

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

S P E C I A L I S S U E

THE DOCTRINE OF LIMITED ATONEMENT

This special issue, devoted entirely to the truth of Definite Atonement, is the second in an anticipated series of five, each dealing with one of the "doctrines of grace." Particular atonement, though hardly a popular doctrine today, nevertheless affords unspeakable comfort to the child of God. Far from being a mere cold, abstract dogma proclaimed by the church, it is intensely personal in its application. For, with respect to the multitude of elect, it means nothing less than that "the Son of God loved each one of them personally, knew them, and gave Himself for them.... He loved not a vague number of men, among whom I also was one. No, He loved me personally!... He loved me so that He gave — amazing grace — HIMSELF for me!" (See the "Meditation"...and then read on.)

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MEDITATION

"Who Loved Me, and Gave Himself for Me"

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

—Galatians 2:20

I was there nineteen hundred fifty years ago
when they crucified my Lord!

I was there, too, in Joseph's garden on the third
day when He arose from the dead!

At Golgotha's hill I was present. Still more, I was

on Golgotha's hill, and I was nailed to the accursed
tree. I was there just as really as though they had
driven the nails through my hands and my feet. I
was there just as really as though I had experienced
in those six hours of the crucifixion all the agonies
and pains of hell. I was there as really as though I

had cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" And I was there as really as though I had cried with a loud voice, "It is finished!" For "I have been crucified with Christ."

And I was there on Good Friday when they laid Him in the tomb. And I was there with Him in the sepulchre, wrapped in the grave clothes. And I was there—with Him, in Him—when with a mighty triumph He arose, the Victor o'er the dark domain, alive through death.

For: I have been crucified with Christ; but yet I live! I have resurrection-life, life out of the dead. And yet I live not all by myself. Nor do I live merely next to or alongside of Christ. No, Christ lives in me. And I live only in Him, live by the faith of which the very Son of God Himself is the object. For that Son of God loved ME! He gave Himself for ME!

How and why and on what ground is it possible to say such things?

Note carefully that this is a very personal confession. The apostle is not merely expounding an objective doctrine here. He is not merely saying: "All God's people, or all the elect, or all who believe on Christ's name have been crucified with Christ, and now live." He does not merely state, "Christ lives in all His own." Nor does he set forth a dogma of definite atonement and say: "The Son of God loved His elect, those whom the Father gave Him. And, because He loved them, He gave Himself in the behalf of and as the substitute for all those elect, and for them only in His atoning death." All this may be very true, but it is not the point of God's Word in this verse.

In fact, the apostle does not even speak in terms of "we" and "us" here.

No, this is a personal confession in the most specific sense, in terms of "I" and "me." The apostle—and must he not often have thought of that fact, even as he does in this very epistle (1:13), that beyond measure he persecuted the church of God and destroyed the faith which he now preached—is speaking of himself and of his own part with the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the fact that the Son of God loved *him* personally and gave Himself for *him* personally. And the intent of this Word of God is that we by faith shall go along with this very personal confession and make it our own.

But then, don't you see, this very personal confession, if it is true, if it is more than a highly elevated and emotional outburst, must be based upon and must be the expression of objective fact, must be the expression of what was objective reality and of

what really and truly happened, of a real event, before Paul ever made or could make this confession. And if you and I make this confession, the same must be true. Understand this well. The apostle is speaking exactly of this. He is not speaking of something which *became* true of Christ and of him when he first believed. He is speaking of something which was true many years before he was converted on the Damascus-road. And the same is true for us. When we make this confession, we are not speaking of something which *became* true after we were born and after we believed, or perhaps through our believing it. Then our confession is after all a lie. Then it is not based on objective facts and events, and then it is not the expression of objective truth.

No, the apostle is looking back to the event of the cross on Golgotha's hill, some thirty years or so before he makes this statement, and therefore also many years before he even knew it was true, and he is saying, "then and there the Son of God knew me and loved me and gave Himself for me." And you and I, when we make this confession in the twentieth century, are saying, "Then and there, nineteen and a half centuries ago, long before I ever saw the light of day and came from my mother's womb, the Son of God knew me (put your own name here) and loved me and gave Himself for me, though I did not and could not possibly know it then."

This is what is meant—if I may connect this meditation with the theme of this special issue—by sovereign election and definite atonement. O, as long as you phrase it in objective doctrinal terms, you probably do not think of this. Then you say, "God chose a certain definite number of men. He gave them from eternity to Christ. And Christ died His vicarious death in the stead of and in behalf of that certain definite number of persons, thereby obtaining for them perfect righteousness and all the other benefits of salvation." You may even stress that both election and the atonement were *personal*. And all of this—don't misunderstand—is true; and necessary it is to state these dogmas, highly necessary especially in our day.

But now give that multitude of elect names and faces. Think of them in terms of Abel and Seth and Abraham and Moses and David, or in terms of Paul and Peter and John and Titus and Timothy and Crispus and Gaius and Tertius. Think of them in terms of the fact that the Son of God loved each one of them personally, knew them, and gave Himself for them. Think of that multitude of elect in terms of your own name and face and those of your fellow saints whom you know personally. Think of the fact that these names are written in the Lamb's book of life, of the fact that they were there, with

Him, when He died and rose again, that He knew them and loved them and gave Himself for them—every last one of them, and them only. Think of the fact that in that very real sense the election of God and the atonement of Christ are *personal*. And then does not what might be termed the blurriness of an objective doctrine begin to give way to the bright light of a sure and only comfort? Yea, does not the dazzling brightness of the glory of our Sovereign God and the amazingly wonderful character of His beautiful grace shine forth?

Think of it!

The Son of God loved me!

The Son of God, very God of God, Light of Light, and that, too, as the Word made flesh—the Son of God in the divine nature and in the human nature—He loved me! That surely means, first of all, that the Triune God loved me, loved me from all eternity, loved me with an eternally first love. And He from all eternity gave me to Christ, His only begotten Son. My name was written in the Lamb's book of life! And He loved me. Yes, He loved me from eternity. But the point of the text is very definitely that He loved me especially in the moment of the cross, the moment when He gave Himself for me. And it was that love which was the revelation of the eternal love of the Triune God.

That love was sovereign! He loved me when I was a sinner, an enemy of God, when I did not and could not and would not love Him! He loved not a vague number of men, among whom I also was one. No, He loved me personally! He loved me also and emphatically when with the rest of fallen mankind I nailed Him to the accursed tree.

Yes, indeed, it was His love toward the Father that moved Him to go the way of the cross. But in that very love of the Father it was love also toward me, poor, miserable, lost wretch of a guilty sinner.

He loved me so that He gave—amazing grace—HIMSELF for me!

Yes, Himself! He, the Son of God, very God of God—be it in the human nature—gave Himself. Do not the Scriptures put it elsewhere that we were purchased with the very blood of God?

For me, He did this. And that means, first of all, that He did it for my benefit, in my behalf, so that I might profit from it, have all the advantage accruing from it, all the advantage that is implied in the one word: resurrection-life!

But "for me" can be in my behalf and for my benefit only because it is in the deepest sense of the word "in my stead, as my substitute."

And this, in turn, stands connected with the fact that the apostle says, "I have been crucified *with* Christ." This points us to the fact that we—all the elect—were *in* Christ when He died the accursed death of the cross, thus giving Himself for us. We were one with Him. We were one with Him legally, so that in His death of the cross He represented us. According to God's counsel He was our representative head, and was crucified as such, not as a mere individual. And I was in Him, just as really as I was in Adam when he first sinned. And so I could be and was crucified with Him nineteen hundred fifty years ago. And when I was crucified with Him, when He died the death of the cross and bore the curse in my stead and in my behalf, it was *my* curse that He bore and bore away. But I was one with Him also organically, so that His death is the death of my death, and so that His life in the resurrection is the life of my life. The result is that I experience the power of that crucifixion in my life. My old man of sin is crucified, and I am free from the law of sin and death, and live.

And being united to Him by a true and living faith, so that I know Him and put all my confidence in Him, so that He is the sole object of all my trust, I know this and have the firm confidence whereby I am able to confess it.

I know that I am free from condemnation, by His righteousness.

I know that I am free from corruption, by His holiness.

I know that I am free from all death, by His life.

I know that I am free from the fear of falling, by His victory.

And when I think on these things, sometimes it causes me to tremble!

EDITORIAL

Election and Atonement

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema

This is our first special issue of the current volume-year. It is a follow-up on the special issue of

May 15, which was devoted to the truth of divine predestination; and it is the second in a projected

series on the so-called Five Points of Calvinism, or, as some refer to them, the "doctrines of grace."

You probably have already noted that this issue is devoted to the truth of Limited, or Definite, Atonement.

Perhaps this occasioned a question in your mind—a question which might also have arisen in connection with the special issue on Predestination—as to the order we are following in this series. The question concerns the order we are following in our treatment of the Five Points of Calvinism. Most of us are probably acquainted with the *pons assinorum*, or "asses' bridge"—more prosaically called a mnemonic, or memory aid—involving the letters of the word T-U-L-I-P. This word is used to help one remember the Five Points of Calvinism, with each letter standing for one of the points, as follows:

T = Total Depravity
U = Unconditional Election
L = Limited Atonement
I = Irresistible Grace
P = Perseverance of the Saints

Although the tulip is well-known as a Dutch flower, and although this mnemonic has, I suppose, a certain practical value, nevertheless the order of the five Points represented in T-U-L-I-P is not that represented in our (Dutch) Reformed Creed, the Canons of Dordrecht. And whatever may have been the origin of this mnemonic, it does not have its roots in our Reformed tradition as such. Anyone acquainted with the Canons of Dordrecht will recall that their order is:

Divine Predestination
Limited (or Definite) Atonement
Total Depravity
Irresistible Grace
Perseverance of the Saints

Upon first consideration, it might seem as though the order followed in our Canons of Dordrecht, as compared with the order followed in T-U-L-I-P, is of no great importance. After all, if one maintains the truths of the Five Points, what difference does it make if he follows one order or another? It might even be argued with some validity that the order followed by the Canons of Dordrecht is nothing more than an accident of history. For the order of the Canons of Dordrecht was determined by the order of the Five Points of the Remonstrance, due to the fact that the Canons were a judgment of and a reply to those five Arminian points. Hence, even as the Arminians began by teaching conditional election, so our Reformed fathers began by maintaining sovereign and double predestination; and even as the Arminians in their second point taught universal atonement, so our

Reformed fathers continued by setting forth the truth of definite atonement in the chapter on "The Death of Christ, and the Redemption of Men Thereby," and so on. And so, as I said, one could argue with some validity that the order followed in our Canons is merely what is called an accident of history.

Yet, upon more careful consideration one may discover that there is a deeper reason for this order, both in the history itself and in the intrinsic relationships of these doctrines.

As far as the origin of T-U-L-I-P is concerned, and, in fact, as far as the name "The Five Points of Calvinism" is concerned, I have no historical information at hand. Frankly, I am fond of neither. With regard to the former, I think there is a lack of regard for the proper relationship of the doctrines. And with regard to the latter—though I am well aware that it would be virtually impossible to rid our doctrinal vocabulary of the expression—I am not fond of having true doctrines referred to as an "ism" nor of having them named after a man. But not having at hand the information regarding their origins, I am not in a position to criticize from this viewpoint.

However, with regard to the order in our Canons of Dordrecht, I am certain that it is more than a mere accident of history. There is an intrinsic relationship between the various doctrines. That intrinsic relationship is such that the five points, or Five Heads of Doctrine, are not five coordinate points, all standing on the same level. Nor is their order a matter of indifference. These points cannot be shuffled for the sake of fitting a certain memory aid. No, the First Head of Doctrine, Of Divine Predestination, is indeed *first*. And it is first, too, in the sense that it stands at the head of all the others. It is determinative with respect to all the others.

The Arminians saw this very clearly. They saw it more clearly than many Reformed people see it—or at least admit that they see it—today.

That the Arminians saw this relationship and saw the key position of the doctrine of divine predestination in relation to the other doctrines of grace is plain from many things. In the first place, it is plain from the very fact that they themselves made their first article in the Remonstrance the article which set forth their doctrine of conditional election, election on the basis of foreseen faith. In the second place, it is plain from the fact that in all the controversy and the conferences preceding the Synod of Dordrecht the Arminians always made the doctrine of predestination their very first line of attack. This is a very striking fact. They understood very well that if they succeeded in destroying the Reformed position on predestination, they would also have succeeded in destroying the *entire*

Reformed position on the particularity and sovereignty of grace. In this connection, it is also a striking fact that their attacks against the Reformed doctrine of predestination were invariably directed against the doctrine of reprobation, first of all. Why was this? It was not because the doctrine of reprobation was the weak spot, the so-called Achilles' heel, of the doctrine of predestination. It was because the doctrine of sovereign reprobation is, more than anything else, offensive to proud, sinful man, hateful to the flesh. And the Arminians saw that they could by craft and subtlety make this doctrine repulsive to men, make it stinking. At the same time, they saw clearly what many fail to see or do not want to admit today, namely, that the doctrine of sovereign election stands or falls with the doctrine of sovereign reprobation. For this reason they never ceased to attack reprobation, thinking thereby to undermine the entire doctrine of predestination, and thinking that thus they would destroy the entire Reformed position on the doctrines of grace.

This becomes very clear from the Arminians' own words.

First of all, already in 1610, when they drew up their Five Articles, the Arminians made it explicitly clear that their second article, on universal atonement, followed from their first, on conditional election. For, having laid down the heresy of conditional election in Article 1, they went on to introduce their second article with these words: "That, AGREEABLY THEREUNTO, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man...." (emphasis added)

In the second place, this becomes very plain in the written opinions which the Arminian defendants were required to submit to the Synod of Dordrecht. Already in their written opinions on the first point (predestination) we find the following significant statement about the atonement:

5. God has ordained that Christ should be the atonement for the sins of the whole world, and by virtue of this decree He has decided to justify and to save those who believe in Him, and to provide men with the means necessary and sufficient unto faith, in such a way as He knows to be befitting of His wisdom and

righteousness. But He has in no wise determined, by virtue of an absolute decree, to give Christ, the Mediator, to the elect alone, and through an effectual calling to bestow faith upon, to justify, to preserve in the faith, and to glorify them alone.

But this becomes more clear from the opinions of the Arminians regarding the atonement. In language which leaves no doubt whether the Arminians see the connection between predestination and atonement, they write in their first proposition:

The price of salvation, which Christ offered to God, His Father, is not only in and by itself sufficient for the redemption of the whole human race, but was also paid for all and every man, *according to the decree, the will, and the grace of God the Father*; and therefore no one is definitely excluded from the communion of the benefits of the death of Christ by *an absolute and antecedent decree of God*. (emphasis added)

And in their fourth proposition concerning the doctrine of the atonement this becomes even more clear, when the Arminians return to their favorite tactic of misrepresenting and vilifying the doctrine of reprobation in order to destroy the doctrine of predestination. They write as follows:

Only those are obligated to believe that Christ has died for them for whom Christ has indeed died. But the reprobate, as they are called, for whom Christ has not died, are not obligated to this faith, and can, by reason of their contrary unbelief, not be justly condemned; in fact, if there were such reprobates, they would be obligated to believe that Christ has not died for them.

Accordingly, the fathers at Dordrecht—not blindly and naively following the order set by the Arminians, but fully aware of this relationship—set forth the doctrine of the atonement in the Second Head of Doctrine. Election and the atonement are inseparable. There is an intrinsic relationship between the two. The atonement (not: atonement, in general; but: *the* atonement) is definite, particular, in its very nature. The heartbeat of sovereign election pulsates in the atonement. This is the truth that is expressed in that classic expression of the doctrine of the atonement, Article 8 of Canons II, which begins in the words, "For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father...."

The Satisfaction of the Cross

Rev. James Slopsema

At the center of all that God has revealed concerning Himself stands the cross. God has revealed Himself in the Scriptures as the God of salvation. This salvation is all in Jesus Christ, the only begot-

ten Son come in the flesh. And at the heart of it all stands the cross. It is through the cross that God brings salvation.

Not all are agreed on the meaning of the cross. Some say that Christ died on the cross merely to serve as an example for mankind. Others say that the death of Christ on the cross serves to demonstrate what God can and will do to man if he does not repent. Still others see the cross as being the basis for God to alter the "conditions" for salvation. Whereas before God required perfect obedience to the law, now God is satisfied with the imperfect obedience of faith. These ideas merely direct our attention away from the true meaning of the cross.

The Scriptures teach that at the cross God was satisfying His own justice so that He might receive unto Himself the elect sinner. This truth is beautifully set forth in Lord's Days 5 and 6 of the Heidelberg Catechism. It is also spelled out very clearly in the Canons of Dordt, Head II, Articles 1-3, which we quote:

Article 1. God is not only supremely merciful, but also supremely just. And His justice requires (as He hath revealed Himself in His Word), that our sins committed against His infinite majesty should be punished, not only with temporal, but with eternal punishment, both in body and soul; which we cannot escape, unless satisfaction be made to the justice of God.

Article 2. Since therefore we are unable to make that satisfaction in our own persons, or to deliver ourselves from the wrath of God, He hath been pleased in His infinite mercy to give His only begotten Son, for our surety, Who was made sin, and became a curse for us and in our stead, that He might make satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf.

Article 3. The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin....

A proper understanding of the cross obviously involves a discussion of God's justice. God's justice may be defined as the virtue of God according to which He always maintains Himself as the God of all moral perfection and goodness. God does this in two ways—by rewarding the good with good and by punishing the evil with evil. Perhaps this can be made clear through an illustration. When a child walks disobediently he ought to be punished by his parents. However, when that same child walks uprightly according to the wishes of the parents, he is properly rewarded in some way. This is necessary if the parents will maintain themselves before their children as being upright and virtuous. It takes little wisdom to see that one can not on the one hand claim to be a person of uprightness and integrity and on the other hand punish the good or reward the evil. By rewarding evil with good or punishing the good a person shows very clearly that he loves the evil and hates the good. He reveals that he himself is basically evil. For a person to maintain himself as upright and morally good he must show his approval for the good and disap-

prove of the evil. So it is also with God. To maintain Himself as the God of all perfection and virtue He must necessarily punish all that is of sin and evil and bless all that is upright and good. This is God's justice.

The truth of God's justice is very clearly set forth in Scripture. It was clearly revealed for example in the law given at Mt. Sinai. Concerning this law Moses informs the Israelites (Deut. 11:26-28), "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God...." The justice of God is also expressed in Isaiah 3:10, 11 where God instructs the prophet, "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with them: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hand shall be given him". In these and many other passages of Holy Writ God reveals that He is a just God, rewarding the good with good and punishing the evil with evil.

The situation of man is that he is a sinner. He has sinned against God originally in Adam; and he sins against God every day of his life. According to the justice of God his sin must be punished. And there is no way around this. God is a God of perfect justice. He can not simply ignore man's sin and bless him in his sin. This would require that God deny Himself. Nor can man appeal to God's mercy in the hope that God's mercy will in some way negate God's justice. God is indeed merciful. He is filled with pity and compassion for His people in their woe. And His chief desire is to deliver them and bless them. This however does not detract from the fact that God is just, and therefore will and must punish all sin.

In light of all this it is possible for sinful man to receive God's blessings only in the way of satisfaction. The demands of God's justice must be met or satisfied. This satisfaction of God's justice must be made either by the sinner himself or by someone else who does it for him. This satisfaction includes two elements. First, satisfaction requires that the full weight of God's wrath against sin be endured. God's justice requires that God punish the sin of man to the extreme. Hence, satisfaction requires that either the sinner himself or someone in his place endure the full burden of God's wrath against his sin. God must pour out the vials of His holy wrath upon the sin of man and only when that wrath is spent and God can say that He has punished man's sin to the extreme can He ever bless the sinner. However, this is not enough. God's justice also requires of God that He bless man only when there is a perfect righteousness or obedience to the law. But

this the sinner has not done. Inasmuch as he has sinned he has fallen short of the perfect obedience required of him. Hence, to receive God's blessing the sinner must either by himself or through another present God with a perfect obedience and righteousness. This is the idea of satisfaction. Another way to God's blessing there is not for the fallen sinner.

The sinner is not able to make this satisfaction himself. The reasons are quite obvious. He is not able to meet either demand of God's justice. First, he is not able to bear away the full weight of God's wrath against his sin. To make satisfaction he must not only endure God's wrath against his sin; he must endure *all* of it. This is impossible for a mere creature. It is certainly possible for the creature to bear God's wrath. Many in fact shall do so in hell. But the wrath of God against sin is so great that man can never bear all of it so as to finish it. That is why hell is forever. But there is another reason why man can not satisfy for his own sin. God's justice requires a perfect righteousness. To make satisfaction man would have to present God with a perfect obedience. This also is impossible for him to do. For man is by nature totally depraved. He is totally incapable of doing any good; he is inclined to all evil. Hence, man can never make satisfaction for his own sin so as to receive God's blessing.

Fallen man stands in need of a Mediator, a Substitute, One Who can make this satisfaction for him. God in His mercy has provided such a Mediator—His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Certainly Christ has all the qualifications to make satisfaction for man. He Himself is a man and therefore can properly bear the punishment for man's sin.

But He is more than a man; He is also very God. Hence, He is able to endure all the divine wrath against man's sins. Finally, He is perfectly righteous so that He can fulfill all obedience and thus present man in perfect righteousness before God.

All these things Christ has accomplished as Mediator of God's people. Upon Him has God poured out all the vials of His wrath. Under this burden Christ lived all His life long. But especially at the cross did Christ endure the wrath of God against sin. There all the horrors of hell were concentrated upon Him. In perfect love and obedience to the Father He endured His suffering to the bitter end. At the cross therefore He finished the wrath of God against the sin of His people and fulfilled all obedience on their behalf. Thus, He made satisfaction for their sins.

This is the truth of vicarious or substitutionary atonement. That this is the meaning of the cross is evident from passages of Scripture. Evident it is from Isaiah 53:5, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." This is the teaching also of I Peter 3:18, "For Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for (literally: in the place of) the unjust, that He might bring us to God".

What a blessing is the cross! All those for whom Christ suffered and died are free forever from the punishment of sin. Christ has borne it all away. And in Christ they stand before God in perfect righteousness. God according to His justice must and will bless them eternally with His glory. Blessed are the people that stand in the shadow of the cross.

Calvary and Reconciliation

Rev. H. Veldman

The sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary is an atoning sacrifice. This means that this sacrifice is the sacrifice of reconciliation. And this means that this sacrifice of Calvary effected reconciliation. Reconciliation was wrought by the cross of Calvary; it became a fact upon that cross.

That the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is this sacrifice of reconciliation is Scriptural. Notice what we read in 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "And all things are of God, Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ,

reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Here we read that God has reconciled us to Himself, and that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. Notice, please, that in this text this reconciliation is absolutely one-sided. How thoroughly Scriptural this is! God redeems us, not He and we; God came to us in Christ, we did not go to Him; God came to us in Christ, seeking to save the lost, we did not seek

Him. Everything proceeds from God! God reconciled us. We never read in Scripture that God is reconciled, that we do the reconciling. God is never the object of this reconciliation, always its Subject; we are never the subjects of reconciliation, always its objects. God reconciles, never we; we are reconciled, God never. And when we read in verse 20: "be ye reconciled to God," we do not read: "become ye reconciled." We were reconciled by God in Christ upon the cross of Calvary. But we do read: "be ye reconciled." And what the apostle is emphasizing is that, having been reconciled, *be ye reconciled*, walk now as reconciled, even as we would address an estranged couple, having been reconciled: having been reconciled, walk and conduct yourselves now as reconciled.

What is reconciliation? In this article we must be brief. Reconciliation is, first of all a covenant concept. Reconciliation implies a relationship. We do not reconcile strangers. We reconcile a husband and his wife, parents and children, employers and employees, teachers and pupils, friends. Spiritually, God and His people are reconciled. With respect to this divine reconciliation, the relationship that is presupposed here is the eternal covenant relationship between God and His people. Secondly, reconciliation implies that this relationship has been disturbed, that it cannot function. It has not been broken. One does not speak of reconciliation between a husband and a wife who have been divorced. A divorce terminates, breaks the relationship. Of course, this is true only as far as the husband and wife are concerned. They have terminated their relationship of marriage. As far as God is concerned, their relationship as husband and wife continues. This is the reason why divorced persons may never remarry as long as death does not terminate their marriage. Now reconciliation implies that this relationship, although not broken, has been disturbed. It cannot function. Applied spiritually to the covenant relationship between God and His people, reconciliation implies that this relationship has been disturbed. It cannot function. To be sure, the sinner has broken it. The sinner has turned his back upon God. The sinner has adopted another relationship, a relationship with the devil. He has allied himself with the devil. But, as far as God is concerned, this relationship has not been broken. His relationship with them is an eternal relationship. God continues to be the God of His people. He continues to love them for Jesus' sake. This is the only possible basis for our salvation. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. However, because of our sin this covenant relationship has been disturbed. It cannot function or operate. The Lord cannot exer-

cise a relationship of love with His people. He cannot exercise friendship with them. He cannot walk with them, have them taste and experience His love and friendship. Thirdly, this reconciliation implies that this relationship of friendship has been restored. Reconciliation is a legal concept. It refers to our status, our legal relation to the law of God. Our legal relation to the law is either that of guilt or of innocence. We are legally either objects of the wrath of God or of His love and favor. To be legally objects of divine wrath means that the law demands of us that we suffer His wrath; to be legally objects of His love implies that we are legally entitled to His love and favor. Now reconciliation implies a change in the legal status, our legal relation to the law of God. Hence, we define reconciliation as that act of God whereby He changes the state of the sinner from one of guilt, in which he is the proper object of God's wrath, into one of righteousness in which he is the object of God's love and favor. And now God is the Reconciler. We may never present the matter as if God were the one who is reconciled and as if Christ steps between God and man to reconcile the former. Scripture never speaks of God and the sinner as being mutually reconciled. The cross of Calvary has effected this reconciliation. Calvary lays the basis for the restoring of God's fellowship with His people. Now the Lord can change the rebellious hearts of His elect children, regenerate them and call them out of darkness of sin into His marvelous light, and once more enter with them into a relationship of friendship. Only, however, now this relationship with them can never again be disturbed. God, in Christ, has merited for His own everlasting life and glory, inasmuch as this relationship has been restored and perfected through and in Immanuel, Jesus, God with us.

What, now is the distinctive feature of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? It is in this connection that we call attention to the fact that there have been set forth several theories of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. These theories are the moral theory, the governmental theory, and the mystical theory. Time and space forbid me to discuss these theories in detail. The moral theory advocates that the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ exerts a moral influence upon the sinner. The love of God as revealed in Christ upon the cross would influence the sinner to love God even as God has loved him. The governmental theory emphasizes that the cross of Calvary reveals the righteousness of God. If the sinner concedes this righteousness of God, if he recognizes what God could have done to him had it pleased the Lord to punish him for his sin even as He punished Christ, if he confesses to God his sin and iniquity he will be saved. And the mystical theory,

too, denies that the death of Christ is that of a substitute. Upon the cross Christ actually bore our sinful nature and delivered it up unto death. Upon the cross our sinful nature died spiritually. And in the resurrection He arose with a new and glorified human nature, wholly free from sin and death. And if by faith we become mystically one with Christ, Who led to death and buried our sinful nature, and Who arose in glory and righteousness, we, too, are delivered from sin and partake of the glory of His resurrection by virtue of this mystical union. Now it cannot be denied that there is an element of truth in this mystical theory. It is surely true that by grace we become one plant with Christ, so that our old nature is crucified with Him, and with Him we are also raised in newness of life. It is also surely true that we are crucified with Christ and are raised with Him and are set with Him in heavenly places. It is surely true that, upon the cross of Calvary, our sinful nature was condemned and that sin was forever denied its right to reign over us. And this is most emphatically true. But we must always bear in mind and never overlook the fact that the Word of God always presents this power of deliverance from the dominion and defilement of sin as the fruit of the cross, never as the ground of our reconciliation and justification. That our sinful nature was condemned upon the cross, crucified with Christ, is only because of the substitutionary character of His atoning sacrifice. Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died for His own, His elect own, as the divinely appointed Substitute, He deprived sin of its right to rule, and merited for us everlasting life and glory. This we may and must never overlook.

We now repeat the question: what is now the distinctive feature of the sacrifice of Calvary? The answer is obvious: the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice, the sacrifice of reconciliation. The theories of the cross, mentioned in the preceding paragraph, have one thing in common: they deny that the death of Christ is the death of a substitute. They transfer the salvation of a sinner from the cross to the sinner's sovereignly free will. We are saved, not because of the cross of Christ, but because of our faith. Now it is true, of course, that we are saved by faith. This is surely Scriptural. However, we are saved by faith because of the cross of Christ Jesus, our Lord. It is not so,

that the cross of Calvary is efficacious because we believe, but we believe because of the power of the cross. The theories mentioned above simply present salvation as resting in and dependent upon the free will of the sinner. Calvary, however, is the sacrifice of reconciliation. Calvary presents to us the *fact* of redemption and salvation.

Indeed, how Scriptural this is! Indeed, the Arminian view, advocating the sovereignly free will of the sinner (and may we ever bear in mind that there are really only two possible views of salvation: salvation is either rooted in the sovereign will of our God or it is rooted in the will of the sinner), wants nothing to do with the sacrifice of Calvary as an atoning sacrifice. Fact is, the Arminians discarded the very term atonement, and advocated at the time of the synod of Dordrecht the theory that Christ upon the cross simply merited for the Father the right to renegotiate with the sinner to save him provided that he believe. But how contrary this is to Scripture's presentation of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have already called attention to the fact that Scripture speaks of Calvary's sacrifice as the sacrifice of reconciliation. Then, there are all the sacrifices of the Old Dispensation which were expiatory, a propitiation, or covering for the sins of God's people. This covering did not simply cover their sin, but covered those sins as a blotter, taking them up into itself and blotting them out before the face of God. And, finally, we may also call attention to the fact that Scripture speaks of the cross as redemption. The word redemption means that the people of God were bought with a price, the price of the blood of the only begotten Son of God. They were purchased out of the power of sin and of the devil and bought with the price of the blood of the Son of God to be the people of God and of His covenant even forevermore. Indeed, well may the church of God throughout the ages sing: "In the cross of Christ we glory." We are saved, actually redeemed and saved at the cross, through the blood of the Lamb of God and of the Son of God. Then our redemption and salvation became a fact. All that follows through the grace and Spirit of God is the fruit of Calvary. May we as churches never deny this saving, redeeming, and efficacious power of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Resting in Him, our salvation is forever sure.

The Perfection of Christ's Death

Rev. Ronald Hanko

The subject of "Limited" or "Definite" Atonement is often the most controversial of the Five

Points of Calvinism. The differences between the Calvinist and the Arminian, even on the subject of

predestination come into sharpest focus at this point. Even many so-called Calvinists, who agree with us on the doctrine of sovereign, unconditional, double predestination, will disagree violently with us when we teach that Christ did not die for all, but for a "definite" or "limited" number of persons. They claim that Christ Himself did not teach definite atonement, and they attempt, though rather inconsistently, to be "Four-Point Calvinists," differing from historic Calvinism at this point only.

In a certain sense, of course, even the Arminian teaches a "limited" atonement, or at least a "limited" salvation. He, too, believes that some only are brought to heaven and enjoy the eternal bliss of the saints. Universalism teaches both that Christ died for all men, and that all men are actually and finally saved. But there are few, even among the opponents of definite atonement who are willing to go to this extreme in their teaching. They teach that Christ died for all men, but that not all men are actually saved.

There are, then, two points at which the opponents of definite atonement are at odds with us. They differ first of all with regard to the "limitation." We believe that the atonement is limited by the will and good pleasure of the Father and that Christ died only for those whom the Father gave Him, that is, for the elect (Canons II, 8). The Arminian teaches that, from the viewpoint of God's intention, the atonement is unlimited, that it was the good pleasure and will of the Father that Christ die for all men. Nor does he believe that atonement is limited by the cross. Christ gave His life as a ransom for every man, without exception. Rather, the opponents of definite atonement believe that it is the will of man which limits the atonement. Christ died for all, but the sinner's response to the work of Christ determines whether or not he shall be saved.

This is, obviously, a key point. If God's good pleasure is limited by the will of the sinner, and if God's will is frustrated by the decision of the sinner, then not God but the sinner is sovereign in salvation. That certainly is a notion that the Calvinist abominates, especially when he reads in the Scriptures that God's counsel *stands* and that He *does all* His good pleasure (Is. 46:10). God is sovereign also at the cross.

Nevertheless, we must see that those who oppose the idea of "definite" atonement deny not only the sovereignty of God in salvation, but also the perfection of Christ's work on the cross. They have an entirely different view of the nature of the work of Christ. They deny that the atonement is limited, but they also deny that it is "atonement." The Calvinist believes that through the work of Christ he is "at one" with God. Isaiah says that it is our sins which separate us from God (59:2) and

therefore when Christ provides redemption from sin He gives us peace with God. The idea of a general atonement clearly contradicts this for it teaches that although Christ died for every man, yet there are many who are not eternally "at one" with the Father.

The Arminian does this with all the words that Scripture uses in connection with the death of Christ: redemption, propitiation, ransom, satisfaction, forgiveness, etc. Though he may use these words, nonetheless he turns them on their heads and empties them of all their meaning. The word satisfaction is another good example. It is a word which is used in all three of our creeds, and which Scripture also used (Isaiah 53:11). The word means "to do enough" and when we say that Christ's death provides satisfaction we mean that Christ "did enough" to fulfill the demands of God's law for us, to deliver us from the curse of the law, and to obtain for us righteousness and eternal life. About the work of Christ the Arminian says, "not enough." Christ cannot have satisfied, for there are many who do not obtain eternal life, though Christ's blood was shed for them.

There are then only two alternatives: either Christ saves those for whom He dies or Christ is not a Saviour. But, if Christ is not a Saviour, then the angel lied to Joseph and to the church of all ages when he announced the birth of Jesus with the words, "He shall be called Jesus for *He shall save* His people from their sins." Yea, the very name that God gives Him is a lie, for His work does not measure up to the glorious name "Saviour" which is given Him by God.

That correspondence between Christ's work and its fruit is also taught in Luke 19:10 where Jesus says, "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Notice here that those whom He seeks and those whom He saves are the very same persons. He does not seek all the lost and save some. He seeks and saves the lost. And that the lost and the elect are the same limited number of persons whom Jesus seeks and saves is evident from John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out"; and from Matthew 9:12, 13, where Jesus teaches that "the lost" are those who by the grace of God know their lost estate. His seeking corresponds to God's choosing, and His saving is in perfect harmony with the Father's "drawing" so that in the end Jesus can say, "those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost." And this He says, as it were, in the very shadow of the cross (John 17:11).

Our creeds also teach the truth of limited or definite atonement—Lord's Day VII, 20, of the Heidelberg Catechism; the Belgic Confession, XVI, XXII;

Canons II, 8. Nevertheless, in connection with the error of a general atonement, there are those who lay hold of Canons II, 3 in a desperate attempt to prove their doctrine. This article of the Canons reads:

The death of the Son of God is the only and most perfect sacrifice and satisfaction for sin; and is of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world.

We may notice, first of all, in connection with this article that whatever it says, it does not teach a general atonement. It does not say that the sacrifice of the Son of God actually does expiate for the sins of the whole world. It does not even say that it was God's intention that it should so expiate for all. Then Canons II, 3 would contradict Canons II, 8 which says:

For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His son should extend to all the elect . . . that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross . . . should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to Him by the Father . . .

Article 3 does not contradict this, but simply attempts to show what Article 6 teaches, that, "whereas many who are called by the gospel, do not repent, nor believe in Christ, but perish in unbelief; this is not owing to any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice offered by Christ upon the cross. . . ."

The Arminian argument at the Synod of Dort was that the doctrine of definite atonement limits the value of Christ's death. The Canons teach in Article 3 and in Article 4 that the death of Christ is very precious, but that this value of the death of Christ is not determined by the number of those who profit from His death, but by the fact that it was "the death of the Son of God," and that "it was attended with a sense of wrath and curse of God due to us for sin" (Canons II, 4).

Really, it is the Arminian doctrine of universal atonement which denies the value of the death of Christ. For, according to this error, the blood of Christ was shed in vain for many, and certainly then is not all that valuable to those who are saved for it is not the only ground and foundation of their salvation. The Canons point this out in II, B, 3 where the Fathers say that not they but the Arminians "judge too contemptuously of the death of Christ, and do in no wise acknowledge the most

important fruit or benefit thereby gained (the benefit of satisfaction for sin)." Thus too the Fathers said that the error of the Arminians was "out of hell." And what a terrible thing it is when the judgment of hell concerning the death of Christ is taught in the church. The Heidelberg Catechism says,

Though they boast of Him in words, yet in deeds they deny Jesus the only Deliverer and Saviour; for one of two things must be true, that either Jesus is not a complete Saviour; or that they, who by a true faith receive this Saviour, must find in Him all things necessary to their salvation. (Lord's Day XI, 30).

So also this doctrine of a general atonement "tends to the despising of the wisdom of the Father (Canons II, B, 1)" Who gave His only begotten Son on the mere chance that some might be saved through His bitter suffering and death.

And how clearly do the "deeds" of the Arminians show that they deny the perfection of Christ's work. The preaching of the Arminian degenerates into mere begging—the minister begging those who hear to exercise their will and come to Jesus Who has a wonderful plan for their lives, if only they will accept Him. In his mission work, he goes not where and when a sovereign God sends, in the confidence that according to the good pleasure of God that sending shall bear fruit, but he scurries hither and thither desperately trying to bring his "gospel" to all, that all may have their chance to profit from Christ. In all his preaching and teaching he slanders the Son of God and blasphemes the name of Jehovah.

The atonement is perfect because God Himself is perfect. We may be sure that He will not allow the costly death of His Son to be a failure, nor His precious blood to be shed in vain.

It may sound sweet to sinful ears to proclaim and teach a general atonement, but such teaching destroys the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the glory of God. So also it destroys the comfort that we have in the cross, for we believe that the blood of Jesus is the only thing that stands between us and eternal fire; and if the blood of Jesus is not sufficient to save me from the fire, then what in all the world is? May we with the Apostle Paul determine that we shall know nothing else in the church but Christ, the Son of God, crucified as a full atonement for the sins of those who were given Him by the Father.

**Take time to read
*The Standard Bearer***

Arminianism and the Atonement

Rev. Steven Houck

If sovereign, unconditional election disturbs the Arminian, it stands to reason that the Calvinistic doctrine of the atonement will likewise greatly upset him. In fact, anyone who has ever had any dealings with these people will know that there is nothing that so enrages the Arminian as the doctrine of definite atonement. When you tell him that Christ died, not for the whole world, but for a very specific and select group of people, he can hardly contain his wrath. When you add to that the fact that this limited atonement is in perfect harmony with God's good-pleasure and even His love, the rage of the Arminian knows no bounds. Even to suggest that God loves only the elect and therefore sent Christ to die for only the elect is to declare war on one of the fundamental principles of his "faith."

To the Arminian, our doctrine of limited atonement is a most horrible doctrine that is contrary to the Scriptures and even abhorrent to God Himself. For they accuse us of limiting the meritorious work of Christ on the cross. They tell us that we make the cross of Christ insufficient for the salvation of the world. We belittle and under-value the precious blood of Christ when we deny that He died for all mankind. We make God some kind of a monster Who is unfair and cruel in His dealings with man.

But is that true? Are we, who uphold the doctrine of definite atonement, the ones who limit the value of the cross? Are we the ones who destroy the power of His grace as manifested in the death of Christ? Indeed the positions of the Arminian and the Calvinist are so contrary to one another that it is impossible for both to be right. Someone has turned the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ into the lie of the devil. The question is, "Who?"

A careful evaluation of the Arminian position will demonstrate very vividly that the destroyer of the Biblical doctrine of the atonement is not the Calvinist at all, but the Arminians themselves, the very ones who point the accusing finger at us.

The fundamental principle of the Arminian doctrine of the atonement is that Christ died on the cross for all mankind. The atonement is general and universal in its scope.

Does not Jesus Himself tell us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"? God loved the whole world and therefore sent Christ to die for all mankind. The cross is so broad in its scope that it includes everyone who has ever lived, everyone who ever

will live, and all who are living now. Christ died for all. He died for the unbeliever, who will spend eternity in hell, just as much as He died for the believer who will forever be with God in heaven.

That, however, creates a tremendous problem for the Arminian. For if Christ died for all and that death is the means of salvation, then all mankind must be saved. But that can not be. Obviously, there are many who are not saved. The Arminian, however, has a very simple solution to that problem. Christ did not die actually to secure salvation. He died merely to make salvation possible. That Christ shed His precious blood for all does not mean that all are automatically saved. It means only that all now have the possibility of salvation. Christ did not merit actual salvation. He merely removed certain obstacles, so that man, if he wants, can have salvation by meeting the prescribed condition of faith and repentance.

For they tell us that, in the death of Christ for all men, God is given the authority to save those that come to Him by faith. In the cross the guilt of original sin was taken away so that no one is worthy of condemnation on account of that guilt. In fact, some go so far as to say that the death of Christ actually took away all the sins of every man, so that God, in perfect righteousness, can save anyone. They make one exception however. The cross does not remove the sin of unbelief. That is the one unpardonable sin. No one will ever go to hell because he rejects Christ. All other sins have been removed by the cross. Thus God is free to save anyone as long as he by faith accepts Christ as his Savior. In Christ, God has provided salvation for all. It is now up to man to make that possibility a reality. Thanks to the cross, it is no longer a question of sin; it is a question of faith in Christ.

All of this might sound very nice and good to the majority of those who call themselves Christians; but we dare not be fooled. This Arminian view of the atonement comes from the very pit of hell itself. In reality it destroys the true doctrine of the atonement and makes salvation utterly impossible.

It destroys the atonement as a substitutionary satisfaction. The Scriptures teach us that when Christ died, He took the place of a very definite group of people. He bore the wrath of God against the sin of His people, in the place of His people. In that way He satisfied the justice of God on behalf of us. God says that the sinner must die; but Christ died in our place. Thus the apostle Peter refers to

Christ as the One, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes ye were healed" (I Pet. 2:24). Christ is the substitute Who satisfied God's justice with respect to the sin of His people.

But the general, universal atonement of the Arminian can not possibly be this kind of atonement. For if Christ's death truly is a substitution which satisfies the justice of God, then all those for whom Christ died must be saved. If Christ actually died for all men, then their sins, including the sin of unbelief, have indeed been taken away. There is no Scriptural ground whatsoever for making unbelief a special sin and excluding it from the cross. If the sin of unbelief is not paid for on the cross, then no one will ever be saved. For even a true Christian's faith is very imperfect and tainted with sin. That imperfect faith alone would be all that is needed to send us to hell. No, if Christ actually became the substitutionary sacrifice for all, then all must be saved.

The Arminians of old recognized this fact and therefore openly rejected substitutionary atonement. They believed what we call the governmental theory of the atonement. Christ's death was only an example of what God could do to us if He wanted to. It was no substitution and it was not needed to satisfy God's justice. Christ did not have to die for our sin in order that we might be saved. His death was merely an object lesson. It teaches us that God is a moral governor who will not pardon the sinner without a display of His displeasure.

It is true that most Arminians today reject this governmental theory and claim to believe wholeheartedly in substitutionary atonement. Nevertheless, as we have demonstrated, their view of the atonement is of necessity inconsistent with substitutionary atonement. You simply can not believe that the cross merely makes salvation possible and still believe in substitutionary atonement. If Christ's death only makes salvation possible, then the shedding of His precious blood did not blot out a single sin. The cross either took away sin or it did not. There is no other alternative, if His death was indeed a substitutionary death.

That is why we Calvinists insist that the atonement was both definite and particular. Christ died for a very select group of people—His elect church. This is the doctrine of the Scriptures. Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Notice, Jesus does not say, "for the sheep and the goats." No, only the sheep were in His heart when He suffered all the agonies of hell for us. We learn the same thing from the apostle Paul's exhortation to husbands, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ

also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). Christ loved His Church and gave His life for it. He did not die for all mankind. He died for a definite and particular group, namely, for those whom the Father had given Him from before the foundation of the world (John 17:9).

For it is the elect and the elect alone that Christ purposed to save and does actually save, so that not a single one of those for whom He died will ever perish (John 6:38-39). He did not come to make salvation possible. He came to save. The angel announced to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). This is exactly what Jesus Himself said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Jesus did not come to make it possible for the lost to be saved. He came to save the lost. To that fact also the apostle Peter testifies when he says, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (I Pet. 3:18). Notice, he did not say, "that He might make it possible for us to be brought to God." He said, "that He might bring us to God"—actually bring us to God. This is the teaching of Scripture throughout. Christ came actually to secure the salvation of His people.

Thus the Arminian doctrine of the atonement is an abomination to the Lord. It is the lie of the devil. For it is nothing more than work righteousness. To them, the death of Christ is not even the critical thing. It is not His death that saves (that only makes salvation possible); it is man's faith that saves. For that is what makes the difference between heaven and hell. All share the death of Christ in common, but the one who exercises his free will and believes, that one alone is saved. Salvation, then, becomes man's work. No wonder our fathers refer to this doctrine of the Arminians as "the Pelagian error brought again out of hell."

We Calvinists are not the ones who belittle and undervalue the death of Christ. It is rather the Arminians. For they have such a low view of the atonement, that it is not even sufficient to save a single soul. And whose god is a monster? Is it not the god of the Arminians? For he is so cruel that he makes our salvation utterly impossible. And not only is he cruel, but also weak and impotent, for his grace can keep no one from hell, if men are unwilling.

How thankful we ought to be that this god is not our God. Our God, the true God, not only purposes the salvation of His beloved people, but He actually does save us through Jesus Christ. For His death is an effectual power that surely brings us to God. As the prophet says, "He shall see His seed...He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:10-11).

Amyraldianism, the Marrow, and the Atonement

Prof. H. Hanko

Questions have repeatedly been raised, since the time of the Calvin Reformation, whether or not the truth of particular atonement or limited redemption belongs to true Calvinism; whether Calvin himself actually taught this truth; and whether the true line of Calvin's teachings is to be traced through those who held to this doctrine. There are so-called Four Point Calvinists today who maintain all the well-known five points except the doctrine of particular atonement. And there have been those throughout post-Reformation times who have taught, in one form or another, a universal atonement.

Among the latter are to be found the Amyraldians and the Marrow men, both of whom claimed to be followers of the teachings of Calvin, but both of whom taught also a universal atonement in some sense of the word. It is the purpose of this article to explain briefly the teachings of these two groups on the question of the extent of the atonement.

Before we take a close look at the views of these schools of thought, it would be worth our while to notice that in both instances a certain universality of the atonement was taught, especially in connection with *the free offer of the gospel*. We do not have the space in this short article to trace the relation between these two views in detail, but it is worth pointing out that it was really the question of the free offer in both instances which prompted the men of these two schools to teach certain universal aspects of the atonement. This is striking and significant because it relates the issues of these two schools to more contemporary thought in both Presbyterian and Reformed circles and relates these issues to the issues which stand at the basis of our own existence as Protestant Reformed Churches. The free offer of the gospel was an issue in the "common grace" controversy in 1924 which led to the beginning of the Protestant Reformed Churches, and, while the question of the extent of the atonement was not an immediate issue in 1924, it did become an issue in the history of the Christian Reformed Church in the 1960s. It became an issue because, holding to the free offer, the Christian Reformed Church could not escape the question of the extent of the atonement. In the '60s the CRC in fact put its stamp of approval on the doctrine of a certain universality of the atonement.

With these preliminary remarks, we turn to a discussion of these two individual schools of thought.

AMYRALDIANSIM

Moise Amyraut (1596-1664) was the founder of the Amyraldian School of thought. It is evident from his dates that he was a contemporary of the Synod of Dordt, and it is evident from the date of his major treatise, "Treatise on Predestination" (1634) that he wrote with the teaching of the Synod of Dordt in mind.

His teacher, John Cameron, who taught in the school of Saumur in France, was convinced that Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor in the Academy in Geneva, was in large measure responsible for the shift to scholastic theology which characterized Protestant thought everywhere but in France. He claimed therefore that he was interested in recapturing Calvin's true thought and restoring Calvinism to its pristine purity. Interestingly enough, he developed his ideas on the basis of a covenant conception according to which he taught that God had established a two-fold covenant: an absolute covenant which was unconditional and which was rooted in antecedent love, and a hypothetical covenant which was dependent upon man's condition of love. This latter covenant was the only important one because it was the covenant of revelation and of our experience.

Following this line, Amyraut taught that the hypothetical covenant embraced all mankind as one of the contracting parties. The promise of the covenant was eternal life, but this promise was dependent for its fulfillment upon the condition of faith.

In connection with this view of the covenant, according to Amyraut, stood the decree of predestination, a decree which involved a twofold will of God: a particular and unconditional will of God to save only the elect, and a universal and conditional will of God to save all men. These two wills of God are irreconcilable and are part of the hidden mystery which we may not presume to try to understand. Once again it is this latter will of God with which we have to do because it is a part of God's providence, a part of what is really "new counsels" of God which He made because of the fall. It is according to this will that God desires the salvation of all men.

He makes this clear in his "Treatise on Predestination."

These words, "God wills the salvation of all men,"

necessarily meet with this limitation, "provided that they believe." If they do not believe, He does not will it, this will of making the grace of salvation universal and common to all men being in such a way conditional that without the accomplishment of the conditional it is completely inefficacious.

God (so) wills all men to be saved, that He invites them to repent, that He extends His arms to them, that He goes before them and calls them with a lively voice.

As is true with everyone who desires to teach a universal desire of God to save all men, Amyraut also faced the question of the relation between this desire to save all and the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross. How can God desire to save all unless in some sense He sent Christ to save all? To answer this objection, Amyraut taught that the atonement is universal in intention and scope. That is, the atonement is not only sufficient for all, its intention is also to save all upon condition of faith, and its scope embraces all—once again, upon condition of faith. The grace merited by the cross was a grace which was objectively for all, but was subjectively given only on condition of faith.

Closely connected to this stands Amyraut's conception of the free offer of the gospel. God's universal will to save all is expressed in the gospel as an offer. The external call speaks of a sufficiency of salvation for all and of an objective grace for all which will be subjectively applied only upon condition of faith.

In his defense before the Synod of Alencon, which Synod tried him for heresy and exonerated him, he said:

So that those who are called by the preaching of the Gospel to participate by faith in the effects and fruits of His death, being invited seriously, and God vouchsafing them all external means needful for their coming to Him, and showing them in good earnest, and with the greatest sincerity by His Word, what would be well-pleasing to Him; if they should not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, but perish in their obstinacy and unbelief; this cometh not from any defect of virtue or sufficiency in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, nor yet for want of summons or serious invitations unto faith and repentance, but only from their own fault.

In his discussion of the atonement, F. Turretin says, with reference to the teachings of Amyraut:

Some of our ministers teach "that by Christ's atonement a new covenant was established with all, their salvation rendered possible, and an offer made to them in the Gospel." (The quote is from the writings of Testardus, a disciple of Amyraut.)

Turretin further quotes Amyraut as saying:

Since the misery of the human family is equal and universal, and the desire which God has to free them from it by a Redeemer, proceeds from the mercy

which he exercises towards us as His creatures fallen into destruction, in which we are all equal; *the grace of redemption, which He has procured for us and offers to us should be equal and universal*, provided we are equally disposed to its reception. (Underscoring mine, HH.)

Thus objective grace and an offer of pardon to all was earned on the cross by a universal atonement. The reception of such grace was dependent upon the condition of faith.

Amyraut was the first to set forth clearly the idea of an offer of salvation and root that offer in the universal sacrifice of Jesus Christ—even though he limited that universality to intent and scope.

THE MARROW

It is difficult to understand the Marrow controversy unless one understands also that there was a history of Arminianism present in the Churches of England almost from the beginning of the Reformation. Arminianism appeared already in England in the latter part of the sixteenth century and was the occasion for the *Lambeth Articles* which were added to the "Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England," the official Creed of the Anglican Church.

Davenant, who was present at the Synod of Dort as a delegate from England and whose party was represented at the Westminster Assembly, was basically an Amyraldian. In his efforts to find some sort of middle way between Arminianism and Supralapsarianism, he too held to a hypothetical universalism, a general atonement in the sense of sufficiency and intent, a common blessing of the cross for all, and a conditional salvation.

While his views were never adopted by the Westminster divines nor by the church of his day either in England or in Scotland, nevertheless there were always those who maintained them more or less, and the thought which Davenant represented continued to live within the church. It was this which gave rise to the so-called Marrow controversy.

As a sidelight to this whole matter, it is interesting to note that Richard Baxter was a close follower of Davenant and wrote in support of an Amyraldian position. He was answered in an important book written by John Owen and entitled, "The Death of Death in the Death of Christ." This book is a complete and excellent refutation of every attempt to make the atonement universal in every sense of the word. J.I. Packer is correct when, in his introduction to the 1959 edition of John Owen's book, he remarks that the arguments of the book have not to this day been answered.

The "Marrow Controversy" arose in connection with the treatment of the so-called Auchterarder Creed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian

Church of Scotland. We cannot go into the details of this history in this article, but it was during the discussion of this "Creed" on the floor of the Assembly that Thomas Boston whispered to James Hog that he had read a book which spoke to the very issues being discussed. The title of this book was, "The Marrow of Modern Divinity," a book published earlier by Edward Fisher.

The result was that James Hog became responsible for the republication of this book which was widely circulated in the churches. This book came to the attention of the General Assembly in 1720 and was condemned by that Assembly. Among other things, the book was condemned for teaching that an unlimited offer of Christ to all men in the gospel and a warrant to each one who hears the gospel to receive Christ necessarily implies a universal atonement.

Twelve men, among whom were Thomas Boston, James Hog, and the Erskine brothers, protested this decision to the General Assembly Meeting of 1721. Their protest was rejected and the General Assembly retained its earlier decision, although nothing in the way of disciplinary action was taken against the twelve "Marrow men."

What was it that the Marrow men taught?

It is important to understand that the Marrow men wanted to establish in the preaching what they called, "the warrant of faith." By this they meant that all men who heard the preaching had the right to believe and accept Christ as their Savior. They wanted the preaching to press home upon everyone who heard that he had no reason *not* to believe in Christ; that, indeed, he had every right to receive Christ and participate in all the blessings of salvation. They wanted to press this home upon the sinner by assuring him that Christ had indeed died for him, that salvation was his upon condition of faith, and that nothing stood in the way of his coming to Christ.

In order to implement this conception of the gospel, they spoke repeatedly of the free offer of the gospel which came to all who hear, an offer which expressed God's desire and willingness to save them if they should come to Christ.

It is true that the Marrow men insisted that one could come to Christ only by a work of grace, that all who came to Christ were those only whom God had elected from all eternity, and that, therefore, the work of salvation belonged to God. But, as has been true of all those who have maintained an offer of the gospel, they fell into a double-track theology which taught on the one hand an eternal and unchangeable purpose in God to save only His elect, and, on the other hand, an intention and purpose of God to save all who hear the gospel. As Guthrie ex-

presses it:

That though none cordially close with God in Christ Jesus, and acquiesces in that ransom found out by God, except only such as are elected, and whose heart the Lord doth sovereignly determine to that blessed choice, yet the Lord has left it as a duty upon people who hear His Gospel to close with His offer of salvation, as if it were in their power to do it.

In defense of this position the Marrow men had, of course, something to say about the atonement. The Marrow men agreed with the orthodox that the actual application of the blessings of the atonement was for the elect only. But they argued that the offer of the gospel could be made to all who heard because the atonement was sufficient for all, because the atonement of Christ removed all legal obstacles to salvation, because it was offered and was freely available to all on condition of faith, and because there are blessings for all in the atonement.

In order to defend this position, they spoke of a double reference of the atonement. The atonement had a designed general reference to all sinners of mankind as such. Christ did not die for all so as to save all; but He is dead for all, i.e., He is available for all if they will receive Him. Notice the distinction here which the Marrow men often made between "Christ died for all" and "Christ is dead for all." The former they repudiated; the latter they taught. And by the latter they meant exactly that Christ is available for all if they will receive him by fulfilling the condition of faith.

Hence, so they taught, God, out of general philanthropy for all sinners, made a deed of the gift of Christ and of the benefits of His redemption to all indifferently to be claimed upon the condition of faith. This love is His "giving love," to be distinguished from His "electing love."

The "deed of gift" or "grant of Christ" is not itself the general offer, but is the foundation upon which the general offer rests. This grant is real, universal, an expression of love, conditioned by faith, the warrant upon which the faith of every believer rests and by which faith he is justified.

And so we see that in the interests of maintaining a general offer, the Marrow men fell into the error of teaching an atonement which in some important respects was universal. In this way they departed from the teachings of Calvin, Beza, the Westminster Assembly, and the Synod of Dordt. In fact, although their views surely have gained the day in Presbyterian circles, these same views were condemned by their own General Assembly, which condemnation has never been undone by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

What are the lessons to be learned from all this?

In the first place, it is important to understand

that wrong views of the extent of the atonement have, in the history of the church, always been closely associated with a defense of the free offer of the gospel. This ought to give us pause. As widespread as is the teaching of the free offer in our day, the fact remains that historically the whole teaching of the free offer has led to a denial of the particularity of the atonement.

The reason for this is not difficult to see. If God expresses in the preaching of the gospel His desire to save all men, and if indeed God is sincere in this expression, then it follows inescapably that such salvation is, in some sense of the word, available to all men. And if salvation comes only through the cross of Jesus Christ, then that cross had to merit salvation for all who are confronted with the gospel offer. History has proved that the two go hand in hand.

In the second place, those who have taught both the free offer of the gospel and a general atonement of Christ have, until the nineteenth century, stood outside the line of true Calvinism. These heresies

have not been taught in Calvin or Beza, by Westminster or Dordt, nor by those who have been faithful to this heritage. They have come from outside: from Arminianism, Amyraldianism, Davenantianism, the Marrow men, and such like deviators from the faith. In fact, until the nineteenth century the church has consistently condemned these views as being contrary to Scripture and the Calvinism which rests so firmly on the Bible.

How these views finally gained the day within both Reformed and Presbyterian circles is another story which we cannot relate here. But let it be underscored that the line of true Calvinism rests not in the line of Arminius, Amyrald, Davenant, Boston, etc., but rests in the line of Calvin, Beza, Dordt, Westminster and the Reformed faith.

And so we may conclude that our defense of the truth of a limited atonement and our apology for the truth of sovereign grace against the free offer is a defense of the truth as it was confessed by the church throughout the Post-Reformation times.

Definite Atonement and Preaching

Prof. Robert D. Decker

The question, "How can one who holds to the doctrine of limited or definite atonement preach?" has been a vexing problem, not for the one holding to the truth of definite atonement, but for the opponents of that truth. Historic Calvinism, or the Reformed Faith, has always maintained the truth of definite atonement. This truth is zealously preached, taught, and defended by the Protestant Reformed Churches. Christ died in the place of and for the sake of all those whom the Father had chosen in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world (cf. Ephesians 1:3ff.) Christ by His suffering and death on the cross satisfied the justice of God for the elect. The forgiveness of sins, the right to be called the children of God, and everlasting life have been secured for the elect through the atonement brought by Jesus Christ. The debt has been paid, not with gold or silver, but with the precious blood of the Lamb of God. This is the meaning of the victory cry from the Saviour uttered just moments before He commended His Spirit to His Father: "It is finished."

This truth appears plainly on the pages of Holy Scripture. When Joseph was minded to put away privily his pregnant wife, an angel appeared to him in a dream to explain what had happened to Mary,

the virgin. That angel also instructed Joseph as follows: "...thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21b). All people is not the same as His people. Only the latter are saved from their sins by Jesus. When faced with a crowd of unbelievers Jesus said, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Christ will not cast out those whom the Father gives to Him. He will surely save them. Those who are not given to Christ by God will not be saved. They will indeed be cast out! This is graphically illustrated in John 6:66: "Many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." All three of our Reformed Creeds: the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic or Netherlands Confession, and the Canons of Dordrecht clearly reflect this precious truth of the Word of God.

Arminianism denies this truth. Arminianism teaches that Christ died for every individual of the human race. The atonement according to the Arminian is universal in scope, sufficient to cover the sins of all of mankind. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross is capable of washing away the sins of everyone. The Arminian teaches that the atonement is universal also in the sense that by the

death of Christ salvation is made *available* to all of mankind. The obvious questions are: "why then are not all saved?" and "how does one obtain salvation?" The Arminian answers these questions with still another terrible error: man has a free will. (Our Reformed fathers rightly called the error of free will "the Pelagian error brought again out of hell" —Canons II, Rejection of Errors III) Through the preaching of the gospel, according to the Arminian, salvation in Christ is offered to all who hear. Those who "accept Christ" or "allow Jesus to come into their hearts" are saved. Those who refuse the offer of the gospel are damned. But, all people have the ability to accept or reject Christ. There are variations (several in fact) of the Arminian error, but it is not the purpose of this article to treat these.

With its twin errors of universal atonement and the free will of man Arminianism has always been and still is in a frenzy to "win souls for Christ." Evangelism and missions have top priority among Arminian or fundamentalist churches. Preachers and evangelists (many unordained and with no official connection to the institute of the church) barnstorm the world conducting crusades aimed at converting the whole world for Christ if possible. Others make extensive use of the media, especially radio and television, spending and taking in millions of dollars per year. Zeal for missions is mandated by Scripture and, therefore, laudable. It is a shame, at best, that the mission zeal of Arminianism is so misguided!

At the same time the Arminians charge the Calvinists with having no gospel to preach. If Christ died only for the elect, then one can preach only to the elect. If the promise of the gospel is intended only for the elect, there can be no general proclamation of the gospel. Obviously, so argues the Arminian, there can be no mission work or evangelism done by the Reformed Churches. Really, claims the Arminian, there can be no preaching, even in the established church, since all in the church are not elect and no one knows who are and who are not.

It was precisely this charge which prompted the fathers of Dordt to formulate this statement as a summary of the teaching of Scripture on this point:

Moreover the promise of the gospel is, that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure, sends the gospel.

(Canons II, Article 5)

The Arminian charge has been and still is leveled at the Protestant Reformed Churches. Because our churches have taken a strong and consistent stand against the so-called offer of the gospel it is said that

we have no gospel to preach. We cannot do mission work or evangelism since the gospel promise is only for the elect. We cannot, so we are told, proclaim the gospel to the nations. What must we think of this? Is it true? Are the mission efforts of our churches hamstrung by the fact that we maintain the truth of definite atonement and reject the error of the offer of the gospel? Nonsense!

Oddly enough this charge against our churches has not come from theologians from the Arminian tradition but from within the Reformed tradition. Theologians and leaders within the Reformed camp accuse the Protestant Reformed position of the very thing of which the Arminians accused our Reformed fathers nearly four hundred years ago. What is even more strange is the fact that our accusers use the very article of the Canons formulated against the Arminian charge (II, 5, quoted above) to defend the Arminian error of a gospel offer!

The Protestant Reformed Churches have had a great deal to do with Canons II, 5. In 1924 our mother church, the Christian Reformed Church in North America, cited this very article in support of its first point of common grace, more particularly "the little point of the first point." That "little point" teaches the "offer of the gospel." A little more than fifty years later, in the controversy which wracked our churches and resulted in the tragic split of 1953, this article was cited by those who taught a general, conditional promise of the gospel. These tried to defend the statement, "God promises every one of you that if you believe you will be saved," on the basis of Canons II, 5. Let it be clearly understood that the Protestant Reformed Churches fully and without any reservation whatsoever subscribe to the statement of Canons II, 5. One cannot support the error of a "free offer" on the basis of this article. The article speaks of the *promise* of the gospel and the *command* of the gospel but not of an "offer of the gospel." This promise and command must be preached promiscuously wherever God in His good pleasure sends the gospel. This our churches believe heartily. Because we believe this we strive by the grace of God to be faithful to the mandate of the King of the church: "Go ye into all the world...."

This is Scripture. Jesus Himself did not hesitate to preach the doctrines of election and reprobation and definite atonement. For whom does Jesus lay down His life? Listen to the answer of the Saviour: "I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10:15). Why is it that some do not believe? Again listen to Jesus: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand"

(John 10:26-28). Where in all of this does one find anything that even hints of an "offer of the gospel?" At one point Jesus even thanked His Father for hiding the realities of the Kingdom from the "wise and prudent" and revealing them unto "babes" (Matthew 11:25). The Lord ascribes that hiding and revealing to the good-pleasure of God: "Even so Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (vs. 26). Verse 28 of this same chapter is a favorite of the Arminians: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Does Jesus present an offer? No, He speaks in the imperative: Come! This is a command, not an offer. Does Jesus call all people to Himself? Does He promise rest to all? No, He calls and He promises rest only to those who are labouring and heavy laden.

Does this mean we cannot do missionary work? On the contrary, the precious truths of sovereign grace are an *incentive* and an *encouragement* to do mission work. The sheep, the elect, are in the nations. Preaching is the God-given means by which they must be gathered unto salvation. We may be sure that God will accomplish His purpose in the saving of His church in Christ. The church must send out its preachers with the imperative of the gospel: "be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:20). The church may rest assured that the preaching will be effective. To some it will be a savor of death unto death, but to others a savor of life unto life. In both God is well pleased. Thanks be to Him Who always causes us to triumph in every place! (II Corinthians 2:15-17)

1924, 1967 (Dekker Case), and the Atonement

Rev. C. Hanko

1924

The first point of the well-known Three Points adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 in defense of the doctrine of Common Grace reads as follows:

Relative to the first point, which concerns the question of a favorable attitude of God towards humanity in general and not only towards the elect, Synod declares it to be established according to Scripture and the Confession, that, apart from the saving grace of God shown only to those that are elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general. This is evident from the Scriptural passages quoted and from the Canons of Dordrecht, II, 5, and III, IV, 8, 9, that deal with the general offer of the Gospel, while it also appears from the citations made from Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed Theology that our Reformed fathers from ancient times favored this view.

There is an obvious element of inconsistency here. On the one hand, this first point speaks of "a favorable attitude of God toward humanity in general ... apart from the saving grace of God shown only to the elect." Yet, on the other hand, it also speaks of "the general offer of the Gospel," which certainly refers to saving grace and not "common grace." Dr. Abraham Kuyper, who developed the theory of "common grace," would never have agreed with this, since he made a sharp distinction between what he called "gemeene gratie"

(common favor) and particular or saving grace as revealed in the preaching of the gospel. Yet this "general offer of the gospel" has become the main issue in the entire common grace controversy. We are immediately confronted with the question, since all mankind has forfeited the right to God's favor and grace through the sin of Adam, what is the juridical basis for this "common grace"? It was asked repeatedly, At what stage of the suffering of Christ on the cross was this "common grace" merited? The question becomes even more serious when one speaks of a "general offer of salvation." Where is the meritorious basis for such an offer? Immediately the question arises, Is the atonement of the cross in some sense universal, that is, did Christ, according to God's intent, in some sense merit the right to salvation for all men in general? Is there a universal atonement?

Prof. Berkhof, who defended the three points of Common Grace in a pamphlet entitled, "De Drie Punten in Alle Deelen Gereformeerd" (The Three Points in Every Respect Reformed) insisted still on a limited atonement. He wrote (page 8):

Our Church stands as firm as ever in the conviction that Christ died with the intention to save only the elect, though she recognizes at the same time the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ as being sufficient for the sins of the whole world. He who alleges that Synod here seeks to introduce covertly the Arminian doctrine of universal atonement becomes guilty of false representation.

The professor states that God's love is limited to the elect, God's intention to save is limited to the elect, and the atonement of the cross is limited to the elect. He brands the universal atonement, correctly so, as Arminian heresy.

Yet notice the gross inconsistency when he writes in the same pamphlet:

The general and well-meaning offer of salvation is an evidence of God's favor toward sinners, is a blessing of the Lord upon them.... In the prophecy of Ezekiel we may listen to the voice of the Lord in the words that bear testimony to His mercy, "Have I pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?" And again, "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth (that is, of him that perisheth in his sins), saith the Lord God, wherefore turn yourselves and live ye". These passages tell us as clearly as words can tell, that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; note that He does not say, "of the elect sinner", but "of the sinner" entirely general; and the tender calling we hear therein witnesses of the great love for sinners and of His pleasure in the salvation of the ungodly (page 21).

The contradictions stare us in the face. God's love is limited to the elect, yet God has also a "great love" for all sinners. Christ died with the intention of saving only the elect (to say anything else is the Arminian doctrine), yet that saving merit of the cross is offered to all men without exception. God's intention is to save those for whom Christ died, yet His tender calling and well meaning offer come as a blessing to all who hear the gospel. By no stretch of the imagination can those contradictions be harmonized.

This has often been referred to as the "two track" theology, the one track representing particular grace and the other representing common grace and the universal offer of salvation. Two tracks, mind you, one of which runs east and west, and the other north and south! Others have referred to this contradiction as a mystery, since God's logic is supposed to be different from ours. Still others spoke of "the balance that is Calvinism," maintaining on the one hand that God loves only the elect, and on the other that God loves all men; on the one hand, maintaining total depravity, on the other, the "good that sinners do"; on the one hand, particular atonement, on the other, universal atonement; on the one hand, efficacious grace, on the other, a free offer of salvation to all; and on the one hand, the preservation of saints, while on the other, a falling away of saints. Call it what you will, the contradictions are obvious.

1967 (The Dekker Case).

Prof. Dekker plainly saw these contradictions and therefore wrote that there can be but one love

of God, and that this love of God must have its meritorious basis in the cross of Christ. In his article that appeared in the *Reformed Journal*, December, 1962, entitled, "God So Loved ... All Men!" he wrote:

The doctrine of limited atonement as taught by Berkhof and others has commonly been used to place a taboo on the proposition that Christ died for all men and on any statement by a missionary to unbelievers such as, "Christ died for you". Supposedly such language is Arminian. Actually it is not necessarily so. ... The doctrine of limited atonement as commonly understood and observed in the Christian Reformed Church impairs the principle of the universal love of God and tends to inhibit missionary spirit and activity. God so loved *all men* that He gave His only begotten Son! May this great truth permeate the life and witness of the Church in full power!

Prof. Dekker insists that a universal love of God and a sincere offer of the gospel rest on the basis of a universal atonement, and that according to God's *design*! He writes:

As far as the atonement is concerned, four factors may be distinguished, when we speak of design: sufficiency, availability, desire, and efficacy.

The professor wants to maintain, "The *sufficiency* and *availability* of salvation for all men and the divine *desire* that all will receive it." Since all men are not saved he is forced to conclude that the atonement of Christ is limited in its efficacy.

The reference of both Berkhof and Dekker to the "sufficiency" of the atonement of Christ is an obvious attempt to appeal to the statement found in the Canons of Dordt, II, 3, that the death of Christ is "of infinite worth and value, abundantly sufficient to expiate for the sins of the whole world." From the strong opposition throughout the Canons to the Arminian teaching of a universal atonement it should be evident that the fathers meant nothing more than that Christ would not have had to suffer any more *had He died* for the sins of the whole world. Yet in spite of this obvious meaning of the statement, both Berkhof and Dekker appeal to it to teach universal atonement.

Dekker even speaks of God's *design* to save all men. This can only mean that God made Christ a substitute for all mankind. Moreover, it means that God intended that Christ should atone for the sins of all mankind by His obedient sacrifice on the cross. Thus it was God's intention that the debt of sin and guilt be paid for every individual. It is on that basis of a universal atonement, that God now declares to all men, "God loves you"; "Christ died for you."

Salvation is *available* to all who hear the gospel. The death of Christ, the payment for the debt of sin, the right to eternal life is offered to all, for

anyone to reach out and to accept.

Yet all men are not saved. Why not? The answer Dekker gives is, because the atonement is not efficacious for all. One may well ask, Why? If according to God's design Christ died for all men, why is the death of the cross not efficacious for all? Again, how can that one love of God, and that one universal sacrifice for sin be efficacious for some, and not for others? Obviously, if the debt is not paid for all men, as God had desired, then it is not paid for anyone. Dekker denies the efficacy of the cross. How, then, can anyone be saved? Still worse, this is a denial of the sovereignty of God, for God does not attain His eternal design and desire.

What did the Synod of 1967 do about this? As far as the Dekker case is concerned, they did nothing. They were confronted with a dilemma. As became evident from the discussions at that Synod, if they

wanted to maintain the "general offer of the gospel" as adopted in 1924, they would also have to maintain Dekker's conclusions drawn from that decision. To condemn Dekker was to condemn 1924. They maintained the stand of 1924 in regard to the general offer of the gospel, and they did nothing more than declare the statements of the professor to be ambiguous and warned the church against wrong conclusions. Dekker was neither condemned nor exonerated.

What they did do was to declare to everyone a certain doctrinal freedom. Those who should desire to teach that Christ died only for the elect may do so. Those who would proclaim that Christ died for all men, and that God loves all men, are also free to do so. This bodes no good for the Reformed faith once delivered unto us from the fathers, the truth as revealed in the Scriptures.

Book Reviews

THE CHURCH BETWEEN TEMPLE AND MOSQUE, BY J.H. Bavinck; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981; 206 pp., \$5.95, paper. (Reviewed by Prof. R. D. Decker)

Dr. Bavinck occupied the chair of missions at the Free University in Amsterdam from 1939 until his death in 1965. Prior to 1939 he served for twenty years as a missionary in Indonesia. The author wrote an earlier work, *Introduction To The Science Of Missions*, which this reviewer uses as a text in his Principles of Missions course. The Bavinck of this later work which we now review is not the same as the Bavinck of the previous book. He obviously has changed considerably over the years.

In this book Bavinck deals with the "problem" of the relationship between Christianity and the other world religions. Bavinck contends that the church stands both "in community with and over against" other religions. Because all men share a "religious consciousness" there can be and ought to be meaningful dialogue between the church and other religions.

A quotation or two will give something of the flavor of the book. "Man has repressed the truth of the everlasting power and the divinity of God. It has been exiled to his unconscious.... That does not mean, however, that it has vanished forever. Still active, it reveals itself again and again. But it cannot become openly conscious; it appears in disguise, and it is exchanged for something different. Thus

all kinds of ideas of God are formed; the human mind as the *fabrica idolorum* (Calvin, "maker of idols," R.D.D.) makes its own ideas of God and its own myths. This is not *intentional deceit*—it happens without man's knowing it. He cannot get rid of them. So he has religion; he is busy with a god; he serves his god—but he does not see that the god he serves is not God Himself. An exchange has taken place—a perilous exchange. An essential quality of God has been *blurred* because it did not fit in with the human pattern of life, and the image man has of God is no longer true. Divine revelation indeed lies at the root of it, but man's thoughts and aspirations cannot receive it and adapt themselves to it. In the image man has of God we can recognize the image of man himself." (p. 122 emphasis mine, R.D.D.)

"The man who believes in gods and spirits and bows before his idols shows that he is touched by God and that God is seeking him. But he shows at the same time that he himself is busy suppressing that which is absolutely necessary for a person to come to God." (p. 124) These quotations are taken from the chapter in which Bavinck deals with Romans 1:18ff. What Bavinck ignores is the fact that this so-called general revelation is a revelation of the wrath of God "...against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18).

This book will need to be read and considered by

anyone involved with missions and missiology. A much better book, one from a distinctively Reformed perspective, still needs to be written.

REPORT OF THE RES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE TO THE RES CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA. The pamphlet of 35 pages can be obtained for \$1.00 from the Secretariat of the RES, 1677 Gentian Drive, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI, 49508. (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

The RES Nimes 1980 decided that the RES, through its Interim Committee or a committee appointed by the IC, continue its discussion with the RES Churches of South Africa on their views of race relations. Such a committee was appointed. It drew up a preliminary draft of a report which it submitted to the RES Churches of South Africa for their comments. It also met with these churches after a second draft was drawn up, and then prepared a final draft which is to be submitted to the RES in Chicago in 1984. This pamphlet is a copy of that final draft.

The pamphlet contains a brief history of this matter within the RES, discusses the current church situation in South Africa, explains what the various churches which belong to the RES have done to improve race relations, discusses the "Broederbond" and "Broederkring," assesses the situation and offers recommendations. We quote a few of the recommendations to the RES Chicago, 1984:

1. The RES churches in South Africa officially re-evaluate their responsibility to carry out the prophetic role of the church as institute in line with the RES Statements on "The Church and Its Social Calling."

3. All RES churches in South Africa carry out the decision of RES Nimes 1980 "to do all that is in their power to work for such changes in their country that (would) remove the structures of racial injustice still present and use their influence with the South African government to effect such changes."

8. All member churches of the RES in South Africa and all members of these churches do all in their power to conform more fully to the standards of God's Word for the promotion of justice, righteousness and love in all relations among the races

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Protestant Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, expresses their Christian sympathy to one of their members, Mrs. Rein Harkema, in the death of her husband, MR. REIN HARKEMA, whom the Lord took unto Himself on October 22, 1982.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him." (Psalm 103:17)

Mrs. Nell Phillips, Pres.
Mrs. H. Baar, Sec'y.

and the various ethnic groups and nations within South Africa, praying without ceasing for the enabling power of the Holy Spirit to face the difficult problems confronting them all.

I have not read for a long time nor studied carefully the reports and the decisions of the RES on this matter of race relations in the South African Churches. It is not possible for me, therefore, to pass any judgments on the matter as such. From correspondence and contact with saints who live in South Africa, I do know that what we read in our daily newspapers and magazines is horribly biased and inaccurate and cannot be trusted. But what strikes me mostly is that while the RES is becoming increasingly involved in social issues of this sort, the RES has yet to deal firmly with the doctrinal and moral apostasy of the GKN in the Netherlands which is far more terrible and far more a threat to the Reformed character of the RES. One is left with the impression that there is greater concern in the RES over the race issue in South Africa than over the apostasy of the GKN.

We urge all those who are interested in the RES and in these questions to obtain this report.

MORE DIFFICULT SAYINGS OF JESUS, by William Neil/Stephen Travis; Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982; 128 pp., \$5.95 (paper). (Reviewed by Prof. H. Hanko)

William Neil first published a book on this subject in 1977 and intended, in a later edition, to add more "difficult sayings." He died before he could accomplish this, and the task was completed by Stephen Travis.

Since 31 such sayings of Jesus are discussed in this short book, it stands to reason that the treatment of them is very brief, and the emphasis throughout is on the moral aspects of our Lord's teaching. The book is not very helpful in an understanding of Christ's ministry of the kingdom.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Senior Mr. & Mrs. Society of First Protestant Reformed Church expresses their sincere sympathy to Mr. & Mrs. Howard Pastoor in the death of his father, MR. REIN HARKEMA.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28)

Rev. M. Joostens, Pres.
Mrs. R. Pastoor, Sec'y.

NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on January 12, 1983 at the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids. Material to be treated in this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least three weeks prior to the convening of this session.

Jon Huisken, Stated Clerk

News From Our Churches

November 13, 1982

When I asked the question last time, "What is the 'Question Box'?" I was not referring to the "Question Box" that appears in this magazine. Instead, I was thinking about the "Question Box" that appears in the *Katy Times*. Now you ask, "What is the *Katy Times*?" The *Katy Times* is a newspaper found in Texas. You see, our Trinity Protestant Reformed Church has started a venture called the "Question Box" in the *Katy Times* to make the people around their area aware of what the Trinity Protestant Reformed Church is and why they are sponsoring the "Question Box." The answer to the first question is, "We are a church that is interested in a deep, rich and consistent understanding of the truth of God as it is taught in the Bible. We strive for a balance in emphasizing the knowledge of the Bible and living in obedience to it. Both are very important." The answer to the second question is, "Life presents all of us with many difficult questions. These questions need answers before God and man. Many people do not know the clear teaching of the Bible as it relates to their questions. We do not profess to have all the answers by any means. But we will work and study to try to help you find the answers." The congregation is encouraged to submit questions that they would like to see treated. This is an interesting way to have the congregation involved with witnessing to the truth.

The Canadian Government has allowed Rev. Tom Miersma to begin his labors in Edmonton before his papers are approved. That means Tom and Jan Miersma have been in Canada for a month and a half now. I wonder if their papers are approved by now.

Rev. Heys is now laboring in the Wellington area of New Zealand. Wellington is on the "north island in distinction from Christchurch which is on the south island" according to Holland's bulletin. Rev. and Mrs. Heys plan on being in this area for up to six months. Their address is 16 Camellia Terrace, Maungaraki, Lower Hutt, New Zealand.

Now that the missionary from Singapore, Rev. den Hartog, and his family have been in the Grand Rapids area for awhile, he will by this time be in Wyckoff, New Jersey. He plans on giving a slide program for the congregation while he is there. The den Hartogs will leave the New Jersey area Thursday, December 2. At this time I do not know where they plan on going next.

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema traveled to Blue Bell, Pa. to speak at a Reformation celebration held at the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in that town. His invitation gave him the opportunity to speak on the importance of our "Canons" for today and on the history of the Protestant Reformed Churches. I understand that Mrs. Hoeksema also spoke to a group of people who are using or are going to use her book *Peaceable Fruit* for studying. The people who are Orthodox Presbyterians in this area are familiar with our churches and our many publications. While I am talking about Prof. H.C. Hoeksema, I will add the fact that his Canons Class that met at Cutlerville Christian School now meets at Byron Center Library every Wednesday.

Loveland Protestant Reformed Church will be celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary as a congregation very soon. The church is taking donations for this celebration. Loveland was organized in 1958 with seventeen families. Now there are thirty-nine families. The consistory has decided to increase its size by one elder and one deacon for a total of four elders and three deacons. This increase in office-bearers will help to facilitate the work of both the elders and the deacons.

God is making it known to us that He continues to use us in the proclamation of His word. I will end with this quote from Spurgeon, as it appeared in Holland's bulletin: "The way to grow strong in Christ is to become weak in yourself. God pours no power into man's heart till man's power is all poured out. The Christian's life is one of daily dependence on the grace and strength of God."

DH