

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Judge not Providence in little pieces; it is a grand mosaic, and must be seen as a whole. Say not of any one hour, "This is dark," — it may be so, but that darkness will minister to the light, even as the ebon gloom of midnight makes the stars appear the more effulgent. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

See — "God's People Encouraged
in Flooding Judgments' — page 32

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MEDITATION

Satisfaction

Rev. C. Hanko

"Ques. 12. Since, then, by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment, is there no way by which we may escape that punishment, and be again received into favor?"

"A. God will have his justice satisfied: and therefore we must make full satisfaction, either by ourselves, or by another.

"Ques. 12. Can we ourselves then make this satisfaction?"

THE STANDARD BEARER

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"A. By no means; but on the contrary we daily increase our debt.

"Ques. 14. Can there be found anywhere, one, who is a mere creature, able to satisfy for us?"

"A. None; for, first, God will not punish any other creature for the sin which man hath committed; and further, no mere creature can sustain the burden of God's eternal wrath against sin, so as to deliver others from it.

“Ques. 15. What sort of mediator and deliverer then must we seek for?”

“A. For one who is very man, and perfectly righteous; and yet more powerful than all creatures; one who is also very God.”

Lord's Day 5, Heid. Catechism.

Reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a beautiful word. That is especially true for us at this moment, for it answers the cry of the anxious soul that seeks peace with his God.

Reconciliation is often defined as “the renewal of friendship after a disagreement or enmity.” In our present use of the word, it implies that there was once an intimate bond of friendship and fellowship between God and us. Moreover, we are now deeply aware of the fact that we have disrupted this bond of friendship, so that there exists a barrier of enmity between God and us. The bond of friendship which God established between Himself and our first parents in paradise has been disrupted by Adam's fall, and is disrupted even now by our transgressions. We long for the assurance in our own hearts that all is well between God and us. We need that assurance renewed, not once, but repeatedly, as long as we live.

Notice how that word reconciliation stands out in the first question of this Lord's Day. “Since by the righteous judgment of God, we deserve temporal and eternal punishment. . . .” Soon after the Catechism was composed the Arminians raised the objection that this question is too coldly doctrinal, too severe. The guilty sinner who has restlessly tossed about on his bed at night, hiding his face in his tearstained pillow, must wonder how anyone can call this question cold and severe. This is our confession, born out of the work of grace in our hearts, arising from our condemning conscience, as we stand before the tribunal of a righteous God. We confess that we deserve God's righteous judgment upon us, even unto everlasting torment of hell, because of our sins. We ask: “Is there no way out?” We do this, not like a condemned criminal in his death cell, who ponders how he may frustrate the cause of justice, but rather like the publican who pleads, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” We need to escape punishment, because we long for God's favor, which means more to us than life itself. With the Psalmist we cry, “As the hart pants after water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.” It is the anxious plea of those who were pricked in their hearts on the day of Pentecost, who could not wait for Peter to finish his sermon, but interrupted him with their, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” It is the determination of the prodigal son who says, “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and against thee, and am no more worthy to

be called thy son.” In essence, it is the need for reconciliation.

Satisfaction.

Satisfaction is the key word in this Lord's Day. It is the only possible answer to the sinner's plea; the only way of reconciliation. Literally satisfaction means “to make full.” A settlement must be made; a debt must be paid. We have raised the question, How can I be restored into favor with my God? The answer is given, “God will have his justice satisfied.” We must not regard this, “God will have . . .,” as an arbitrary whim of the Most High, as if He could just as well have ignored the offence against His justice. We have already confessed in Lord's Day 4, that “sin which is committed against the most high majesty of God, (must) be punished with extreme, that is, with everlasting punishment of body and soul.” Sin is transgression of God's Law. After all, God is *God*. He has the right to demand of us that we love Him with our whole being. Not to do so offends God, dishonors His Name, defies His authority. Failing to fulfill our obligation we become indebted to God. Debt is intolerable, inexorably exact. We realize that even when we are burdened with a money debt to our fellow man. We pay, and pay, and pay some more; month after month, possibly year after year, until finally the debt has been brought down to the last penny. Only then can be written across our account: Paid in full. Our debt to God is the debt of sin. Ours is not the debt of a single sin, maybe some grievous transgression; nor is it the debt of hundreds of sins, nor mere thousands, but rather millions upon millions, which we increase and multiply as often as the clock ticks off its seconds. Our debt is that mountain of guilt that stands between us and God, cuts off our prayers, makes us utterly miserable, so the “the sorrows of death compassed me, and the pangs of hell gat hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow.” (Psalm 116:3). We cry out, “If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” (Psalm 130:3) Scripture tells us, confirmed by our own experience, God's justice must be fully satisfied. The debt must be paid. Atonement must be made.

Atonement.

Here we have another significant word. Atonement (notice the at-one-ment) means literally, ‘to be at one with,’ or, ‘to be set at one.’ The sin barrier between God and us must be removed. God need not be reconciled with us (He never changes). But we need to be reconciled with Him. The debt of sin must be paid; peace and fellowship must be restored.

There is only one way in which our debt can ever be paid, the punishment commensurate with our sin debt must be borne. The soul that sins must die. Sin

against the most high majesty of God must be punished with everlasting torment of hell. No, even those who suffer the anguish of hell never atone for a single sin. In order to bear the wrath of God against sin, and to bear it away, we must surrender ourselves willingly under the wrath of God, in love, in willing, obedient suffering. Every sinful, rebellious "NO" must be replaced with a loving, submissive, "YES, LORD." God is just in all His ways and works. Only perfect obedience of love in atonement for every sin which we have committed can satisfy God's just demand. Only the assurance that our debt has been paid, our sins have been blotted out, can create in us the peace of forgiveness. That we know and confess.

Substitution.

Our Catechism, almost surreptitiously, introduces a new thought here. It speaks of full satisfaction, either by ourselves or *by another*. By another means *substitution*. Substitution is a marvelous word, for in this context, as we shall see, the word was born in the eternal bosom of God, an integral part of God's eternal plan and purpose in Christ Jesus.

Of course, if that were possible, we ourselves should make satisfaction for our sins. If we have a money debt, it is our obligation to pay that debt. No one else can be held responsible for any debt incurred by us. Before the tribunal of God, I, and I only, am accountable for the guilt of my sins. Before my consciousness, I deserve eternal death.

Yet I cannot make the necessary satisfaction. I am overcome by the power of sin and death; desperately, hopelessly lost in sin. I may bathe myself under a shower until my skin tingles; I may wash my hands until they sting, but the blot upon my soul remains unchanged. All my tears and confessions of sorrow cannot atone for a single sin, no matter how small that sin may appear to be. All my love and devotion, all my works wrought by the new man in Christ can never undo the sins that cleave to me. Even if I could attain to perfection, so that from this hour until I die, no sinful desire, thought, word, or deed ever blotted my soul, I still would be an unprofitable servant who did no more than his duty. Yet, O wretched man, I only increase my debt every day, every hour, every second of my existence.

Does this suggestion of a full satisfaction *by another* imply that I may possibly be able to summon a substitute to my aid? My sinful pride would like to seek outside aid to my rescue. An angel possibly? Not as if I have anything to say about the angels, but angels are sinless. They have no debt to pay to God. Could one of them assume my debt and bear it away? Or some animal? Scripture speaks of the sacrifices that were brought in the old dispensation accompanying confessions of sin and pleas for forgiveness. Or

some other man? Moses expressed the desire to be blotted out of the book of life, if thereby God's honor could be maintained among the heathen and His covenant realized in His people. Paul, in that stirring introduction of Romans 9, declares that he could wish to be accursed from Christ for his brethren according to the flesh, if that could bring their salvation. But the very desire implies the hopelessness of one man's atoning for the sins of another.

How can God ever punish another creature for the sins that you and I commit? That would be contrary to God's justice. How can a mere creature, no matter who or what it may be, bring the sacrifice of perfect obedience for our sins? All the blood that spurted from the slain beasts that were sacrificed in the temple day after day, could not atone for sin in any way. How can a mere creature ever merit anything with God? Much less, how can a mere creature attain for us that which he does not possess, eternal life in covenant fellowship with the living God?

What can wash away my sins? As far as I or any other creature is concerned, NOTHING! What can make me whole again? NOTHING, if that depends in any way on me or on any other creature.

The Wonder.

Here we see the breaking of the dawn into the dark night of our sin and misery. That which is eternally impossible with man is possible with God. God in His eternal, sovereign power, wisdom, and grace, has prepared Himself as our Substitute in Christ Jesus. A Man, a righteous Man, Who is also very God.

Adam as our representative head in paradise was a figure of the last Adam Who was to come as flesh of our flesh, in order to stand in our place as our representative Head and bear the wrath of God against our sins.

When God gave His promise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," God already declared His promise of the birth of One Who had to be without guilt, born of a virgin.

When God gave the sacrifices in the old dispensation, He was repeating His promise of His own Son, Immanuel, Who could stand under the consuming fire of God's wrath and still not be consumed. God had to be in Christ, reconciling us unto Himself, never to count our transgressions against us.

What can wash away my sins? Nothing, but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing, but the blood of God. (Acts 20:28).

Reconciliation! God brings His rebellious, unfaithful, wandering friend servant back to Himself by satisfaction, atonement, through His own wonderful, glorious Mediator, Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

EDITORIALS

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

Vote No!

Some months ago we reported to you about a new attempt in the State of Michigan to bring about parochiaid, that is, state funding of non-public schools. The proposal, promoted chiefly by the same forces (including Christian School men) which formerly tried to legalize parochiaid, was a kind of two-edged sword. On the one hand, it proposed the elimination of property taxes as the chief source of school revenue; and it would require the state government to provide some other means of tax support (at state level) to fund the schools. In this day of so-called "tax rebellion" this was, of course, the "candy" which was designed to attract votes. On the other hand, it proposed a voucher system, according to which every school-age child would receive a tuition-voucher which could be turned in at *any* school, public or private, to pay for his education.

In earlier editorials we called this nothing but a thinly disguised parochiaid proposal, although the forces promoting it tried not to leave this impression on the public and even called their organization by a name which would not hint at parochiaid, "Citizens for More Sensible Financing of Schools." We were not the only ones to recognize this as a parochiaid proposal. The traditional foes of parochiaid among the public school forces also recognized this, and the "Council Against Parochiaid" has been actively opposing the new proposal.

It is not our intention at this time to offer further critique of the proposal, but to report on progress made in the effort to get the proposal on the ballot in the November election which will soon be held.

On September 9 *The Grand Rapids Press* reported that the petitions to place this proposal on the ballot apparently had enough signatures and that the Board of State Canvassers had decided that the proposal was to appear on the November ballot as Proposal H.

On September 28 *The Grand Rapids Press* in an Associated Press dispatch reported that a group called the Council Against Parochiaid had taken to the Michigan Supreme Court "11 specific objections in its lawsuit over whether the proper petition form was used and whether it was circulated properly." It should be kept in mind that this was not a lawsuit concerning the constitutionality of the proposal itself, but only a suit as to the propriety of the proposal's place on the November 7 ballot.

On September 29 it was reported in *The Grand Rapids Press* that the lawsuit by the Council Against Parochiaid was rejected and that the proposal will indeed appear on the November 7 ballot.

What the outcome in the November election will be is difficult to predict. There is a profusion of proposals on the ballot, including more than one about taxes. This might tend to work against Proposal H. It could, however, also have the opposite effect. The fact that loud voices are being heard about the necessity of cutting taxes may also work in favor of Proposal H. That, however, powerful and large forces oppose Proposal H is also a fact; and these could well succeed in their efforts to defeat it at the ballot box.

Even a favorable vote, of course, should not affect the attitude of our schools and people. If parochiaid is principally wrong and dangerous — and it is — then we cannot accept it even if it is available.

But if it is principally wrong, then we should also take advantage of the opportunity to express ourselves in the voting booth. We should vote No, not for the reasons which public school supporters put forth, but for our own reasons of principle.

We urge our Michigan readers to vote on November 7, and to vote NO!

Playground or Battlefield?

It does not require keen powers of observation to detect that we live in the midst of a hedonistic culture. Perhaps that word "hedonistic" is, by reason of its very foreignness, a euphemism, i.e., a nice sounding word for a very evil and ugly reality. Simply put, a hedonistic culture is a culture in which men are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. And please note: I do not say, "*more than* lovers of God." That would make it a matter of degree. But I say, "*rather than* lovers of God." That makes it a matter of antithesis, a matter of either . . . or.

Without difficulty one can enumerate many items which point to the truth of this proposition. The trouble is, perhaps, that we ourselves become so accustomed to living in such an environment and such a culture that we frequently do not stop to consider it and to evaluate it.

Item — Stand at the intersection of Torrence Avenue and Interstates 80 and 94 on a late afternoon on Friday. Observe the thousands of cars streaming out of metropolitan Chicago bumper-to-bumper and three abreast. Where are they going? To Michigan, to seek pleasure. You can observe the same phenomenon on the Tri-state Tollway northbound or on the Northwest Tollway, except that there the thousands of hurrying and impatient vehicles will be driving toward Wisconsin. Forty-eight hours later you can observe them streaming back toward Chicago at the latest possible moment, sated with a weekend of pleasure.

Item — Count, if you can, the hundreds of thousands who jam the football stadium of a large university or a smaller college on a Saturday afternoon. Or add up the millions who throng to the Sunday doubleheader of the big league baseball teams throughout the summer. Or tally up the millions of fans (that's an abbreviation for "fanatics") who walk through the turnstiles to see a professional football team in action. Add to this the millions who have their eyes glued to the television screen or their ears to the radio.

Item — Check the schedule of your local television station. Add up the hours devoted to news programs or programs which can at all be classified as educa-

tional; then compare the hours upon hours devoted purely to entertainment. Or turn on your radio. Exclude the few all-news stations or all-religious stations. What do you find when you turn the dial? Station after station which does virtually nothing but din rock music, country-western music, or just plain jazz into your ears.

Item — Observe the fact that most of our legal holidays have been moved to Monday-observance. Why? To provide a three-day weekend which can be devoted to more pleasure-seeking.

Item — Observe the fact that labor is pressing for a four-day work-week. Why? To provide more free time which may be devoted to pleasure-seeking.

Items such as these may be multiplied. These I enumerated offhand.

I have mentioned them, bear in mind, not because I intend to discuss the right or wrong of any of the forms of entertainment mentioned above. I have mentioned them as symptoms, evidences, of a certain mode of life, a certain attitude, a certain madness which characterizes our culture and which infects all of life in our country. That I mention our country does not mean that I exclude others which could fall under the same judgment; but I know our own country from firsthand and extended observation. I would hazard a guess that the same thing could be said of many other lands: their culture is characterized by pleasure-madness, and that, too, usually in direct proportion to the degree of affluence.

What, we may ask, are the characteristics of this pleasure-madness?

In the first place, this is their religion. Just as the people of God are lovers of God, these worldlings are lovers of pleasure. Pleasure — all the pleasures that life and the world have to offer — is their god, and pleasure-seeking is their religion. They love pleasure. They set their heart on pleasure. They aim at pleasure. They strive after pleasure. They do all in their power to obtain pleasure. They cannot rest until they obtain it. And when they have obtained it, they want always more and more.

In the second place, they view the world as a playground, as *their* playground. If it does not in its natural state offer them enough variety of pleasure, they will use it and bend it and shape it, employ its powers and its resources, as well as the inventive genius of their fellowmen, all in order to achieve one goal: more enjoyment of a greater variety of pleasures, all for the satisfaction of their carnal, pleasure-mad nature.

This is real!

Ask the child of the world what he wants out of life, what he aims at. He will tell you that he wants enjoyment. He certainly does not look at his job as being a God-given station and calling in life. He does not even look at it as a mere means to provide daily bread for himself and his family. No, he wants more, much more. He wants some enjoyment out of life. He wants a good, comfortable home. He wants a car. He wants a recreational vehicle. He wants a boat. He wants a summer home. He wants sufficient money to go on a long and expensive vacation-trip. He wants, wants, wants — always more. And he wants time to enjoy all these things. He is compelled to work, at least enough so that he can adequately finance his pleasure-seeking. But his work is not in any sense the main thing. It is secondary: it stands in the service of his pleasure-seeking. That explains the fact that he clamors for a shorter work-week — with the same, or higher, wages, of course. That explains the fact that his union-contract must stipulate a goodly number of paid holidays, as well as an ever longer paid vacation.

If he can possibly manage, he will arrange, too, for an early retirement — again, with adequate pay — so that then he can devote all his time to enjoying life, to pleasures.

Such is the striving of the wealthy and of the middle class.

Such is also the striving of those who live at the so-called poverty level. The haves want more. The have-nots want to graduate to the class of the haves.

What is your attitude, child of God?

No, I am not first of all interested in the legitimacy or illegitimacy of certain forms of pleasure. I surely would not deny that there is a proper place in the life of a child of God for recreation and relaxation.

But my concern is with *attitudes*, with your outlook on life.

Do you view the world as a playground? Well, a playground is for play. And if you view the world as a playground, then your life in the world will be characterized by pleasure-seeking.

Or do you view the world as a battlefield in which a spiritual battle is waged? Well, a battlefield is for battle. And if you view the world as a battlefield, then your life in the world will be characterized by the spiritual battle of faith — even in your times of enjoyment and relaxation and recreation.

It is plainly evident that such an attitude will make a radical difference.

More about this later.

CORRESPONDENCE

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema
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Dear Prof. Hoeksema:

In my recent article concerning the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, I made certain critical remarks about the moderator of the Assembly, Dr. G. Aiken Taylor, which remarks I feel were out of place. I am speaking specifically of my comments on the way in which Dr. Taylor conducted himself as moderator. I should point out that what I wrote was based on personal feeling. It should be obvious that there is some problem in establishing an objective basis on which to judge arrogance. Others, and I am sure Dr. Taylor, felt that his conduct was appropriate. That I did not, and do not, for whatever reasons, should not have been

included. I have, frankly, allowed my strong disagreement with Dr. Taylor in areas of theology to become far too personal and this may have, in fact, distorted my own views of the way in which he handled himself, though I am not prepared to admit that in a total way. I still feel that Dr. Taylor has led the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL into positions at odds with Reformed truth. Concerning that, one has only to read for himself and decide on the basis of his own understanding. For the rest, however, the personal remarks were out of place and for them I herewith apologize to you, your readers, and Dr. Taylor, and ask that this be printed at the earliest possible date in the STANDARD BEARER.

Cordially,
E. C. Case

STUDIES IN ISAIAH

God's People Encouraged in Flooding Judgments

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

The previous article dealt with "The Sign of Isaiah's Son" (Isa. 8:1-6), under the headings:

A. Foretelling Destruction of Confederated Syria and Israel by Assyria (1-4).

B. Revealing Desolations Made by Assyria in Israel and Judah (5-8).

1. The sin of distrust and misplaced trust on the part of Judah (5-6), and now,

2. *The flood of God's judgments for these sins.* "And therefore (because the people had distrusted God's protection and had relied on the success of their application for help from one of their enemies), behold, (take note of what is about to come upon you), Adonai brings up upon them the waters of the river, the mighty ones (waters) and the great ones (waters), even the king of Assyria and all his glory, and it shall go up over upon all its channels, and it shall go over all its banks (submerging Israel and finally inundating Judah). And it shall come on against Judah; it shall overwhelm and pass over even to the neck; it shall reach and (there) shall be the expansion of its wings (to) the fulness of the breadth of Thy land, O Immanuel!" (v. 7-8).

Judgment against Syria and Israel is also to extend to Judah, which turned away from the waters of Shiloah, the waters flowing softly in mercy. For this, Judah then will not have the quiet waters of Shiloah, but the mighty, sweeping, damaging waters of the Euphrates. For men who will not have the river which

flows from the throne of God will receive the overflowing flood waters of judgment. The world has its Minne-ha-ha, Laughing Water, or its Sault, Dancing Water, but the Church has its Waters of Shiloah. The tiny rill of the gospel should mean more to us than the grand rapids or great powers of the ungodly world. Churning rapids are dangerous, especially when formed by the mad jumble of ecclesiastical streams crammed into one ecumenical channel. It all leads to enslavement under an Assyrian tyrant and all his earthly glory.

But, say modern men, you are behind the times. We have no patience with your waters of quietness, your golden thread of election, or your scarlet thread of atonement and imputed righteousness. We live in a fast-paced age and must keep up with the times. We require more advanced thought in this enlightened age of titanic oil spills at sea, and other grand improvements; and we have discovered that the universe made itself. So we can not afford to lag behind the cognoscenti, but must head for an atomic smash, like other people.

But as people of God, we may well wait patiently for Him, knowing, as one man put it, that "the day will come when the worldly-wise will not only be called fools by others, but will confess themselves so in endless despair."

Now the flood waters are up to the neck. The enemy has gotten Judah (the kingdom of Christ) by the throat. So it is not even a matter of "sink or

swim.” Judah is going down. But God can keep the head of the remnant of His people above water. Yet punishment for their despising the Lord and His kingdom is upon them and cannot be avoided. The wings of the Assyrian military shall spread over the breadth of Judah, Thy land, O Immanuel! Where Palestine is said to be Immanuel’s Land we have the assumption and implication of the Messiah’s heavenly origin, His Davidic descent and royal authority. Isaiah prophetically addresses Christ, the promised Messiah, to hold out to the elect remnant a remnant of hope. Their comfort is that He shall yet come, and that in order that He may come, they then must be returned to Immanuel’s Land, where Immanuel must be born, out of Judah’s tribe.

Sweeter sounds than music knows
 Charm me in Immanuel’s name;
 All her hopes my spirit owes
 To His birth and Cross and shame.
 — John Newton

God was saying, as Calvin put it, “Nevertheless, the land shall be Thine, O Immanuel; in it Thou shalt have Thy residence and abode.” The land, and the Jews, shall be overrun, but cannot be destroyed until Immanuel, the virgin’s Son, be born there, live there, preach, work miracles, and die there. Isaiah is so refreshed by the name and sight of Christ as to forget all distresses, and in Him “to triumph over Satan and over enemies of every description.” There is comfort in the name Immanuel, God with us, to all who receive the promises of God by faith. For it is only by faith that we know God is with us.

C. Encouraging God’s People in the Destruction (9-22).

1. *Their enemies shall not prosper against them.* “Be evil (Ger., bese), peoples, and ye shall be broken in pieces, and give ye ear, all from distant lands; gird yourselves (for attack and battle against God’s people), and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves and ye shall be broken in pieces. Counsel ye, counsel, and it shall come to nought (be frustrated); speak a word, and it shall not stand (be carried out); for with us (is) God” (v. 9, 10). Judah’s enemies are destined to fail. Their conspiracies are not the most to be feared (v. 12) Jehovah is to be feared (v. 13). He is for the elect a sanctuary, but for the reprobate a stone of stumbling (v. 14-15).

Here, in v. 9, the heathen nations are addressed. They, the breakers in pieces, shall themselves be broken in pieces. In every age the nations of the world are shivered to pieces on the rock of the Church. The Church, the spiritual Israel, is as a rock, for “God is with us”! The nations surrounding and

distant from Israel are evil. Well, then, says God through His prophet, Be evil! as evil as you please! Be bad! Be the worst you’re capable of! You think your might is sovereign and independent? There is no power but of God! But do your worst; you shall be shivered to pieces. Gird yourselves (like a wrestler tightly bound about the waist, like a boxer with hands taped, an athlete with taped wrists, feet, and ankles, or like a hoplite who puts on full armor from head to foot), but you will be shattered to pieces. We, too, have seen our arch-enemy and those enemies, our sins, broken, overthrown, as God had promised it would be, according to the mother-promise (Gen. 3:15). But gird yourselves for the worst you can do in rebellion against God. For all your pain and rage, you will be shattered. For God is just. Do not imagine that He will not punish sin in time as well as in eternity. The records of divine history bear this out. Our first parents, for one sin, were driven out of Eden. The violently wicked world He drowned with a flood. Fire from heaven fell on Sodom. This tells us God is just and will now punish sin. The open mouth of the earth, swallowing up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, loudly warns you that God will not spare the guilty. The overthrow of Egypt in the Red Sea, the destruction of 185,000 of Sennacherib’s men, tell you God justly judges in time. Is it out of place to say that there are judgments of God also in our days? Many a sinner who boasts himself against the Almighty is broken in pieces. We have seen empires collapse, tyrants fall, despots fade away and the heathen dashed in pieces like a potter’s vessel.

So God says to the Church’s enemies (v. 10), Take counsel all you please, but “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (46:10). There is no counsel against the Lord. Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not? Christ’s Church fights boldly and remains on the field (Calvin). The Church has infallible counsel. The Lord further challenges the enemy: Speak the word (or decree). Make your decrees, but behind them is the decree of God determining whatsoever comes to pass. He works all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11), while the decrees of God’s enemies shall not stand, for — Immanuel! God is with us! God’s enemies exult when things go their way. They despair when things go badly for them. But God’s people are safe in His hands both in good and bad times. The plots, plans, and decrees of the wicked are war against God and His people. But if God be for us, who against us? Their counsels shall be annulled, blotted out, and the hail of the fiery darts of their enemies, too, shall sweep away the refuge of their lies. Enemy waters shall overflow their hiding places (28:17, 18).

“The enemies of the Church of God, and of His

people, can never do more than the Lord permits; they cannot go a hair's breadth beyond the divine license, and when they are 'permitted' to do their worst, there is always some weak point about all that they do, some extreme folly which renders their fury vain. The wicked carry about them the weapons of their own destruction, and when they rage most against the Most High, the Lord of all brings out of it good for His people and glory to himself. Judge not Providence in little pieces; it is a grand mosaic, and must be seen as a whole. Say not of any one hour, 'This is dark,' — it may be so, but that darkness will minister to the light, even as the ebon gloom of midnight makes the stars appear the more effulgent. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. His wisdom will undermine the mines of cunning. His skill will overtop the climbings

of craft. 'He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.' " (C.H. Spurgeon).

2. *Their enemies not to be feared, while they take refuge in God* (11-14) "For so spoke Jehovah unto me in the being strong of the hand (of God impelling me — Tregelles), and (under the influence of divine inspiration, Ezek. 3:14) dissuaded (disciplined) me from going in the way of this people, saying," (v. 11). The word of the Lord comes to His people through His prophets, and comes by the separating hand of God, withdrawing His people and His prophets from those who trust in men and ally with the world (God's enemy). It is dangerous to be allied with unbelief and with those who despise the promises of God. So the prophet and his disciples are protected from the infections of infidelity.

TAKING HEED TO THE DOCTRINE

The Reformed Doctrine of Reprobation

Rev. David Engelsma

In the eyes of Reformed Christians, the doctrine of double predestination, election and reprobation, has always been the heart of the Reformed faith and, therefore, they have boldly confessed and stoutly defended it as a most precious truth. In the eyes of the enemies of the Reformed faith, this doctrine has ever been odious — a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, with the result that they have made it the object of fiercest attack.

At the present time, predestination comes under heavy fire within the Reformed churches themselves. This is taking place in our own country, in Holland, and in many other places in the world. The form of this attack is a denial of reprobation. It is alleged that reprobation is detrimental to the Reformed faith and

should, therefore, be excised from the Reformed confession. It hinders missions and casts dark shadows of doubt over the souls of God's people. It is the reason why many preachers fail to preach election. In traditional Reformed theology, election is accompanied by reprobation. But preachers today feel an aversion to reprobation and cannot preach it. Since they regard election as inseparably connected with reprobation, they are silent on election, also. This, say the present-day foes of reprobation within the Reformed churches, is a sad state of affairs, for election should be preached. Election, they contend, is a vital Biblical truth, but reprobation is not part of the gospel. Reprobation is only a logical construction, originating in the minds of Reformed thinkers of the past.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the doctrine of reprobation is Reformed. Even the most outspoken enemies of the doctrine have to admit this. It is not so much that every Reformed and Presbyterian theologian from Calvin on has taught it, as it is that the creeds of the Reformed churches teach it. This is a problem for the opponents. They recognize that the creeds teach it. They are bound by a vow "diligently to teach and faithfully to defend" reprobation "without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same, by . . . public preaching or writing"; in fact, they are sworn to "refute and contradict" any teaching that opposes reprobation (Formula of Subscription).

This is the reason for the agitation today to do away with the Formula of Subscription and to undercut the binding authority of the creeds, especially the authority of the Canons of Dordt. The close relationship between the denial of reprobation and the effort to nullify the authority of the Canons is clear in an article by G. C. Berkouwer, "*Vragen Rondom De Belijdenis*" ("Questions Concerning The Confession"), in *Gereformeerd Theologisch Tijdschrift*, February, 1963. Berkouwer has difficulties with (in fact, disagrees with) a certain teaching of the Canons. That teaching is eternal reprobation ("...men kan concreet zeggen dat zich deze strijd concentreert in de vragen van de verwerping 'van eeuwigheid'"). The teaching of the Canons in I, VI, "That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it proceeds from God's eternal decree," "makes it impossible to distinguish predestination from fate." Berkouwer judges both of the texts which the Canons quotes in support of its teaching, Acts 15:18 and Ephesians 1:11, to be inadequate for this purpose; neither teaches what the Canons claim it does ("*een onjuist Schriftberoep*").

But Berkouwer does not feel himself guilty of violating his vow of the Formula of Subscription. He does not even feel constrained to lodge a gravamen against the teaching which he opposes. For he is not bound by this element of the Canons. It is not authoritative for him. Berkouwer distinguishes between the "central intention" of the Canons ("*centrale bedoeling*," "*grondmotief*") and the "framework" ("*kader*," "*structuur*") by which this "central intention" is expressed. The central intention of the Canons is unmerited election and the sovereignty of grace. This is binding. The framework is a view of the sovereignty of God as the cause of everything. To this belongs the notion of an eternal decree of reprobation. All of this is part of the "human and fallible character" of the confession. This is not binding. Opposition to reprobation motivates the attack on the confession.

We are bound to defend the Reformed doctrine of

reprobation. We intend to do this, focusing on the ongoing attack on reprobation in the Reformed community.

It is wise, at the outset, to guard against certain misconceptions men might have concerning a defence of reprobation. It is a misconception to suppose that we have an interest in reprobation independently of election. We concentrate on reprobation, because it is this which is under attack today. Nevertheless, our concern for reprobation is due to our love for election and our desire that election be maintained by the Reformed Church. It will become plain that in the attack on reprobation, election is at stake.

In a brochure that he wrote in 1927, "*De Plaats der Verwerping in de Verkondiging des Evangelies*" ("The Place of Reprobation in the Preaching of the Gospel"), concerning which Berkouwer has written that he does not "know of any attempt to penetrate more deeply into the counsel of God" (*Divine Election*, p. 208), Herman Hoeksema warned "that we must have no isolated sermons on reprobation . . . It is the antithetical shadow-side of election. It belongs with election. It can be understood only in the light of election. It shall certainly have to be presented, therefore, always in connection with election" (p. 23).

It is also a misconception to suppose that the defenders of double predestination are hardhearted persons who take delight in always preaching reprobation. In the little work just referred to, Hoeksema went on to say: "...reprobation must not be preached with a certain delight (*voorliefde*). Whoever is always preaching on reprobation shows thereby not only that he has a hard and cruel nature, but also that he has not understood God the Lord in His works." Paul begins the 9th chapter of the Romans with the statement that he has great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart and that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the Israelites — about whom he will say that God hardened them and blinded them, according to His reprobation of them. In a booklet entitled, "Predestination Revealed, not Hidden nor Confused," Hoeksema wrote: "one cannot very well speak of the subject of God's sovereign rejection of the reprobate . . . without feeling to an extent the same heaviness, the same continual sorrow for them which the apostle here so emphatically declares to feel in his heart. No cold-blooded rejoicing in the damnation of our fellow men may characterize our contemplation of God's sovereign dealings with the children of men" (p. 5). This is in the spirit of John Calvin's calling reprobation the "awesome decree."

Reformed men and Reformed churches proclaim and defend reprobation because of two spiritual, not natural, characteristics. Reformed people bow unre-

servedly to the authority of Scripture; and Reformed people have a zeal for the glory of God, both in His sovereignty in the saving of the elect and in His sovereignty in the damning of the reprobate.

Divine reprobation, or rejection, is the eternal decree of God which appoints certain, definite persons to everlasting damnation for their sin. It is a part of God's predestination: He determines beforehand that the eternal destiny of some, particular persons shall be hell.

In trying to grasp this truth, Reformed men have differed as to whether the objects of reprobation appeared in the mind of God as fallen or unfallen men. This is the debate between infralapsarianism (also known as sublapsarianism) and supralapsarianism. This debate concerns the order of the decrees in the eternal counsel of God. Infralapsarianism holds that God's decree of predestination follows His decree of the Fall, so that the objects of election and reprobation are present in the mind of God as sinful men and women. Supralapsarianism holds that God's decree of predestination precedes His decree of the Fall, so that the objects of election and reprobation

are present in the mind of God as unfallen, but as those who were to fall into sin.

A certain confusion concerning the relationship between the infra — supra debate and the struggle now going on over the Reformed doctrine of reprobation must be cleared up. Sometimes, the enemies of reprobation present their attack on that doctrine as an attack on the supralapsarian view of reprobation. On the other hand, Reformed people have sometimes suspected infralapsarianism as a weakening of the doctrine of reprobation. Both of these notions are equally wrong. A battle is raging within Reformed churches. It is an outbreak of the war of all the ages over the faith and gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. At issue is the Godhead of God and the sovereignty of His grace. The bulwark of the truth that the foes are determined to pull down is the doctrine of reprobation. The conflict is not between infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism, but between those who deny reprobation and those who confess reprobation, whether in an infra or in a supra manner. All Reformed believers agree on the essentials of reprobation.

(to be continued)

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Letter to Timothy

October 1, 1978

Dear Timothy,

In our last letter we discussed the election of elders to their office and the importance of spiritually qualified elders for the Church of Jesus Christ. In this letter we will discuss the particular work of the elders in the Church.

Before we discuss this matter as such, it might be well to quote here the pertinent article in the Church Order and the pertinent passage in the Form for Ordination so that we have clearly before our minds what our "minor confessions" have to say about this.

Article 23 of the Church Order reads:

The office of the elders, in addition to what was said in article 16 to be their duty in common with the minister of the Word, is to take heed that the ministers, together with their fellow-elders and the deacons, faithfully discharge their office, and both before and after the Lord's Supper, as time and circumstances may demand, for the edification of the churches, to visit the families of the congregation, in order particularly to comfort and instruct the members, and also to exhort others in respect to the Christian religion.

The pertinent part of the Form for Ordination reads:

Therefore, in the first place, the office of elders is, together with the ministers of the Word, to take the oversight of the Church, which is committed to them, and diligently to look, whether every one properly deports himself in his confession and conversation; to admonish those who behave themselves disorderly, and to prevent, as much as possible, the sacraments from being profaned: also to act (according to the Christian discipline) against the impenitent, and to receive the penitent again into the bosom of the Church, as doth not only appear from the above mentioned saying of Christ, but also from many other places of Holy Writ, as I Cor. chap. 5, and II Cor. chap. 2, that these things are not alone intrusted to one or two persons, but to many who are ordained thereto.

Secondly. Since the apostle enjoineth, that all things shall be done decently and in order, amongst Christians, and that no other persons ought to serve in the Church of Christ, but those who are lawfully called, according to the Christian ordinance, therefore it is also the duty of the elders to pay regard to it, and in all occurrences, which relate to the welfare and good order of the Church, to be assistant with their good counsel and advice, to the ministers of the Word, yea, also to serve all Christians with advice and consolation.

Thirdly. It is also the duty particularly to have regard unto the doctrine and conversation of the ministers of the Word, to the end that all things may be directed to the edification of the Church; and that no strange doctrine be taught, according to that which we read, Acts 20, where the apostle exhorteth to watch diligently against the wolves, which might come into the sheepfold of Christ; for the performance of which, the elders are in duty bound diligently to search the Word of God, and continually be meditating on the mysteries of faith.

From all this it is evident that the main task of the elders is that of supervision, or government, or rule. This is in keeping with the nature of their office, for they reflect in their office the kingship of Christ. Christ rules over His Church by His Word and His Spirit. And this rule is particularly exercised through the office of elders.

It ought to be stressed once again that this rule is always by means of the Word of God. We have talked about this before, but it bears stressing. In the final analysis, it is the Word of Christ which rules in the Church. For all who are under the rule and government of the elders are under the rule and government of the Word of Christ. His rule is the rule of all faith and life through His Word. The elders must, therefore, come always with that Word. They have no other power or authority than the Word of the Scriptures. It is also for this reason that the Form emphatically states that elders are in duty bound

diligently to search the Word of God, and continually be meditating on the mysteries of faith.

That rule is first of all over the ministers. They must take heed "that the ministers faithfully discharge their office," and must "have regard unto the doctrine and conversation of the ministers of the Word." There are two sides to this matter. On the one hand, ministers sometimes tend to forget that they are under the supervision of the elders. They act like little popes in their congregations and simply rule single-handedly and authoritatively without any regard of this injunction of the Church Order and the Form. The elders have almost nothing to say in the Consistory meetings or in the affairs of the congregation. All is done by the ministers. This is a very great evil and will result in the spiritual deterioration of the congregation. On the other hand, elders must not be afraid to exercise their rule also over the ministers. They must insist that the ministers submit to their rule. Upon them is this responsibility.

This rule which the elders must exercise over the ministers of the Word is particularly in connection with the preaching. The Form speaks of the "conversation" of the ministers, but this is not to be interpreted as meaning that the life of the ministers can be separated from their office. There is, of course, a certain sense of the word in which the elders supervise the life of the minister in the same way in which they supervise the life of all the members of the congregation, but a minister's life is always closely connected to his office. He always walks in the congregation as the shepherd of the sheep. Every part of his life stands related to his calling. He cannot, even for a moment, say: "Now I am living apart from my office and I must be considered as an ordinary member of the flock." He is always the minister, the shepherd, the pastor.

The Church Order speaks of this supervision in terms of taking "heed that the ministers faithfully discharge their office"; and the Form speaks of the calling of elders to have regard to the ministers so that "all things may be directed to the edification of the Church; and that no strange doctrine be taught." This implies a number of things, only a few of which we can mention here. In the first place, the elders must see to it that the Word is purely preached in the worship services on the Lord's Day. This is why, after the service, the elders shake hands with the minister. By this handshake they indicate that they put their approval on the work which the minister performed. And seeing to it that the minister preaches faithfully, they must be sure: 1) that the truth of Scripture alone is preached. There must be no heresy or false doctrine. 2) That the whole counsel of God is preached. There are many times when a minister does not necessarily preach heresy, but he fails also to preach

the whole counsel of God. He leaves out the sharp doctrines of Scripture. He avoids the truths which, in his opinion, might offend. He steers clear of doctrines which emphasize the truth of sovereign grace. The elders must see to it that this is not done, and must admonish their minister when he fails in this respect. 3) That the warnings and admonitions of Scripture are brought to the attention of the people so that not only are believers comforted, but also that "it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God, and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted." (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. and A. 84).

To accomplish this, it is well that from time to time the minister and the elders consult together concerning the preaching so that the minister and the elders together may discuss whether these obligations of the minister's calling are being carried out. This will give the minister opportunity to discuss his ministry with those who have supervision over him, and it will give the elders opportunity to discuss with the minister the needs of the congregation which they perhaps know far better than a minister — especially if the minister has not been long in a given congregation.

But belonging to the office and calling of the ministers is the work of Catechetical instruction, of family visitation, of pastoral calls. Over all this work too the elders must exercise supervision. Usually, to supervise the Catechetical instruction, elders periodically visit the Catechism classes; and this is as it should be. But the minister ought to consult with his elders periodically concerning the material he intends to use in Catechism so that they may approve of that material and have opportunity to offer suggestions. Nor must the elders feel that the work of Catechetical instruction is better left in the hands of the pastor who is supposed to be an "expert" in this field. They must labor closely with the minister so that this work

is done as carefully and faithfully as possible. Family visitation belongs to the work of elders as well as the minister, and, for that reason, either two elders or an elder and the minister make these calls. It is my conviction, however, that the elders, when they accompany the minister, ought to take a more active role in these labors. It is, however, in the area of pastoral labor that little, if any, supervision is exercised. Usually the pastor is pretty much on his own in this work. In a certain sense, this is almost bound to be the case. The elders cannot accompany the minister on all the calls he makes. Emergencies arise when the pastor is called suddenly to come to the help of one of the sheep. Pastoral counselling is often required on a regular basis at times when an elder cannot accompany the minister. Nevertheless, here too supervision must be exercised. It seems to me that the best way to accomplish this is for the pastor to submit, at each Consistory meeting, a report of his pastoral activities. There are several advantages to this. In the first place, in this way the elders can indeed exercise supervision of his work. In the second place, if there are specific problems in the congregation with which the minister is dealing, the Consistory will be kept abreast of them. In the third place, the minister can consult with the elders on problems and gain their advice as to how to proceed. In the fourth place, the elders can act as a certain "check" upon the minister. It is so easy for a minister to become too personally involved in a problem so that he loses his objectivity and allows his sentiment to overrule his judgment. The elders can be a helpful corrective to this.

In all these ways, the elders perform their work of supervision over the minister. We must continue to discuss this work of supervision, but this will have to wait for a later letter.

Fraternally in Christ,
H. Hanko

Vital Issues for Reformation Christians

(A series of public lectures from the Word of God).

- "The Inerrancy of Scripture" — Prof. Herman Hanko (Thursday, October 26)
- "Women in Church Office" — Prof. Robert Decker (Monday, October 30)
- "Reprobation — Is It Reformed?" — Rev. David Engelsma (Wednesday, November 1)

The speeches will be given in the auditorium of Illiana Christian High School, 2261 Indiana Ave., Lansing, Illinois, at 8:00 P.M.; they are sponsored by the Evangelism Committee of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.

"For the defense and promotion of the Reformed faith in the Chicago-land area."

ALL AROUND US

Women as Deacons in the C.R.C.

Rev. G. Van Baren

Those who have kept up with the decisions of Reformed church bodies, must be aware that now the Christian Reformed Church can have women ordained as deacons provided "their work is distinguished from that of elders." That last clause is, perhaps deliberately, ambiguous. The work of deacons has ever been distinguished from that of elders — why make that specification in connection with women deacons?

The reports in the *Banner*, the *Outlook*, and the *Bulletin* of the A.C.R.L. all indicate great confusion at the C.R. Synod when the above was adopted. Some have, I believe correctly, questioned the legality of the decision in light of violations of the *Church Order*. Others, again I believe correctly, have questioned the decision in light of its incompatibility with Scripture.

At the same time, both those pleased with the decision, as well as those who are very unhappy about it, are agreed: this is only the beginning. It seems that hardly anyone in the C.R.C. believes that all of this will stop with the ordination of women deacons. This is but the prelude for the final approval of women as elders and then also as ministers. It's just a matter of a few years before the C.R.C. follows the practice of other denominations in our land and in other lands. It will, I suppose, take a few years yet before Scripture will become clear to them on the subject of women as elders or ministers, and a few years yet before the Spirit leads them into a better understanding of the calling and task of the woman in the church. Such is the implication of some of the study-committee reports. One wonders: did the church never understand the Scriptures during the past 2000 years? And did not the Spirit truly guide the church in this

matter over the thousands of years of the church's existence? At least one essay on the subject admits: "As you travel through the history of the church, the man's role in the church is never questioned. Jesus was a man, the disciples were men, the leaders of Israel through the ages were mainly men." (*Calvinist Contact*, July 14, 1978, p. 7)

From the *Calvinist Contact* mentioned above, we learn the following:

The day was Wednesday, June 21, 1978. The topic was a report entitled: "Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office." At about 5 p.m. that day, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church made the following declaration: "That Consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders."

Women in office. That is something with which the church has struggled throughout the 1970's. In 1973, after receiving a report from its study committee that concluded that "the practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical office cannot be conclusively defended on biblical grounds," synod decided to refer the entire report to the churches for study and reaction.

A new study committee was appointed at that time to receive those reactions and to continue to study the question. In its report to the 1975 Synod, this committee concluded "that biblical teaching is not opposed in principle to the ordination of women to any office that men may hold in the Church."

However, in the light of the majority report of its advisory committee, the 1975 Synod declared that, in its judgment, "sufficient biblical grounds have not been advanced to warrant a departure from our present practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order."

In 1975 synod appointed a committee to study the hermeneutical principles which are involved in the proper interpretation of the relevant Scripture passages, to apply these principles in an exegetical study of the relevant passages, and to present synod with the results of their study."

A lot of words but it all comes down to this: three study committees have looked at great depth about the Biblical principles for women as elders and deacons, and with all three studies the conclusion has been the same — the Bible is "unclear" when it comes to the role of women as elders and ministers but it seems to be a bit more clear in the case of women as deacons.

Synod, in adopting that recommendation which will allow women to be ordained as deacons, backed up their decision with two main grounds: "There is some evidence in the Bible for opening the office of deacon to women. At least two passages in the New Testament (Romans 16:1 and I Timothy 3:11) indicate that women may serve as deacons." And "the headship principle in which the woman (wife) is to be subject to the man (husband) is not violated as long as the office of deacon is expressed in terms of assistance and service."

Synod was careful in adopting its stand on women deacons. The provision that "their work is distinguished from that of elders" proved to be a very strong force. . . .

The denomination has, for years, sent missionaries around the world to proclaim the Word and administer the sacraments. Among them have been several women. We at home allow women to be sent to Nigeria to preach to the natives and to baptize them but we are threatened when they ask for the same rights at home. There seems to be an inconsistency there.

In any event, women may be ordained as deacons in your church if you are ready for it. May they be blessings for the churches they serve.

The last paragraphs of the above quote indicate indeed there has been an "inconsistency" in the place of women in the church at home vs. their place on the mission field. Sadly, this "inconsistency" has been resolved not by remedying the wrong on the mission field, but by increasing the wrong by incorporating it into the life of the church at home.

The last paragraph also appears very misleading. The Church Order of the C.R.C. has not yet been officially changed, and will not be till 1979 Synod — so officially women can not legally be placed in office until that is properly done.

The report in the *Banner*, July 14, 1978, in an editorial by Dr. L. De Koster, suggests what appears to have been great confusion on the floor of the synod. The confusion was such that there is legitimate reason to question the legality of the decision finally taken.

According to De Koster, the synodical committee of pre-advice proposed "that consistories be permitted to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon as delineated in the Church Order. Article 25." This was substantially what the majority study committee proposed. A minority study committee recommendation was substantially the same according to the spokesman for that committee. Now — this was first voted on by voice vote, then by a show of hands, but the vote was so close that it could not definitely be determined whether the motion passed or failed. Then a vote was taken by roll-call of the delegates. This showed that the motion *passed* by one vote (followed by applause from the audience). But then someone claimed an error in the tally — which proved to be the case. There was actually one fewer vote in favor and one more opposed than previously suggested. All this meant was that the motion actually failed (no applause from the audience).

Does all that sound sufficiently confusing? But the end was not yet. Now there was a motion from the floor proposing the recommendation of the minority study committee. This recommendation was, "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders." Only the last clause made this motion slightly different from that once defeated. The rules of the C.R. Synod suggest that "a main motion is not acceptable: if it is verbally or substantially the same as a motion already rejected by synod." So some reminded the chairman, but his recognition of the motion was sustained by the members of Synod by vote. Remember: the spokesman of the minority study committee had already agreed that their proposal was substantially the same as the originally proposed motion. So, when the original motion was defeated, there was no moral or legal basis for submitting a similar motion.

Yet the second motion passed by some 15 votes to spare. It is highly questionable whether this second motion was in order — at least De Koster seems to suggest that it was not.

Another complication comes in. The motion approved was and is contrary to the adopted church order of the C.R.C. That church order states in Article 3, "Confessing male members of the church who meet the Biblical requirements for office-bearers are eligible for office. . . ." Further, Article 48 states, ". . . No substantial alterations (to the church order and creeds) shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

Thus the synod adopted a change which was contrary to the church order and before the church order was altered, or could be altered. Fact is, the

synod proposed on the floor a change of the church order to be finally approved by the synod next year. That change reads: "Article 3; a. Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the offices of minister and elder. b. All confessing members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the office of deacon. c. Only those who have been officially called and ordained or installed shall hold and exercise office in the church. Supplement, Article 3, Women as Deacons: The work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders."

A motion was then adopted that "this wording of Church Order Article 3 and its Supplement be ratified by the Synod of 1979." This meets the technical requirements of the Church Order that the churches be given first the opportunity to study the proposed change before final adoption.

All of this suggests that the study on women in office and the decision on women serving as deacons was, strictly speaking, out of order on the basis of the reading of the Church Order of the C.R.C. And since this proposed change in the Church Order will not be ratified before the synod of 1979, it would surely seem incorrect to say, "women may be ordained as deacons in your church if you are ready for it." That can not be done until the Church Order is finally changed.

There are some very unhappy people in the C.R.C.

today because of this and other developments in the C.R.C. It is no wonder that Rev. P. De Jong writes in the *Outlook*:

Must we (1) for the present remain in the denomination to fight more uncompromisingly and militantly for the Reformed faith and against anti-biblical and anti-Reformed decisions and policies we see coming out of our Synod and church institutions? Must we (2) leave our denomination to seek fellowship with some other denomination or denominations which are trying to maintain and promote the Reformed faith and life? Or must we (3) move toward a secession and union of Christian Reformed churches who are determined, by the grace of God, to maintain the historic Reformed faith and practice?

One can sympathize with the agonizing of soul of many within the C.R.C. One would be tempted to provide them with some answers. But I would only suggest concerning proposal 1: while one remains to fight, how long will it take till one's children and grandchildren succumb to these false teachings which are presented in catechism, schools, churches? And there is the question of corporate responsibility: all those in the C.R.C. are part of the body which already holds many positions contrary to Scripture and the Creeds. As long as one remains in the body, he can not escape the fact that these decisions *are also his* by virtue of the fact that he is member of that body. This would be an extremely troubling reality, it seems to me.

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Family Worship - A Reformed Heritage

Rev. J. Kortering

A few weeks ago, I walked into a Christian bookstore and informed the clerk that I was interested in buying a King James Bible for table use. There came the most puzzled look over his face. It still makes me smile to recall it. Politely, he replied that he did not understand. I suppose the poor chap envisioned be-

fore his mind our family discreetly eating the venerable pages of King James. I quickly put his mind at ease and rephrased the request, a King James Bible for family devotions: good size print, hard cover, a few study helps, and such like. We were glad to find such a Bible.

The experience did leave its impression upon me. It made me think, why do we have devotions about the table at the time we eat? Is this something particularly "Dutch"? I recall those times when I had the privilege of being guest in homes of families that were not Dutch, nor Reformed in church affiliation, and they did not have family devotions as we think of it. At best there was "grace" at the beginning of the meal and that was it. In other homes they had evening devotions in the family room while the entire family was gathered for reading the Bible, discussing it, and having family prayer.

Almost instinctively, my thoughts wandered back to the Bible. Is there any mention of family worship there?

In early Old Testament times we read of this. In Genesis 4:26 mention is made that during the days of Enos, the son of Seth, "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." This would have taken place within the sphere of the family, since there was no formal church established. Whether they did this with more than one family is uncertain. In all likelihood it was on an individual basis, much like the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, Genesis 4:3,4, and of Noah, Genesis 8:20. The sacrifices represented part of their devotional life with God.

There are other references. In Genesis 18:19 we read of Abraham, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Such exhorting of children by Abraham would involve many serious moments of rehearsal of God's promises and the calling they had to be a peculiar people.

Moses spoke on behalf of God when he said to Israel, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates," Deut. 6:6-9. What a beautiful picture of the family at worship.

Did not Job do likewise? His sons feasted in their houses and we read, "And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them and rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts," Job 1:5. Is that not a father interceding for his children?

Daniel prayed three times a day in Babylon. Mind you, this was not a heathen custom. The King Darius had listened to his princes and made a law that none in the kingdom could ask any petition of any god, save the king. Daniel refused to pray to the king; he prayed to his God! Of this we read, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed he went into his house; and his windows being opened in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime," Dan. 6:10. We can be sure that the aforetime did not only refer to the days prior to the king's decree, but to the days of his youth. He was trained in daily prayer while he was still at home with his parents.

Turning to the New Testament, we learn that the Bereans searched the Scripture *daily*. They read God's Word each day in their homes, more than likely with their children. With this knowledge, they were in a position to judge whether Paul's preaching was in harmony with the Scriptures.

One other significant passage is found in I Tim. 4:4,5. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer." This is mentioned in the context of eating. Some leaders commanded the people to abstain from meats which God had created to be received with thanksgiving, verse 3. The emphasis here is this, we are blessed in our eating of food if we are able to do so in the light of the Word of God and prayer.

Probably family worship about the table at meal-time is "Dutch." Gladys M. Hunt makes this observation in her book *Focus on the Family*: "My grandfather was a Dutch immigrant with ten children, and he took seriously his responsibilities for the Word of God in the lives of his children. It was family custom that the Scripture be read at the close of every meal for which the family gathered. He didn't check out the psychological effect of this on his children; it never occurred to him to stop the practice because the children wiggled. He did it because it was right and he was responsible. Because he obeyed, my father learned to be a faithful Christian father to us and carried out the same pattern. In our home no one thought of leaving the table after any meal until we had read the Scripture. We had food to nourish us physically; then we had food to nourish us spiritually. It was built into life as part of our daily nourishment, like a spiritual dessert," page 66.

The Reformers, especially Luther and Calvin, placed great emphasis upon the Word of God, its reading and study. They translated the Bible so that it could be in the homes of the people. They spent time in prayer and meditation. Surely, Geneva stands as a noble testimony that Calvin had great interest in the

spiritual strength of the home and community as it was brought under the power of the Word of God. Some of this can be seen in the concern that our Calvinistic forefathers in the Netherlands had for the spiritual well-being of the family. Handed down from many generations ago, we have our Church Order. It includes Article 23, part of which states, "The office of the Elders . . . in common with the Minister of the Word . . . before and after the Lord's Supper, as time and circumstances may demand, for the edification of the churches, to visit the families of the congregation, in order particularly to comfort and instruct the members, and also to exhort others in respect to the Christian religion." The main thrust here is that the consistory, office bearers in the church, are to be vitally concerned about the well-being of the family. One of the earliest assemblies of the Dutch churches met in the Wezelian Convention, 1568, and ruled that such home visitation be done every week. A later convention, 1586, explained that those visits should include inquiry whether the father, "conduct the duties of godliness in the faithful instruction of their households in the matter of family prayers, (morning and evening prayers) and such like matters."

In his book, *Taking Heed to the Flock*, Dr. P.Y. De Jong gives some details as to the emphasis that was placed upon family visiting and more particularly the concern for family worship. He makes reference to the Synod of Glasgow in Scotland, 1708, in which a certain procedure was adopted for "ministerial visitation" to the families of the church. Such visits included this: "After the minister has spoken to the servants and children, he must address himself especially to the master and mistress of the family about their personal obligation to God and their care for the salvation of their souls; their duty to promote the true religion and worship of God in their home, opposing and punishing sin, promoting true godliness, and honor the day of the Lord. Here it is also proper to admonish the fathers to see to it that in the daily family worship the Lord is served in prayer, thanksgiving, and Scripture reading," page 76.

He also makes reference to "Questions which the Elders of the Church at Utrecht are to ask the members of the congregation at the time of family visitation." This includes the following: "Whether the head of the family faithfully leads the family in prayer and in teaching them the Word."

After surveying this history, Dr. De Jong makes his own suggestions on pages 78-82. Among the questions that should be considered, he offers this one:

"(5) Is family worship faithfully and profitably conducted? This of course requires ideally that the father leads in audible prayer, reads the Scriptures reverently and if possible comments on the significance of the passage for the family. Likewise the elders should know whether every member of the family, even the younger children who have learned to read, are in possession of a Bible and make diligent use of it for themselves."

From this consideration, we may conclude that it is Biblical and certainly part of our "Dutch" heritage to have family worship. Generally, our forefathers have connected this with the time of eating the family meal.

Hence, we return to our King James for table use.

It was suggested at our Standard Bearer staff meeting, that there is legitimate concern on the part of many of our people, elders, pastors, and parents that this family worship is suffering.

It is of course difficult to determine to what extent it may be suffering. I suppose that the weakening of family worship takes a definite course. A beautiful and significant heritage can become mere tradition. Family devotions instead of being moments of spiritual *worship*, degenerate into a pious formality. No family cares to continue a parody of piety, so the whole idea of reading the Bible and praying together at mealtime is abandoned or sorely neglected.

In other cases, however, it may not be so drastic. Family devotions probably fall victim to so many other pressures that seem to prevail. Parents and children know the importance of them, but somehow other things win out.

The Lord willing, we like to analyze a bit what is involved in family worship and consider in our next article some suggestions as to how it can be more effectively conducted.

All of this leads us to the purpose of this new rubric of articles in our Standard Bearer.

We are going to concern ourselves with preparing brief study guides of the books of the Bible. The idea is that they can be used in conjunction with family devotions, to help open up the Scripture, summarize the teachings of the many chapters, and in general help one keep his direction while reading the Bible at the table.

This custom is a worthy heritage.

May we not neglect it nor depart from it.

Know the standard and follow it.
Read The Standard Bearer

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Signs in Society (3) Homosexuality

Rev. Mark Hoeksema

Last time we began to examine some of the factors which are helping to produce social unity, and pointed out that the women's liberation movement is one social factor that has done much to strengthen the trend toward this unity. We concluded that this movement is one of the signs of the times in the area of society, and that the result of this phenomenon (and others) will be the antichristian kingdom.

Another social trend is the recent emphasis upon the rights, or lack of rights, of homosexuals. This emphasis, sometimes called the gay rights movement, is of recent date. It was only a few years ago that the subject of homosexuality was very rarely discussed, never written about in any respectable publication, and mostly ignored in the hope that it would go away. Whether from ignorance of its nature, or because of aversion to the unpleasant subject, the whole matter was not visible to any great extent.

But all of that has changed. No longer hushed up or avoided, homosexuality today is openly discussed and written about. With the rise of the gay rights movement in the last few years, homosexuals have been demanding what they consider to be rights and privileges that have traditionally been denied them. They want acceptance by and in the community, and the end to discrimination against them in the armed forces, and in many positions of social responsibility, such as the teaching profession. They press for equal treatment in matters of employment, and, even more, for public recognition that their life-style is a legitimate and viable alternative to that of the rest of the more conventional society. There have even been attempts to have homosexual marriages recognized in the eyes of the law, so far unsuccessfully.

The whole issue of homosexuality (and the church's involvement with it) came to the fore within the last year by means of national publicity. In an effort to maintain community standards, officials in Dade County of Florida passed an ordinance that restricted homosexuals in employment opportunities, particularly in the educational field, thus in effect discriminating against them. The gay rights movement fought this ordinance, claiming denial of their rightful

opportunities and asserting their rights to equality under the law. Opposing the homosexuals was a coalition of conservatives, including many church leaders. Well-known entertainer Anita Bryant emerged as the spokesman for this conservative group. After a protracted and sometimes bitter campaign the ordinance was upheld by a vote of the people and the gays went down to defeat. A similar event took place shortly after in Minneapolis, with the same result, and the same outcome is generally predicted wherever the rights of homosexuals are contested across the country.

Now all of this has affected not only our society in general, but also the church. The church has become involved in the issue of homosexuality. Without passing judgment on the correctness or wisdom of such involvement, and without expressing opinion concerning the sincerity of the people involved, I merely note the fact as such. Homosexual marriages have taken place, some with the blessing of clergy. A so-called "Metropolitan Church" has arisen, composed primarily of and ministering to homosexuals. According to reports, its membership runs the gamut from radical liberals to conservatives or evangelicals who profess faith in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. In addition, several major denominations have faced the issue on the synodical level, including the United Presbyterian Church. A task force assigned to prepare a report to the Synod agreed that society should not discriminate economically against homosexuals, and urged the repeal of laws governing sexual behavior of consenting adults. The task force also agreed that homosexuality was not a matter of conscious choice, but arises instead from a complex of psycho-social forces that are difficult to analyze. The majority of this task force endorsed the acceptance of practicing homosexuals into the offices of the church, basing their position on a rejection of Romans 1:18-32 as being merely the teaching of St. Paul conditioned by time and place. The minority, however, rejected such ordination as being contrary to God's intentions for man, though they urged the church to accept and work with homosexuals. The

General Assembly adopted this minority report by a good majority, reflecting the sentiments of the members of the United Presbyterian denomination.

How did all of this come about? While the causes or origins of any trend or change in society are very complex, a couple of major factors can be pointed out. As far as society in general is concerned, the gay rights movement is a delayed result or corollary of the sexual freedom movement of the 1960's, delayed because even the radicalism of the 1960's did not extend quite so far as homosexuality. And in more recent times the so-called human rights movement has lent impetus to this phenomenon. After all, if the racial minorities and economically underprivileged can press for and obtain more rights, why not homosexuals? And in our technological society the media soon spread the word from one end of the nation to the other. The gays, after all, are but a small minority of our society. The latest and best figures place their strength (both males and females) at between four and seven percent of the population. But a vocal minority they have become, and society has reacted both encouragingly and discouragingly, so that the issue has become highly visible and controversial.

The church has become involved in the controversy mostly in reaction to what has taken place in society. Predictably, the response of the church has varied widely, depending on who is responding. Some wish to take the historical stand against homosexuality in any form, interpreting traditionally and literally such passages as Genesis 19, Leviticus 18 and 20, I Corinthians 6:9-10, I Timothy 1:10, Jude 6-7, and the clearest passage of all, Romans 1:18ff. They point out that we must believe and accept the Bible for what it says and clearly means, and that practicing homosexuals are therefore excluded from membership in the church and surely from its offices. Others take exactly the opposite view, insisting that this sin is no worse than others which do not bar one from membership or the office, and argue away the clear teachings of Scripture by operating under the assumption that these are time-bound and culturally conditioned, and hence not binding on the church today, which has a much better understanding of such matters than did the Biblical writers. They rely upon the findings of modern psychology and proclaim that homosexuality is the result of social conditioning, and that the individual is not responsible for what he is. Still others attempt to find a middle ground. They condemn the practice of homosexuality, and insist that those who do practice it are ineligible at least for the offices of the church, and perhaps for membership in it. But they also distinguish between the condition and the practice of homosexuality; while condemning the latter, they are sympathetic to the former. While they feel that the practice is sin, and is

clearly condemned in God's Word, they also assert that the factors which go into producing a homosexual are very complex and that the individual cannot be held wholly responsible for what he is. There is disagreement on this point of responsibility, for the matter of social conditioning does not make the matter of homosexuality wholly involuntary, but must include choice as well; where the line must be drawn has not been determined by a consensus of the Christian community.

What then must we say about all of this? As far as society at large is concerned, this movement is undoubtedly part of the "levelling" effect of which we have spoken before. It is necessary to the success of antichrist that society as much as possible be made one. Most people would probably agree that if there is a fringe of society (at least regarding popular attitudes), the homosexuals constitute that fringe. It is then a mark of the progress of the development of antichrist that already now attempts are being made to incorporate this group into an integrated society. But at the same time, in light of the failure of this movement on the whole, it is also clear that the uniformity of antichrist has not yet been achieved, and that his time is not yet. How long it will be before a homogeneous society comes to pass is a matter of speculation; but that the clear signs are present is beyond doubt.

As far as the church is concerned, it is necessary to observe that, to the extent that the church justifies and supports this social trend, it is wrong and is proceeding down the road of apostasy toward amalgamation with the world as the false church. How the church can justify and support the homosexual movement in the face of the clear teachings of Scripture is impossible to understand, except to say that the church has torn loose from its Scriptural moorings. The Scriptures are so clear and explicit in the condemnation of homosexuality, both the practice and the condition that to teach otherwise defies comprehension.

Our obligation as Reformed Christians is then to be aware of what is transpiring in the world around us so that we can read intelligently the signs of the times. But our obligation is also never to be swayed by the flood of publicity and arguments against the teachings of Scripture, and not to become callous or indifferent to the sins of the world just because we hear so much about them. Homosexuality is sin, and in the eyes of God it will remain so until the end of all time. And as both an incident and a result of sin (according to Romans 1), it and the society that allows it will fall under the wrath of God. Let us therefore be aware of the coming of the end, and in faithfulness to the Scriptures, keep our garments unspotted from the world!

Dear Members and Friends of the R.F.P.A.,

We give thanks unto our Faithful Covenant God in this the 54th year of publishing the Standard Bearer, for He has provided us the strength and an open door to publish our magazine. The following information is witness of His many blessings to us.

We are still printing, as of August first, 1900 copies of the Standard Bearer, two hundred of which are kept for bound volumes, while forty are kept for reprints. By the way, bound volumes now cost fifty cents more. The last issue of the Standard Bearer mailed out totaled 1660 copies, the same number mailed out as last year. To subscribers in the Grand Rapids area, 385 copies were mailed out, plus another 381 copies to subscribers in other parts of Michigan for a total of 766. In Michigan, both Jenison and Hudsonville continue to be a great outlet of the Standard Bearer where together, 162 subscribers receive a copy of our magazine. In comparison, 152 copies go to Iowa, 111 copies are mailed to Illinois and 82 copies are mailed to California.

The Standard Bearer is mailed to forty states. The only states that do not receive copies are: Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Dist. of Columbia, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Utah. We also mail copies to far away places for instance: Australia, Brazil, Germany, Hungary, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore and South Africa. Indeed the Standard Bearer reaches to the far corners of the earth.

The Membership, Education, and Information committee reports that we are still continuing the ten issues for two dollars program, with our hope that many of these will become regular subscribers. We have also started a new program whereby each subscriber to the Standard Bearer may, with his renewal, send ten free issues to a new subscriber. We urge those who know of someone interested in subscribing to the Standard Bearer to take advantage of the ten free issue offer.

The board continues to acknowledge gifts of ten dollars or more by means of a thank you letter. Gifts this year totaled \$10,038.88. Church collections totaled \$5,913.01 and individual gifts totaled \$4,125.87. The board greatly appreciates your gener-

ous financial support and covets your prayers in supporting this means of proclaiming the Reformed Truth. It is through these generous donations and gifts that our printing and mailing costs are met.

The board has a committee along with a committee of the Permanent Committee for Publication of Protestant Reformed Literature still continuing work in obtaining a tax exemption letter to become a non-profit organization. Progress is being made as will be evidenced by another amendment needing to be made to our constitution.

The board gratefully acknowledges the hard work of our business manager Mr. Henry VanderWal. Henry also handles the mailing of our books. We also thank Mr. Gerrit Pipe for his efforts in helping to mail the Standard Bearer and Mr. John Bishop for helping Mr. Pipe while our business manager was on jury duty.

How good our Covenant God is to us in that, by his Grace, He has guided and sustained our editors. By His Spirit He has enabled them to write faithfully concerning the Reformed Truth. Indeed, thanks be to God for our faithful Editor-in-chief and department editors.

We sincerely thank the following members of the board over the past three years who are now retiring; Leonard Dykstra, Leon Kamps, and Fred Ondersma, for their untiring efforts and dedicated labors. Thanks be to God for supplying these men who have faithfully labored for the cause of God's kingdom.

The Staff and Board of the Reformed Free Publishing Association continue to covet your prayers and support of this Kingdom work. We conclude our report with a question. Recently a new subscriber in Iowa enclosed a short note along with the seven dollar subscription fee. He expressed his interest in our Standard Bearer and wished us the Lord's blessing. He included this note: "It amuses me that you call your organization the Reformed 'Free' Publishing Association, when I have to pay seven dollars for a years subscription." That is an interesting thought. Do you know why the word "Free" is used?

THE BOARD OF THE R.F.P.A.

David Harbach, Secretary

IN MEMORIAM

On August 2, 1978, our beloved husband and father, MAURICE KLOP was called to his eternal home.

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

Genevieve Klop
Ed and Mary Lotterman
and children
Jonathan and Jayne Klop

Kalamazoo, Michigan

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Ladies Aid Society of the Hull, Iowa Protestant Reformed Church hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mrs. John Boer, in the sudden death of her grandson, JOHN DOUGLAS BOER, at the age of 24 years.

May the Lord comfort the sorrowing and grant them peace in the knowledge that — "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord." (Romans 8:28a).

Rev. Mark Hoeksema, Pres.
Mrs. Nellie Brummel, Sec'y.

PRE-CHRISTMAS SALE

Order this very special package deal now!

The Mysteries Of The Kingdom
(An Exposition of the Parables)

Peaceable Fruit
(For The Nurture of Covenant Youth)

God's Covenant Faithfulness
(50th Anniversary of the Prot. Ref. Churches)

Therefore Have I Spoken
(A Biography of Herman Hoeksema)

Each of these books usually sells for \$5.95. If you order before November 15, you can obtain all four for \$15.00, plus \$1.00 for shipping. That's almost 40% discount!

Write to: RFPA Publications, P.O. Box 2006, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501. (Enclose your check or money order for \$16.00).

— NOTICE OF LECTURE —

On October 19, 1978, at 8 P.M., in The First Protestant Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, our annual Reformation Day Lecture will be given. Rev. Bernard Woudenberg of our Kalamazoo Protestant Reformed Church will speak on the topic — THE REFORMATION AND THE PREACHING. Plan now to attend and urge others to hear this interesting lecture.

The Lecture Committee

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On November 1, 1978, the Lord willing, our parents MR. AND MRS. GERRIT BRUMMEL, will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary. We are grateful to our heavenly Father for keeping them for each other and for us their children and grandchildren. We are thankful for the Christian love, guidance, and home given us by them. Our prayer is that our Covenant God will continue to bless them in the years which are yet to come.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." (Ps. 103:17).

Andrew and Mary Brummel
Shelley, Kristi, and Julie
Peter and Judy Brummel
Stacy, Gary, Lane,
Kevin, and Allisa

Jerry and Marilyn Brummel
Jessica
Allen and Florence Driesen
Jeremy and Rebecca
John Brummel

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Protestant Reformed Church wish to express their sympathy to Mrs. Genevieve Klop in the loss of her husband, MAURICE KLOP.

"The Lord knoweth the days of the upright; and their inheritance shall be forever." (Psalm 37:18).

IN MEMORIAM

The Adult Bible Study Class of the Kalamazoo (Michigan) Protestant Reformed Church wish to express their sympathy to Miss Berdena Rust in the loss of her mother, MRS. SENA RUST.

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

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST
September 13, 1978
Hope Prot. Ref. Church

Classis East met in regular session on September 13, 1978 at Hope Church. Rev. J. Heys led in opening devotions; Rev. M. Joostens chaired this session. Each church was represented by two delegates.

The two matters put in the hands of study committees were treated at this session. The first was the request from three brethren in Skowhegan, Maine for the organization of a Protestant Reformed church there. The classis decided that organization was not feasible at this time. These brethren were advised either to contact the Mission Committee and request that some kind of labor be done in their area or to determine if one of our congregations would consider the Skowhegan area as its mission project.

The second matter concerned the request of Hope Church for advice on how to proceed with the membership papers of children of divorced parents. Classis decided that this matter was out of order since it had not been finished in the consistory.

Classical appointments were requested by Faith, Southeast, and Southwest. The following schedule

was adopted: FAITH: October 8 — Joostens; SOUTHEAST: October 1 — Heys, October 22 — Woudenberg, November 5 — Van Overloop, November 19 — Joostens, December 3 — Van Baren, December 17 — Woudenberg, December 31 — Van Overloop, January 14 — den Hartog; SOUTHWEST: September 24 — Van Overloop, October 15 — Van Baren, October 29 — Heys.

Classis elected Rev. Heys and Rev. Woudenberg to serve on the Classical Committee. The Finance Committee submitted expenses of \$442.56.

Faith Church informed the classis that Candidate W. Bruinsma had accepted the call to be their pastor. A special meeting of classis will be held on October 25th at Hudsonville for the purpose of examining Candidate Bruinsma.

The next regular meeting of the classis will be held on January 10, 1979 at Southwest Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Jon J. Huiskens
Stated Clerk

News From Our Churches

Classis East of our churches has scheduled a special session on October 25 in order to examine Candidate Wilbur Bruinsma who has accepted a call to our Faith Church in Jenison, Michigan. Candidate Richard Flikkema has accepted his call to our church in Isabel, South Dakota. Classis West has postponed its fall meeting to October 18 in Doon, Iowa. Candidate Flikkema will receive his Classical exam during this meeting. Our Southwest Church in Grand Rapids has called Candidate Michael De Vries. Should Candidate De Vries accept this call, he too will be examined by Classis East on October 25. Faith Church plans to install their new pastor on the evening Classis meets.

At a congregational meeting held on September 25, Southeast Church extended a call to Rev. Ronald Van Overloop. The Southeast trio also included Candidate De Vries and Rev. Arie den Hartog.

Sometimes news seems to leap long distances with greater speed than it crosses town. Bulletins in Randolph, Wisconsin, and Redlands, California, both carried the news that Rev. John Heys is making plans to go to Christchurch, New Zealand as an emissary. He is, however, experiencing some difficulty in getting his visa. Rev. Heys' consistory in Holland, Mich-

igan, has already given their pastor permission to be absent for eight or nine months. You may recall that Rev. Van Overloop just returned after spending nine months in Christchurch.

Rev. B. Woudenberg and Elder Clare Prince spent about ten days during the end of September in Jamaica, evaluating the mission field there.

The Evangelism Committee of our church in South Holland, Illinois, is sponsoring a series of three lectures on October 26, October 30, and November 1. These lectures are intended for the defense and promotion of the historic Reformed faith in the Chicagoland area. In order, they will be: "The Inerrancy of Scripture" (Prof. H. Hanko); "Women in Church Office" (Prof. R. Decker); and "Reprobation — Is It Reformed?" (Rev. D. Engelsma). All three lectures will be held in the auditorium of Illiana Christian High School.

Southwest Church met in their new building for the first time on Sunday, August 27. A dedication program for the new building was held on Friday, September 15.

K.G.V.