truthfulness of Him Who is the way, and the truth, and the life. And that preacher who proclaims a free offer in the name of God takes upon himself a heavy responsibility, and will have to give account some day of his tampering with the gospel of the Scriptures!

But there is harmony among Reformed confessions with respect to this subject. The Westminster Confession is by no means alone in this position which excludes any possibility of the offer-theory. As might be expected, this is also true of the Canons of Dordrecht. And do not forget: the Canons were in a sense a Reformed ecumenical creed, due to the fact that almost every Reformed church of that day in lands other than the Netherlands had representatives who took an active part in the Great Synod and who subscribed to the Canons. In this light, it is worthwhile to note how the Canons rule out the offer-theory. We shall not go into great detail, but merely call attention to some outstanding features. Meanwhile, we recommend that those who are interested in this subject read and study the Canons as a whole, and pay particular attention to Chapter III, IV, which has much to say, both positively and negatively, on the whole subject of the call of the gospel and the conversion of the elect sinner to God. In fact, it will do none of our readers any harm to give himself a refresher course in the Canons. They are as up-to-date today as they were at the time of the Arminian controversy.

With respect to the subject under discussion, I would call attention, first of all, to Canons I, 6:

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

The Murray-Stonehouse pamphlet on "The Offer of the Gospel" proposes that "God delights that those to whom the offer comes would enjoy what is offered in all its fullness." It posits a "real attitude, a

real disposition of lovingkindness" toward all. Still more, it even recognizes that faith is the necessary means unto salvation. For in the last paragraph of the introductory section of this pamphlet we read:

Still further, it is necessary to point out that such "desire" on the part of God for the salvation of all must never be conceived of as desire to such an end apart from the means to that end. It is not desire of their salvation irrespective of repentance and faith. Such would be inconceivable.

Now I realize that Murray and Stonehouse here do not intend to emphasize that faith is one of the gifts of salvation and that it is absolutely a gift of grace, the God-given means and instrument whereby He saves His people. The contrary is true. It is just exactly their purpose to teach that faith is a *condition* of salvation, that it is the condition attached to the offer. In fact, they say this in so many words: "This is the same as saying that he desires them to comply with the indispensable conditions of salvation." And thereby they land themselves squarely in the Arminian camp, of course. The offer of salvation is conditional; and unless man complies with the condition of faith and repentance, God cannot and will not make good on His offer.

But this is precisely the point of my citing Canons I, 6. The Canons want nothing of this view. They teach that faith is a gift of God for the elect only. And they teach that the reception of the gift of faith on the part of some, but also the non-reception of the gift of faith on the part of others proceeds from God's eternal decree of election and reprobation. And this means — apart from anything else that may be said of the offer-theory — that God just exactly does not desire the salvation of the reprobate ungodly. What a strange and contradictory theory this is, then, which teaches that God desires the salvation of the reprobate, but nevertheless will not to bestow upon them the gift of faith, without which they cannot possibly be saved!

I need not quote in this connection what the Canons say about election, about reprobation (I, 7 and I, 15), nor what they say about particular atonement (II, 8). On all these matters the Canons and the Westminster Confession are in complete agreement, and we have commented on them in connection with our discussion of the Westminster.

There is one article in Canons III, IV to which we may pay attention for a moment. It was used in 1924 by the Synod of Kalamazoo. It was employed by the opponents of Dr. Clark in the case which preceded and gave rise to the Murray-Stonehouse pamphlet. It is not quoted in the latter; in fact, all references to the confessions are conspicuously absent from this pamphlet — not a high recommendation for a

pamphlet on such an important subject. But more recently it was quoted by Dr. John R. de Witt in the British magazine, *Banner of Truth* (January, 1973), in an article entitled "Distinctives of the Reformed Faith." Dr. de Witt evidently counts the free offer of the gospel as belonging to the distinctives of the Reformed faith. He writes:

It (the Reformed faith) does not tamper with human responsibility, nor cancel out the free offer of the gospel. 'As many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called; for God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word what will be acceptable to him, namely, that all who are called should comply with the invitation. He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life and rest to as many as shall come to him and believe on him.' [III-IV/8]

Now it has been pointed out many times in the past in the pages of this magazine and elsewhere that this is a corrupted translation of Canons III, IV, 8. But let it be pointed out again. [To our shame, by the way, we still have this corrupted translation in our *Psalter*!] The correct translation, which cannot be confused with the offer-theory, is as follows:

As many, however, as are called by the Gospel are seriously called. For God has seriously and most truly shown in his Word what is pleasing to him, namely, that the called should come unto him. He even promises seriously to all those coming to him and believing rest of soul and eternal life.

Those who hold the offer-theory must hold that this article teaches something like the following: "As many as are invited by the preaching of the gospel are unfeignedly invited by God. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in His Word that He is desirous, yea, longs and yearns that every one that hears the gospel invitation should comply with it and accept it. Moreover, He seriously promises to all who accept the invitation, and thus come to him and believe, rest and eternal life."

But this is by no means what the article teaches. It does not speak of an invitation with so much as a word, nor of complying with an invitation. It speaks of the *calling*. And in the light of the article itself and also of the context, the Canons here mean the external call of the gospel. Now what does this

external call of the gospel say? Or rather, what does God Himself say in that outward call of the gospel? He says that men must believe and repent. He says that they must come to Him. And the article states that God is serious about this. He calls unfeignedly. He means what He says! And the article states further that it is "pleasing" to God that those who are called should come. This simply means that it is right in God's sight that men should heed the call to faith and repentance. Not to heed it is terribly disobedient, and it is displeasing to God; it incurs His fierce wrath and displeasure.

Notice, further, that there is no suggestion whatsoever that any man is by nature *able* or *willing* to heed that call of the gospel. None is! But that has nothing to do with the fact that it is nevertheless right to come to Christ, and terribly sinful and displeasing in God's sight not to heed the demand of faith and repentance. Our Heidelberg Catechism maintains this same position with respect to the law of God when it asks: "Doth not God then do injustice to man, by requiring from him in his law that which he cannot perform?" Answer: "Not at all; for God made man capable of performing it; but man, by the instigation of the devil, and his own wilful disobedience, deprived himself and all his posterity of those divine gifts." We must always be on our guard against the insidious notion that somehow responsibility implies *ability* on the part of the natural man, whether with respect to the law or the gospel. That simply is not the case.

But my point is: there is no offer mentioned or suggested in this article of the Canons. Nor is there so much as a hint of a favorable disposition, an attitude of lovingkindness, or a desire for the salvation of all on the part of God.

Nor is this taught in the final statement of the article. That statement plainly teaches a particular promise: a promise of rest and eternal life *to all those coming and believing*. And they are, without any doubt, the elect, who come and believe through sovereign grace and through the effectual calling.

But of an offer there is not so much as a breath in this article, nor anywhere in our Canons.

**Know the standard and follow it. Read THE STANDARD BEARER!**

## QUESTION BOX

## About The Death of Christ

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

From a Grand Rapids reader we received the following question:

“What death did our Lord Jesus Christ die on the cross? Men that sin are dead; and when they pass on, they pass on into eternal death. The believers’ punishment, including eternal death, is laid upon our Lord and Savior. Did He die our eternal death, and how did He die that death for us?”

## Reply

In reply, I would emphasize that our Lord Jesus Christ died our death in the full sense of the term, that He did so vicariously for all those whom the Father gave Him, and that thus He completely removed the punishment of death for all His elect.

In briefly explaining this reply, let me point to the following:

1) Death is *one*, not several. I think we tend to overlook this sometimes, and unintentionally we begin to think and to speak as though there are several deaths. We speak of physical death, of spiritual death, of everlasting death. And before we realize it, we begin to use these terms as though they refer to three different deaths. Actually, of course, they are but *aspects* of the one death.

2) What is more important is that we understand what death really is, whether in its spiritual, its physical, or its everlasting aspect. Death is punishment. It is the visitation of the wrath of God. It is the execution of the sentence of God’s justice against the sinner. It is the experience of the curse of God in all our existence, body and soul, from the cradle to the grave, and then on into everlasting destruction in hell. It is to be banned from God’s fellowship, to be alienated from Him. “To live apart from God is death,” — that is, in the sense of being apart from His favor and fellowship, of being the objects of His holy wrath and His fierce displeasure.

3) This death, in the full sense of the word, the death which was our just punishment because of sin, Christ assumed in the stead of and in behalf of all His elect people, and them only; and He obediently and voluntarily endured and suffered that death on the cross to the very end. The fruit is that there is no

more death for God’s people; that is, in the sense that there is no more punishment for us. Even as far as our physical death is concerned, the sting of it has been removed: “our death is not a satisfaction for our sins, but only an abolishing of sin, and a passage into eternal life,” as the Heidelberg Catechism puts it in Lord’s Day 16, Question and Answer 42.

But notice that in that same Lord’s Day it is plainly taught that our death also in its spiritual aspect and its everlasting aspect has been removed. As far as our being dead in sin is concerned, Question and Answer 43 teaches: “That by virtue thereof (i.e., by virtue of the sacrifice and death of Christ on the cross), our old man is crucified, dead and buried with him; that so the corrupt inclinations of the flesh may no more reign in us; but that we may offer ourselves unto him a sacrifice of thanksgiving.” And as far as the anguish and torments of hell are concerned, the Catechism teaches this in Question and Answer 44: “That in my greatest temptations, I may be assured, and wholly comfort myself in this, that my Lord Jesus Christ, by his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings, but especially on the cross, hath delivered me from the anguish and torments of hell.”

4) The final question is already answered in the last quotation from the Heidelberg Catechism. How did Christ die that death for us? “By his inexpressible anguish, pains, terrors, and hellish agonies, in which he was plunged during all his sufferings (“all the time that he lived on earth,” Lord’s Day 15), but especially on the cross.” We must remember that when our Lord Jesus Christ was “born of a woman, born under the law,” He came under the wrath of God immediately — not personally and individually (for He was the sinless Son of God in the flesh), but as our Mediator and Head. As such He suffered under the wrath of God all His lifetime; and this suffering reached its climax and its completion on the cross, especially at the moment of the fourth word from the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

That our Lord Jesus Christ was able to do this in the place of all His people was due to His being the

Son of God in the flesh. That He was able to be the substitute for us and to suffer in our stead was due to His being by divine appointment the Head of all the elect.

Two concluding remarks: 1) It must be emphasized that Christ died for the elect, and for them only. If the above is the meaning of the death of Christ — and it is! — then it should be plain, too, that as soon as one makes the death of Christ general and universal, he is also compelled to conclude that all men are actually saved. For if Christ died for anyone, there is no more punishment for that person. 2) I always think that the first paragraph of the communion-section of our Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper is a classic description and exposition of Christ's atoning suffering. I refer to this paragraph: "That we are confidently persuaded in our hearts, that our Lord Jesus Christ (according to the promises made to our forefathers in the Old Testament) was sent of the Father into the world; that he assumed our flesh and blood; that he bore for us the wrath of God (under which we should have perished everlastingly) from

the beginning of his incarnation, to the end of his life upon earth; and that he hath fulfilled, for us, all obedience to the divine law, and righteousness; especially, when the weight of our sins and the wrath of God pressed out of him the bloody sweat in the garden, where he was bound that we might be freed from our sins; that he afterwards suffered innumerable reproaches, that we might never be confounded; that he was innocently condemned to death, that we might be acquitted at the judgement-seat of God; yea, that he suffered his blessed body to be nailed on the cross — that he might fix thereon the handwriting of our sins; and hath also taken upon himself the curse due to us, that he might fill us with his blessings: and hath humbled himself unto the deepest reproach and pains of hell, both in body and soul, on the tree of the cross, when he cried out with a loud voice, 'My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?' that we might be accepted of God and never be forsaken of him: and finally confirmed with his death and shedding of his blood, the new and eternal testament, that covenant of grace and reconciliation when he said: 'It is finished.'"

## About Isaiah 1

From a west coast reader we received a question which arose in connection with a Men's Society discussion of Isaiah 1. "In my opinion it is spiritual Israel that we must see first of all in verse 25 and following. I believe verse 10 shows us carnal Israel. The prophet comes in this verse with judgment. The others did not go along with it. In my opinion carnal Israel cannot be liberalized with spiritual Israel. Judgment cannot be balanced with grace. I believe this leads to a liberalized covenant idea, and the result is common grace."

### Reply

I am not at all certain that I understand some of the details of this question and of the discussion which evidently went on in the Men's Society referred to. I would guess that my correspondent could express himself better in his native tongue, the Dutch language; and, incidentally, if there are those who have a little problem expressing themselves in the English language, they are welcome to write me in Dutch. In this particular instance, I am not quite certain what my correspondent means by "liberalized." I was tempted to put "liberated" in parentheses; but, on the other hand, I don't want to put words in someone's pen.

However, I think the main problem set forth by my correspondent concerns the relation between the spiritual and carnal elements in Israel as it is addressed here in Isaiah 1. On this main problem I think I can shed some light. And then if I have missed the point of the question, or if my correspondent has still more questions about this subject, he may write me again.

I will quote the particular passage in question, Isaiah 1:25, ff.: but it will be helpful for our readers to get out their Bibles, so that references to other parts of the chapter will be clear. Here is the passage from 25 to the end: "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin: And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen. For ye shall be as an oak whose

leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them."

Here are my suggestions:

1) We must bear in mind that throughout the entire prophecy Isaiah is concerned, from a positive point of view, with the remnant according to the election of grace, graphically pictured in 1:8, 9 as "a cottage in a vineyard, a hut in a garden of cucumbers, a besieged city." The positive purpose of the prophecy is the comfort and encouragement of that elect remnant. And to be sure, that which comforts that elect remnant is the promise of salvation, of redemption and deliverance. "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness," vs. 27. Or, as you have it in Isaiah 40: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

2) Hand in hand with this positive intent goes the purpose of the hardening of the wicked reprobate and the message of reproof and judgment. In fact, this is on the foreground in Isaiah 6 in the account of Isaiah's calling as prophet. Isaiah is commissioned, "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed," Isa. 6:9, 10. A very heavy task Isaiah received from the Lord, therefore. And when he asks the Lord, "How long?" he receives the answer that this must go on "Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without men, and the land be utterly desolate, And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land." This is all dreadfully negative. Isaiah must preach until and for the purpose of the complete hardening and destruction of the reprobate ungodly element in Jerusalem-Judah. But do not overlook the positive purpose of this all, namely, the salvation through judgment of the remnant: "But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teal tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." (Isa. 6:11-13)

3) Jerusalem-Judah (the church of that day) is spoken of here as Zion. Zion is another name for Jerusalem, the city of God. Jerusalem is frequently designated by this name because in Zion (the mount of the throne of David and of the temple) lay the real

significance of Jerusalem. It was the city where God dwelt among His people, and where His people had fellowship with Him; such was the idea of the temple. And it was the city where God reigned as King, and where His people obeyed Him and lived according to His commandments; such was the proper idea of the theocratic throne and kingdom. But we must remember that this Zion never exists historically in the world unmixed. There is always the true, real, elect Zion, but also the reprobate-ungodly shell. And when that reprobate-ungodly element in historical Zion is in the majority and is in control and in positions of power (the throne and the priesthood, for example), then Jerusalem becomes manifest as spiritually Sodom and Gomorrah. That was the situation, to a large extent, during Isaiah's ministry. This accounts for the description which you find in the first part of Isaiah 1 also: a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, etc. And this accounts for the severe words of reproof in vss. 10, ff., where you have described the abominable hypocrisy of a church that is ecclesiastically and religiously punctual and precise, but which in its walk is wicked and oppresses the poor, the fatherless, and the widow. This accounts, too, for the demand of repentance in the context of vss. 16-20, as well as for the promises of forgiveness and cleansing for the repentant, but also the threats of destruction for the rebellious.

4) This also accounts for the sudden changes from dire words of judgment and warnings of destruction to beautiful and comforting words of promise and salvation. This is not due to the fact that "judgment is balanced with grace." This is never the case. And it is plainly not the case in the passage under discussion. According to vs. 27, judgment is not *balanced* with grace. Not at all! But judgment *serves* grace, serves redemption. Zion shall be redeemed through judgment! Besides, the whole context militates against the idea that judgment is balanced with grace. Notice that judgment goes through! It is executed! The destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed, etc. Or, as Isaiah repeatedly puts it elsewhere: "There is no peace, saith my God, for the wicked!" But it is precisely through this judgment and destruction of the carnal element in historical Zion that the true Zion emerges purged and purified and shall be called "The city of righteousness, the faithful city."

5) Centrally, we must remember, this redemption of Zion is accomplished through the judgment of the cross. The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is the judgment and condemnation of the wicked world. At the cross is revealed all the fierce wrath of God over against sin and the sinner. But what about elect Zion,

then? How does she escape that wrath and condemnation of God? For the elect remnant, too, remember, are no better than the rest. They, too, are dead in trespasses and sins by nature. They, too, are the proper objects of God's wrath and condemnation. They, too, by nature stand condemned at the cross! The answer is that all the waves and billows of God's wrath which were due to that elect remnant by nature are made to come upon our Lord Jesus Christ. He endured them all, and did so obediently and voluntarily and fully, in our behalf and in our stead. And thus Zion is redeemed through judgment. And thus throughout history, the judgment of the world is

at the same time the salvation of the church!

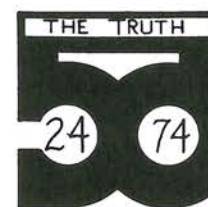
But to the wicked, saith my God, there is no peace!

Grace is never common — whether in the gospel or apart from it.

Well, there my correspondent has a few brief thoughts in connection with a weighty and very important subject. As I said, if he has further questions, he may call again.

P.S. I have one more letter for Question Box — this one from Canada; but it will have to wait until the next issue, the Lord willing.

## The Standard Bearer In Retrospect



In our reprint for this issue of *The Standard Bearer* we reproduce in shortened form an article entitled "Dr. Martin Luther On The Stage." This article is found in Volume IV, pp. 197-199.

There are several reasons why this article is of interest. 1) It is an illustration of how rapidly the principle of common grace broke down the wall of the antithesis in the Christian Reformed Church, especially in the area of public entertainment. 2) It has some things to say about drama which are still important today as this problem rises repeatedly in the Church. 3) It makes an astonishing prediction at the end of the article concerning what will come of a Church which opens its doors to dramatic productions.

It seems that a Young Men's Society in a Christian Reformed Church sponsored a movie on the life of Dr. Martin Luther. The author of this article which we reproduce was concerned, first of all, about the fact that this indicated a decline in the spiritual strength of Young Men's Societies. This decline is described and discussed; but we are not primarily concerned about that, and so that portion of the article we omit.

But then Rev. Hoeksema goes on to argue that "a good movie is impossible." He writes as follows:

\* \* \* \*

The movie is not essentially different from the theatre-play.

Before the film is ready its contents have been played by living men, impersonating the characters in the film.

You cannot dramatize life.

You may not play sin.

And it is equally impossible to imitate holy things.

The film on the life and time of Dr. Martin Luther offers no exception to this. By it Dr. Martin Luther is thrown on the screen, is forced on the stage, is compelled to play over a large part of his life. Were he still among the living, he would surely refuse to appear on the stage for the purpose of re-enacting his life for the entertainment of the public that is too spiritually weak and disinterested to make a serious study of the history of the Reformation, that has forgotten to commemorate the thirty-first of October as Reformation-day, and that rather indulges in the "fun" of halloween parties. But what he would surely refuse to do, others do for him and by imitation and impersonation they force him on the stage "to play for us," even as Samson before the Philistines.

Men have imitated Martin Luther as the seeking soul, hungering and thirsting after peace with God and seeking the righteousness which is by faith; they have mimicked the indignation of his soul at the corrupt practices of the Roman Catholic Church of his day,

his joy at finding what his soul desired, his fight for the truth, his spiritual agony and struggles, his preaching and prayer. All these experiences were in reality the fruit of the operation of the grace of God upon the man Luther, the Most High using him as an instrument for the deliverance of His Church in the world. How abominable it must be in the sight of God when men imitate and mimic such a deep spiritual struggle and glorious victory of the grace of God, in order to entertain the public!

The men that were used to produce the film *acted* as if their soul was overwhelmed with spiritual agony because of sin and *it was not; acted* as if they hungered and thirsted after righteousness and *they did not; acted* as if they found peace and it was but *an empty act; acted* as if they raised their eyes in longing and earnest prayer to God Most High and they only *feigned; acted* as if they were the very instruments of God filled with an holy enthusiasm for the truth as it is in Jesus, and they only *played!*

And thus they throw the man Martin Luther on the stage. Thus they force him on the stage. And he will play for you for money. Thirty-five cents you are asked to pay, fifty cents if you want a reserved seat, and you may see Dr. Martin Luther reproducing for your entertainment the most serious incidents of his life and struggle! . . .

Is it not unspeakably sad?

\* \* \* \*

The author then goes on to discuss the fact that the film also conveyed erroneous theology and became an instrument for the propagation of heresy.

But the conclusion is of particular interest.

\* \* \* \*

I will not emphasize now, that these "good movies" will create a taste for all movies, and that it is not at all impossible, that under the auspices of some Reformed (?) body all shows and theatres will be open unto our young folks.

Why not? Concede the principle of the theatre and what remains is only a relative matter.

Presently you may see consistories investigating whether or not a play or movie is good or bad, in order to determine whether or not anyone becomes subject to the discipline of the Church by attending it.

And within a short time we will see the day, that the whole matter of the theatre and vaudette (the word does not appear in my unabridged, but it is apparently an old word to designate the place where vaudeville acts were performed; vaudeville acts were live theatrical performances usually of a humorous kind. H.H.) is dropped, or their frequenting is sanctioned by some Synod. Perhaps some future Synod will pass a resolution that the attendance of theatre and vaudette is not at all a sin, providing we, as Christian people strive to make them as good as possible and that we protest whenever something ungodly is presented . . .

I venture to prophesy that such will be the end of the amusement problem.

But in the meantime I warn our own young folks not to go along with the present tendency.

Rather go in the radically opposite direction.

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## ALL AROUND US

## Mental Trouble And Sin

Prof. H. Hanko

Most of our readers are aware of the fact that there has been quite a stir in the Christian approach to mental illness — a stir brought about by a book written by Jay Adams and entitled, "Competent To Counsel." This book, briefly, repudiates most, if not all, of modern psychiatry and psychology and explains mental problems from the viewpoint of sin. Jay Adams claims in his book that this is Scripturally sound. He insists that the Bible points to sin only as the source of all mental and emotional trouble. He refuses to speak of "mental illness" because he claims that this is a holdover from unbelieving psychology and psychiatry and is a concept not found in the Scriptures. He finds that the solution to all mental problems therefore, is admonition which is based upon and comes with the Word of God.

In the summer issue of the *Pine Rest News Bulletin* this position was indirectly challenged. While the article did not refer directly to Jay Adam's position, it spoke of the same idea and emphatically repudiated it. The article speaks of the relation between sin and mental suffering and refuses to acknowledge that such a relationship exists. The author writes:

A person who is emotionally disturbed is not just spiritually confused, but he experiences many interpersonal and intrapersonal difficulties. Man is a unity. When any area of relationship is in jeopardy, other areas are affected. On this basis, I find it helpful to remember that rather than saying a person is suffering because of separation from God, it seems more appropriate to say he feels separated from God because of suffering.

Now apart from anything else in the above quotation, the article fails to explain the reason for this suffering. However, the author does make an effort to do this when he writes:

Having said this, let me emphasize another conviction. Spiritual problems are to be recognized as a part of the total malfunction of a person. Many who come for care of physical and emotional problems have concurrent spiritual difficulties. These must be recognized if the "whole" person is to be helped. Throughout our lives, there is a natural development and growth. Due to social, emotional, or other pressures, individuals often have difficulty

developing or coping at times. Under such pressure, a person may be unable to deal with problems, and thus behave immaturely. If he is emotionally immature, chances are his spiritual means of coping will not be fully developed either. That is why the total person is treated at Pine Rest.

Whatever the author may mean by "the total person," I know from personal experience that Pine Rest gives little attention to the spiritual aspect of a person's problems. I recall that years ago I used to attend doctor-pastor conferences. One of the reasons I quit going was that scarcely any attention was paid to sin. It was so bad as a matter of fact that at one meeting, a minister rose after a speech and pointedly asked a doctor whether it was true, as the doctor seemed to intimate, that we did not believe in sin any more, but explained all unacceptable behavior in terms of mental illness which required psychiatric care. I know, too, from personal experience that, generally speaking, the staff frowned upon and sometimes tried to prevent ministers from visiting their sheep and bringing to them the Word of God. Pine Rest has no real Christian psychology and psychiatry. In another issue of the *News Bulletin*, the whole theory of so-called transactional analysis is defended. This is one of many current "fads" in the field of psychiatry, and leaves Pine Rest open to the suspicion that the staff is susceptible to any passing theory that comes along. But the fact remains, that, on the whole, there is very little left in Pine Rest which is Scriptural.

\* \* \* \* \*

A review of the above mentioned book appeared in a recent issue of *Reformation Today*. While the author of this review finds some favorable aspects to the book, he nevertheless severely criticizes it. Some criticisms are to the point. He charges Adams with being too simplistic in some areas of the book. He also castigates Adams for failing to distinguish properly between the office of believers and the special offices in the Church with respect to this problem of mental distress. But there runs through the criticism of the book a rejection of Adams' basic position.

The whole question of the relation between sin and mental suffering is a difficult and complex one. It is not our purpose to discuss the matter in this article. This is far too involved a matter to be the subject of the articles in this column. But there are a few remarks which we want to make.

In the first place, the Scriptures are filled with references to all different kinds of mental anguish and distress. One has only to read the Psalms to discover how deeply the Psalmists of Israel experienced great trouble and agony. Yet, while this is particularly to be found in the Psalms because they are given by God to serve as a kind of spiritual biography of the child of God, the same thing may be found in many other passages of God's Word. Many, if not most of these passages describe accurately much, if not all, of what today goes under the name of mental illness.

In the second place, Scripture always puts all this suffering and distress of the soul in a spiritual context. That is, Scripture finds the reason for all these problems which we face and burdens of the soul which we bear in our own sin. Not just in our sin in general, but in our own lack of spiritual-mindedness: our failure to pray, our spiritual carelessness, our pride, our lack of trust and confidence in God, our proclivity to let hatred eat away at our hearts, our covetousness, etc. And Scripture, therefore, finds the cure for these distresses in confession of sin and in spiritual renewal by the operation of the Holy Spirit. Scripture indeed acknowledges that we may need help in our troubles, but this help is to be sought from the Lord; if not directly, then from the Lord through His Word and through those who are appointed in the Church to bring us His Word. Cf. e.g., James 5:14, 15.

In the third place, there is great need for us to be reminded of the fact that sin is not a plaything, a toy, something which need not be feared. Whenever we harbor sin in our lives, we may expect that it will have the most dreadful consequences for us, for God is not mocked. What we may consider insignificant and minor sins, not worth a great deal of attention, and not fraught with any particular dangers to our spiritual welfare, are nevertheless sins in the sight of God. And sin will not go unpunished. We must learn more and more to confess our sins to God and to one another.

Finally, I am very much distressed about the fact that modern psychology and psychiatry (even as it is practiced in Christian institutions) has capitulated to God-denying theories of the cause of mental suffering and the cure for it. Sin is being more and more ruled out of the picture. This is generally true throughout our society. No longer will men reckon with sin. Sin is erased from the dictionary. Sin is an old-fashioned

idea with no relevance to modern times. Sin is banished from our thinking as a useless remnant of bygone years and the thinking of a superstitious folk who have long since departed the world's scene. And so everything must be explained in terms other than sin. If this idea prevails in the Church, there is simply no more room for the Word of God and the cross of Christ. We must be very, very careful that we never allow this type of thinking to influence us — not even in the area of mental problems.

\* \* \* \* \*

I had really intended to end the article at this point. But last night, while reading *Calvinist Contact*, I came across an example of what we were discussing. In that paper an article appears, written by the chaplain of Pine Rest Christian Hospital on "Infidelity" under a sub-heading of pastoral counselling. The article discusses the reasons for infidelity and enumerates the following: 1) Married life becomes after a time "rather drab, monotonous, and routine," and the wife tends to place her family and housework ahead of her marriage. 2) We are more exposed to the temptations of infidelity than years ago. 3) Marriage has its "ups and downs" and infidelity comes at "low spots in marriage." 4) Men tend toward infidelity because, after they get to be fifty, they "are trying to prove something."

These are the reasons given in the article. Notice that there is absolutely no reference at all to sin.

What then is the cure? The cure is "commitment": "To me, fidelity is not just simply the fact that somebody doesn't go out with some other woman. Fidelity means that he is fully committed to his wife, to his family, and to his relationships with her. When you look at all these factors, to me the solution of the whole matter of infidelity in marriage is to build a stronger commitment for each other and to each other. If a wife is deeply committed to her husband and makes sure that he knows this and that he realizes this; if a husband is genuinely committed to his wife, no matter how much he is tempted by these secretaries who wear rather short skirts, or by people who openly flirt with men in a factory. It's not going to bother him because he knows that he is committed to his wife and he is not going to be unfaithful to her."

Notice again that there is nothing of Scripture in all this, nothing of the calling of the Word of God. It is true that in the very last paragraph we read: "Of course, I know that in all of this commitment, there must also be the commitment to God, before whom we make our sacred vows when we marry, and we commit ourselves to each other until death us do part. This, too, is often lacking."

The fact remains nonetheless, that there is nothing

particularly Christian, or Biblical, about the whole discussion. The entire article could just as well appear in the *Reader's Digest* or in an Ann Lander's Column. In fact, one reads the same thing there time and again. If what is written above is true, then the

Christian really has nothing to say to God's people which the world has not said and cannot say. And, generally speaking, the world says it a whole lot better.

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## TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

# Our Protestant Reformed Position Regarding The "Free Offer Of The Gospel" (2)

*Rev. David J. Engelsma*

In opposition to the free offer, it is Biblical and Reformed to teach that God loves and desires to save the elect Church of Jesus Christ and her only. In the Old Testament, He loved and desired to save only Israel, not the other nations (cf. Deut. 7:6-8; Psalm 147:19, 20; Matt. 11:20-24). Among Israel, He loved the elect, not all (Rom. 9:6-13). In the New Testament, He loves, elects, and desires to save some only out of the fallen human race, but He hates, reprobates, and wills the punishment of damnation for others (cf. Rom. 8:28ff.; Rom. 9; I Pet. 2:7-9). In opposition to the offer, it is Biblical and Reformed to teach that the grace of God is sovereign and irresistible and that the love of God in Christ never fails (cf. John 6:37; Rom. 8:29, 30; Rom. 8:39). In opposition to the offer, it is also Biblical and Reformed to teach that the preaching of the gospel does not have the nature of an offer, but that the preaching is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," (Rom. 1:16).<sup>4</sup> God's grace in the preaching is sovereign grace that saves everyone whom God desires to save. By the preaching, God also hides the truth from some and hardens them (cf. Matt. 11:25-27; Rom. 9:18). This is His will for

them, and Jesus, in full agreement with His Father, thanks God for this too (cf. Matt. 11:25-27). The preaching of the gospel is not an impotent offer but the scepter of the risen Christ, the sword of the Spirit, and the almighty power of God to call the things that be not as though they were (Rom. 4:17).

Although our controversy with the offer is not a quibbling over words, even the term, "offer," is objectionable. It is not a Biblical term. Although at one time it could be used to describe the call of the gospel,<sup>5</sup> since the Latin word, *offero*, meant 'carry to, place before, present,' by this time the word itself is so freighted with Arminian connotations as to be unserviceable and dangerous.

Does our rejection of the free offer make us "hyper-Calvinists"? The term, "hyper-Calvinist," is a term of reproach and condemnation, describing someone as a person who has driven the truth of Calvinism to such an extreme that he has actually marred and even destroyed true Calvinism. The name is bandied about very loosely today. Many enemies of Calvinism refer to genuine Calvinism as "hyper-Calvinism" in order thus to blacken Calvinism

itself in the eyes of the ignorant. Others are only too ready to call a solid, consistent Calvinism, "hyper-Calvinism." Apparently, however, there have been those who have deserved the criticism of "hyper-Calvinists." Claiming to be Calvinistic, these churches denied that God calls anyone by the preaching of the gospel except the regenerated elect, and they denied that the Church, or preacher, should call anyone to repent and believe except those who show themselves to be regenerated. Evidently, they drew the conclusion from the doctrines of election and limited atonement that the Church may preach only to the regenerated elect, especially, that the Church may only call the regenerated elect to repentance and faith. They called their position a denial of the free offer. *Reformation Today* (Summer 1970), in an article entitled, "The Ill-Fated Articles" accuses the Gospel Standard Churches (in England) of holding this view. Confessional articles adopted by these churches in 1878 and maintained at the present time express a doctrinal position that may with some right be criticized as "hyper-Calvinism." Article 26 states: "We reject the doctrine that men in a state of nature should be exhorted to believe in, or turn to God" (p. 25). Article 33 states: "Therefore, that for ministers in the present day to address unconverted persons, or indiscriminately all in a mixed congregation, calling upon them to savingly repent, believe and receive Christ, or perform any other acts dependent upon the new creative power of the Holy Ghost, is, on the one hand, to imply creature power and on the other, to deny the doctrine of special redemption" (p. 26).

Our denial of the offer differs fundamentally from the denial of those who mean to deny that the Church should call all and sundry to repent and believe. We must dissociate ourselves from such churches, even though they also vehemently oppose the offer. It is indeed true that there is a sense, an important sense, in which God calls only the elect. The efficacious call of God is directed to the elect and to no other. This is taught, e.g., in Romans 8:30. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called." But there is also a sense in which God calls others besides the elect, i.e., the reprobate unbelievers. This is plain from Matthew 22:14: "For many are called, but few are chosen." These words are the conclusion of the parable of the king's wedding-feast, in which Jesus teaches that God calls many to salvation who perish eternally. According to the parable, God commands His servants to call "as many as ye shall find" (vs. 9) to the marriage. This is the call that God makes in the preaching of the gospel, the call that Reformed theology has termed "the external call," in distinction from the "effectual call" which consists both of the preaching and the

work of the Spirit in our hearts.

We maintain that God calls everyone who comes under the preaching to repent and to believe. God does this through the Church's preaching. The Church and preacher are ordered by God to call everyone, whether regenerate or unregenerate, whether converted or unconverted, whether believer or unbeliever, to repent and believe. "(God) now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). As far as the reprobate unbeliever is concerned, the nature of the call is that it is a demand that sets forth his duty. It does not express God's love for him nor God's desire to save him. It certainly does not imply the ability of the one who is called to do what he is commanded to do, any more than God's demand to fallen men to keep His law implies their ability to do so.<sup>6</sup> But the call expresses the sinner's responsibility. This is the Reformed position in the Canons of Dordt: "As many as are called by the gospel, are unfeignedly<sup>7</sup> called. For God hath most earnestly and truly declared in his Word, what will be acceptable to him; namely, that all who are called, should come unto him. He, moreover, seriously promises eternal life, and rest, to as many as shall come to him, and believe on him," (III, IV, 8). When the Canons say that "God hath . . . declared . . . what will be acceptable to him (or, pleasing to him), namely, that all who are called, should come unto him," this does not mean that God loves all and desires the salvation of all. The Canons have been busy in Heads I and II refuting this very notion. But the meaning is that the activity of coming to Christ is pleasing to God, whereas the refusal to come in faith is displeasing to Him, and God makes this known in the preaching when He calls men. Therefore, when men wickedly refuse to come to the marriage, the king of the parable in Matthew 22 sends out the army of His wrath to kill those obstinate men.

Some have charged that without a love of God for all and a desire of God to save all, there is no warrant, i.e., foundation or justification, for the call to all men in the preaching. But they are mistaken. Nowhere does Scripture indicate that the warrant for the call to all who hear the preaching is the universal love of God. The Church brings to everyone God's call to repent and believe on Christ crucified because God has commanded her to do so. She knows that God will use that call both as a savor of life and a savor of death (II Cor. 2:16). As she goes forth into all the world sounding the call of the gospel to all to whom God sends her, she does not say, "Behold God loves you: Come to the marriage." But she says, "All things are ready: Come unto the marriage" (Matt. 22:4). From the viewpoint of the ones who are called, the warrant of the call is that God has perfected salvation in Jesus Christ.

We ought to make clear to others and we must be aware ourselves that our denial of the free offer in no way hampers our preaching or hamstrings missions and genuine evangelism. Men lay this charge against those who deny the free offer. In a recent work on hyper-Calvinism, Peter Toon has written: "The combined influence of the Hyper-Calvinists mentioned above was to produce in the Churches connected with them, and amongst those whom they influenced, a tendency only to maintain their Churches but not to expand them."<sup>8</sup> Hulse charges that "hyperism undoubtedly affects preaching and teaching and is very dangerous because it can stultify and destroy the witness and life of a church" ("The Free Offer," p. 15). As Churches, and as preachers, we are able to preach to the unconverted. We proclaim Christ crucified to them, presenting Christ in the preaching of His Word, always, of course, as the righteousness of God. We pass upon them the judgment of the gospel, that they are by nature guilty and totally depraved, children of wrath, exposed to the damnation of hell except they repent. We call them, in the Name of God, to repent and believe. As we command all men everywhere to repent, we proclaim to all the promise that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This is Reformed preaching.<sup>9</sup> This was the preaching and procedure of the apostles.

Let those who intend to be Reformed, truly

<sup>4</sup>Note the title of Hoeksema's attack on the well-meant offer in 1930: *Een Kracht Gods Tot Zaligheid*. . . (*A Power of God unto Salvation*. . .)

<sup>5</sup>It was so used in the Canons of Dordt: "It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ, offered therein . . ." (III, IV, 9). Long ago, someone noted that *offero* in Calvin had the sense of "to present, to exhibit or set forth" (*Calvin's Calvinism*, Eerdmans, 1956, p. 31, footnote).

Calvinistic, compare the notion of the free offer with the teaching of the Canons of Dordt. The Canons speak only of God's love for the elect in Christ, of a desire of God that the elect be saved, and of a grace of God that is particular and sovereign. It knows nothing, absolutely nothing, of a love of God for all, of a desire that all be saved, or of a grace, whether in the preaching or elsewhere, that fails to save. But does this imply a weakening of the preaching? Does this mean a hindrance to a serious call by God and by the Church to all to whom God sends the gospel? Such has been the accusation of the Arminians from of old. But the Canons give the lie to this accusation, most fully and most clearly. Those who hold to the free offer out of fear that otherwise they lose the preaching must see this. And we ourselves must see this, so that we never apply our denial of the offer wrongly. The Canons begin with the importance of "the joyful tidings" as the means by which men are brought to faith" (I, 3). They stress that the preaching must promiscuously proclaim the (particular) promise "together with the command to repent and believe" (II, 5). They insist that the call of the gospel in the preaching is "serious" (III, IV, 8). They conclude with an encomium to the preaching: "And as it hath pleased God, by the preaching of the gospel, to begin this work of grace in us, so he preserves, continues, and perfects it by the hearing and reading of his Word . . ." (V, 14).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day IV, Q. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Latin: *serio*, 'seriously.'

<sup>8</sup>Peter Toon, *The Emergence of Hyper-Calvinism in English Nonconformity* (London: The Olive Tree, 1967), p. 150.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. the Canons, II, 5.

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Rev. J. Kortering

One thing that you covenant young people have in common with Martin Luther is your quest for peace with God.

Luther longed for it. The burden of his sins pressed so sorely upon him that he would wrestle with God in prayer for long hours. He was sensitive to the presence of the Holy God. There were times when he would confess his sins with weeping and groaning, crying out for forgiveness. The very first time he officiated at the holy mass, he trembled at the presence of God. He tells us,

At these words I was utterly stupefied and terror stricken. I thought to myself, "With what tongue shall I address such Majesty, seeing that all men ought to tremble in the presence of an earthly prince? Who am I, that I should lift up mine eyes or raise my hands to the divine Majesty? The angels surround him. At his nod the earth trembles. And shall I, a miserable little pygmy, say, 'I want this, or I ask for that?' For I am dust and ashes and full of sin and I am speaking to the living eternal and the true God." Quoted from *Here I Stand*, by Bainton, page 30.

The thought of dying obsessed him. What if he would die and have to face so great a God? He underwent a traumatic experience when in July of 1505, Luther, being 21 years old, was walking home and lightning struck close by him. In his holy fear he thought God had hurled that lightning bolt at him.

Overagainst such terror, Luther sought peace with God. If only he could be sure that God had forgiven his sin. If he could only know for certain that God smiled upon him with divine approval, that would make the difference. How he longed to be able to pray and have peace in his soul. He cried to God to take the turmoil away.

Covenant young people know something of this. It may be in varying degrees, but it is no less real. You know the burden of your sins and in that way know the struggle of soul. Certainly Christian young people have a difficult role in life. You know what is required, you read this in your Bible, you hear it explained from the pulpit, your parents talk to you about Christian living. Your teachers in school point this out to you. In a real sense you are confronted with the Word of God from every side. At the same

time you are surrounded with monstrous temptations. We use that word deliberately, for iniquity has abounded and depravity has intensified. You cannot naively say, "My folks may have gone to movies when they were young, or they listened to the pop music of their day when they dated, therefore they have no right to stop me." The movies and music of a decade ago were corrupt, but can hardly be placed on a level with the rot produced today. It is much worse and even more devastating today. You have a strong desire to experiment with sex; the yearnings of interest in the opposite sex are rising within your own bodies, and the lust of the world tempts and excites you to live and let live. You have opportunities for excellent instruction in school, catechism, and the home, and yet you resist them at times, maybe even by wasting your time. And when all this happens you know the turmoil that follows. Sometimes you feel so guilty you retreat to your own room and want to be alone. You get disgusted with yourself. There are times you cannot sleep nights, for the pangs of guilt won't let you. You are deeply afraid. And this fear is before the face of God. Yes, you long to have peace with God. Oh, that you may know forgiveness for sins, that you may be free from the guilty conscience that bothers you. How you seek strength to overcome temptation. In your prayers you ask God to guide you through the storm.

You seek peace with God.

From the life of Luther we can learn how God brought him that peace. Luther was a child of his times. The church of his day emphasized the holiness and righteousness of God. The emphasis was so great that the people became afraid of God. They saw that He was pure and holy and that He would not compromise His holiness. As righteous, He would punish the evil and reward the good. Since Luther could see only evil in His life, all Luther could see was a monstrous God lurking in the background ready to hurl Martin Luther into hell.

Within that setting, Luther tried to follow the instruction of the church as to how to find peace with God. Already at fourteen years of age, Luther saw Prince William of Anholt walking down the street carrying a sack of flour like a donkey. It struck his

impressionable mind that someone who would renounce his throne to do that must indeed be holy and have peace. He resolved to enter the monastery.

Once within the monastery, he did everything required of him. In his words,

I was a good monk, and I kept the rule of my order so strictly that I may say that if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery, it was I. All my brothers in the monastery who knew me will bear me out. If I had kept on any longer, I should have killed myself with vigils, prayers, reading, and other work, page 34, *Here I Stand*.

All of this was, however, to no avail. His ultimate hope rested in his trip to Rome. He had the privilege to travel to the eternal city. Surely, if he was to find peace with God anywhere on earth, it had to be here. He climbed the *scola sancta*, supposedly the steps that were before Pilate's judgment hall and upon which Christ had stood while on trial. He was told that if he did this, he would release a soul from purgatory. For good measure he kissed each step and secretly regretted that neither his father nor mother was dead, he would have to settle for releasing his grandpa Heine. Still no peace.

It came when he opened the Scripture. This was new to him. Even though he was thirty years old, he had not studied the Bible. He was assigned the task of teaching the Scripture at Wittenburg. While preparing for his lectures on the Psalms and Romans, the Lord led him to Romans 1:17, "The just shall live by faith." Upon meditating on this he tells us,

Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that the "just shall live by his faith." Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy, God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning and whereas before the "justice of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven, page 50, *Here I Stand*.

His peace came when he saw that God is not only just and holy, but also merciful and loving. The justice of God which He lovingly provided for His people is satisfied in Christ. At the cross, justice and mercy kiss each other. This produces peace.

This is also where you young people must find your peace with God. There is peace nowhere else, only at the foot of the cross.

There is a difference, however. As Luther was a child of his time, so you are children of your time. Our times are different. The church in Luther's day emphasized the justice and holiness of God at the exclusion of His mercy and love. The church world in

our day does the very opposite. It emphasizes love and mercy at the exclusion of justice and holiness. The end result is the same. It takes away peace with God.

We need not belabor the point that the church in general emphasizes God's love and mercy at the exclusion of justice. If you are the least alert to what is going on in the world today, you know this. Church papers, so called Christian radio and television programs, pulpits in the churches, speakers at retreats, emphasize that God loves everyone. We supposedly have such a God of love that He does not want to hurt anyone. He wants to save everyone. In His love, He provided Christ for making salvation possible for everyone. Now He comes to us and tells us His good news that we can be saved if only we will let him save us. This God of love is presented as being so close to us that He talks to us like the guy next door and if we want to pray to Him we can use the latest jargon and He won't mind. Some so called religious songs describe one's relationship with Christ as if He is our "Lover" and they croon out mockeries. In this setting, where do we hear that God is just and holy? When does anyone tell us that God is filled with wrath against those who reject His Word? Who tells us that the Holy God is exalted in heaven, and we must worship Him with fear and trembling? All this is lost. As in Luther's day the church emphasized God's justice and made people afraid of Him, today the church emphasizes God's love and brings God to the level of man.

Where will we find peace with God?

As Luther could not find it with a God of justice and holiness apart from love and mercy, neither can we find it with a God of love and mercy, apart from justice and holiness.

Why? Because they go together. To deny God's justice or love is to deny God as the God of our salvation. His justice demanded that sins be paid, and the penalty for sin is death. No man can make this payment. If we think that we must earn our peace with God by making up for our sins, we are doomed forever. Luther tried, but failed. Here is where the love of God comes in. In love God sent Christ to die in our place and make this payment. His righteousness must not be denied, and we must not think that the love of God cancels out His justice. The opposite is true. His love provided the payment whereby His justice is satisfied.

Hence justice and mercy embrace at the cross.

The flood gates of heaven opened for Luther as he meditated upon these words, "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Peace is through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has made our peace with God. And all the

benefits of His death become ours through faith in Him.

There is a lesson here. You young people are searching for peace with God. The church of Luther's day offered a pseudo peace, but to the spirit-filled soul of Luther it did not suffice. The nominal church does the same today. It offers a pseudo peace with a false Christ and a caricature of God that is not true. A peace that does not include justice and love is not for real.

Search the Scriptures. They are given to you as a

gift of the Reformation. Look at that beautiful passage and see how justice and mercy unite in Christ.

It is an amazing wonder that God forgives sinners. Surely, we do not deserve such favor. It is this that makes salvation so beautiful, because it is all of grace. The strength to face temptation and sin comes to us from this God of all grace.

Peace with God – do you have it?

Believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. He leads us to the God Who in love satisfied His justice. On that rock, we have the victory over all our sins.

## CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

# Eschatology – The First Period

(80 - 250 A.D.)

## THE SECOND ADVENT OF CHRIST

*Rev. H. Veldman*

### IRENÆUS

Only very scanty accounts are possessed of the personal history of Irenaeus, one of the Church Fathers. It has been generally supposed that he was a native of Smyrna, or some neighbouring city, in Asia Minor. But, it is also believed that he was born in Syria, and that he removed to Smyrna in his boyhood. He himself tells us that he was acquainted in his early youth with Polycarp, the illustrious bishop of that city.

It is certain that Irenaeus was bishop of Lyons, in France, during the last quarter of the second century. He is supposed to have died about A.D. 202; but there is probably no real ground for the statement of Jerome, repeated by subsequent writers, that he suffered martyrdom, since neither Tertullian nor Eusebius, nor other early authorities make any mention of such a fact.

His great work, *Against Heresies*, was, we learn, written during the episcopate of Eleutherus, that is, between A.D. 182 and A.D. 188. It is from this writing that we now quote Vol. I of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, page 562 in support of the contention that also Irenaeus advocated premillenarian teachings. We will notice that Irenaeus appeals, for example, to Matt. 26:29 and Isaiah 11:6, speaks of the fertility of

the vine and of the corn, declaring that Papias also taught this, and that the fulfillment of these words could not apply to a super-celestial place, and that they who drink it are not devoid of flesh, inasmuch as to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not to spirit. We now quote from Irenaeus:

For this reason, when about to undergo His sufferings, that He might declare to Abraham and those with him the glad tidings of the inheritance being thrown open, (Christ), after He had given thanks while holding the cup, and had drunk of it, and given it to the disciples, said to them: "Drink ye all of it: this is My blood of the new covenant, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of this vine, until that day when I will drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. Thus, then, He will Himself renew the inheritance of the earth, and will re-organize the mystery of the glory of His sons; as David says, "He who hath renewed the face of the earth." He promised to drink of the fruit of the vine with His disciples, thus indicating both these points: the inheritance of the earth in which the new fruit of the vine is drunk, and the resurrection of His disciples in the flesh. For the new flesh which rises again is the same which also received the new cup. And He cannot by any means be understood as drinking of the fruit of the vine when settled down with his (disciples) above in a super-celestial place; nor, again,

are they who drink it devoid of flesh, for to drink of that which flows from the vine pertains to flesh, and not spirit.

Later, in this same chapter, Irenaeus quotes passages from Papias which we have already quoted, referring to the future establishment of a wonderful kingdom. It appears from this quotation from Irenaeus that also this learned Church Father held premillenarian views.

### TERTULLIAN

Tertullian was born a heathen, and seems to have been educated at Rome, where he probably practiced as a jurisconsult. We may, perhaps, adopt most of the ideas of Allix, as conjecturally probable, and assign his birth to A.D. 145. He became a Christian about 185, and a presbyter about 190. The period of his strict orthodoxy very nearly expires with the century. He lived to an extremely old age, and some suppose even till A.D. 240. More probably we must adopt the date preferred by recent writers, A.D. 200.

It seems to be the fashion to treat of Tertullian as a Montanist, and only incidentally to celebrate his services to the Catholic Orthodoxy of Western Christendom (the writer of this sketch, in Vol. III of the Ante-Nicene Fathers, when speaking here of "Catholic Orthodoxy," does not refer, we understand, to the Roman Catholic Church — H.V.). Were I his biographer I should reverse this course, as a mere act of justice, to say nothing of gratitude to a man of splendid intellect, to whom the filial spirit of Cyprian accorded the loving tribute of a disciple, and whose genius stamped itself upon the very words of Latin theology, and prepared the language for the labours of a Jerome. In creating the Vulgate, and so lifting the Western Churches into a position of intellectual equality with the East, the latter as well as St. Augustine himself were debtors to Tertullian in a degree not to be estimated by any other than the Providential Mind that inspired his brilliant career as a Christian.

Our quotation from the writings of Tertullian appears in Book III of his five books against Marcion. Marcion was a disciple of Cerdo, and, according to Irenaeus, Cerdo taught that the God announced in the law and the prophets could not be the father of Jesus Christ. Marcion did not regard the Cosmos as the creation of the supreme God; it was the production of a demiurge, an inferior or lesser god. His demiurge is the creator and lord of all men, who has, however, a chosen people, and is the God of the Jews, the God of the Old Testament. Marcion's reading of the Old Testament convinced him that the principle of retributive justice found in the Old Testament could not be reconciled with that of love and goodness as represented by the God of the new

covenant, according to Tertullian. The good God knows all things and is all-powerful. The Old Testament with its ceremonial law and its low standard of morality is quite fitted to the creation God, but neither he nor his book should have recognition among Christians. This teaching, we understand, is wholly contrary to the teachings of the Word of God.

We now quote from Tertullian, Vol. III of the Ante-Nicene Father, page 342:

Yes, certainly, you say, I do hope from Him that which amounts in itself to a proof of the diversity (of Christ's), God's kingdom in an everlasting and heavenly possession. Besides, your Christ promises to the Jews their primitive condition, with the recovery of their country; and after this life's course is over, repose in Hades in Abraham's bosom. Oh, most excellent God, when He restores in amnesty what He took away in wrath! Oh, what a God is yours, who both wounds and heals, creates evil and makes peace! Oh, what a God, that is merciful even down to Hades! I shall have something to say about Abraham's bosom in the proper place. As for the restoration of Judaea, however, which even the Jews themselves, induced by the names of places and countries, hope for just as it is described, it would be tedious to state at length how the figurative interpretation is spiritually applicable to Christ and His church, and to the character and fruits thereof; besides, the subject has been regularly treated in another work, which we entitle *De Spe Fidelium*. At present, too, it would be superfluous for this reason, that our inquiry related to what is promised in heaven, not on earth. But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us in another state of existence, inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem, "let down from heaven," which the apostle also calls "our mother from above;" and, while declaring that our citizenship is in heaven, he predicates of it that it is really a city in heaven. This both Ezekiel had knowledge of and the Apostle John beheld. And the word of the new prophecy which is a part of our belief, attests how it foretold that there would be for a sign a picture of this very city exhibited to view previous to its manifestation. This prophecy, indeed, has been very lately fulfilled in an expedition to the East. For it is evident from the testimony of even heathen witnesses, that in Judaea there was suspended in the sky a city early every morning for forty days. As the day advanced, the entire figure of its walls would wane gradually, and sometimes it would vanish instantly. We say that this city has been provided by God for receiving the saints on their resurrection, and refreshing them with the abundance of all really spiritual blessings, as a recompense for those which in the world we have either despised or lost; since it is both just and Godworthy that His servants should have their joy in the place where they have also suffered affliction for His name's sake. Of the

heavenly kingdom this is the process. After its thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints, who rise sooner or later according to their deserts, there will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgment: we shall then be changed in a moment into the substance of angels, even by the investiture of an incorruptible nature, and so be removed to that kingdom in heaven of which we have been treating, just as if it had not been predicted by the Creator, and as if it were proving Christ to belong to the other god and as if he were the first and sole revealer of it. But now learn that it has been, in fact, predicted by the Creator, and that even without prediction it has a claim upon our faith in respect of the Creator. What appears to be probable to you, when Abraham's seed, after the primal promise of being like the sand of the sea for multitude, is destined likewise to be equality with the stars of heaven — are not these the indications both of an earthly and a heavenly dispensation? When Isaac, in blessing his son Jacob, says, "God give thee

of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth," are there not in his words examples of both kinds of blessing?

Tertullian, although speaking of a heavenly kingdom, also believed in a period of a thousand years which would precede the heavenly establishment of the kingdom of God. And all this was declared by the one God of all the earth, therefore also by the Creator of the world. This concludes our references to the truth of the advent of Christ toward the end of the ages. It is apparent that, in the period A.D. 80-250, premillenarian views were held by the Apostolic and Church Fathers. As Justin Martyr wrote, namely that others did not share this conception which is known as Premillennialism, there were those who did advocate this view. In our following article, the Lord willing, we will call attention to another subject in connection with these doctrines of the last things. At that time we expect to call attention to the truth of the resurrection.

## Book Reviews

*Prof. H. Hanko*

**Christian Science, Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses;** by Anthony Hoekema; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., (paper).

These four paperbacks are a reprinting of Hoekema's work: *The Four Major Cults*. They are however, more than reprints; they bring the material on these cults up to date with added information on recent developments among these sects.

These are very valuable books for anyone interested in a study of these sects. The books all include a brief history of the sect; a separate and important chapter on the basis and source of authority of these cults; an analysis of the major teachings of each, usually grouped under the general headings of the main loci of Dogmatics; and various important and interesting appendices in which the author supplies additional information and documents.

The value of the books is to a great extent due to reliability. Hoekema refers often to and quotes at length from the writings of these sects themselves.

Proof is therefore offered for all Hoekema's contentions.

The books can well be used for personal study, but also for society discussions. They range in price from \$1.25 to \$1.95.

**Explosive Evangelism,** by George R. Jaffray Jr.; Tyndale Bible Society, 1972 (paper).

The author of this book on evangelism is intent on bringing the message of the gospel to every person. He takes the position that this can only be done if the people of God themselves engage in personal evangelism. He writes in the preface:

Of course, if churches could be turned right side up, oriented toward building Christians up instead of pampering non-Christians and the fleshly, there would be a dramatic change in evangelism. Things being what they are this is not likely, if left alone. But it is up to Christians to put pressure on them, to be used by God to cause changes and get the emphasis where it belongs. This book is not for the unmotivated! It is for those who are serious about

evangelism and ache to see more done than a mere scratching of the surface.

And in the Epilogue he writes:

We have found out that evangelism is basically going out with God's message to men, with the goal of telling it to every person and making some disciples in every nation. In examining the various types of evangelism, it became clear that only a combination of personal evangelism with visitation of each individual within every locality has the capability of coming anywhere close to being able to reach the goal.

In stressing lay evangelism, the author insists upon a trained laity to perform this task. He obviously wants to be Scriptural and Reformed; but there are serious weaknesses in his book. In setting the goal of bringing the gospel to every person, he sets before the people of God an impossible task not only, but a task which has never been accomplished and which will, in the nature of the case, never be accomplished. He fails to put evangelism into a proper theological context, and therefore is never clear on what he means by lay evangelism other than to imply that there is no distinction between the official ministry of the Word and the witnessing of people of God. There are from time to time Arminian overtones, as, e.g., when he discusses methodology as working *with* the Spirit — in what amounts to some kind of cooperative venture.

A lot of stress is placed upon methodology and step by step instructions are given on how to approach the unbeliever.

The book can be obtained by writing the author at 1995 52nd St. S.E., Kentwood, Michigan, 49508. It should however, be read with discretion.

**Get Out!**, by G. VanDooren; Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; 1973; 98 pp., \$2.00 + postage, (paper).

The subtitle of this book by a minister of the Canadian Reformed Church is: "A Guideline for Reformed Congregational Evangelism." The contents of the book were first offered as subject matter in a

course for the membership of the Burlington, Ontario, Canadian Reformed Church.

There are many valuable and interesting features about this book which commend it to the reader. 1) It is written within the context of the Reformed heritage which gives it a Reformed perspective in many parts, and which brings into the material quotations from the Confessions and Church Order. 2) It has a very interesting discussion of evangelism programs in the Churches in the Netherlands of which the author was formerly a member. 3) It includes an abundance of practical material on the matter of Christian witnessing and congregational evangelistic work. All these features make the book well worth getting for anyone interested in the work of evangelism.

But there are other features of the book with which I cannot agree. 1) The whole thrust of the book is based upon an exegesis of Eph. 4:12 which is dubious. By eliminating the comma after saints, he comes to the conclusion that the saints are also called to the work of the ministry. On this point is based a great deal of the emphasis in the book on personal evangelism. 2) He seems to approve of (or at least does not condemn) Key 73, Campus Crusade, Youth For Christ, The Jesus People. 3) He condones Sunday School as an arm of evangelism, something which seems to me to be out of keeping with the doctrine of the covenant. 4) There are instances of Arminian language. We read on p. 26 e.g., "Let us beware that we, with our smooth theories, do not enter into conflict with the patience, the longsuffering and lovingkindness of the LORD! He is most certainly willing to give a new chance to the lost children and grandchildren of apostates; even to these apostates themselves . . ." He mentions on p. 61 that the calling of the Christian is "to win souls for Christ". This is certainly not Reformed language. 5) The book suffers from lack of organization.

We recommend the book to our readers for its valuable suggestions, but we urge caution in reading it.

Have you made use of the "green sheet" in our November 15 issue?

## News From Our Churches

In looking over the bulletins which I receive regularly, I rather enjoy noting the topics of speeches presented at mass meetings, league meetings, office-bearers' conferences, etc., in various of our churches. Since this issue of the *Standard Bearer* is likely the last which will appear in 1973, I suppose that now is as good a time as any to pass along a few of those topics. An Office-Bearers' Conference in Hudsonville featured Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, who spoke on "Censura Morum: Is it Conducted Properly?" A week prior to that, Prof. Hoeksema spoke at a Sunday School Teachers' Mass Meeting, in First Church, on "The History of the Ten Tribes in Proper Perspective." "Is Women's Liberation Affecting Us?" was the title of the speech delivered by Rev. C. Hanko for the Mr. and Mrs. League Fall Mass Meeting at Hope Church. Rev. R. Harbach spoke on "Christ's Covenant Line — Its Purpose," at the League of Ladies' Societies, meeting in First Church. Rev. G. Van Baren delivered a speech entitled, "Affluence and its Effect on Home and Church," at the Men's League Meeting held in First Church. And at an Office-Bearers' Conference held in Loveland, Rev. D. Engelsma spoke on "The Free Offer of the Gospel."

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From Loveland, a couple of short items: Around the middle of October the congregation gathered for a program in celebration of the ten years of Rev. Engelsma's ministry there. And, concerning the

Reformation Day Rally sponsored by The Reformed Witness, we learn that printed copies of Rev. Engelsma's speech entitled "The Reformation and Good Works," were made available to those who want them, free of charge. According to the printed program, "anyone desiring a copy of the speech can obtain it by writing The Reformed Witness, 709 E. 57th St., Loveland, Colorado 80537." Rev. Engelsma, incidentally, is currently considering the call to serve as home missionary of our churches. At the congregational meeting held in Hope Church on November 29, Rev. Engelsma was elected from a trio which included also Rev. R. Harbach and Rev. H. Veldman.

Two of those same ministers were also on another trio. Part of the agenda for the December 3 Congregational Meeting of South Holland was to be the calling of a minister from a trio consisting of the Reverends D. Engelsma, D. Kuiper, and H. Veldman.

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At the time of this writing, Rev. Van Overloop was probably on his way to Prospect Park. He followed immediately after Rev. Heys, and planned to stay for three Sundays, beginning December 2. Seminarian J. Slopsema intends to spend his Christmas vacation in New Jersey, bringing with him seven sermons for a two week period — two Sundays, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day. During that time Mr. Slopsema's dogmatics' professor will be prepar-

*(Continued on back page)*

### ATTENTION, OFFICEBEARERS!

The Officebearers Conference of Classis East will meet the evening of January 3, at 8 P.M., at the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. Professor Robert Decker will speak on the topic, "Creeping Compromise."

### NOTICE

Classis East will meet in regular session on January 3, 1974 (Thursday) in the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated at this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least ten days prior to the convening of this session.

John Huiskens  
Stated Clerk  
Classis East

**Gift Idea? Give good books.**

**Give RFPA publications!**

### Resolution of Sympathy

The Martha Society of the Doon, Iowa, Protestant Reformed Church expresses sincere sympathy to Mrs. John Van Den Top and family in the death of her father

MR. ALBERT VAN BEMMEL

May our covenant God comfort the bereaved by His Word and Spirit. "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." (Romans 14:8)

Rev. Richard Moore, Pres.  
Mrs. Henry Bleyenburgh, Sec'y.

ing, among other things of course, the semester exams for his students. And then, immediately after the holidays, Professor Hoeksema will head for New Jersey, where he will preach for two Sundays, during the time in which Mr. Slopsema, now back in Grand Rapids, will be, with the other Seminary and pre-seminary students, laboring through those exams. That's what you call team work.

On Tuesday, November 27, Rev. Schipper, after a week's siege of the flu, headed for the balmy climate of Texas, where he expected to labor for the first three weeks of December. According to current plans, his visit there would be followed by that of Rev. G. Van Baren, who intends to remain in Houston for two weeks.

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Then, last but hardly least is the following contribution from our Business Manager. The subscription statistics, which are interesting in themselves, are made even more so by the comparisons suggested by Mr. Vander Wal. Read on, for what he calls, alliteratively, "startling statistics."

"Some of our readers may be acquainted with Robert A. Ripley's news items entitled "BELIEVE IT OR NOT!" These interesting but almost unbelievable facts, appeared in newspapers across the entire U.S.A. a few years ago. We would like to add a few facts of our own which prove quite interesting and almost unbelievable.

"Believe it or not, but in the State of New York, with a population of 18,241,266, only nine of this vast number receive our *Standard Bearer*! On the other hand, in the State of Iowa — population 2,825,041 . . . more than 100 subscribe to our magazine.

"Believe it or not, but the great city of Chicago, Ill., — population 3,369,359 . . . only three residents of that metropolis receive the *Standard Bearer*. But of little Isabel, South Dakota, population 394, seven receive and read our publication.

"In Detroit, the largest city in Michigan, with a population of 1,513,601, only one, that's right, only *ONE* resident receives our paper. But, in Edgerton, Minn., population only 1,119, eighteen are subscribers."

#### THE STANDARD BEARER

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#### CONTENTS:

Jesus — Saviour .....	122
The OPC and the "Free Offer" (4) .....	124
About The Death of Christ .....	127
About Isaiah 1 .....	128
The <i>Standard Bearer</i> In Retrospect .....	130
Mental Trouble and Sin .....	132
Our Protestant Reformed Position Regarding the "Free Offer of the Gospel" .....	134
Peace With God .....	137
Eschatology — The First Period (Irenaeus) .....	139
Book Reviews .....	141
News From Our Churches .....	143