

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Thank God — He not only *permits*, but *sends* afflictions in His wisdom; and when He sends them upon His people, He does so in His love and grace. What an awful thing it is when one, in his desire to defend the false view of common grace, will attribute to Satan what Scripture ascribes to God. Only as I know that whatever befalls me is sent by my God for Jesus' sake unto my eternal profit, can I find assurance and comfort through every adversity on this earth.

See "Does God Send Sickness?" — page 731

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THE STANDARD BEARER

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MEDITATION

The Zeal of Jerusalem's Watchmen

Rev. C. Hanko

I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. Isaiah 62:6, 7.

... "and give him no rest."

This is a bold statement. I would never dare to make it. Much less would I have the courage to carry it out, if it were not that my Lord Jesus Christ urges me to do so.

"Him" refers to Jehovah, the eternal "I AM." He is the Immovable Rock who maintains His cause and

covenant over against all the attacks of the powers of darkness in this present evil world.

The One who gives me this instruction is no less than the Angel of Jehovah. The Angel is addressing Jerusalem as His militant church on earth, spurring her on to hold undauntedly to the faith entrusted to her and to keep her eye fixed upon the glory promised in the world to come. This Angel is the Christ, of

Whom the Psalmist spoke in prophetic vision, "The zeal of Thy House hath eaten Me up." (John 2:17)

Jesus' disciples witnessed that zeal throughout His entire earthly ministry. They stood amazed, for this zeal literally devoured Him; yet He never faltered. Deliberately He walked in the ever darkening shadow of the cross as the suffering Servant of Jehovah, even when every step He took brought Him closer to the abyss, the yawning pit of utter darkness and horrors of God-forsakenness. In holy zeal Jesus clung to the cross even when His enemy, Satan, desperately wanted to tear Him down to prevent Him from bringing atonement for the sins of His people. Triumphant His zealous voice echoed through the depths of hell: "It is finished!" With renewed ardor Christ made His march of triumph through the tomb, through the heavens to the Heaven of heavens, where all power was entrusted to Him over every creature of the universe. Even now Christ zealously labors in fervent devotion to God. He rules as King of kings and Lord of lords, carrying out the counsel of God's will that all glory may be unto the Father, world without end. He gathers His church unto Himself as eagerly as a bridegroom prepares for his wedding day.

God's zeal for the perfect revelation of His own glorious NAME is the zeal of Christ. Christ's zeal fills the Spirit of Christ, Who, in turn, arouses that zeal in our hearts, as the zeal of God's House.

Christ urges us from heaven: Give Jehovah no rest; no, not until He makes Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth.

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem."

In the old dispensation Jerusalem was situated upon mount Zion as a mighty stronghold with massive walls and strong, iron gates. Jerusalem represented the militant church of God as she still fights the battle of faith against all of God's enemies, which are her enemies: boldly confident of the victory in her God. Of her the inspired poet sang: "Walk ye round about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye her bulwarks, consider her palaces: that ye may tell it to the generations following. For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." (Psalm 48:12-14)

Jerusalem is the city of the great King. Christ, the mighty Conqueror, came to earth for the very purpose of fighting her battles and destroying her foes. As her victorious Lord He is now enthroned in the heavens. By His Spirit He takes up residence in her midst, even in the hearts of Jerusalem's inhabitants. Do you not hear it? There is the shout of a King among them. (Num. 23:21) He entrusts to His church the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatsoever she binds on earth is bound in heaven, whatsoever she

looses on earth is loosed in heaven. Christ opens and closes the gates of the kingdom through her, thus assuring her that the gates of hell can never overwhelm her.

As if that were a small thing, Jerusalem is uniquely the City of God. God dwells in the midst of her. Her inhabitants are saints in Christ, citizens of the heavenly commonwealth, who live in most intimate communion of life with God, and thus with one another. The enemy rages within and without, the struggle is long and bitter. The anxious night causes Jerusalem's children to ask: "Watcher, what of the night?" And the reassuring answer echoes back: "The morning cometh, even though it is still night." In the darkest hours God is her Refuge and her Strength, a very present Help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

Even when the antichristian powers seem to overwhelm the church, she still looks in eager anticipation for the day when the new Jerusalem will descend from God out of heaven and the tabernacle of God will be eternally with men. Then the iron doors will be changed into pearly gates that stand wide open; the lurking enemy is banished forever. Jerusalem's streets will be of gold, her mansions fully occupied, and her glory like the dazzling brightness of the sun at noonday. God's glory will shine forth upon the uplifted faces of the saints, who devote themselves in holy ardor to Him, yes, to HIM, the ever blessed, the wholly adorable Lord over all.

In her present situation with the enemies still threatening from every side, Jerusalem's safety rests with her sentinels who guard her walls. These sentinels have a threefold task to perform. They must be alert for any sneak attack of the enemy, to warn the inhabitants to take up arms to defend themselves. They must also know the time, so that day and night they may call the hour, announce the signs of the times, and give the citizens ample time to adorn themselves in festive array for the arrival of their King. These watchmen are at the same time the King's heralds, proclaiming to Jerusalem the messages of her King.

It is no wonder that these men are carefully screened, chosen, appointed, trained, equipped, and mandated by no one less than God Himself. Jerusalem's inhabitants are informed of God: "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem!" In the broadest sense of the word, these watchmen include every member of the church in the office of believers. Parents are watchmen in the home, teachers are watchmen in the school, the single adults, the aged, the young people, and even the children are watchmen, each in his own divinely appointed place with abilities entrusted to him from God. A great responsibility rests upon the shoulders of each and every

believer to guard his soul from the assaults of the evil one, and to protect his fellow Countrymen from attack.

Each one of us wears the uniform of Jesus Christ, which we receive at baptism, and which we keep, even though in time tattered and torn, until we exchange it for white robes of righteousness, palm branches of victory, and the crown of glory. The same God who assures Jerusalem that He supplies her with watchmen also pledges to her that they will be faithful. They "shall never hold their peace day nor night." Never will they allow the enemy to approach without giving warning. Never will they fail to call the hour, whether that be at noonday or in the dark hours before the dawn is breaking. Never will they cease to call: "Prepare thyself, O Israel, for thy King cometh unto thee." No, false sentinels do hold their peace to deceive the people, but true watchmen never can. Jerusalem's citizens may rest assured of that.

Yet, knowing my own weaknesses, my own failings, how can I be sure? What man is there among the children of men who is qualified for this task? The Lord assures us that when He sets His own watchmen upon our walls He Himself also qualifies them for their calling. He mandates them through His Word and by His Spirit in their hearts. He says: "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silent." The same Spirit Who calls also qualifies them by His constant witness within them.

I find that the expression, "Ye that make mention of the Lord," might well be expressed as: "ye who are Jehovah's remembrancers."

Jerusalem's watchmen are gifted of God to be Jehovah's remembrancers.

Anyone who remembers is one who knows. He knows because he is taught of God. The Dutch has a word for that. It is, "Godgeleerde," which means, one who is taught of God; in that sense a theologian. He is taught, not by a mere inner voice, but by the Holy Spirit Who speaks to him through the Scriptures. He is taught, not merely intellectually, so that he can converse freely about the things of God, but he is taught to know God in love, so that he confesses from the heart: "This God is my God forever and ever."

This theologian keeps God in remembrance as before his mind's eye. Like Enoch, he walks with God. Like David, he has the Lord always at his right hand. Like Asaph, he confesses: "Thou hast holden me by my right hand: thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me in glory." Like Paul, he counts it a privilege to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. That truth so inspires

his soul, that he prefers to talk about nothing but that. His occupation, his duties, his cares, his times of relaxation are all subservient to this one calling to be a faithful sentinel upon Zion's walls. He chooses rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season. He esteems the reproaches of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this world. He confesses: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." He begins to understand just a little bit how that zeal of God's House could devour his Christ.

Yes, I begin to understand what my Lord means when he urges me, "And give Jehovah no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in all the earth."

He spurs me on to prayer, even to watch and pray. That prayer must be a divinely acceptable prayer, not concerned with all my present whims and fancies, but motivated by the Spirit of Christ within me, so that I sincerely pray: "Father, I want nothing more than that Thy NAME be hallowed. Father, I long for the coming of Thy kingdom. Father, teach me to do Thy will, but also cause Thy will to be done by the angels in heaven, by every creature on the earth, even by the evil forces of hell. Yes, Father, for Thine IS the kingdom, Thine the power, Thine the glory into endless eternity.

The exalted Christ urges us to pray much, even without ceasing. He spurs us on to storm the throne of grace with constant prayers, to clamor for a hearing, to insist on receiving what we ask, to compel the Lord to rend the heavens and come down to deliver His church. As Jacob wrestled with the Angel to obtain the blessing, as the importunate widow never ceased to harass the unjust judge, or as the man who wearied his neighbor with midnight pleas, even so may and must we beg of our God to carry out the counsel of His will, the yearning desire of His own soul, that Jerusalem may be established as the capitol City and center of the new creation, reflecting and showing forth in spotless holiness thy praises of her God.

The zeal of God fills Christ Jesus as Lord in heaven. He, in turn, inspires His church, His Bride, with that same holy ardor.

He calls to us: "Behold, I come quickly."

To which we can only respond: "Yea, Lord Jesus, come . . . quickly."

EDITORIALS

Our Australasian Tour (9)

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

After the respite of a partial day's rest at Melbourne, we resumed the work of our tour on Wednesday, July 9. We left at 8:45 in the morning on a long taxi ride to the railroad station in downtown Melbourne, where we caught a train for Geelong, some 60 miles away. Interestingly enough, we learned from our cabby that Geelong has gotten the nickname of "Sleepy Hollow." We, of course, were not really interested in the city of Geelong itself — although it seems to be a rather peaceful little harbor city to the southwest of Australia's largest city, Melbourne. Our interest lay in the fact that Geelong is the site of the Reformed Theological College, the training school for ministers in the Reformed Churches of Australia and New Zealand and known to our readers through our comments concerning the views of Dr. Runia and Dr. Woudstra in past issues of our *Standard Bearer*. Our friends who were in charge of arrangements for our tour of the Australia mainland had made arrangements for us to visit Geelong also. And although some effort had been made to have us officially invited to the College, this, as we had expected, did not materialize. A friend had generously made all the arrangements for our stay at the Commodore Motel, which is directly behind the premises of the Reformed Theological College. He had also made arrangements for us to use the conference room at the motel, so that we might be able to hold an informal meeting with interested persons. Our contact man among the students was Mr. John Cromarty, a student from the Free Presbyterian Church, and the man who was the first among the students to detect the errors of Dr. Woudstra. We met him over lunch at the motel, where we talked over arrangements for possible activities during our brief stay at Geelong. After noon lunch, Mr. Cromarty introduced us to Prof. Barkley, the principal of the college; and then he took us on a tour of a building which houses the Reformed Theological College, a building which is actually a rambling old mansion. Perhaps comparisons are odious; but as we were touring the building, I thought to myself that I much preferred our modern, commodious, and comfortable

facilities on Ivanrest Avenue thousands of miles away. As to size, the Geelong College is not much larger than our Seminary, either as to faculty or student body. (And from some recent correspondence, I have been given to understand that since the time of our visit all the students at Geelong from the Free Church have withdrawn, for some reason which I have not yet learned.) During the afternoon Mr. Cromarty acted as our host and our guide on a sightseeing tour to some of the sights in the immediate Geelong area as well as along the ruggedly beautiful coastline in that vicinity. Our attentions, however, were divided rather unequally between sightseeing and listening to Mr. Cromarty's briefing concerning the Reformed Theological College and, in particular, concerning the development of the Woudstra situation, with which he was intimately acquainted. Our chief interest, however, was in holding a meeting if possible and of becoming acquainted with some of the personnel of the college; and arrangements were made for such a meeting on the following day at 1:30 P.M. in the conference room of our motel. Present at that meeting were the members of the faculty (Prof. Barkley, Prof. Wilkinson, and Prof. Harman), an Anglican minister, a Reformed Presbyterian minister (Rev. McEwen, whom we had occasion to meet again in Melbourne), and a Free Presbyterian minister, and about a dozen students. It had been suggested that we talk about current theological trends, or issues. We gladly accepted this suggestion: for it gave us the opportunity to discuss various issues which are vital and which are very much on the foreground in Reformed circles today. But we wished to do this, of course, from our Protestant Reformed viewpoint; and in order to accomplish this for an audience which was not well acquainted with our Protestant Reformed position, we first gave a brief introduction concerning the origin and the position of our churches. After our introductory talk, the meeting was opened for questions. And there were a good many interesting questions, including several in connection with the question of a free offer, common grace, and the AACCS. Our meeting lasted more than two hours; and after

the meeting itself there were some who lingered to make further acquaintance and to ask more questions. Since our visit we have not had much of any direct contact with those whom we met at that time. We did receive requests for catalogues of our Seminary and for information concerning seminary notes and other publications, as well as requests to be placed on the mailing list of our *Theological Journal*. We found the meeting to be extremely interesting because it gave us an opportunity to gain some insights into Geelong and into the state of theological education in the Reformed Churches in that part of the world. We were also very pleased to make the acquaintance of several of the students and to lay the groundwork for possible future contact.

Late in the afternoon of July 10 we boarded the train for our return to Melbourne. On our trip back to Melbourne we were accompanied by a young man of the Launceston Evangelical Presbyterian Church, David Higgs, who was also a house guest at the Morgans, whom we were expecting to host us at Melbourne. At the Melbourne station we were met by Mr. Ian Morgan, a man who has played a leading part in the doctrinal odyssey of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. At the time of our visit Mr. Morgan was still a lay member, though a man of wide theological knowledge who has been with the EPC movement from its beginning. He has been responsible for instruction in dogmatics for the students of the EPC. Since the time of our visit, the Presbytery of the EPC has ordained Mr. Morgan as a teaching elder in charge of theological instruction. I may point out at this time that the Evangelical Presbyterian Church does not have a seminary, but what is called a Collegiate of Theology. They have mapped out for their theological students a five year course, which, however, is conducted on an extra-mural basis, and largely by correspondence. Our seminary has already been giving some assistance by correspondence, and we hope to continue this in the future. It remains to be seen, however, whether it will be possible and advisable to provide a greater degree of assistance. If this should be mutually acceptable and should prove feasible, one of the best ways in which we could both

render assistance and strengthen the ties between our denominations would be that of receiving students for the ministry from the Evangelical Presbyterian Churches at our Theological School. But to return to my account, we spent Thursday night and all day Friday with the Morgans; and our visit with them was delightful. On Friday we engaged in long conversations with Mr. Morgan. He had prepared a list of questions which he wished to discuss with us, chiefly concerning various doctrinal matters. Not only was this interesting for its own sake, but it also furnished us an insight into the large degree of agreement in viewpoint between their churches and ours. During the afternoon of that day we did a little sightseeing, driving to the heights of Mt. Dandenong, whence we could get a view of metropolitan Melbourne, though it was through the smog. I may mention that we interrupted our sightseeing to pay a visit to the firm which was supposed to be the Australian distributors of our RFPA publications. One of our incidental purposes during the trip was to check up on the channels of distribution for our publications; and wherever we had the opportunity, we did this, and at the same time tried to establish better channels and to obtain new distribution centers for our literature. On Friday evening there was a cottage meeting at the home of the Morgans which was attended by some 15 people. At this meeting there was considerable interest in the subject of Christian education, which was supposed to be the main subject of discussion for the evening. But there was also interest in the subject of common grace and also the subject of the AACS. And so as the evening wore on, those present ended up being divided into three smaller groups: a group talking about Christian education with Mrs. Hoeksema, another group talking with Rev. Hanko, and a third group engaged in discussion with me. The hour became late all too soon, and thus ended our stay in the Melbourne-Geelong area.

On Saturday morning, July 12, we regretfully had to say good-bye to the Morgans; and after our auto trip to the Melbourne airport, we caught our TAA flight for Sydney, almost 500 miles to the north on the east coast of the continent. But that is a new story, and it will have to wait until our next issue.

As Others See Us

Our readers have for some time now been receiving an account and evaluation of our Australian tour written from the viewpoint of one who made the tour. It was interesting to me, and I think it will be

interesting to our readers to see an evaluation of a portion of our tour from the viewpoint of those who received us. And such an account — with respect to our Tasmanian tour — I found in the most recent

issue of the quarterly magazine of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia, *The Evangelical Presbyterian*. I wish to pass it on to our readers.

The editor of *The Evangelical Presbyterian*, you will recall, also traveled, in 1974. And Rev. Charles Rodman is still busy writing in his magazine concerning his trip. The first section which I wish to quote is from an account of his visit to Grand Rapids in August of 1974:

“After taking the Lord’s Day services at the Willowdale Church (Toronto, Ontario – HCH) – on Monday morning I made my way to Grand Rapids via Chicago to visit Prof. H. Hoeksema of the Protestant Reformed Church of America, with whom I had correspondence some time prior to my overseas trip, along with others of our Church.

“The Protestant Reformed Church, like our own, cannot accept as Biblical the proposition that God in the offer of the gospel, manifests a sincere and earnest desire for the salvation of all men, even the reprobates. Such a concept does nothing but form an ambiguous bridge of doctrine between the Biblical and Reformed doctrines of grace on the one hand and Arminianism on the other. While we abhor hyper-Calvinism, which as Rabbi Duncan expressed it ‘is all house and no door’, we have, by the grace of God, been delivered from Arminianism which he depicted as being ‘all door and no house.’ On coming to a knowledge of the Reformed Faith, we were amazed to find that the same tenets, which we had rejected when we turned our backs on Arminianism, had been embraced by many calling themselves Reformed under the guise of common grace.

“In our controversy with the Free Church in Australia which began in 1963, we identified the doctrinal system arising out of the idea of a universal desire in God for the salvation of all men, as modern modified Calvinism as distinct from the earlier modified Calvinistic system known as the Doctrine of the Marrow.

“In refutation of these errors and in vindication of the position of our Church, our Presbytery published ‘The Vindication’ in 1965 and later a booklet entitled ‘Universalism and the Reformed Churches – A Defense of Calvin’s Calvinism.’

“During the controversy and after, we had thought that we stood alone. We were greatly encouraged when we learned that there were scholars, ministers, elders and a denomination that had not bowed the knee to this form of pragmatic teaching. It was, therefore, a particular joy for the writer to stay with Prof. and Mrs. Hoeksema and family while in Grand Rapids, and also to meet his fellow colleagues of the theological seminary with others of the Protestant Reformed Church.”

A little later in his article Pastor Rodman adds the following:

“Since my return to Australia, we have had the pleasure of having Prof. and Mrs. Hoeksema together with the Rev. C. Hanks visit our country and preach in most of the congregations of our Church. The appreciation of their visit is given in another section of this magazine. I would like, however, to add my own comment, that the visit gave cause for our people to rejoice in the God Whose truth the Professor so ably expounded. It is music to one’s ears to hear a man who is clear-cut when he expounds the truths of the Reformation. In the Launceston congregation, Rev. C. Hanks related the story of how their denomination came into being. This was most interesting and informative.”

On page 15 of the same issue of *The Evangelical Presbyterian* there is a further report concerning our visit. That report here follows in full, with a couple of corrections of dates and references made.

“*Launceston*: We were privileged indeed to have as our guests Prof. and Mrs. Hoeksema and Rev. Hanks on the week-end of 5th and 6th of July. On the Saturday afternoon the Rev. Hanks gave an outline of the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches of America and their struggles against the theory of ‘common grace’, which began to gain a foothold in the theology of the Reformed Churches some 50 years ago as a result of its formulation and propagation by one Abraham Kuyper some years earlier in Holland. The teaching of ‘common grace’ is now generally embraced as having been always a part of the Reformed system of theology.

“This meeting was followed by a fellowship tea prepared by the ladies of the church.

“The evening meeting was taken by Prof. Hoeksema who spoke on ‘The Reformed Faith in Crisis’, where he ably held forth the cardinal truth of our faith, and showed how the faith is constantly under attack; one of the most recent attacks being embodied in a movement known as the ‘Toronto Movement.’

“Then a wonderful weekend was concluded when the Professor addressed the congregation on the Sabbath morning, speaking on the text from Isaiah 45:22-25, ‘Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved, for I am God and there is none else.’ The exposition of this text will be remembered by us all for a long time. As one member expressed – ‘I could have sat there for another two hours’ – so intent was the attention on the preached word.

“*Burnie*: (Wynyard) Reported that they also experienced God’s blessing in the preaching of the Word when Prof. Hoeksema spoke on John 3:16.

"Taranna: Pastor Lyons was especially pleased to meet the visitors as he had corresponded with them for many years.

"Winnaleah: Winnaleah was very privileged to be included in the itinerary of Prof. and Mrs. Hoeksema and Rev. Hanko. A late afternoon Bible study was taken by Prof. Hoeksema who gave a very instructive exposition of Ephesians 2:8, 9, and later answered questions on other topics. About 40 adults and children attended, and a family tea which followed was a happy time of fellowship.

"Melbourne: After a visit to Geelong to meet the Faculty and some of the students of the Reformed Theological College, the visitors stayed two days with Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and family. During that time, with little respite, they patiently discussed many theological issues, and on the second evening conducted a very informative cottage meeting on the subject of Christian education.

"Brisbane: We regret that a report of the meeting in Brisbane is not to hand."

GUEST ARTICLE

The Communion of the Saints (2)

The truth of the communion of the saints is far more than merely an abstract doctrine that we only confess with our mouth. It is a blessed, practical, spiritual reality for the saints of God that is begun here on earth and shall be perfected in glory. This article of our faith involves many important implications for the calling of the individual saints of God. How often do we think of ourselves as members of the communion of the saints? We are not merely so many individual members of the church of Jesus Christ. We are all members of one living organism of the body of Christ and so also members of one another. This is a practical reality that all of the saints of God must keep in mind. We live then not unto ourselves or for ourselves, but we live for the sake of the body of Christ, the communion of the saints, that God may be glorified in the one glorious church of Jesus Christ.

The child of God must love the communion of the saints and must seek it constantly. He finds no communions with those that are of the world and who walk in darkness. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (I Cor. 6:14-16.) The friends of the child of God cannot be those of the world for he has nothing in common with them; he stands antithetically opposed to them. Therefore he

cannot join with the world in its associations, in its societies, in its entertainment, in its goals and purposes. The saints find fellowship and communion with those who are members together with them of the body of Christ. With the members of the communion of the saints the child of God has all things in common. The spiritually healthy child of God seeks that fellowship. He does not seek to live all by himself as an individual. He loves and seeks the fellowship of the saints.

The calling of the saints toward the communion of the saints is fundamentally that they dwell together as saints. That we are saints means that we have in principle been delivered from the bondage of our corruption and the dominion of sin over us. We have been in principle consecrated to God and His glory. This implies in the first place that there is a love for God and for the truth of His Word. The apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:15 speaks of this: "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ." The reference here is surely first of all to the speaking of the truth of God and of His Word. The communion of the saints is characterized above all by saints who come together because of their love for the truth of God's Word. This they confess together as saints; this Word they testify of to one another; and in this Word they rejoice together. The exhortation of Paul in this text must very really be followed in the communion of the saints. There must be a speaking of the Word of

God in love to one another in order to exhort, comfort, encourage, and admonish one another with the Word of God. The saints speak to one another the Word of truth that is for the use of their mutual edification. The saints come together often for this purpose. Their coming together is not to talk only about the vain things of the world, but to talk with one another about the Word of God and the calling of the saints of God in the light of that Word of God, as well as the understanding of the whole of life in the context of that Word of God. This must characterize all of the fellowship of the saints, not only that of the worship services and the societies. Do we do this with one another and do this on a very practical spiritual level? Or do we concern ourselves only with the things of the world when we come together? What about our young people? Do we speak the truth in love to one another? Is the truth of God a living subject of our conversation that characterizes all of our conversation?

In the second place the saints of God walk together in righteousness and holiness. It is only when they walk in the light of God's righteousness and holiness that fellowship is possible. This is revealed first of all in their love for one another. Paul speaks in Ephesians 4:3 of "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And in the preceding verse he tells us how that is done, "With all lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love." And again in verses 31 and 32, "Let all bitterness, and wrath and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." The communion of the saints as manifest in this life is among those who remain sinners, who bear about with them the old man of sin. That sin causes strife and conflict and division in the church. That is why the saints are called to be longsuffering with one another in their weakness and sins. They are called to walk in all lowliness and meekness, not esteeming themselves to be better than any other; not boasting in sinful pride in their own righteousness. The communion of the saints is only possible if there is kindness and tenderheartedness among the saints, and only when the saints forgive one another their sins seventy times seven.

Together the saints strive to walk in true holiness before God. They separate themselves from the wicked-wickedness of the world in their conversation and their walk. They strive to consecrate their whole lives unto God and His glory. They seek in humility and kindness to admonish one another in that way of consecration to God. Paul says in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meek-

ness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." In the communion of the saints the saints mutually exhort one another unto truth and righteousness and pray for one another that God may be glorified in the communion of the saints.

God has given to each of the saints a calling within the communion. As we noticed last time, God has through the Holy Spirit endowed each of the saints with certain gifts and talents and with a certain measure of grace. By virtue of these gifts and the grace of God, each of the saints has a particular place within the church. Some seem to be more honorable and of greater significance than others. Nevertheless all of them are indispensable to the fullness of the communion of the saints as God has created it and calls it into being in a certain local manifestation of His church. All of the saints from the greatest to the least have a place in the communion of the saints. The individual saint of God has significance only as he stands related to the whole of the communion of the saints. Even the greatest of the saints of God has no significance of himself independent from the communion of the saints. And even the seemingly least honorable of the saints is indispensable to the communion of the saints and has a place of significance in the communion. And God has adapted all of the saints together so that, as Paul says, "Those members which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God has tempered the body together having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked." (I Cor. 12:23,24.) The calling of all of the saints of God is therefore to work toward the full manifestation of the communion of the saints to the glory of God. And in that calling every saint has need of all of the other members of the body, and stands in the service of all of the other members of the body with the particular gifts and measure of grace that God has given to him. Whatever that particular place the child of God has received in the body, whether minister, elder, deacon, or simply a saint in the office of all believers, he must be faithful to serve the whole of the body of Christ that the name of God might be glorified.

The communion of the saints comes to its most glorious manifestation in the institutional life of the church, and even more particularly in the gathering together of the saints of God for worship. It is especially in the worship services where God causes the Word to be preached by those whom He has ordained in the church as pastors, that serves, as Paul says in Ephesians 4, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect

man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." In the worship service the saints of God express their common faith, hope, and doctrine. When the saints are gathered together for worship they glorify God together in the singing of the songs of Zion; they come together as the church of Jesus Christ in prayer before the throne of grace; and they bring together their gifts and offerings for the support of the poor and needy and the maintenance of the church. The calling of the child of God toward the communion of the saints is above all that he gathers with the church in worship. The love of God and His Word and the love for His people draws the child of God to the worship services from Sabbath to Sabbath. The worship services give opportunity for every child of God to exercise his calling as member of the communion of the saints. It is his responsibility to be there. The child of God enters into the house of God with all of the saints with a glad heart. He is called to greet the saints of God in true brotherly love. He has opportunity to speak with the fellow saints of the wonders of God's Word and of His grace. Also the time after the services ought to be used for this purpose.

Included in the institutional life of the church are also the catechism classes, the Sunday school classes, and the various societies. These are wonderful opportunities that God gives to us to gather together in the communion of the saints. Today in many churches, societies and Bible study classes have fallen very much in disrepute. They are either not held at all or very poorly attended, and even those which are held are often little more than social clubs. It is very urgent that we continue this aspect of the communion of the saints that God has given to us and to use these as wonderful opportunities to study the Word of God together with our fellow saints. It belongs to the calling of every child of God to be an active member of these meetings, to come carefully prepared for the study of the Scriptures, and to take an active part in the discussions for his own benefit and that of his fellow saints. How little time we sometimes take for the study of God's Word. We give the excuse often that we are too busy with the affairs of this world. While for the most part we as a denomination have very good attendance at society meetings, there are still many among us who do not attend these meetings. There are those among us who carefully prepare for society meetings but there are also many who come to these meetings evidencing that they have not even opened their Bible to study the Scripture passage which is to be discussed. The result of the latter is that often these discussions flounder sadly or they are dependent entirely on the discussion leader. We who confess the truth of the communion of the saints and who are Reformed Christians who understand the urgency of growing in the knowledge

of God and of knowing the doctrines of our faith ought surely to be zealous members of societies in our churches.

We must not limit the communion of the saints, however, only to the institutional life of the church. It extends to all of the relationships of the saints and their calling toward one another in all of life. In Acts 2:41-47 we have a very beautiful picture of the communion of the saints as it existed in the early church. This passage surely has reference to a peculiar time in the history of the church, a time of great difficulty because of the infancy of the church, because of the persecution and extreme poverty that the church was experiencing at the time. Nevertheless there are in this passage indications of the love and concern for the communion of the saints that must always exist among the saints of God. The saints of God must always desire to have fellowship with one another and exercise their calling toward one another.

Many passages of Scripture can be sighted which speak of the various aspects of the communion of the saints in general. The apostle Paul in Philippians 4:8 states, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." How much of our lives are spent only living unto and for ourselves? How much do we do only for the purpose of what benefit we ourselves can get out of it? Do we really spend very much time out of genuine Christian love for one another? Do we give not only of our monies but also of our time and of the gifts that God has given to us for one another? This work does not belong only to the minister, the elders, and deacons of our church but also to every individual member.

The apostle Paul in I Corinthians 12 verses 25 and 26 states that the care of the saints for one another must be such that "whether one member suffer all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."

The communion of the saints must become especially manifest to those whom God gives particularly difficult trials and afflictions in this life. There is in our midst much evidence that God has richly blessed the communion of the saints in this respect. Of this many of the saints of our churches have testified. This does not, however, make the need to emphasize this aspect of the communion of the saints unnecessary. We all must remember our calling in this respect. The apostle James in chapter 1 of this epistle states: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (vs. 27.) Our Lord Jesus Himself, when He speaks of the judgement, speaks of the saints as those who inherit the kingdom prepared for them, "for I was an hungered and ye gave me

meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” (Mt. 25:35,36.) It is the calling of the child of God in the communion of the saints to search out those whom Christ was talking about and to minister to them in

true Christian love.

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.” (Ps. 133:1,3.)

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Does God Send Sickness?

Rev. G. Van Baren

A number of weeks ago I had an opportunity to address several Reformed Doctrine classes in a Christian High School on the subject of “Common Grace.” The differences between the Christian Reformed stand and our own were obvious. The usual objections were raised. Probably none of the students were convinced of the error of common grace. The visit did, however, serve to point out clearly the differences between our two denominations on this subject.

I introduce this subject here and now because I noted a clear and logical development in the wrong direction on this subject of common grace. The errors which were maintained are errors against we also ought to be warned in these last days. The one error involved the question of whether God sends sickness. We had been discussing the “first point” of common grace. I had pointed out that if God sends good things upon both elect and reprobate *in His grace*, then properly He sends the “bad” things, as floods, sickness, etc. *in His wrath* both on elect and reprobate. At that point there arose very strong objection both from the minister-teacher and the students. “Did God send sickness?” “Was it not rather true that God permitted the devil to send some of these things?” “What kind of God do we have, what kind of example would He be to us, if He sends these bad things?” “Did Jesus ever make anybody sick? Didn’t Jesus rather only heal people?”

All of this smacks of a dualism and resembles some of the ideas of Pentecostalism, and is surely out of the realm of what is truly Reformed. The question is

not simply a difference between the Protestant Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church, but represents a clear departure from that which is truly Reformed. We ought also to be aware of such an insidious error and be warned against it.

John Calvin certainly maintained that God *sends* adversities. In commenting on Isaiah 45:7, he writes, “We ought therefore to hold this doctrine, that God alone is the author of all events; that is, that adverse and prosperous events are sent by him, even though he makes the use of the agency of men, that none may attribute it to fortune, or to any other cause” (Commentary on Isaiah).

And does not the Heidelberg Catechism clearly speak concerning this in Lord’s Day 10, question 27: “What dost thou mean by the providence of God? The almighty and everywhere present power of God; whereby, as it were by his hand, he upholds and governs heaven, earth, and all creatures; so that herbs and grass, rain and drought, fruitful and barren years, meat and drink, *health and sickness*, riches and poverty, yea, and all things *come*, not by chance, but *by his fatherly hand*.” What comes by God’s “fatherly hand” is definitely *sent* by Him.

But of greatest weight is the teaching of Scripture itself. There one can find instance after instance of the fact that God does not simply permit Satan to send evil things upon us, but that God sends that which is termed “evil.” I speak here of the “evils” of sickness, floods, and similar adversities. There is that passage of Isaiah 45:7, “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do

all these things." The contrasts of the text make plain that God is speaking of that which we would term "good" and which we term "evil." God "creates" these — that is surely stronger even than the term "send." To the devil is not attributed such power.

With such instruction Amos 3:6 is in agreement: "Shall a trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" The "evil" here again is not "sin" which God has done, but the evils of troubles and afflictions. God did it.

But, did not Christ only heal? Did He ever make anyone sick? Though it is true that we have no record of Christ making anyone sick during His sojourn on this earth, the record also clearly shows that Christ also sends that which men consider adverse. He cast out the demons who entered into the herd of swine which rushed headlong into destruction in the sea (Matt. 8:30-32). He cast out money-changers and buyers and sellers in the temple, twice. He called the scribes and Pharisees the most terrible of names (children of snakes or vipers, Matt. 23:33); He spake terrible woes upon them, suggesting their eternal punishment in hell — something far worse than the sending of mere bodily sickness. And He Himself reminds His disciples that He came not to send peace but the sword (Matt. 10:34). One must bear in mind also that those miracles of healing were performed by Christ not merely because He wanted to heal people — but in order to teach emphatically spiritual truths concerning the way of salvation for God's people.

One can find many instances in Scripture where God *sends* adverse things upon the wicked in His wrath. In fact, Scripture testifies that even those things which God sends upon the wicked which they would call "good" are sent in His wrath (cf. Ps. 73). We read in Judges 9:23, "Then God *sent* an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem . . ." An evil spirit is sent of the Lord also upon Saul (I Sam. 16:14; 18:10; 19:9). Many passages in Jeremiah teach especially that God sends the "evil" on the wicked and often upon His apostatizing people. We read in Jer. 6:19, "Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it." And again, Jer. 11:11, "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape . . ." Or, Jer. 18:11, ". . . Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you . . ." Or, Jer. 32:42, "For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon them all the good that I have promised them." Or Jer. 45:5, "And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not;

for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord . . ."

The testimony of God's Word is clear throughout. Consistently, it reminds of the fact that God sends these evils upon wicked men, and He sends them also upon His people when He would chastise them for certain walks of disobedience. This is not to say that Satan does not seek to use and direct these same things for his own evil advantage. As with Job, Satan seeks to use adversities to cause God's people to curse God — though God uses and sends the same things to strengthen His people in their faith.

This is a comforting truth too for the saints. We know and must know that God is ever Sovereign. He not only permits certain things to occur, but His hand directs these. The wicked experience the wrath of God when the "evils" of this time befall them.

But the child of God, too, often experiences the same "evils" upon himself. The floods affect him; sickness befalls; there is suffering and persecution. What must the child of God say? Does God *send* also this — or does Satan send it? Does God only *permit* what befalls His saints?

Job has something to say about that. Job faced "evils" such as few children of God ever must endure here on this earth. In one day he lost all of his possessions and all of his children. The blows struck him one after the other. So terrible was the disaster, that one wonders how any could endure. Would not grief overwhelm Job? Nor was God punishing Job for some sin. Job walked uprightly before God in all his way. That is not to say that Job was without sin. No man born of Adam is without sin on this earth. But Job was a faithful child of God who sought God in all that he did. Nor did Job's vast wealth lead him to set his heart on earthly things. When Satan challenged God to afflict Job, insisting that Job only served God because it was profitable to Job, God gave Satan specific approval to touch Job, but within certain limitations. Thus Job first lost all his possessions and his children, and later his health as well.

And what did Job say? In chapter 1, verse 21, he beautifully expresses what is the experience of every child of God, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." You see, Job did not say, "Satan hath taken away," but, "Jehovah takes it away." Job recognized the hand of God in the sending of adversity upon him.

Again, when Job's health fails as well at the instigation of Satan, Job's wife says to her husband, "Curse God and die." But Job answers, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not

receive evil?" Ah, yes; whoever suggests that we do not receive of God that which is evil, speaks as the "foolish women." To "receive evil" of God surely means that God has sent that.

But is it that important whether one says that God sends sickness or that the devil sends sickness? It certainly is. If Satan sends all these things, then I can quickly fall into the error of pentecostalism, and with earnest prayer believe that God must deliver me from the clutches of Satan. Each time sickness falls, I would tremble — believing that I had once more fallen into Satan's hands. What terrible affliction would then be mine!

But thank God! We know and confess that it is God in mercy for Jesus' sake Who also sends afflictions upon us. True, I don't enjoy all afflictions which He sends. But I understand that in His divine wisdom, He sends this for my spiritual profit. Did not the Psalmist understand this well when he expressed in Ps. 119:75, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that *thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me*"? The Psalmist knew both that God afflicted — and that it was done in faithfulness. Repeatedly in

this Psalm the writer expresses a knowledge of the reason for this too: "Before I was afflicted, I went astray; but now have I kept thy word" (vs. 67).

Only because I am convinced that God sends afflictions, can I confess with the Word of God in Romans 8:28, "And we know that *all things* work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." Or, II Cor. 4:17, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Thank God — He not only *permits*, but *sends* afflictions in His wisdom; and when He sends them upon His people, He does so in His love and grace. What an awful thing it is when one, in his desire to defend the false view of common grace, will attribute to Satan what Scripture ascribes to God. Only as I know that whatever befalls me is sent by my God for Jesus' sake unto my eternal profit, can I find assurance and comfort through every adversity on this earth. Let us never speak as "foolish women," but in truth according to that Word which God has given His church.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Seen of the Living God

Rev. John A. Heys

To know, apart from the grace of God, that the living God sees us is an awesome, yea a terrifying experience.

That knowledge drove Adam and Eve into the thickest part of the trees in the garden of Eden. And it will cause the ungodly in the day when Christ returns to call for the hills and the mountains to cover them and hide them from His all-searching and holy eye.

But to know in the grace of God that He sees us in all our afflictions and oppressions of the wicked enemy is for the child of God a glorious and comforting truth and blessed experience. To know that God always sees us in Christ; to know that He never sees us in any other way than as those who belong to Christ, who have been redeemed by the blood of His cross and whose names were eternally written in His Lamb's book of life, affords the children of God unspeakable comfort and assurance. This brings him out into the open to seek the face of that God of his

salvation. It makes him climb the mountain to lift his prayers unto this living God and to sing His praises with a loud and joyful voice.

These truths are to be seen in the life of Hagar who was used by Sarai and Abram to strive to bring forth the covenant seed that was implied in the promises which God had given to Abram. She conceived and despised her mistress, Sarai. When she could no longer take the harsh treatment that Sarai brought upon her, she fled and was on the way to Egypt, for she was an Egyptian.

The angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness by a fountain and confronted her with the evil of this flight, for evil it was. We can understand her action, and apart from the grace of God we would have done the same, and perhaps sooner than she did. But it was wrong for her to flee from her mistress, and the angel told her this very truth.

After all is said and done, she asked for the harsh treatment that Sarai inflicted upon her. She was still

Sarai's maid; and that is also why the angel asked her in those very words, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou?" That she was mistreated we cannot deny. And that holds true for both Abram and Sarai. Cruel was Sarai's treatment. Lacking in compassion was Abram's behaviour after Hagar conceived by him. He owed her gentle and thoughtful protection, a home and nourishing food with safety. And she owed him her presence there by Abram's tents and in the service of his wife until she had borne him this child. It was his as much as it was hers. And the fifteenth verse of Genesis 16 also declares that she bare Abram a son. Incidentally, we may note that God does not say that she bare this son to Sarai — which was a great comfort to Hagar. For one of the reasons that she fled was that she could not bear the thought of giving up her own flesh and blood to become Sarai's child. It would be too painful to be in the same household with that child, to see it every day and be kept from caressing and caring for the child while Sarai would claim all the joys and benefits of motherhood.

And now the angel of the Lord came to her with questions, even as God came to fallen man with the question, "Adam where art thou?" Now the question was, "Whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?" That pinpointed the matter at once. For Hagar had at once to admit that she came from the service of Sarai and that she intended to get as far from it as she possibly could. She was forced to admit, "I came from where I belong." And she was confronted with the fact that although she fled to escape the treatment she did not want for her sin of despising Sarai, she did not flee from and escape the searching eye of God. She was not simply running away from Sarai and going to peace and safety. She was running up against the living God and, continuing in the way of sin, she would be walking, yea running, to her destruction in the wrath of an holy God. She was not fleeing to safety in Egypt. She was rushing to a confrontation with the living God.

How often, is it not that we forget that, and concern ourselves only with what we think is safety for the flesh. How often are we not ready to trample God's law under foot to obtain some carnal advantage, while wholly ignoring the living God before Whose judgment seat we will have to appear? How often, is it not, that we are on the way to Egypt (that is, to the world) for some advantage of the flesh, fleeing from our duty before God and refusing to humble ourselves in obedience to His law? The employer mistreats us, cheats us, takes advantage of us, and so we rush to Egypt for the world's tactics of the strike, or of the boycott, and trample the fifth commandment under our feet. And we think all the while that we are doing ourselves and our families good because we come home with a fatter check, and

with more ability to put delicious and dainty food on the table, and more expensive clothes on their backs, in a more comfortable home, to which and from which we ride in a later model automobile. And the living God sees it all. But the tragedy is that we do not see it as sin. Therefore when the living God Who has seen it sends, not the angel of the Lord, but the officebearers of Jesus Christ to ask us, "Servant of the living God, whence camest thou, and whither wilt thou go?" we dare even to answer that we are serving the living God by our deeds of rebellion.

Not so with Hagar. She confessed, "I flee from the face of my mistress, Sarai." Confronted by the angel of the Lord she confessed that Sarai was still her mistress and that she had not gotten from under the obligation to serve her. Therefore she did not answer the "Whither wilt thou go?" She had no plans any longer of going further to Egypt. She would go back. To admit that Sarai was her mistress was to confess that she did wrong by leaving, and ought not to continue in that way. She did not oppose the angel of the Lord or in any way try to defend herself in her sin.

Hagar recognized this angel of the Lord as God Himself. For she called Him, "Thou God seest me." And though the English translation presents Him as the angel of the Lord, He is the Angel of the Lord. No mere angel is He, but the Christ Himself in His Old Testament form before the Son of God took upon Him the human nature that was prepared in the virgin Mary. She was afforded that rare privilege of having the Christ Himself appear to her and promise her a son. She knew that she was with child, but not until now did she know that it was a son that she would bare to Abram. And, of course, neither Abram nor Sarai knew as yet that it was a son and that what they had sought would be accomplished. It remained for them to learn from Hagar that she would bring forth a son, that this son would not be Sarai's son but her own, and that God Himself had promised her that she might keep this son.

Hagar was amazed, and expressed this also in the name which she gave to that Angel of the Lord, and in the statement which in the English translation is in question form, "Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?"

The emphasis falls on the verb *seeth* and not on the words "after" or "here." She did not mean that she was surprised that she saw God here in the wilderness rather than back at home in the house of Abram and Sarai. Nor did she mean that after not looking for Him before, she now does here in the wilderness. But consider that she was walking in sin. Consider also that she was mistreated by Sarai and brushed off by Abram and felt so very alone. "Does God care?" must have been a question in her soul for many, many

days. "Does He really see me in my sad plight which was not my doing but that of my mistress, who simply gave me to her husband, and now treats me so cruelly?" And she found that God did see her and was with her and now came to turn her back from her sinful flight to set her feet on the way of righteousness. The emphasis falls upon the fact that God saw her, and not that she had seen God. This is plain, first of all, from the fact that she expressed the activity of God in the name which she gave to Him. It is to God that she gave a name. And, in the second place, when she gave a name to the well she again spoke of God — that He is the living and seeing God. Her own actions are not on the foreground.

And let us take note for a moment of the fact that we so often measure God's loving care for us by material gifts and works that benefit the flesh. That loving care, however, is also to be seen in His works whereby He turns us from a sinful way and brings us on our knees in repentance. We soon take it ill when God, through one of His servants, rebukes us for a sinful way and for laxity in our spiritual life. But that rebuke which He administers through one of His officebearers also is a sign that He sees us in love and has a Father's concern for us. And it is wonderful and blessed to be seen of God in that way. It is a privilege of grace that Christ as the Angel, that is, the Messenger of the Lord, comes with a message that is designed to bring us back to a walk of life wherein we can know the blessed watchfulness of God over us and thoughts of peace unto us.

We cannot find that knowledge and have that joy

on the way to Egypt, that is, on the way to the world in all its unbelief and wickedness. In Egypt we can only hear Him speak His curse and pronounce His woes upon sinners. They are outside of Christ and have not been redeemed by His blood, and for them there are no benefits of the cross. Those whom He sees outside of Christ, He sees in righteous indignation and wrath. And it is terrible to be seen of the living God that way! Paul, speaking of a very particular grace of God, declares in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." And the plain implication is that there is terrible condemnation for those who are outside of Him. What is more, Paul does not say, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who will join themselves to Christ Jesus, but who ARE in Christ Jesus. And a little later in the chapter he points out that God predestinated a people in Christ and that we are in Him by sovereign, eternal election before we are called to enjoy the blessings in Him.

These who are seen by Him in Christ may rest assured that He sees them in love and that He cares for them. These upon whom He looks that way may look upon Him with confidence and sing:

To the hills I lift my eyes;
Whence shall help for me arise?
From the Lord shall come my aid,
Who the heavens and earth has made.
He will guide through dangers all,
Will not suffer thee to fall;
He Who safe His people keeps
Slumbers not and never sleeps.

FROM THE HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Hebrews (13:11-14 continued)

Rev. G. Lubbers

GOING OUTSIDE OF THE CITY TO BEAR CHRIST'S REPROACH — continued (Hebrews 13:13)

When the believers pass through that gate in which they separate themselves forever from the types and shadows as a way of salvation, then they will glory in the cross of Christ through which they have been crucified to the world, and by which cross the world is crucified to them. (Gal. 6:14.) This makes for a

new ground of boasting; all other teachings are strange and heretical. But this also calls forth the hatred and scorn and derision of those who glory in works, and not in the cross. Here is the borderline between the sons of the flesh and the sons of the promise. And the sons of the flesh ever are full of enmity against the sons of Sarah, Jerusalem which is above. (Gal. 4:21-31) But they will not be heirs with

the sons of the free-woman, but shall be cast out. (Gen. 21:10) But those who remain within the gate are really the sons of the bondwoman, Hagar, who are cast out of the inheritance of Isaac and the "Seed" which is called in Him. (Gen. 21:12) Against this back-ground we must see the "reproach" which the Hebrews Christians will need to endure when they cling to Christ, the Head, and will not allow any man to judge them in "meat and drink, or in respect of a feast-day, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come." (Col. 2:16,17) This is the glorious prospect of those who heed the injunction, "Let us go forth, therefore, unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."

But Jesus had said, "In the world you shall have tribulations." (John 16:33a) Often Jesus told His disciples that they would need to suffer for His sake, for righteousness' sake. That would be inwardly blessed. For the "reproach of Christ" is the reproach wherewith He was reproached of the world, the seed of the Serpent. But never is that reproach so bitter and fierce, as when this comes from those who have heard the Christ preaching His Cross as the condemnation of all human pride, and of those who would glory in the flesh and not in God. We must here, "outside of the gate", look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy which was set before him, endured the Cross and despised the shame and was set down on the right hand of God.

Then we lift up our eyes to a better city, which has twelve gates whither the twelve tribes of Israel enter in. Outside of this city will be all the unbelievers who "reproached" the church of the living God in the world, and mocked and persecuted her unto the death. For without are the dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, which includes also those who reproach the church for Christ's sake. These make a lie; these have strange and manifold doctrines by which the church must not be carried away. (Phil. 3:2; Rev. 22:15) The writer to the Hebrews stresses that "we have here no abiding city". Never did we have here an abiding city. All the history of the earthly city of Jerusalem testifies to this fact. We have here but to read all the prophets as they predict the fall of the earthly city in the captivity to Babylon. Jerusalem is a heap of ruins, a den of dragons, when sacked and destroyed by the hordes which come across the Euphrates. (Jer. 9:11) She is desolate and without an inhabitant. No, we seek, with great longing, one which is about to come. This Jerusalem will descend out of heaven. It is the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. We do not look back, but we look forward with our eyes riveted upon that heavenly city. We seek the things above, where Christ is. Our citizenship is in heaven. (Hebrews 11:9,

10; Phil. 3:20, 21) Here in that heavenly city we will have the true tabernacle of God with man. (Rev. 21:3) In this hope of better things let us go forth outside of the gate bearing Christ's reproach, in order to be rewarded with him with the crown of life after we have endured and been approved. (I Peter 1:6, 7; James 1:12) Rejoice then with joy unspeakable outside of the "gate" of all unbelief which is disobedient to the Son and which will not see life, but will remain under the wrath of God!

THE ONE SACRIFICE LEFT FOR US TO OFFER THROUGH CHRIST (Hebrews 13:15)

Christ is the end (*telos*) of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. He that believes hath eternal life; He has passed from death into life and shall not come into condemnation. If we confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in our hearts that God hath raised Him from the dead, we shall be saved. (John 3:36; 5:24; Rom 10:4-10) The believer confesses unto salvation. From the fulness of his heart his mouth speaketh. This speech is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the fruit of faith. And this speech is a *spiritual sacrifice* when directed to God in thanksgiving.

The writer to the Hebrews mentions here that we must bring sacrifices of praise to God. He puts it in the "let us" form. He includes himself amongst those who go outside of the gate to bear Christ's reproach. He will lead them personally outside of the city and teach by word and by good example. And here outside of the gate, and by the power of the cross of Christ, by the death and resurrection of the Son of God, through which he has been renewed unto the image of God, he will bring sacrifices of praise. That is the only *sacrifice* left in the New Testament church. Yes, it is a sacrifice. It is laid on the altar of incense before the throne of God. It is praise which is presented to God. It is holy singing and confession and prayers, all the days of our life, but *especially* on the New Testament Sabbath Day, the Day of the Lord. No, he will not be judged in Old Testament new moons, meats, drinks, sabbaths of the lunar calendar. These were a "taskmaster" to Christ, which hemmed him in till the time appointed. He clings to Christ, the Head, from which all the body grows with the increase of God. (Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:16) Those who have gone forth outside of the camp of O.T. Israel's laws and shadows have the spirit of the risen Lord. They are ingrafted into Christ the Head, and it is *impossible* that he would not bring forth fruit of thankfulness. (Rom. 6:1-7) For we are not under law (*upo nomou*) but under grace (*upo charin*). This means that he must bring the sacrifices of *praise* to God. He is here not tied to the Old Testament priesthood of Aaron, but he is in the living spiritual priest-

hood in Christ Jesus. He is an office-bearer who can come into the temple to bring his sacrifice. It is the *fruit* of his lips. And upon these lips God has placed His praise, *Soli Deo Gloria*; it the praise of the *glory* of grace. (Eph. 1:6) It is the song than which there is none greater: the Song of Moses and the Lamb, telling redemption's story of the sovereign love and grace of God. Here is no glorying of the wise in his wisdom, nor of the rich in his riches, nor of the mighty in his might; but here is a glory in this, that we know that God is the Lord, who exercises lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth — at Calvary, where Christ becomes unto us the wisdom of God, righteousness, sanctification and complete redemption. Eternity will not be long enough for the redeemed to bring the sacrifice of praise, the fruit of the lips. In God's eternal tabernacle which is heavenly, we will bring these sacrifices.

And they will be "acceptable to God". In the dawn of history, when the Son of God was gathering His church, there was a sacrifice which pleased God. It was the sacrifice of Abel. (Gen. 4:5; Heb. 11:4; I John 3:11,12) God was not pleased with the sacrifice of Cain. Why? He did not bring it through Christ. The writer to the Hebrews emphatically places on the foreground that these sacrifices must be "through him". (*Di' autou*) He alone is the way to the Father, whether that be now on earth as we walk by faith, or presently in glory when we shall see God face to face in the face of Jesus Christ. "No one cometh unto the Father, except through (by) *me*." (*di' emou*) On this one point the Lord is very emphatic: by *Me*, and by no one else! And no sacrifice of praise is acceptable in all the earth and heavens if it is not brought through Jesus, Who suffered without the gate for our sins. There is no sacrifice of praise which is not connected with the sin-offering. The whole burnt-offering only means something after the sin-offering has been brought outside of the camp of Israel.

the poor and needy. Then all our speaking of the wonder of what Christ did for us outside of the gate is tinkling brass and a sounding cymbal. How does then the love of God dwell in our hearts? If God so loved us, how ought we to love one another. (I John 3:16, 17) True sons of Abraham will walk in the footsteps of a living faith which believes in God even when all seems dark and impossible. So also in the church we must have a faith which believes in God, that God gives us abundance, that those who have nothing have no lack. (II Cor. 10:6) God has His secret blessing upon the liberal soul. He puts it into his hands to distribute it to the poor. With such sacrifices God is well-pleased.

For in such sacrifices there is a "communication". The translation "to communicate" is not good here. In the Greek text there is not a verb or infinitive noun. The Dutch translates "*mededeelzaamheid*". This refers to the inner quality and propensity to exercise the fellowship of goods as an expression of the love of Christ. The resultant notion can be then to communicate goods, necessities to the poor. This, too, we must not forget. We live in an age when we allow all kinds of organizations to rob us from these joys. We must allow this to be our spiritual sacrifice of love and mercy. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

This, too, we must do and perform through Christ. In the power of His death and resurrection we must do so. And we must be thus, through Him, an imitator of Him, Who had compassion upon the multitudes. This is not a mere social gospel, which is no gospel, but this is the working out of our thankfulness with fear and trembling, looking for the reward of grace. Then it shall be said: "what ye have done to the least of these which are mine, ye have done so unto me." That will be in the city which we are seeking, the abiding city!

PRACTICAL SERVICE OF GRATITUDE PLEASING TO GOD (Hebrews 13:16)

The Lord is not well-pleased with a dead faith which does not reveal itself in good works. Faith without works is death! The writer to the Hebrews has this in mind when he says, "but do good and to communicate forget not". To "do good" is a translation of a word which means to do well, to do beautiful deeds. We think here of the almsdeeds which Dorcas did, when she made coats and garments for the poor. Such mercy is truly beautiful. We often forget this. We feel that if only we go to church punctually, listen to the sermons, and sing of the wonderful love of God, that this is sufficient. It is all dead works if we close up our bowels of mercy for

TEACHERS NEEDED

The Society for Protestant Reformed Education of HULL, IOWA is in need of a teacher-administrator and 2 teachers for the 1976-77 school year. For more information contact: Bernard Driesen, Boyden, Iowa 51239; or phone — collect — (712) 725-2071.

Adams Street Protestant Reformed Christian School will be in need of two teachers for the 1976-1977 school year. Inquiries may be sent to Mr. Kenneth Schipper, care of the school, at 1150 Adams Street S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49507.

Due to our decision to add a fourth teacher to our Staff, the SOUTH HOLLAND PROTESTANT REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL is accepting applications for the position. Anyone interested should write or phone Mr. Menno Poortenga, 18425 Oakwood Ave., Lansing, Illinois 60438. Phone: (312) 474-0675.

ALL AROUND US

The Vidalia Resolution

Rev. H. Veldman

In the Banner Herald, a monthly publication of the Primitive Baptists, published at Jessup, Georgia, in the November, 1975 issue, appeared an article with the above heading. We believe this article to be of interest to our readers. We now quote:

The Voice of Our Past

THE VIDALIA RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the doctrine of the use of the preached word as a means in the regeneration of sinners is again being agitated among us, causing great unrest among our brethren in Georgia, and among those associated with us in other states, and grave fears are entertained that our fundamental doctrines are being compromised and that doctrines, time and again rejected by Primitive Baptists, are being fastened upon us as a part of our faith, and

WHEREAS, Such teaching among us has always led to strife and ultimate division, be it

RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our belief in and loyalty to the time-honored faith of Primitive Baptists, which faith we understand to include the doctrine of eternal, particular and unconditional election — that a definite number of particular persons were, before time, chosen of God unto salvation or eternal life, that this number can not be increased or diminished; that this definite number of particular persons were embraced in the covenant of Grace and given to Christ to redeem, and that Christ in His death on the cross died for these and none others, and that their eternal salvation was thus made infallibly secure. And be it further

RESOLVED, That as touching the doctrine of regeneration or effectual calling we reaffirm the declaration of our people expressed in 1909, and published in what is known as "The Cordele Statement," in which it says, "Through the gospel the children of

God are instructed and fed, strengthened and rebuked, exhorted and corrected; but *nowhere* does the Bible teach that God uses the gospel as a means of regenerating sinners." And be it further

RESOLVED, That we advise, beg and implore our churches to kindly, lovingly and faithfully guard our people against any teaching contrary to this faith, that strife and division may be avoided and the bond of fellowship between our churches may be preserved and strengthened. And be it further

RESOLVED, That we here assembled pledge ourselves to one another and to our brethren everywhere to teach and labor to establish these doctrines most firmly in the minds and hearts of our people.

To read something like this surely warms our hearts. We, as Protestant Reformed Churches, also believe that the divine decree of election is eternal, particular and unconditional. We surely believe that this divine decree is absolutely sovereign. It is for this reason that we reject the general, well meaning of the gospel to all who hear it. And we also believe that regeneration is immediate.

However, we do wish to ask two questions. First, do the Primitive Baptists also believe in double predestination? Double predestination believes in sovereign reprobation as well as in sovereign election. They are inseparable. One cannot believe in the one without also believing in the other. And, secondly, what objection do the Primitive Baptists have, doctrinally, against the baptism of infants? We believe that this doctrine of the baptism of infants very beautifully emphasizes the sovereignty of God's election, bearing in mind, of course, that the sacrament of baptism does not speak of a universal love of God to all who are baptized.

The Presbyterian Advocate

This is a new magazine. We will let this magazine speak for itself. In its first issue (the only issue we have received as of now), its reason is stated as follows, on page 3 of its October, 1975 issue, underneath the heading, THE REASON FOR THIS MAGAZINE:

The PRESBYTERIAN ADVOCATE is the response of one angry Presbyterian to the arrogant, irresponsible, and vicious actions of much of the "leader-

ship" of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. I am an ordained minister of the denomination and write on behalf of those ministers and ruling elders of our church who remain loyal to the Bible and to the historic confessions of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches. The current ruling faction of the church, the liberal modernists, are now attempting to remove every one of these faithful men from their pulpits and offices in the denomination.

I intend to publish this magazine on a frequent basis and to continue publishing it as long as I have something I want to say and as long as I can finance its publication and delivery. One thing I promise: the content and continued publication of THE PRESBYTERIAN ADVOCATE will not be influenced in the slightest by hostile ecclesiastical activity against it or against me.

In addition to exposing the follies which presently beset the church I look forward to developing in future issues, material of a more constructive nature, to exploring the true presbyterian Christian heritage and how it can aid us to live godly creative lives in all the many dimensions of personal and corporate life in the modern world.

Grael Brian Gannon, Editor-Publisher
Park River, North Dakota
October 1, 1975

Then, on page 4 of this magazine appears a STATEMENT OF BELIEF. We also wish to quote this.

The doctrinal position of the PRESBYTERIAN ADVOCATE will take shape in subsequent issues as the various points are discussed. Briefly it may be said to derive from the supreme authority of an infallible Bible given from heaven, interpreted in its own terms, and issuing in subordinate standards whose principal theme is the majesty and absolute sovereignty of God, that man's chief end is to glorify and enjoy Him, enabled by redemption from sin through the substitutionary satisfaction of the justice of God by the death of Christ and by the Holy Spirit's applying the merit of Christ's death to the elect and in regenerat-

ing them, also in the Christian life of these redeemed and their eternal life in a new age inaugurated by the final return of Christ in royal power.

The sovereignty of God as manifested in the life of the redeemed elect means that the entire spectrum of life and civilization should be transformed and brought into submission to Him, and that He gives definition to the very processes by which this is accomplished.

The consequence of these principles is a faith Calvinist in doctrine, Reformed in worship, and Presbyterian in government. Its principal historic subordinate standards are:

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|---|------|
| The Gallic Confession of Faith | 1559 |
| The Scots Confession of Faith | 1560 |
| The Belgic Confession of Faith | 1561 |
| The Heidelberg Catechism | 1563 |
| The Second Helvetic Confession of Faith | 1566 |
| The Canons of the Synod of Dordrecht | 1619 |
| The Westminster Confession of Faith | 1647 |
| The Westminster Larger Catechism | 1648 |
| The Westminster Shorter Catechism | 1648 |
| The Formula Consensus Helveticae | 1675 |

We shall await future issues of this magazine. According to the reason as stated for its appearance and its statement of belief, this magazine intends to be Calvinistic in its doctrine, adhering to the Reformed confessions. However, one thing troubles us: the author of this magazine appears to stand alone. Of course, there is nothing wrong, in itself, in standing alone, if need be. However, does not a congregation in any way support him? Does he stand all alone, all by himself, and why?

Liberal Congregation Leaves Missouri Synod

From the *Presbyterian Journal*, the October 29, 1975 issue, the following article appears, on page 5, under the above heading:

OKLAHOMA CITY — Grace Lutheran Church, a 250-member congregation here, has become the first congregation to withdraw from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) in the current liberal-conservative dispute.

In a congregational meeting, members voted 111 to 56 to sever all ties with the Missouri Synod and to join the Lutheran Church in Mission (LCM) . . .

The Grace church is the first liberal congregation to withdraw in protest against conservative policies.

According to the *Oklahoma City Times*, the Rev. Edwin T. Heyne, pastor of the Grace church (and leader of the liberal majority congregation), said he has been unpopular with some members of his church for several years, ever since he openly supported busing for integration in the city schools here. He added that he expects no problems over the question

of who owns the church property.

However, according to a certain Wanda Van Gelder, there must have been some irregularities in this action of Grace Church to separate itself from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. This article continues:

However, Wanda Van Gelder, a leader of the conservative group in the church, said the vote could be legally challenged due to improper procedures. She said 71 new voters were added and 10 inactive members were reinstated to voter status before the meeting began.

Miss Van Gelder also asserted that one person who voted for withdrawal had been confirmed as a member at a service only four hours before the meeting.

(Editor's note: Just before press time we received word that representatives of the minority congregation, including Miss Van Gelder, have obtained a court order barring the disposition of the church's assets.)

VOICE OF OUR FATHERS

Man's Creation and Fall (3)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

"We believe that God created man out of the dust of the earth, and made and formed him after his own image and likeness, good, righteous, and holy, capable in all things to will, agreeably to the will of God. But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but willfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death, and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remains thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuse; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us, saying: The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not: where St. John calleth men darkness. Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this, concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin; and has nothing of himself, unless it is given from heaven. For who may presume to boast, that he of himself can do any good, since Christ saith, No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him? Who will glory in his own will, who understands, that to be carnally minded is enmity against God? Who can speak of his knowledge, since the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God? In short, who dare suggest any thought, since he knows that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God? And therefore what the Apostle saith ought justly to be held sure and firm, that God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. For there is no will nor understanding, conformable to the divine will and understanding, but what Christ hath wrought in man; which he teaches us, when he saith, Without me ye can do nothing."

The Belgic Confession, Article XIV

In the previous two articles on this chapter of the *Confession* we have treated the subjects of the creation of man out of the dust of the earth and the fact that he was created in the image of God. These subjects are stated in the opening sentence of Article XIV. It is our intention to focus on the rest of this article as it speaks of: "the fall of man, and his incapacity to perform what is truly good." Even at this point there are several subjects which might profitably occupy our attention and be treated in several articles. Among these are the history of the fall itself as this is given in Genesis three; the controversial question of God's sovereignty and sin; the covenant of works view; man's depravity and the bondage of the will of man. We shall limit ourselves to a discussion of man's "incapacity to perform what is truly good" and only briefly touch upon these other subjects. We do this because our times demand it and because one's views on man and his depravity radically affect his views on God Himself and the *gracious* character of the salvation of His elect people in Christ.*

Concerning the fall itself Article XIV makes several points. Man's sin was voluntary. This the Creed

emphasizes when it says: "he . . . willfully subjected himself to sin." Man, in other words, was not compelled to sin against his own will and desire. Thus man is responsible for his own fall and its consequences. The Reformed faith has always been very careful to maintain this truth lest the fall be construed in such a way as to make God the author of sin. The very thought of that is blasphemy. This is also very plain from the Scriptures: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:13-15) At the same time, neither our *Confession* nor we wish to deny God's sovereignty with respect to sin. Sin is not some eternal force along side of God. The fall of man was not some unthought of or unplanned occurrence which frustrated God's original purpose with creation and to which He had to react. Scripture makes abundantly evident that God's purpose from all eternity is to manifest His incomparable glory in Christ through His cross and resurrection; i.e., in the

way of sin and grace. Though we who are mere sinful men and less than specks of dust cannot comprehend this "mystery of the gospel," we must believe and confess it. And this too is all of grace! God created Adam in such a way that he could choose the good or the evil, and God always deals with man as a rational and willing creature, even though He retains His own sovereignty. Thus Adam sinned of his own will and brought upon himself and his posterity death and the curse of God.

We believe too on the basis of the Word of God that man fell by the instigation of the devil. Sin had its origin in heaven when Satan and a host of angels with him "left their first estate." (Cf. The Epistle of Jude) Satan, in the form of a serpent, approached Eve in the Garden of Eden and tempted her. Eve gave way to "the lusts of the flesh and the lusts of the eyes and the pride of life" and ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thus disobeying God's command. (Genesis 3:6) And she gave to her husband and he ate also. Thus it was that man: "... willfully subjected himself to sin ... giving ear to the words of the devil. For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed; and by sin separated himself from God, who was his true life."

Finally, in this connection let it be understood that the record of the fall of man as presented in Genesis 3 is literal history. There was a real garden of Eden, a real woman and man, a real devil, a real serpent through which the devil spoke, and Eve ate real fruit from a real tree. If this be offensive to the sensitivities of today's sophisticated intellectual, it can only be because he lacks God-given faith to believe the simple truth of the Bible. The warning of Peter Y. De Jong is well taken: "The story, so often represented as a myth or symbol by modern theologians, is affirmed as history by Christian believers. The whole structure of Christian theology is radically affected by whether or not we maintain the historicity of Genesis 3. Those who reject the story of the fall of necessity adopt views of the image of God in man, the nature and consequences of sin, and even the essential character of God's grace in Christ radically different than those championed by historic Christianity. Without hesitation and compromise the church should repudiate every attempt to make the story of the fall more palatable to modern man." (*The Church's Witness To The World*, vol. 1, pp. 259-260)

By his fall man brought upon himself and his progeny dire consequences. The *Confession* emphasizes this in the strongest language when it says: "... having corrupted his whole nature ... and being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts, which he had received from God." Thus, as a consequence of his sin, man corrupted his whole nature and lost the

image of God, "all his excellent gifts." That man "lost" the gifts of God's image must be understood properly. He did not merely *lose* those gifts, but they were changed into their very opposites. Man's knowledge was changed to darkness so that he can only lie about God; his righteousness was changed into unrighteousness; his holiness into corruption so that he is no longer consecrated to the service of God. Man always changes the truth into the lie, holding it under in unrighteousness. Indeed he has lost "all his excellent gifts." In a real sense man has become the image bearer of the devil.

A word needs to be said concerning the often disputed phrase, "and only retained a few remains thereof." This and a similar statement in the Canons of Dordrecht are used as proof for the view of common grace. The argument is that man has retained some "remnants" of the image of God as a fruit of God's common (not saving) grace which He bestows on mankind in general. Thus, it is said, man is still able, by God's common grace, to do some good. He can develop culture and learning; produce many good things, etc. But this is not the teaching of the *Belgic Confession*. What the Creed is saying is merely that man has retained some remains of his rationality and morality. He did not become something other than a man through the fall. Man did not become an irrational beast. He is still able to know the difference between good and evil. He can still come to some knowledge of God through the things that are made. But notice that these are only "remains" or remnants, very small elements of what Adam possessed in the state of rectitude. Notice too that man retains these "remains" only in order that he may be without excuse. This is plainly the teaching of Scripture. Knowing the difference between right and wrong, knowing that there is a God; man always changes the truth into the lie; and changes the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man. (Romans 1:18ff.) Man is the enemy of God; deliberately he chooses the evil and always hates the good. He is wicked, corrupt, and perverse in all his ways; he is, in fact, dead in trespasses and sins. (Ephesians 2:1) There is no grace in all this. The message to spiritually dead, sinful man is always: "Thou art inexcusable, O man." (Romans 2) For this reason "the wrath (not grace) of God is revealed from heaven against all the unrighteousness of men." (Romans 1:18ff.) This is clearly taught in the Canons as well:

"There remain, however, in man since the fall, the glimmerings of natural light, whereby he retains some knowledge of God, of things natural, and of the differences between good and evil, and discovers some regard for virtue, good order in society, and for maintaining an orderly external deportment. But so far is this light of nature from being sufficient to bring him

to a saving knowledge of God, and to true conversion, *that he is incapable of using it aright even in things natural and civil.* Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted, and holds it in unrighteousness, by doing which he becomes inexcusable before God." (emphasis mine, R.D.D., Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 4)

This is the historic, Biblical, Confessionally Reformed truth concerning the fallen, natural man.

The punishment for sin is grievous. Man becomes "subject to sin." Sin is his Lord and he is its slave. He can only serve sin in all that he does. This is the Reformed truth overagainst all Pelagian-free-willism. This is the doctrine of total depravity. The terrible truth of depravity is not that man is a big sinner, not that he sins all the time; but that man can do nothing but sin. He lacks the ability to do any good at all. To prove this the *Confession* cites the words of Jesus: "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him," (John 6:44); and the words of I Corinthians 2:14: "... the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God." *The Confession* also makes reference to Romans 8:7 which reads: "Because the carnal mind (literally: "the mind of the flesh", R.D.D.) is enmity against God: for it is not

subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Notice that according to this text the carnal mind, the mind of the flesh is not only not subject to God's law, but it cannot be subject to that law! (Cf. Canons III, IV, 1-3; Heidelberg Catechism, L.D. II)

The conclusion is inevitable. No one is able to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling unless God first works in him both to will and to do of His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12, 13) Man by nature is no more able to will his own salvation than a corpse is able to rise out of its coffin. He is liable to death and curse. The message of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is and ever must be: "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)

May God in His grace grant us the strength to hold this truth firmly for the glory of His Name. This is our only comfort in life and in death.

*Anyone interested in more intensive study of these doctrines is urged to consult:
Herman Hoeksema's *Reformed Dogmatics*, pp. 169-280, Reformed Free Publishing Association, Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506.
Edward J. Young's *Genesis 3*, Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London. (This is an excellent "devotional and expository" study of the third chapter of Genesis by the late professor of Old Testament at Westminster Seminary.)

IN MEMORIAM

On Sunday, January 25, 1976, the Lord gathered to Himself our dear daughter and sister ERMA JEAN KORTERING, at the age of 51 years.

Her life was a testimony of the precious truth of Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusted in thee."

Mr. and Mrs. Justin Kortering
Lafert
Jess
Rev. and Mrs. Jay Kortering
Mr. and Mrs. Ervin Kortering
Mr. Ken Schuitema

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of The First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland (Mich.) wishes to express their heartfelt sympathy to the Justin Kortering family in the loss of ERMA KORTERING, our member, who was gathered with the saints above on Sunday morning, January 25, 1976.

May God's Word bless and comfort them in this hour of sorrow. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee." (Isaiah 26:3)

Mrs. Gordon Wassink, Sec'y.

NOTICE

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on March 3, 1976, in Edgerton, Minnesota, at 8:30 A.M. Delegates in need of lodging or transportation should notify the clerk of the Edgerton consistory.

Rev. David Engelsma,
Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!!

Covenant Christian High School is in need of an Administrator for the coming 1976-77 school year. Please send applications and qualifications to: Mr. Gordon Van Overloop, 3711 Hillcrest, Hudsonville, Michigan, 49426.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church expresses hereby their deepest sympathy with one of their members, Mrs. Hilbert Kuiper, in the recent loss of her mother, MRS. JOHN VANDE WEERD of Rock Valley, Iowa. May our God comfort her and the bereaved family through the Spirit of Him Who assures us, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, he that believeth in Me ... shall never die."

The Ladies Society of the
Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church,
Mrs. B. Bruining, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express their sincere sympathy with their members, Mr. and Mrs. G. Lubbers, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Lubbers, and Mr. and Mrs. R. Lubbers in the loss of their sister, MRS. G. JAGER who was taken into the Rest a short time ago. May they confess with the church of all ages: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake, with thy likeness." Ps. 17:15.

The Adult Bible Class of the
Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church.
Mrs. G. Cnossen, Sec'y.

Church Directory

Faith Church, Jenison, Mich.

Clerk: Mr. Fred Hanko
2315 Chippewa Dr.
Jenison, Mich. 49428
Phone: 457-2127

Treas.: Mr. Andrew Brummel
4151 W. Omaha, SW
Grandville, Mich. 49418
Phone: 532-6751

First Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Clerk: Mr. James Heys
1432 Giddings, SE
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

Treas.: Mr. Wm. Oonkes
4141 Burton, SE
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506

First Church, Holland, Mich.

Clerk: E. Kortering
253 E. 19th St.
Holland, Mich. 49423
Phone: 396-4966

Treas.: Gerald Vanden Berg
3734 Adams St. RFD No. 2
Hudsonville, Mich. 49426
Phone: 896-8422

Hope Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Clerk: Mr. John Kalsbeek
4132 Hall St., SW
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504

Treas.: Mr. Leon Garvelink
1539 Ferndale, SW
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49504

Hudsonville, Mich.

Clerk: Mr. Harry Zwak
3985 Van Buren
Hudsonville, Mich. 49426

Treas.: Mr. D. Van Overloop
5726 - 36th St.
Hudsonville, Mich. 49426

Benevolence Treas., (Jamaica Fund)
Mr. B. Wigger
3560 Berker
Hudsonville, Mich. 49426

Kalamazoo, Mich.

Clerk & Treas.:
Mr. Wm. Clason
1317 Pinehurst Blvd.
Kalamazoo, Mich. 49007

Prospect Park, New Jersey

Pastor: Rev. A. den Hartog
176 Prescott Ave.
Prospect Park, N.J. 07508

Clerk: Mr. Tom Nelson
12 - 64 Burbank St.
Fairlawn, N.J. 07410
Phone: (201) 797-8993

Treas.: Mr. Clarence De Groot
176 Prescott Ave.
Prospect Park, N.J. 07508
Phone: (201) 278-6791

Southeast, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Clerk: Richard Teitsma
3681 Mohave Dr., SW
Grandville, Mich. 49418

Treas.: Robert Noorman
949 Oakdale, SE
Grand Rapids, Mich. 49507

Southwest, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Clerk: Gerald Feenstra
7643 Cardinal Dr.
Jenison, Mich. 49428
Phone: 669-1484

Treas.: Kenneth L. Kuiper
1820 Berkley, SW
Wyoming, Mich. 49509
Phone: 243-4019

Doon, Iowa

Clerk: John Kalsbeek, Jr.
Box 67
Doon, Iowa 51235
Phone: (712) 726-3148

Treas.: Minard Van Den Top
Box 224
Doon, Iowa 51235
Phone: (712) 726-3184

Edgerton, Minn.

Clerk: Henry Huisken
930 Mechanic
Edgerton, Minn. 56128
Phone: (507) 442-6791

Treas.: Allen Brummel
R.R. 1, Box 115
Edgerton, Minn. 56128
Phone: (507) 442-5931

Ebenezer, Forbes, N.D.

Clerk: Lorenz Bertsch
Forbes, N.D. 58439
Phone: (605) 358-8691

Treas.: Gus Streyle
Forbes, N.D. 58439
Phone: (605) 358-8811

Edmonton, Alberta, Can.

Clerk: Mr. David Zylstra
12126 - 36th St.
Edmonton, Alberta T5W 2B6
Canada
Phone: (403) 474-4483

Treas.: F. Tolsma
9656 - 63 Ave.
Edmonton, Alta., Canada
T6E 0G5
Phone: (403) 434-3579

Hull, Iowa

Clerk: Mr. Henry Hoekstra
RR #2
Hull, Iowa 51239
Phone: (712) 439-1113

Treas.: Mr. Tony Jansma
RR 2
Doon, Iowa 51235
Phone: (712) 726-3435

Hope, Isabel, S.D.

Clerk: Mr. Jake Reichert
PO Box 106
Isabel, S.D. 57633
Phone: (605) 466-4124

Treas.: Mr. Jerrold Reichert
PO Box 38
Isabel, S.D. 57633
Phone: (605) 466-3168

Loveland, Colorado

Clerk: Mr. Milton Alsum
50201 Beryl Lane
Loveland, Colo. 80537
Phone: (303) 667-7272

Treas.: Mr. Tom De Vries
Route 2, Box 41
Loveland, Colo. 80537
Phone: (303) 667-7874

Lynden, Washington

Clerk: Hans Vander Veen Jr.
313 Garrison Rd.
Sumas, Wash. 98295
Phone: (206) 988-4060

Treas.: Vernon Maas
2083 Birch Bay - Lynden Rd.
Ferndale, Wash. 98248
Phone: (206) 366-2373

Pella, Iowa

Clerk: Bernie Menninga
608 E. 2nd St. (Apt. 215)
Pella, Iowa 50219
Phone: 628-4397

Treas.: Vernon De Vries
RR 3
Knoxville, Iowa
Phone: 842-5397

Randolph, Wisconsin

Clerk: Mr. Gary Buteyn
RR 2, Box 133A
Randolph, Wisc. 53956
Phone: 326-5666

Treas.: Mr. Henry Zandstra
RR 1, Box 158
Randolph, Wisc. 53956
Phone: 326-3305

Hope, Redlands, California

Clerk: Larry Huisken
820 College
Redlands, Calif. 92373

Treas.: Bud Van Uffelen
25867 Mission Rd.
Redlands, Calif. 92373

South Holland, Illinois

Clerk: Eugene Kuiper
1211 E. 164th St.
South Holland, Illinois 60473
Phone: 339-6262

Treas.: Gerrit Holleman
18330 Stony Island Ave.
Lansing, Illinois 60438
Phone: 474-6051

News From Our Churches

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST January 7, 1976 Southeast Protestant Reformed Church

Rev. H. Veldman led the classis in opening devotions and after reading the credentials declared classis to be properly constituted. Rev. C. Hanco, by order of rotation, presided over this classis.

The business before the classis was routine and could be quickly disposed of. The usual committees were appointed by the chairman and later reported to the classis. Elders B. Windemuller and P. Knott served on the Finance Committee. They reported a total expenditure of \$315.87 for this session. The classis authorized the synodical treasurer to reimburse these expenses. Elder H. Zwak thanked the ladies of Southeast Church for the coffee and donuts which they served us. Kalamazoo Church, being vacant, again requested classical appointments for the coming quarter. Classis granted their request, and the chair appointed Rev. J. Heys and elders J. Bishop and J. De Zeeuw to construct a schedule. Classis adopted the following classical appointment schedule for Kalamazoo: January 18 - Rev. M. Schipper; January 25 - Rev. C. Hanco; February 8 - Rev. M. Joostens; February 22 - Rev. G. Van Baren; March 7 - Rev. J. Heys; March 21 - Rev. R. Van Overloop; April 4 - Rev. H. Veldman. Because of distance and other considerations, classis did not place Rev. A. Den Hartog on this schedule.

Subsidy requests also had to be treated at this classis. The classis approved and forwarded to Synod Kalamazoo's request of \$6,300.00 and Prospect Park's for \$9,500.00.

The voting for synodical delegates resulted in the following; Minister delegates: *Primi*: Rev. C. Hanco, Rev. J. Heys, Rev. M. Joostens, and Rev. G. Van Baren. *Sucundi*: Rev. A. Den Hartog, Rev. M. Schipper, Rev. R. Van Overloop, and Rev. H. Veldman. Elder delegates: *Primi*: D. Engelsma, J.M. Faber, J. Kalsbeek, and R. Teitsma. *Secundi*: G. Feenstra, F. Ondersma, H. Vander Kolk, and H. Zwak.

Rev. C. Hanco and Rev. M. Schipper, *Primi* and *Secundi* respectively, were chosen delegates ad examina.

The questions of article 41 of our Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily by each of the churches.

Upon accepting an invitation from Faith Church as meeting place for our April 7, 1976, classis, classis stood adjourned. Rev. J. Heys closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Assist. Stated Clerk,
Rev. M. Joostens

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The retired clerk of Southwest Church asked that mention be made of the new consistorial clerk and bulletin clerk of Southwest Church. The new clerk is Mr. Gerald Feenstra, 7643 Cardinal Dr., Jenison, Michigan 49428. Phone - 616-669-1484.

Office Bearers Conferences are not held exclusively in the Michigan area. Rev. R. Moore was to speak on the subject, "Christian Giving and the Budget" during an Office Bearers Conference on January 27 in the Doon, Iowa, Church.

The lecture series in Rock Valley, Iowa, continued on December 3 with a speech by Rev. D. Engelsma of South Holland, Ill. The subject was "Modern Translations of the Bible - A Help for Understanding or Misunderstanding." The next speech in the series was scheduled on January 14. Rev. Kortering's subject was "God loves the world, not all men." While on his visit to Northwest Iowa, Rev. Engelsma also conducted a chapel service in Doon at the Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed Christian School.

Many of our churches conduct monthly Sunday evening discussion group meetings. For example, the topic at the January 11 meeting in Isabel, South Dakota, was "What Is Our Calling As Church In the Racial Situation?"

A Point to Ponder from Loveland's bulletin:

"A man who is at peace with God will be often in God's company."

K.G.V.