

The **STANDARD BEARER**

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

... We must always get into the clear light of the cross. There the Lord lightens our darkness to see light. There we see the divine law satisfied and its lightning bolts of holy wrath irretrievably imbedded in the cross. The cross alone with its mercy-drops of Christ's blood reveals mercy to sinners. It is at the foot of the Crucified One that we learn to pray the publican's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

See "Jesus Crucified" — page 331

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MEDITATION

The Blessed Peacemakers

Rev. H. Veldman

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Matthew 5:9

Is not this word of our Lord Jesus Christ also of force in the midst of the world? Some of these beatitudes, sayings of our Lord, may seem paradoxical, such as those in which the Saviour proclaims blessed the poor in spirit, the mourners, and the

meek. But men should have no difficulty with this seventh beatitude. Is not "peacemaking" a magical word, particularly in our world of today? Who today does not desire peace? War is surely terrible! And one cannot fail to be impressed by all the ef-

forts to secure and establish peace in our present day and age. Was not World War I fought to make this world safe for democracy? The statesmen, especially of the powerful nations of the earth, are continually traveling back and forth to seek and establish peace for our children and their children. And is it not true that they are called blessed who seek this lasting peace and happiness?

However, we must be careful here. After all, also this seventh saying of the Lord is a beatitude. These beatitudes, we understand, set before us the characteristics of the citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. And this implies that these citizens alone are peacemakers, that the love and desire and striving for peace are limited, very exclusively, to the Kingdom of Heaven, and that therefore this striving for peace is not found in the midst of the world. Peacemaking is something that characterizes only the children of God, is true only of those who know themselves as washed and cleansed by the blood of the cross of Calvary. The rest of the children of men are not peacemakers but warmongers. Only the people of the living God delight in peace. The rest of the children of the world delight in war.

* * * * *

The opposite of peace is war.

"War is hell," one hears in the midst of the world. Thus spake once an American general during the Civil War. What would he have said had he lived through World Wars I and II, or the war between our country and Vietnam? Is not this the opinion of all those when they are reminded of these last world wars? Who can describe the horrors of the battlefield, the moans and agonies of the wounded and the dying? What can we say of the anxiety among the dear relatives and friends? What an indescribable suffering these wars have left in their wake! Think of the sorrow which is experienced in countless homes when word reaches them that a dear one gave his life for his country — as if a dear one ever gives his life for his country! He does not give his life; on the contrary, his life is taken from him. And then there is all the misery which a war leaves in its wake, especially in those countries where these wars were fought. War is surely terrible, and it is terrible of whatever nature it may be. It sets man versus man, class over against class, nation over against nation. And in our American Civil War it often set brother against brother. Hence, is it not true: War is hell.

"War is hell." O, it is far more correct to say that hell is war. The war we have mentioned a moment ago is merely an outward show or appearance. He who merely sees the external battlefield, the abominations of the hatred of the nations, who attempts to discover the occasion of any war, who

deplores the existence of armies and navies and airforces and who also deplores the fact that all swords have not become plowshares and all spears pruninghooks has truly never known what war really is, what its essence is, what the origin is from whence it springs. In fact, he has really never seen war who merely takes notice of the external fruit which is revealed upon the battlefield. We must define war as to its essential meaning; we must identify its essence. And we must surely understand that one cannot possibly restore peace by external means. Indeed, hell and war are inseparably connected.

War is really something far more profound. There is a war whereof all misery and anguish and death, all battlefields with all their horror, all struggles and murders, all conflicts between nations and classes are but an outward and necessary manifestation. Essentially war is in the heart of man. Hell is war. The essence of war and of hell are identical. Man does not simply wage war; he is war. War, in its deepest and fundamental significance, is the terrible operation of sin and death in the heart of man. War is not occasioned by anything on the outside of men; it comes up from within. Man is not a peacemaker, will never be called a child of God; he is a warmonger and will be called a child of the devil. We are children of war, even as we are sin and darkness; fact is, we are against God and also against one another.

It is well, also at this time, that, to understand the true significance of peace, we proceed from the scriptural truth that God is the God of peace. The word "peace" is literally derived from a word that means: to agree. The fundamental idea of the word is: to tie, unite. Hence, the idea is: to be united together, agree with one, be in agreement. Peace is therefore unity, harmony and it can exist only in the bond of love.

God is the God of peace. He is that, fundamentally and essentially, in Himself. God is the triune God. He is essentially one and personally three: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is one. There is in God oneness of mind and of will and thoughts and desires. There is in God no conflict, no division, no discord. And He is personally three: each divine person lives the entire divine fulness in His own personal way. Hence, God is the God of peace, of unity and harmony in the sphere of infinite perfection. This God, the alone living God, is also peace for man. Peace, our peace, is determined by God. God, never disturbed by any conflict or disagreement, determines our peace, which is possible only as we stand in relation to Him. There is no peace apart from Him; we either love Him, have fellowship with Him, love the neighbor, or we hate Him,

hate also the neighbor, are at war and enmity against Him and the neighbor, and have no peace.

Peace — how wonderful it is! On the one hand, it is the peace of soul that transcends all human understanding, the blessed assurance that everything between God and me has been righted, the subjective, personal consciousness of the objective state of reconciliation, that I have the legal right to the blessedness of God's covenant fellowship. And, on the other hand, spiritual peace is spiritual harmony, harmony between me and the Lord. There is no enmity between us, only love. And it is spiritual harmony between one another, and this in the love of God.

* * * * *

Blessed are the peacemakers; they shall be called the children of God.

Who are these peacemakers? Surely, Christ does not refer to those who further the cause of peace in the way of worldly peace conferences. First, they do not seek peace even outwardly. At these peace conferences each nation is determined to seek and establish itself. Secondly, if they did seek peace, their peace has nothing to do with real peace, the peace of God in Christ Jesus. And, thirdly, if we wish to seek peace, real peace, at these conferences, let us then speak of the peace of the Prince of Peace, of the cross and of the blood of the cross. And, of course, these peacemakers are not those who do all for the sake of peace.

God is the Peacemaker. We, of course, cannot make peace. We are not interested in peace, true peace. We are haters of God and of the neighbor; we are warmongers; we delight in war and discord; we are against God and against one another. God alone can make peace, and He did make peace in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord. He paid for all our sins, destroyed all the power of the devil and merited covenant fellowship for all those given Him of the Father, Who loved them from before the foundations of the world. God is the God of all peace, also of our peace.

Through the grace of God we become peacemakers, furthering the cause of peace. We seek peace with God. We seek this peace judicially. We confess our sins and seek their forgiveness through the blood of the cross of Calvary. Really, these peacemakers do not make peace. How shall a creature make peace? How shall I call light out of darkness, peace out of death? But this means that we further the cause of peace, seek it, strive for the furtherance of the cause of peace. We seek this peace with God, beseech God for forgiveness, and ask Him to receive us in mercy for Jesus' sake. But we also seek peace spiritually. We desire to walk unto God's glory. We desire to put off the old man

with all his evil works of darkness and enmity, and to put on the new man, walk in all good works, to love Him and seek Him by the grace of God. And then we also seek peace with one another. We will hate and fight all enmity, the war of sin. We will point the wicked to his sin, refuse to accompany him in the way of his evil and have fellowship with him. "I love the Lord," is the essence of his life. Unto that end, we will oppose all enmity and hatred also within the church of the living God, constantly admonishing one another, walking the way of the precepts of the Lord. And finally, seeking peace, true peace with the neighbor, we, with our eye upon the future, long for the day when all the wicked and their wickedness will be no more, in the heavenly renewal of all things, the eternal realization of God's covenant with His own, in that day when peace shall reign forever. We love the Lord, and all things must speak forever of God's honour and glory.

* * * * *

Blessed are the peacemakers.

Warmongers know no blessedness. There is surely no blessedness in war, even when viewed outwardly. There is no blessedness in killing one another, hating one another. War is rooted in the hatred of God and of one another. And, secondly, these warmongers surely carry with them in their hearts and consciousness the testimony that they are children of the devil. The devil is exclusively a warmonger, a hater of God and of men. Hence, all warmongers are his children, like unto their father, the devil.

Only these peacemakers are blessed. They are blessed already in this life, having the proof within themselves that they are children of God, Who is the God of peace. And we shall be called the children of God. Here we are called the children of the devil. Even as Christ was hated by the world, called every name under the sun, we shall be hated for Jesus' sake. But, we shall be called the children of God. We shall be called this publicly, vindicated by God, in that wondrous day when all things shall be made new, in the day of the heavenly renewal of all things.

Blessed peacemakers.

Despised and reviled in the midst of the world.

One day publicly vindicated by God and called, by Him, His children.

*Read and Study
The Standard Bearer!*

EDITORIALS

Prof. H.C. Hoeksema

Reformed Book Outlet

The title of this editorial is also the name of a new bookstore which will soon be opened in the Hudsonville Shopping Plaza.

What? Has the *Standard Bearer* taken to promoting commercial projects and advertising the opening of new businesses?

By no means! This is no ordinary bookstore, and it is no commercial project. It is a venture of three societies in our Hudsonville Church, and its purpose is to promote not so much the *sale*, but the *purchase* of good Reformed literature, and especially that which is produced by the Reformed Free Publishing Association.

Here is the story.

For some time there has been talk among our people about the possibility of starting some kind of small Christian bookstore in the area of one or more of our churches. But it seemed such a venture could not get off the ground simply because there was no "take-charge" organization or individual(s) to make the first move. Then, when Prof. Hanko returned from his recent trip to the U.K., many of us saw his pictures and heard his account of the several small Christian bookshops which he visited, shops which stocked quality Reformed literature, which included also our R.F.P.A. publications. These bookshops were able to maintain themselves while promoting Reformed literature. Some of Prof. Hanko's enthusiasm about the whole idea rubbed off on others, and they began to ask, "Why can't we do something like that?" Out of some informal discussion came some initiative, and under the leadership of Rev. G. van Baren a definite plan to start such a bookshop in Hudsonville began to take form.

One purpose of the proposed store is to promote our own R.F.P.A. literature — books and *Standard Bearer* — along with other literature published in our churches: books, pamphlets, periodicals, and cassette tapes. Another purpose is to stock and make available quality, dependable Reformed liter-

ature, such as commentaries, concordances, doctrinal studies, church history books, biographies of men of God, and some quality children's books. In other words, the bookstore would serve as a guide and a help to those who ask for dependable, worthwhile Reformed reading and who want to build good home libraries. There are plenty of religious bookstores, of course. But none of these is devoted to what we would call only GOOD religious books. And it so happens that in Hudsonville there is no bookstore where church people might buy books.

With Rev. van Baren's initiative and guidance representatives of three Hudsonville societies met to form an organizational board for such a bookstore for a period of one year. The board met and made many decisions connected with the project. A small "neighborhood" bookstore, accessible to many of our Protestant Reformed people, but also very visible to members of the Reformed community in general, was favored. Just at this time a small store in the Hudsonville Plaza became available, too. Financing became available also. Everything was falling into place. The board decided it was the right time and place to start.

A general manager and a couple assistants were appointed, and before long there were more volunteers to help operate the store once it opens. For the time being, all the work will be donated. The manager has already compiled a list of a good representation of Reformed literature to stock, shelving has been purchased, the store is being readied; and before long the store will be a reality — quite possibly soon after you read this report.

The store will be called the Reformed Book Outlet.

They plan to advertise in local papers, to promote a "book of the month," and to offer books at good bargain prices, in order to encourage people to visit and to recognize the bookstore as a dependable source of good literature. The possibility of expanding to a mail-order business will be considered

when once the whole project gets off the ground. Watch for future reports and announcements!

Finally, we want to emphasize that the Reformed Book Outlet is not established to make money. If there are any profits, they will be used to produce

and to promote more Reformed literature. The purpose of this venture is to be a witness of the Reformed faith to the community, and especially to witness through our own Protestant Reformed literature.

Still Distorted

In *Clarion* (Jan. 25, p. 29) the Rev. W. Pouwelse begins a response to my editorial of last October 15 in which I asked for correction of several distortions of our Protestant Reformed position. In this first installment Mr. Pouwelse deals with the matter of distortions in connection with the First Point of 1924. In my editorial I complained that the Rev. Pouwelse's earlier article suggested that it was Kuyper's theory of presumptive regeneration which crept into the Christian Reformed Churches in America in 1924. This matter the Rev. Pouwelse now has cleared up. However, I must call his attention to the fact that his earlier statement was far from clear. In the preceding context he had been writing at length about Kuyper's doctrine of presumptive regeneration. Then suddenly, without identifying Kuyper's theory any further and without having made any reference to common grace, he simply wrote: "The theory of Dr. A. Kuyper had crept in also in the Christian Reformed Churches in America." Pouwelse now makes it clear that in this statement he was referring to Kuyper's common grace theory. I can accept that.

The second distortion, however, is not corrected. I am afraid that the reason is that the Rev. Pouwelse still leans too heavily on Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene's book, though he also now quotes from the Acts of Synod of the CRC, 1924.

I wrote as follows in this connection: "What is worse, however, is the fact that in citing the Three Points no reference whatsoever is made to 'het puntje van het Eerste Punt' (the real point of the First Point), namely, the general, well-meant offer of grace and salvation. And this has everything to do with the difference between the Protestant Reformed and the Liberated. This is true, in the first place, because the spiritual father of the doctrine of the general offer was none other than Prof. W. Heyns, the man who also defined the covenant

in terms of a general, conditional promise. It is true, in the second place, because this Prof. Heyns was the very American theologian who was quoted in support of the Liberated covenant view on the front page of one of the first issues of *De Reformatie* to reach us after World War II."

The Rev. Pouwelse interprets this objection as meaning that the distortion is that "The impression is given that the Synod of Kalamazoo dealt with the theory of Dr. Kuyper, while the Synod actually dealt with the doctrine of 'the very American theologian' Prof. W. Heyns."

Now I said no such thing.

I did not deny that in the Three Points it is principally the doctrine of Abraham Kuyper's common grace that is adopted, even though Point I makes no literal mention of common grace.

What I did indeed say is that Rev. Pouwelse made no reference in his article to "het puntje van het eerste punt (the real point of the First Point)."

What I did say is that it is this "puntje van het eerste punt" that is especially of importance with respect to the differences between us and the Liberated.

What I did say, too, was that Prof. Heyns was the spiritual father of this general well-meant offer of grace and salvation in the First Point.

But the Rev. Pouwelse tries to make it an either-or proposition. *Either* Dr. Abraham Kuyper's doctrine is represented in the Three Points, *or* Prof. W. Heyns's doctrine.

And then he goes to great lengths in quoting from the Acts of Synod of 1924, and he refers to the fact that the Synod in its proofs makes reference to Kuyper and Bavinck, but that it never mentions Heyns.

Now what is wrong?

In the first place, even in quoting from the Acts of Synod the Rev. Pouwelse makes the same mistake as in his quotation originally from the Rev. van Oene's book. In so doing, he omits the very section of the First Point in which the general, well-meant offer is taught. This is the same mistake, by the way, which the Rev. Kuyvenhoven made in *The Banner* some months ago. This indeed leaves one wondering where the whole question of the general offer comes from. Let me quote the First Point in English translation, italicizing the part omitted by the Rev. Pouwelse in both of his articles on this subject: "Regarding the first point, touching the favorable attitude of God toward mankind in general and not only toward the elect, synod declares that according to Scripture and the Confession it is established, that besides the saving grace of God shown only to the 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 Scripture passages that were quoted and from the Canons of Dordt, II, 5 and III, IV, 8, 9, where the general offer of the gospel is set forth; while it also is evident from the citations made from Reformed writers belonging to the most flourishing period of Reformed theology that our fathers from of old maintained this view.*"

In the second place, the Rev. Pouwelse did not do his homework. I advised him to go to the primary sources. He did this only in so far as he consulted the Acts of 1924 somewhat. If he had

consulted the Acts of 1926, he would have discovered that the Synod of Englewood, in treating a protest from Middleburg, Iowa, against the decisions of 1924, spoke of "a goodness or grace of God in the causing to go forth of a well-meaning offer of salvation to all to whom the preaching of the gospel comes." And if he had consulted all the early polemical writings of that period, he would have discovered that one and all refer to this matter of the general, well-meant offer. I refer to such works as L. Berkhof's brochure, *De Drie Punten in Alle Deelen Gereformeerd*, H.J. Kuiper's brochure, *The Three Points of Common Grace*, H. Hoeksema's *A Triple Breach*, H. Hoeksema's *Het Evangelie*, H. Hoeksema's *The Protestant Reformed Churches in America*.

In the third place, if the Rev. Pouwelse had acquainted himself with some of the developments connected with the doctrine of the well-meant offer, and had studied some of the polemical writings of that period, or even if he had consulted a work such as A.C. De Jong's *The Well-Meant Gospel Offer (The Views of H. Hoeksema and K. Schilder)*, he would have discovered the place and part of W. Heyns in all this.

Now I am not interested whatsoever in merely proving a point. I am interested in keeping the record of history straight. I am interested, too, in not having our Protestant Reformed position misrepresented and distorted. Once more, therefore, I ask for correction.

MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE

Our Order of Worship

Prof. H. Hanko

In our last article we began a discussion of those parts of the worship service which go under the name of Salutation, Votum, and Benediction. The Salutation which is chiefly used in our Protestant Reformed congregations is: "Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ," or; "Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Votum which is used is taken from Psalm 124: "Our help is in the name of Jehovah, Who made heaven and earth." The Benediction

takes on different forms, and the ministers tend to vary these benedictions from service to service.

In the last article we took note of the fact that, while the votum and salutation have a long history dating back to the time of Calvin, they are not necessarily required by Scripture. They are, therefore, to be included or excluded from the service at the discretion of the Consistory. We make mention

of this once again because it came to our attention, while we were in Ireland and England, that some churches there, though standing in the tradition of the Calvin Reformation, do not make use of either the salutation, the vatum, or the benediction. They begin the service with the announcement of a Psalm. They do this because they believe in purity of worship, i.e., they include in the worship service only such elements as are expressly commanded by Scripture. It is striking, however, that while no formal benedictions are pronounced, the concluding prayer, as far as its contents are concerned, is often the words of the apostolic benediction. But they do believe in keeping their worship services as simple as possible.

However this may be, the salutation, vatum, and benedictions are, if properly understood, means to make the worship services more solemn and are valuable aids in leading the congregation into worship.

Last time we discussed at some length the vatum. In this article we shall discuss the salutation, and the relation between the salutation and the vatum — a subject of some interest.

As was said above, the salutation usually is made in these words: "Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ." While there is perhaps not a great deal to say about the salutation as such, there is one interesting point that needs to be made.

When the congregation is addressed in these words, it must be clearly understood that the congregation is addressed as God's people! The congregation as assembled at a given worship service on a given Lord's Day is, by the minister, addressed as those who belong to God, those who are God's saints, those who have an inheritance in Christ and who are destined to enjoy the blessedness of the everlasting Sabbath which God has prepared for His people and which shall be theirs in the glory of heaven which is to come.

This immediately brings up the question: how is it possible to address the congregation in its entirety as God's people when every one knows that there are, in the congregation, those who are not truly God's people? There are those who attend church because they were born in the line of the covenant and grew up in the church, but who are not true people of God, for there are always Esaus in the covenant, who manifest themselves as such later in life. It is also possible that there are visitors in church on that particular Lord's Day, who, for whatever reason they may have come to church, are not the people of God. This is not only a fact of experience, but it is also the teaching of Scripture. Jesus assures us, in the parable of the wheat and the tares, that the tares are not only always present, but

that they must continue in the same field as long as the church is here upon earth. And Paul speaks of the fact that not all who are of Israel are truly Israel (Romans 9:6).

Before we enter into a discussion of this point, it must be remembered that this address is, after all, patterned after the example of the apostles in their epistles. In most of the epistles, not only by Paul, but also by the other apostles, an address is found in which, in each case, the letter is addressed to a particular congregation or group of congregations, which are further designated as, "beloved of God, called to be saints," "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus," "all the saints in Christ," and such like expressions. This is even true of the letter to the Corinthians in which congregation were many weaknesses and sins and even a case of incest, concerning which Paul admonishes the church to cut such a one off from the fellowship of the church. He addresses the Corinthian congregation as, "the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (I Cor. 1:2). If we could say nothing else about this matter, this example of the apostle would settle the issue once and for all.

However, the Scriptures make clear that the church of Christ as it is found in the world is always addressed organically; i.e., it is addressed as an organization from the viewpoint of God's purpose in that church. Just as a farmer calls his field a wheat field even though it has many weeds in it — calling it by the name of the purpose for which he intends it; and just as Jesus speaks of Himself and His people as the vine and the branches — even though there are branches in that vine which must be cut out; so do the apostles address the church as church, beloved in Christ, even though there are unregenerated people in it, for it is addressed as one organism, from the viewpoint of God's purpose in it. It is very important that this be done. And the form of the salutation has, therefore, Biblical warrant.

It must be remembered that this address includes in it all classes of people in the congregation. The congregation is composed of old and young, parents and single people, with all their individual differences which arise out of their own unique character and walk in life. Thus also children and infants are addressed as part of those who are people of God, beloved in Christ, saints according to God's purpose. This is clear from the fact, e.g., that in his epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, the apostle specifically makes mention of children and addresses to them a special Word of God which fits their needs as members of Christ's church. It is for this reason that these children also, saints and beloved, must receive the sign of membership in

the church and must be present also in the worship service. They too have a place in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. They are not potential believers, possible converts, a segment of the congregation which does not really belong to the congregation and must therefore meet separately from the congregation on the Lord's Day in some sort of "children's service." They are a part of the church which the Lord addresses.

So, when the salutation is spoken, the congregation is addressed by God through the minister. This too is important to remember. The worship service is about to begin. The congregation is about to meet with her God. As that momentous and significant moment arrives, God, through the minister, addresses His people: "Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ." The congregation hears this Word of God and immediately realizes that God has come into her midst to commune with her, have fellowship in worship with her and speak to her those Words of salvation which the saints need to hear to be saved.

Two things must be said about this salutation. In the first place, it is interesting that the congregation is addressed as "Beloved." This too is Biblical. Paul addresses his epistle to the Romans as, "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God." That means that immediately the congregation hears God call them His beloved. What a wonderful truth this is. They come to church on the Sabbath weary and bowed down with the sins of the week, the cares of life and the troubles of their pilgrim's pathway in this world. They come, oftentimes, hesitant and wondering whether God will receive them, for their sins have prevailed against them day by day. They come starving for bread which they need for their soul's nourishment, but concerned about the fact that they deserve nothing at the hand of God. It is almost as if they dare not lift their heads, for they are in God's house. But then comes to them those blessed words spoken by their God Himself, addressed to them in all their needs and sorrows, filled with Father's concern and love: "Beloved . . ." Immediately this fills the soul of the child of God with great joy and comfort. Once again their heavenly Father shows the great mercy which is towards them that fear Him and which is from everlasting to everlasting.

This gracious Word of God must, however, be appropriated by faith as the child of God lifts his weary head to hear the voice of God. It is faith that lays hold on this Word. It is faith, first of all, which lays hold on it as the very Word of God — not merely the word of the minister. It is faith which appropriates this truth as the very truth of the Scriptures. And it is faith which makes this truth a personal possession of the beleaguered child of God

who staggers into church under the load of his sins and sorrows. He believes that Word; and he believes that God speaks to him. And the wonder of it is that God Himself works that faith in the hearts of His people so that they can and do make that Word their own — in spite of all evidence to the contrary; i.e., in spite of their sins, in spite of their unworthiness, in spite of the fact that they deserve only God's anger. At the very beginning, before all else, this Word becomes theirs. And it is this very fact that makes their worship possible.

Secondly, the possibility for this wonderful truth lies exactly in the fact that we are beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ. After all, the believer must have an objective ground for believing that he is truly God's beloved, the object of God's love. He must have this objective ground, because he knows that this can never be true as he is in himself. He is a sinner. He is unworthy. He has deserved only God's wrath. He is wicked and depraved. How then can God call him Beloved? Faith appropriates this truth only because the objective ground is Christ and His perfect work. It serves to remind him that he is not beloved in himself — this is far from the truth. But he is beloved in Christ, because Christ died for him and earned all of salvation. He belongs to Christ. He is righteous because of Christ's perfect sacrifice. Because God sees him in Christ, God calls him My beloved. The believer must know this, and must hear this.

We now turn to the question we raised in the early part of this article: what is the proper relation between the salutation and the vatum? and, we might add, between the salutation and the doxology? I ask these questions because, at least within our churches, there are different practices. Some congregations begin the worship service with the doxology, and only after the doxology is the salutation spoken along with the vatum. Some of our congregations have the salutation spoken along with the vatum. Some of our congregations have the salutation first and then the vatum; but others have the vatum first, then the salutation: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. Beloved congregation in our Lord Jesus Christ."

It seems to me that it is liturgically incorrect to have either the doxology or the vatum precede the salutation. It seems to me that the salutation must come first. There are especially two reasons why I consider this correct.

In the first place, it follows from the very nature of the salutation, as I explained it above. Before anything else the people of God have to hear that God looks down upon them in love. It is psychologically and spiritually impossible, it seems to me, to sing, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow

... "when the child of God has not yet heard God's reassuring Word of comfort: "You are my beloved." The doxology is, in a very real sense, a response to this Word of God. I hear, in the midst of my sins and troubles, God's Word to me: "You are my beloved in Christ"; and my response to that Word of God is: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

In the second place, we have repeatedly mentioned in these articles that worship is covenant fellowship, and therefore a holy conversation between God and His people. But within that covenant we are not equals with God. He is God and we are always creatures — and sinners. This implies the fundamental truth of Scripture that our "part" of this holy conversation, our word spoken to God, is always the fruit of God's Word to us. God always speaks first and our speech follows. God's speech creates our speech as a living response to what He says. This fundamental truth, a truth which emphasizes God's sovereign grace, must be reflected in the worship. In the service itself, and in the order

of its various elements, God speaks first. Thus the salutation ought to precede the vatum. God says to us, "You are my beloved in Jesus Christ." This speech of God is followed by our response, first of all, in the vatum: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth."

As we noticed last time, this vatum, while spoken by the minister, is nevertheless the confession of the church which she makes before God's face. It is her response. It must follow what God says. And, spiritually, it does. God's Word creates in the church the church's confession.

Then everything is in order. God speaks first to our troubled hearts as we assemble in His house: "Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ." The saints appropriate that Word of God to themselves by faith. The perfect response to it is: "Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Then from the throats and hearts of those assembled arises the glad and joyful refrain: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." It is all right. It is all as it ought to be. It is the church of God in worship.

THE DAY OF SHADOWS

Sin Found Out and Punished

Rev. John A. Heys

When Esther finally made known to the king her request, that her life and the lives of her people be spared from the death decreed upon them, she branded the whole plot of Haman as an act of selling her and her people to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. And she was correct in this. Chapter 3:9 makes it plain that Haman bought from the king the decree to exterminate all the Jews in the kingdom. And he promised the king ten thousand talents of silver, if he would agree to this slaughter. No doubt the money would come from the confiscated properties of the exterminated Jews.

This reveals the fact that Esther was fully aware of the details in the whole plot of Haman. Most likely Mordecai told her much of the plot. Surely

from him she received the information that Haman was behind the whole scheme. Mordecai knew that he had offended Haman by not honouring him as the king commanded. And he knew that Haman was getting revenge upon him in a way that would not only return blow for blow but add to Mordecai's misery by attacking his people. The scribes who drew up the message which was to be published may also have indicated that Haman would execute this decree of the king. They may even have told Esther the details of the whole scheme.

Esther told the king that they had been sold to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. And then she added that, if the decree were that they were to be

sold for bondmen and bondwomen, she would have held her peace, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage. It is difficult to determine just what she meant by the enemy countervailing the king's damage. According to some the king would suffer financial loss, if the Jews were exterminated or made to be bondmen and bondwomen. The word countervail means equal. Some therefore rule out the idea of financial loss to the king but insist that the enemy, namely, Haman is not equal or worth troubling the king in the matter of being bondmen and bondwomen. Regardless of what she meant, the point not to be missed is that she is playing up to the king. She is striving to make him think that she is so very much concerned with his well-being and does not want him to suffer damage of any kind, or to bother him with trivial matters. She is out to blacken Haman as much as she can and to get the king on her side by showing concern for him. She wants the king to know that she in no way blames him for this decree. He was to blame, for as I pointed out several times before, he accepted Haman's slander of the Jews without any form of investigation into the matter, and even without asking for any examples of the misconduct of the Jews. He, Haman, accused the Jews of not keeping the king's laws and of having diverse laws that kept them from being good citizens. But Esther wants the king to believe that she does not blame him for this decree. It is Haman whose life she wants ended in shame.

When the king asked who dared to presume in his heart to do all this that Esther related to him, it became plain that he in no way linked all this with the decree that Haman got him to make. He had no scruples against all the Jews. It was not his idea to exterminate them. And when Esther speaks of the decree, he has not at all before his mind that decree. Cleverly Esther never mentioned that it was his decree and that he was the one from whom the enemy had bought this right to destroy, slay, and cause to perish. He had no smiting of his own conscience.

On the other hand the words were no sooner out of Esther's mouth and Haman's heart skipped a few beats, and it was as though a knife had been driven through him. He did not know that Esther was a Jewess. He was not trying to have her slain. But he knew who she meant by her people, and was quite aware of the fact that it was his desire to exterminate the Jews. He understood now why Esther wanted him at these banquets. He knew his life was in mortal danger and that what his wife and friends had told him was true, that he would not prevail in his plot to get even with Mordecai, but would surely fall before him. He experienced what Moses said, and is recorded in Numbers 32:23, "Be

sure your sins will find you out." We may get away with our sins before man, because men are not everywhere present and all-seeing and all-knowing. But no man gets away with his sins before God. What a terrifying experience it must be for the unbeliever when he dies and at once stands before the God against whom he sinned all his life! For him death is no blessing but the end of all hope that he ever had of obtaining what he called blessings. He may die unafraid of God because he has ruled Him out of all his life and called the believers fools. But stark terror, gripping fear will strike him in the twinkling of an eye when his earthly eye closes and his heart stops beating.

This will never be the case with the child of God. He may fear death because he knows what a sinner he is. He trusts in the blood of Christ. But he sees no reason in himself why he should be dealt with in mercy and lovingkindness. And then at once all the mists are rolled away, all his doubts and fears disappear as he is received by Christ and ushered into heavenly glories. Our sins were transferred to Christ from eternity when we were chosen in Him. And that we will see the moment physical death takes hold of us. Our sins will not find us out, but we will find out that our sins have been paid for in full, and that we are found in Christ, Who was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (II Cor. 5:11).

Haman the unbeliever had no such peace when he learned that the king had found out his sin. And the king himself went into a form of shock. It shook him that someone wanted to kill his wife. And he did not yet know that Haman did not try to kill his wife, for he too was wholly ignorant of the fact that she was a Jewess. What also struck him was the fact that the laws of the Medes and Persians cannot be altered. His wife was doomed. Besides, he had lost his right-hand man upon whom he leaned so heavily. He had to go out into the garden to sort things out in his mind. He wanted to keep his beautiful wife so badly, and he depended so much on this right-hand man. But his eagerness to keep his wife, and his anger at the one who arranged to have her killed prevailed. He returned to the banquet room. His hatred, mentioned in Esther 7:7, had not abated. And now it intensifies. For Haman had approached Esther in an attempt to save his life, for he could see that there was "evil determined against him by the king." She gave him a cold stare; and if she said anything, it did not at all allay his fears. In fact, we get the impression that his fear grew, for now he approaches even more closely to her, perhaps to take her hand and in tenderness to make a desperate plea. He fell on the bed whereon Esther was. Now that was not a bed for sleeping, but a couch. In that day they did not

sit at the table on chairs but reclined on couches. Even much later, in the day when Jesus was on this earth, such was the custom. And those pictures of Him and His disciples eating the Last Passover are so wrong when they picture Him and His disciples sitting on chairs. Esther had not gotten up when the king left his dining couch to go into the palace garden. And Haman did not faint in his fear and fall upon that couch. He came close to make a more urgent plea for his life, probably asking her to speak to the king and tell him that he had no knowledge of the fact that she was a Jewess, and did not plot to kill her. But, as I began to say, the king's wrath intensified when he saw Haman fallen on the couch and so close to his wife. He misjudges Haman's deed and accuses him of trying to force Esther.

Esther makes no attempt to correct the king. Her hatred of this enemy was so fierce that she wants him put to death. And if the king's wrong impression will seal and hasten that death, so much the more would it please Esther. She could have spared his life. It seems very improbable that in his plea for his life that Haman did not tell her in no uncertain terms that he did not know that she was a Jewess, and that instead he thought very highly of her, considered her to be the most beautiful and wonderful queen that the nation had ever had. Honesty and truth on Esther's part would have corrected the king and not let another sin be attached to Haman.

The king without hesitation revealed his judgment on Haman so that those in the room covered Haman's face with a cloth, thereby indicating that he was slated for execution. The form of execution had not yet been announced. But Harbonah, one of the chamberlains in the room at that time, informed the king of the gallows that Haman had built for Mordecai's execution. These gallows had been built no more than one day before, and quite likely that very morning. And not until Haman was hanged, and the king was assured that he was dead, was the king's wrath pacified. Surely he had become furious upon learning that Haman got him to decree and set in motion action that would take the life away from his wife, and then caught him in what he thought was an attempt to force the queen.

Two Scriptural truths come to mind as we consider all this history. The first is found in Psalm 76:10 where we read, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." The king's wrath and Esther's did serve the praise of God in the salvation of His people and in the way, in His covenant faithfulness, that He prepared for His Son to come in our flesh. Haman's wrath, which would have kept God from receiving the praise of His people in their salvation, was restrained. God is in heaven and has perfect control over every creature. His counsel is fulfilled in every detail; and we shall praise Him in the new Jerusalem, when we are delivered from all our sins, for all His wisdom, power, love, and faithfulness to His church.

The other Scriptural passage is found in Psalm 7:15 and Psalm 57:6 and in Proverbs 28:10. Let us begin with that last passage. There we read, "Whoso causeth the righteous to go astray in an evil way, he shall fall himself into his own pit." Can it be denied that Haman tried to cause the righteous to go astray in an evil way? No, he did not attempt to lead God's people into sin. But can it be denied that he would be touching the righteous, if he succeeded in keeping the Christ from being born? Was he not touching The Righteous One? And would there be any righteous? We need that Son of God in our flesh to make us righteous. Take note again of II Corinthians 5:21: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." What is more, all our righteous deeds come out of the life of Christ in us, given to us when we are born again. And if Christ's birth is prevented, there is no life of Christ in us, or any righteous deeds at all. There are then no righteous people.

Then, too, can it be denied that the way to hell's torment is an evil way? And Haman would have turned the believers from the upward way to glory to the steep slide into hell, if no Christ is born. Truly, as the Psalms above teach us, "He made a pit and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made" (Ps. 7:15). "They prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down; they have digged a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves" (Ps. 57:6). Truly God is on our side.

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ALL AROUND US

Rev. G. Van Baren

South African Church Breaks from R.E.S.

The *Christian News*, Feb. 18, 1985, (and other publications) reports the break of the largest Reformed Church in South Africa from the R.E.S.:

The largest white Dutch Reformed body in South Africa recently suspended its membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES), a conservative international alliance with headquarters in Grand Rapids, Mich.

But a smaller South African church has decided to stay in the world Reformed group, by an 80-50 vote of its national synod.

The decision of the small but influential Reformed Church in South Africa (known in Afrikaans as the Gereformeerde Kerk, or GK) to retain its membership is an indication of the sharp divisions among pro-government Afrikaans-speaking churches on whether to break ties with international ecumenical bodies.

Most major leaders in the South African government's ruling Nationalist Party are Afrikaners — descendants of Dutch settlers — and members of the most powerful church in the country, the 1.5 million-member Dutch Reformed Church, (in Afrikaans, the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk, or NGK).

In December, the big denomination temporarily suspended its membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The action was taken by the NGK's 12-member plenary executive, a top decision-making group.

The NGK's suspension of its membership was widely regarded as a reaction to a resolution passed last August by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. Meeting in Chicago, the international alliance declared theological justification of apartheid (the South African doctrine of racial separatism) to be a heresy.

The theologically conservative RES gave the two white South African churches until 1986 to reassess their failure to oppose South Africa's racial policies.

In explaining the decision to suspend membership in the international group, the NGK gave four reasons:

—It objects to the organization's failure to make "nonmembership in the World Council of Churches" a condition of membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

—The NGK objects to the fact that the Reformed Church in the Netherlands continues to hold membership in RES. Conflict has arisen in the RES over the Netherlands church because it belongs to the World Council of Churches and allows the ordination of homosexual persons.

—The NGK claims that the sums assessed member churches for support of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod are too high. The NGK, as the largest member, pays \$30,000 a year, or 2 cents per member, accounting for 21 percent of the organization's budget.

—The NGK charges that when the RES rejected a proposal for launching a four-year study rather than immediately issuing a condemnation of theological support for apartheid, the organization violated its own constitution

. . . To withdraw completely from membership in the international group, the NGK's general synod of 600-700 representatives would have to approve the move by a two-thirds majority. "It's questionable if they can get that. I think there is hope," said Mr. Schrotenboer.

The Reformed Ecumenical Synod has 35 member churches of Reformed and Presbyterian traditions, representing 5.5 million Christians. It represents a more conservative, evangelical strain of Calvinism than the larger World Alliance of Reformed Churches. However, two-thirds of its member churches are also members of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

Sixty percent of RES member bodies are based in four southern African countries — South Africa, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

So the struggle against the apartheid "heresy" continues. While the Reformed Church in the Netherlands continues a member in good standing in the R.E.S., with its membership in the World Council of Churches, with its professing homosexual members, with its women ministers (at least one unmarried though having a child and living with her boyfriend), the apartheid "heresy" has been firmly dealt with by the R.E.S. — now with the above-mentioned consequences. Doubtlessly, we've not heard the last of all of this.

Some Reformed Leaders on Abortion

The *Christian Renewal*, January 7, 1985, presents a box of short quotes from leaders within the Reformed churches concerning the issue of abortion. If these short quotes are representative of their views on abortion, surely there is reason for deep concern — for there is no interest expressed in what Scripture teaches, except to advocate a position which is also a violation of the sixth command.

It is ironic that choosing against the "cruel consequences of absolutism" in reality means choosing death for the unborn — especially those children who are not perfectly formed. But is this view advocated by reformed leaders expressive of the love and justice practiced by Mother Teresa? Is it not the cold and calculating "love and justice" of a faceless humanism?

Lewis B. Smedes — in his book, *Mere Morality*: "If we pass laws on the premise that a fetus is a person from conception, will we be led to cruel and crazy positions that few responsible people would wish to defend?" (p. 142).

"We must . . . prevent the anti-abortion crusade from carrying society to the cruel consequences of its own absolutism" (p. 142).

Smedes' Solution: (1) Abortion should be legally permitted during the first six weeks of pregnancy. (2) Abortion should be severely restricted after the first six weeks and through the twelfth week. (3) Abortion at the third month should be a crime, "a crime for which extenuating circumstances might recommend suspension of judgment."

Andrew Kuyvenhoven — in *The Banner*: Kuyvenhoven summarizes Smedes' position as outlined in the July 18, 1983 issue of *The Banner* and writes, "I recommend thoughtful analysis of Smedes' argument."

Kuyvenhoven's Solution: "We can help the people of our countries with a proposal (abortion up to three months) that can win wide support."

James Olthuis — in *Catalyst*: "I don't like the idea of absolute principles because it suggests that there can be more than one absolute . . ." (Nov. 1983).

Olthuis' Solution: "Indeed, the mother does have the right to exercise her call by choosing not to bear a child . . . the question of making abortion legal or illegal depends largely on your view of the state and on what is flexible in a pluralistic society."

"If we know that what is developing in the womb will *probably* (emphasis added) lead to a human vegetable, we are called to alleviate suffering and living death" (*Catalyst*, Nov. 1983).

H.M. Kuitert — in *Gezond Gezin*, Oct. 1969, "If a woman absolutely does not want any more children, then she has the absolute right to have an abortion."

"During the first months after conception life is discernible to the biologists only. As long as it is no more, it is 'value-indifferent' or 'value-free.'"

Kuitert's Solution: Kuitert does not have to justify the need for abortion since abortion is not an ethical problem for him. It is the woman who must decide. Not God's Word but the individual is the norm for human activity.

If these positions are held in Reformed circles, there is no more any basis for opposition to the crime of abortion today. One expects support for abortion from a wicked world (though also there, there are many who denounce it for other than Scriptural reasons); but one is appalled when some of the thinking of the abortionists enters into the thought and writings of those called "Reformed"!

And . . . Euthanasia . . .

The *Calvinist Contact*, Jan. 18, 1985, presents an Euthanasia report submitted to GKN:

A decision to terminate life in situations where recovery is no longer possible can be justified from a Christian perspective. This is the conclusion reached

in "Euthanasie en Pastoraat," a report submitted to the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands (GKN). The report concerns itself with the question of whether under certain circumstances Christians may allow life to come to an end, and whether such a decision can be biblically defended.

The report makes no distinction between passive and active euthanasia. The former involves the terminating of life through the discontinuation of life support systems. The latter involves terminating life by means of lethal drugs, injections, etc. Though it recognizes a vast difference between the two types, the report concerns itself only with the responsibility involved in accelerating the process of death.

In coming to its conclusions, the report dealt with the following considerations:

1. People have increasing and far-reaching control over many aspects of their lives. Couples determine, for the most part, whether or not they wish to have children and when. Choices are made regarding education and occupation, marriage and divorce.

2. "Life" is more than a biological term. Discussions considering whether humans may have control over their lives are often negatively judged in many Christian circles. Life is considered to be a creation of God, and humans may not wilfully put an end to it. However, the report states that God is the One who grants life in a manner different than our mothers who also on a certain day grant us life. Nonetheless, our life is a gift of God. This is brought to expression in the belief that we are dependent on God for life. In spite of everything that happens, the believer affirms that life is a gift, and a task. It is also something to be thankful for.

3. A situation can arise when death is more preferable than life; a situation in which the confession that life is a gift sounds like an absurdity.

4. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is for humans, and not the other way around. The commandments mark the parameters in which human existence is possible. If they are used to maintain an inhuman situation, they cease to mark the parameters defining the possibility for human life (cf. Mk. 2:23-28).

5. This leads to the belief that the commandments, particularly the sixth commandment, do not concern themselves with an abstract notion of life. Instead, they are concerned with the protection of living persons. A deplorable and hopeless situation is not, according to the biblical promise, the meaning of life.

6. It is precisely from the gospel of the resurrection that death becomes relativized. Through it we become liberated from a convulsive idolization of life.

7. In light of the Bible, it is impossible in the natural course of things to view a disease process, for example, simply as the will of God.

Though the above is not yet adopted (it might be after two years' wait), it does indicate the trend in the churches — approving a form of abortion all the way to finding "good" reasons for euthanasia.

THE LORD GAVE THE WORD

Missionary Methods (28)

Prof. Robert D. Decker

With some variation in detail the mission writers we have studied (John L. Nevius, Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson) agree that the missionary must strive to establish self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating indigenous churches. What has become known as the "three self formula" is helpful and has validity provided the terms be carefully defined along Biblical, Confessional lines. This has not always been done; neither have missionaries implemented this method along Biblical lines in many instances. (Roland Allen, an Anglican missionary around the turn of the century, points to some of the inconsistencies and weaknesses of this formula as it was being applied on foreign mis-

sion fields in his day. Cf. especially, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, but also, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's Or Ours?* and *The Ministry Of The Spirit*, all published by Wm. B. Eerdmans.)

Certainly in all mission work the goal must be the gathering of the elect out of the nations into the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ as that Body of Christ comes to manifestation in the church institute. All would agree too that such churches must be indigenous. To cite examples from our own work as Protestant Reformed Churches, the churches in Jamaica must be just that, Reformed churches in Jamaica. The church, and we hope soon to be able

to say, churches, in Singapore must be in Singapore. Neither of these can be or ought to be part of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America. They must be manifestations of Christ's Body in their native lands.

But what is meant by the term "church" in the "three self formula"? The reference here is to the church institute as that comes to manifestation in local congregations of believers and their children. According to Scripture this means that "church" means believers and their children under the three-fold office of Christ. A church in that sense is organized on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity. The church has regular preaching of the Word from Lord's Day to Lord's Day. It makes use of the sacraments as instituted by Christ and it exercises Christian discipline in the name of Christ. In sum a church is a gathering of believers and their children under the care of Christ through the pastor, elders, and deacons; manifesting the marks of the true church: the pure preaching of the Word, the proper administration of the sacraments, and the exercise of Christian discipline. This, by Scriptural and Confessional definition, is the meaning of the term church. Such churches were organized by the Apostles (especially Paul) at Thessalonica, Colosse, Ephesus, Corinth, and elsewhere throughout Asia Minor and the Mediterranean world. As the record in the Book of Acts clearly indicates, the Apostles preached the Word, baptized, ordained elders and deacons, and then moved on. They did not remain as pastors in a given church for long periods of time. They established indigenous churches each under its own officebearers.

But this definition of churches is quite different from the meaning given to the term especially by Nevius and Venn and to a certain extent also by Anderson. Churches are not merely groups of believers and their children under the care of an unpaid native "helper." Groups scattered abroad under lay leadership, without elders and deacons, visited only rarely by the missionary and only occasionally by a native preacher, having baptism and the Lord's Supper infrequently are not what the Bible and our Confessions call churches. In some instances (and this was not rare) a native pastor had anywhere from one to two hundred and fifty such "churches" under his care. Supervising a number of these native preachers were the missionaries of the sending churches or boards. And things remained this way for years and years. This we believe to be unscriptural. Mission work must not have as its goal the multiplication of mission stations under lay leadership. Missions according to Scripture and our Confessions has as its goal the establishment of churches.

What is meant by "self-supporting"? Nearly

everyone thinks of but one thing when he hears the word, "self-supporting," viz. money. The mission churches ought to be financially independent from the very outset. To build churches for the converts, to pay the salaries either in whole or in part of the native preachers, to assist the converts in ways other than benevolence is bad mission practice. Both Scripture and the history of missions, as well as contemporary missions, make this abundantly evident. To assist the converts in these ways fosters an attitude of paternalism on the part of the sending churches and an attitude of dependence on the part of the converts. This practice also breeds envy, jealousy, and strife among the converts. The growth and development of the new churches both spiritually and numerically are greatly impeded. The church at Antioch through whom the Holy Spirit sent the apostle Paul on his missionary journeys did not assist or subsidize the churches which the Apostle organized. In fact the church at Antioch did not even pay a salary to the Apostle and his assistants.

This is proper, we believe. Converts ought to build their own churches and support their own preachers. Churches need not be elaborate buildings costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. Native preachers ought to be supported by the congregation which they serve. Where this is done things will be done "decently and in good order."

We can accept the whole idea of native churches being "self-governing" provided this too be understood Biblically. In the Biblical and Confessional sense this means each congregation is under the care of Christ by means of properly called, qualified officebearers. These must be natives. This means that a large part of work on the foreign fields will have to consist of the training and instruction of qualified men for the offices of pastor, elder, and deacon. The training of native pastors can either be done by the missionaries themselves or by having natives who aspire to the ministry trained in the Seminary of the sending churches. The former method was and is being employed on our Jamaican field. Rev. G.C. Lubbers spent a great deal of time and energy instructing several young men who are now pastors in Jamaica. He was assisted in this work by emissaries from our churches. Some instruction was also done by correspondence. Revs. J.A. Heys and C. Hanko did much or perhaps all of the latter. The Rev. Lau Chin Kwee, currently an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore, received three years of instruction in our Seminary. Jaikaishin Mahtani, currently about half way through three years of training for the ministry, is studying at our Seminary. This brother hopes to return to Singapore after the 1985-'86 seminary

term in order to be examined and ordained in the ministry of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Singapore. There are advantages and disadvantages in both methods, but both have worked out rather well. As the mission churches grow and develop they will supply their own theological training for prospective ministers and missionaries. Concerning the training of elders and deacons, we believe this is an important part of the work of the missionaries. Promising men, men who possess the necessary gifts for church office, must be instructed in the fundamentals of Reformed doctrine, Bible History, and Church Polity. Instruction must also be given in the calling and duties of elders and deacons. In sum, these men must be trained to assume leadership in the congregation.

The new church must also be "self-propagating." By this we mean that the newly organized congregation of believers and their children under the care of Christ through the officebearers has the mandate of Christ to "go into all the world" preaching and teaching the gospel. The mission calling applies with equal force to them as to the older, established, sending churches.

This, therefore, must be the goal of our mission labor. Wherever God out of His good pleasure sends us we must preach the gospel commanding all to repent and believe. We must do this with

God's appointed means: "the foolishness of preaching" (cf. I Corinthians 1). The whole counsel of God must be proclaimed publicly and from house to house (cf. Acts 20:17-35). Our goal must be to organize believers and their children into manifestations of the Body of Jesus Christ.

Doing this we may be confident that God will give the increase. God's Word does not return void. He is pleased to save His elect by the foolishness of preaching. By that same foolishness God is pleased to make of no effect the wisdom and power of the world. In the way of faithfulness to this calling we may confess with the Apostle, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many who corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:14-17). We may be confident too that when the gospel has been preached to the nations for a witness, God will bring the end of all things (Matthew 24:14). In no less a work of God are we involved in the work of missions. May the Lord give us grace to persevere to His glory.

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

Nicene Creed

Rev. James Slopsema

Article 10 (cont'd.)

Article 10 of the Nicene Creed reads, "We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins."

In this article the early church acknowledged first of all the existence of one baptism. This idea we considered in our last article. The early church also connected baptism to the remission of sins. She also confessed in this article that baptism is for the remission of sins. It is this idea that we now consider.

That baptism is for the remission of sins is certainly Biblical. In Mark 1:4 we are taught that "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." Peter uses similar language in his speech on Pentecost. In response to those who were pricked in their hearts Peter exhorted, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

That baptism is for the remission of sins is a very beautiful and comforting truth. However, when the

early church confessed a baptism for the remission of sins she had a warped view of what this means. Already at this early stage in her history errors concerning baptism had arisen in the church. Hence, although the confession she made here in this article of her creed is Biblical, what she meant to express was not. What we wish to do in this article therefore is to set forth the teaching of the early church on baptism. And having done that we will set forth the true Biblical idea of baptism, especially that baptism is for the remission of sins.

In this early period of the church's history there was no fully developed doctrine of baptism. The early church fathers emphasized that baptism is a sacrament of regeneration. The trouble was, however, that the church fathers had no clear conception of regeneration. They did not distinguish between regeneration and justification, as we have learned to do on the basis of God's Word. Consequently, when the early church fathers spoke of regeneration in connection with baptism they had in mind primarily the idea of the remission of sins. In addition to the remission or forgiveness of sins they also included in regeneration the idea of spiritual renewal by the Holy Spirit. Along with this idea of regeneration the early church fathers also saw in baptism a translation out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Christ. Baptism was the rite of initiation into the kingdom and church of Jesus Christ.

The early church fathers also had the idea that somehow the sacrament of baptism itself had the power to save. It was taught, for example, that baptism washed away all sins committed prior to its administration. At this time the church had no real conception of original sin. Her attention was focused on the actual sins committed in this life. It was the teaching of the church that all sins committed prior to baptism were forgiven through baptism. Quite in harmony with this line of thinking it was also the teaching of the church fathers that baptism was necessary to enter into the kingdom of God. Consequently, infants who died without the benefit of baptism were considered to be damned to eternal perdition. This idea was based primarily on Jesus' words to Nicodemus, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:5).

Arising from this idea of baptism, especially the idea that all sins committed prior to baptism are forgiven through baptism, came the abuse of postponing baptism. Infant baptism was practiced in the early church. However, many parents postponed the baptism of their children. Some did this out of indifference. However, others did so that their children could take advantage of the forgiving

powers of baptism after the sins of youth had been committed. In like manner, adult converts frequently postponed baptism as long as possible. Again, the purpose was to take the greatest possible advantage of the forgiving powers of baptism. In many cases the postponement of baptism was motivated by a desire to live in sin as long as possible. One could live as he pleased so long as there was time for baptism before death. Then all sin would be wiped away. Consequently, many were not baptized until they were on their death bed, as was Constantine, the first "Christian" emperor of Rome. In turn, in times of catastrophe and calamity the church witnessed many baptisms.

We find, then, in this early period of the church's history the seeds of the Roman Catholic doctrine of *ex opere operato*. This is the view that the water of baptism itself washes away sin, that this washing of baptism is accomplished in all who receive the sacrament, and that this is indispensable for salvation.

Much different is the teachings of the Scriptures in this matter as summarized in our Reformed creeds.

According to Scripture, baptism is a sign and seal of salvation. More particularly it is a sign and seal of the washing away of sins in the blood of Jesus Christ.

The washing away of sins involves a twofold spiritual reality. Included in the washing away of sins is, first of all, the remission of sins. That our sins are washed away means that God forgives our sins for the sake of the shed blood of Christ. But the washing away of sins is more. It also is an inner cleansing of heart and soul by the Holy Spirit. The washing away of sins implies spiritual renewal — regeneration and sanctification. This certainly is the teaching of our Heidelberg Catechism, LD 26, Q 70.

Now, baptism is a sign and seal of that spiritual reality.

That means, negatively, that the water of baptism itself does not wash away sins. The water of baptism has not the power to wash away so much as the least of our sins. Its only power is to wash away the dirt from our bodies. For that reason neither is baptism indispensable for salvation. We need not fear that an infant who dies without being baptized is thereby doomed to eternal perdition.

Baptism is merely a sign and seal of the washing away of sins. And that means, positively, that the spiritual reality of the washing away of sin is symbolized in baptism. Because water has the power to wash away the dirt of the body, God has ordained it as a sign and symbol to depict the washing away of sins in the blood of Christ. Furthermore, baptism is a seal of the washing away of sins. A seal is a

pledge, a guarantee. In baptism, therefore, God pledges salvation. He guarantees the washing away of sins depicted in the washing of water. This pledge of salvation doesn't come to all, not even to all who are baptized. The seal of baptism is to the believer. Baptism is God's seal that He will most certainly wash away the sins of all and every believer in the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son.

For that reason baptism is also a means of grace to the believer.

It is through the sacrament of baptism that the Holy Spirit strengthens the believer in his faith. Baptism serves the strengthening of faith, of course, exactly because it is a seal. Through baptism God seals or guarantees to every believer that He will certainly wash away the believer's sins in the blood of Christ. In that way the believer's faith is strengthened.

And it is through the strengthening of his faith that the believer comes to partake in richer measure of the grace of the washing away of his sins. Through the strengthening of his faith in Christ he comes to the glad assurance that his wretched sins are all forgiven for Christ's sake. Through the strengthening of his faith by baptism

he is also renewed spiritually so as to live a new and holy life. Through the confirmation of his faith by baptism the believer is comforted and refreshed in all the blessings of God's salvation.

In this sense baptism is a means of grace to the believer.

And it's in this sense, too, that we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins.

By this confession we do not mean, then, that the water of baptism washes away our sins. Nor do we mean that baptism somehow magically washes away all sin prior to baptism so they are all forgiven.

By this confession we mean rather that baptism is a sign and seal of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. And when that seal, therefore, is administered to the believer, or when the believer witnesses that seal administered to others, his faith is made strong even to the enjoyment of the forgiveness of his sins.

What a glorious thing is baptism!

And what a glorious confession we are able to make!

GUEST ARTICLE

3. Jesus Crucified

Rev. Robert C. Harbach

"And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him."

—Luke 23:33

On the basis of this word of God we confess, in the words of the Apostolic Confession, "I believe He was crucified." The Heidelberg Catechism, explaining this confession, says that there is more in His being crucified than if He had died some other death. For by His crucifixion "I am assured that He took on himself the curse which lay upon me; for the death of the cross was accursed of God." He was hanged upon the tree of the cross, making the

death of the cross cursed of God. For the law says (Deut. 21:23), "he that is hanged is accursed of God." Paul refers to this law in his letter to the Galatians when he writes, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (3:13). The law curses sin, that is, God by His law curses sin. The crucifixion is God cursing sin; it is the crucifixion of sin. On the cross, God bore His own curse, so that His was the curse, ours the blessing.

THE MEANING. "They crucified Him." That was the mode of His death. He did not and could

not die any other death. He died not by poisoning, drowning, starving, nor by any of the other common ways men die. Both John the Baptist and James Zebedee were beheaded. Stephen was stoned. Capital punishment, according to Israel's law, was also by burning. It is possible to die by stoning, or by burning, yet no blood be shed. But without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. He could not die in any of these other ways, nor by assassination, much less by suicide (for that is sin, and He died *for* sin, not *in* sin).

He died solely by crucifixion. After the Jewish Old Testament form of capital punishment by stoning, the dead body would be hanged on a tree. But Jesus was hanged on the cross alive. This was not Jewish, but pagan Roman torture punishment. He was crucified, nailed through hands and feet. This was done by the power of the Roman government under the political pressure of the Jews. For Peter, missionary to the Jews, charged their council, the Sanhedrin, thus: "whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." For they had actually utilized a heathen form of deadly torture to do away with Jesus. (They were the ones who repeatedly had cried, "Crucify Him!"). The Egyptians in Joseph's day executed by hanging; so did the Persians in Esther's day. But the Romans in Jesus' day used the most inhumane and barbaric form of execution. The Jewish council had passed sentence on Him, had actually in their implacable hatred imprecated His blood upon themselves and on their children to get the deed done. They not only were responsible for His death, but for His dying the most accursed death.

THE FORESHADOWING of the crucifixion is seen in the Old Testament types of patriarchal revelation as exemplified in the coats of skins with which God clothes Adam and Eve. (Animals had to be sacrificed to provide this "covering" or "atone-ment.") Abel's lamb, offered on the altar just outside the garden of Eden, is type of the Lamb of God whose sacrifice of himself opens the way into the heavenly Paradise. Isaac, Abraham's only son, is type of God's only begotten Son bearing His cross in our place. Christ made sin for us on the cross is the antitype of the brazen serpent lifted up on a pole in the wilderness, so that there is life for a look at the crucified One! Jesus applied this type to himself as the Antitype. David prophesied of Him in his twenty-second Psalm, "they pierced My hands and My feet." The wave-offerings with the heave-offerings prefigured the cross. The homes of the Israelites at the Passover had blood on their doors in the form of a cross, the blood marking lintel, doorpost, and threshold. The cross is observable in the layout of the tabernacle, first in the mercy-seat, then in the altar of incense, then opposite each other the lampstand and the table of showbread

and finally the altar of burnt-offering.

The cross also appears, typically, in prophetic revelation. As David had, Zechariah prophesied of the cross in, "They shall look on Me whom they have pierced." The Jews try to elude the force of these prophecies, but without success. This evasion was not made in Old Testament times, but in the New Testament day, and only after the crucifixion had become history. There was no effort made to explain away these prophecies before the death of Christ. The endeavor to do so after the fact reveals the desperate weakness of the Jewish prophetic interpretation. The historical fulfilment record of the crucifixion as preserved in the inspired Scripture accounts leaves all attempts to undermine these prophecy records ridiculous. The cross on Calvary, the Place of a Skull, is symbol of rationalism condemned and the death of all human wisdom.

According to the New Testament record, Jesus was actually crucified. Judas had betrayed Him for that purpose. "The Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified." The Jews clamored for His crucifixion, screaming over and over the awful word, *crucify!* Pilate finally gave in and ordered, "Take ye Him and crucify Him!" Then the Roman soldiers of the governor "led Him away to be crucified." At the place called Calvary, "there they crucified Him."

THE TRUTH by which we must live and die is expressed in all these texts. The great truth the true church here confesses embraces the whole of our theology. "He was crucified" is the very center of the gospel. The glory of the church universal, of the church militant, is not in some denominational form of worship, not in a peculiar emphasis on one sacrament, not in some oddity of doctrine (for example, millennialism), but it shines in the cross. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world!"

Passing strange it is then to read in a British special bulletin, a "Mission to England Bulletin," published by the British Council of Protestant Churches, and printed by the Newtownards Chronicle, that Billy Graham does not emphasize "The Blood" in his ministry as an evangelist. The bulletin states, "In a letter of 29th February, 1968, W.H. Martindale, writing on behalf of the Billy Graham Association, said, 'There are many aspects of the Christian life that Mr. Graham does not touch upon because he does not believe that they are the duty and responsibility of the evangelist. Mr. Graham believes that we are saved through the blood of Christ; however, this aspect of Christian doctrine he does not emphasize in His message. This is the duty and prerogative of the pastors.'" Astounding! But is this practice of Graham's in har-

mony with the divine injunction, "Do the work of an evangelist" (II Tim. 4:6)? Is it conceivable that the two New Testament evangelists, Stephen and Philip, did not emphasize the blood of Christ in their messages since that is for pastors and not evangelists to do? Will Scripture bear out such a strange idea? Take any preaching, sermon, or "message" that does not have any emphasis on the blood of Christ: can the content of that discourse be said to be the gospel? or wouldn't it be "another gospel"? How can one preach, teach, or evangelize and not emphasize the gospel? Doesn't this "work of the gospel as an evangelist" (Westminster Form of Church Government, XV) require not only a bit of emphasis on the blood of Christ, now and then, but a concentricity to that theme so that the preacher (Graham is a preacher, isn't he?) never gets away from it?

In this great fundamental, indeed, essential of the Christian Faith, we have the point of unity for all believers. The point of Christian unity is not found in the doctrine of the second coming of Christ; it is not in "prophecy preaching," nor in what some term "church truth." We must not allow anything to becloud the issue of the Word of the Cross in Jesus' blood. We must always get into the clear light of the cross. There the Lord lightens our darkness to see light. There we see the divine law satisfied and its lightning bolts of holy wrath irretrievably imbedded in the cross. It is at the foot of the Crucified One that we learn to pray the publi-

can's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." A mercy apart from Jesus' blood, or apart from an emphasis on His blood, is a mercy outside the cross. But there is no such mercy! Flowing from the blood of the Crucified there is not a drop of "common grace." What do men of the world have in common? Sin! What do men of the world have which Christian men do not have? Condemnation! (See John 3:36; 5:24). What do Christian men have which men of the world do not have? Eternal life! Christian unity comes through the same channel, Christ crucified. Every covenant blessing bears the same sacred blood-mark of His atoning sacrifice. The cords of love which bind the sacrifice to the altar of Calvary bind brethren closely together. Their prayers, from whatever race, tongue, tribe, or nation (Rev. 5:9), all meet at the great throne of mercy. There alone is blessed union in Christ.

*Take time to read
and study the
Standard Bearer!*

QUESTION BOX

Ahab's Wicked Humiliation

Rev. C. Hanko

A reader sent in the question:

"I Kings 21:29. Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me? because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his sons' days will I bring the evil upon him. Ac-

ceptance of Ahab's humbleness is a bit puzzling to me. Could you explain?"

In this account of Ahab's humbling himself before the Lord we read that king Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth, which appealed to him as an

attractive addition to his palace grounds in Jezreel. Even though Naboth had good reasons for refusing to sell this vineyard to the king, Ahab still coveted it. One received the impression that Ahab put on a scene in front of Jezebel, his ruthless wife, in order that she would obtain the vineyard through tactics he was too cowardly to use. In any case, Naboth was killed, Ahab claimed the vineyard, and the prophet Elijah was sent to him to pronounce God's judgment upon him for his wicked idolatry, his covetousness, his theft of the vineyard, and the murder of Naboth.

King Ahab humbled himself. But this humiliation was not a sincere sorrow for the sins he had committed, nor was his repentance a true turning away from his sin unto God with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.

In II Corinthians 7:10 Scripture speaks of a "godly sorrow" that works repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of. On the other hand, it speaks of "the sorrow of the world" that works death. Ahab's sorrow was of the second sort. His sorrow was not the fruit of God's grace and of the operation of the Holy Spirit in his heart. Nor was he sincerely sorry that he had sinned against God by transgressing God's commandments. Ahab's sorrow did not bring about a lasting repentance in turning away from sin and hating it. The king's sorrow was of the sort that one finds in the world of wicked men, a deep concern about himself and the bitter consequences of his sins. He did not want to die. Much less did he want to die the shameful and horrible death that would result in the dogs licking his blood. He fasted, put on sackcloth, and thus humbled himself in the hope that he might escape the consequences of his evil deeds. He hoped that this act of humility would bring a reversal in God's judgment.

So far we face no serious problem. The questioner is evidently in full agreement with that. The problem arises when we consider that God sent the prophet Elijah on a return mission to tell Ahab that, because he humbled himself before the Lord there would be a postponement of judgment.

This may well be considered to be God's curse reward on a wicked humiliation.

In the first place, God's judgment upon Ahab was not lifted. It was not even changed into a lighter sentence. It was only postponed. True, this somewhat pleased this selfish, cowardly king. Even though he would suffer a tragic death, he would not have to witness God's judgment upon his house. That was a cowardly selfishness. He seemed little concerned about the fact that his wicked sons would continue in his wicked ways, and that the sins of the father would be visited upon the sons in their hatred against the living God. Nor did it greatly concern him that his entire house would be wiped out by Jehovah, Whom he had so deeply offended with his wickedness. His only concern was Ahab, and that concern was satisfied in part by the postponement of judgment upon his house.

But why, we ask, did God postpone His judgment upon Ahab's pretence of humiliation? The answer is, that the measure of Ahab's iniquity and guilt was not yet full. As long as this wicked king could still show a semblance of remorse, he was not yet ready for God's judgment to fall upon him. Soon Ahab's sorrow and fear for God's judgment faded away and he continued to increase his sins before the face of God. There was a hardening process going on in his soul. Not long afterward he was warned by the prophet Micaiah that, if he went out to battle against the Syrians, he would not only lose the battle, but Israel would be like sheep without a shepherd. The judgment that God had previously pronounced upon him would certainly come to pass. But Ahab preferred to listen to the four hundred false prophets who told the king only what he wanted to hear, assuring him of the victory over the Syrians. Cowardly Ahab still felt the fear of death because of the prophecy of Elijah, confirmed now by Micaiah, so that he disguised himself to deceive the enemy. But God he could not deceive. Well aware that Jehovah is God, and fully conscious of God's righteous judgment upon him, he went to battle and met his death.

This should have been a warning to Israel that the way of the transgressor leads to hell. God is not mocked. He who forsakes the living God and turns to idols will certainly be judged in righteousness.

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thoughtful gift for any occasion.
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News From Our Churches

March 30, 1985

Rev. Slopsema has declined the call from our Lynden Church in Washington; Rev. Van Baren has declined the call from our Hull Church in Iowa; and Rev. Engelsma has declined the call from our Edgerton Church in Minnesota.

With the advance of the Mission Committee the consistory of Holland Church, Michigan, has authorized Rev. R. Miersma to organize a Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Wellington, New Zealand, on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity, into an indigenous congregation. The organization took place March 17.

A result of the work of Prof. Hanko and Rev. Engelsma in the United Kingdom last fall is that the Bible Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland has requested a sister-church relationship with the Protestant Reformed Churches. Our synodical Committee of Contact has approved the request and is recommending that Synod, 1985 establish such a relationship. The Bible Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland is sending the Rev. George Hutton to the States this June to be present at Synod when the request is treated.

The Committee of Contact received a letter of appreciation from Measbro' Dyke Evangelical Church of Barnsley, South Yorkshire, England (Rev. Philip Rawson, Pastor) containing these statements: "... At the beginning of November we were privileged to welcome into our Church, Rev. & Mrs. Engelsma and Prof. & Mrs. Hanko These were days of great encouragement and refreshment from on high to our souls. Rev. Engelsma and Prof. Hanko brought the pure word of God to us in a powerful and profitable manner. Our hearts rejoiced in the love of God our Saviour, Whose Name and glory was so evident in the preaching and conversation of our brethren. This visit under God was a means of strengthening existing friendships and creating new ones. The communion of the saints was a blessed reality"

The Activities Committee of Kalamazoo Church in Michigan has developed an "International Day" for their annual spring conference, April 19, at Kalamazoo Church. Rev. Rawson will be speaking twice. In the morning, he will speak on his personal experience in regards to his coming to the Reformed faith. In the evening, he will speak on "The

Calling of the Reformed Faith in England Today." In the afternoon there will be a special report on the work of Mr. Deane Wassink, who is currently teaching at Covenant Christian School in Newtownabbey, North Ireland. There will also be a round-table discussion with Prof. Hanko and Rev. Engelsma regarding their visit.

Rev. Van Overloop has completed some changes in the fifteen-minute radio broadcast on clear channel station, WCFL, 1000-AM, 11:45 AM each Sunday. "Among other things we are giving our telephone number and address, along with the time and place of our worship services. Also we make a point of mentioning a pamphlet in connection with the subject treated in the broadcast. We have heard some good news from as far away as Delavan, Wisconsin."

The Sunday School Teachers' Mass Meeting will be held April 18, at 8:00 PM in Hope Church. The topic will be a workshop on the motivation of children in the Sunday School.

Rev. Joostens spoke to the Eastern League of Men's and Ladies' Societies on Tuesday, April 9, in Southeast Church on the topic, "World Hunger and Our Responsibility as Church and Individuals."

Doon Church's Young People's society gave a gift of \$500.63 to their church to purchase new *Psalms* and Bibles. The Adult Bible Society gave a gift of \$170 for a new pamphlet rack. Doon's Consistory scheduled a special congregational meeting March 27 to consider proposals to purchase four new pews, to accept the plans for a new parsonage, and to gain permission for a drive to raise funds for downpayment on the parsonage.

South Holland Church in Illinois had an interesting announcement in their bulletin: "Parents, or others, who have Baptism Certificates from our Church that were not stamped with the official Church seal can have them sealed by the Pastor. The State now requires this, for the Certificates to be used in acquiring legal documents, e.g., a Social Security card and number."

The new clerk in Loveland Church is Frank Van Baren, 5530 Janna Dr., Loveland, CO 80537. The new clerk in Hudsonville Church is Pete Hoekstra, 1278 Greenly, Hudsonville, MI 49426.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 29, 1985, the Lord willing, our parents, MR. AND MRS. ERNEST MEDEMA, will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

We, their children, thank our Heavenly Father for blessing us with God-fearing parents who have and continue to guide and instruct us in His ways. Our prayer is that God will bless them and keep them in His care.

"For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations." (Psalm 100:5)

Thomas Grant	Matthew Wayne	
Peter Randall	Kimberly Joy	
Nancy Jo	J. Scott	
Ralph Ernest		South Holland, Illinois

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

With thankfulness to God, our parents and grandparents, MR. AND MRS. ROBERT NOORMAN, will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary, the Lord willing, on April 21, 1985. We are grateful to the Lord for the years they have shared and for the abundant love and covenant instruction they have given us. We pray that they will continue to experience the blessings of our faithful God in the years to come.

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." (Psalm 145:3, 4)

Rick and Sue Noorman	Jim and Faith Noorman
Michael, Joel, Denise	Keith Noorman
Gary and Joyce Noorman	
Lisa and Chad	

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan expresses its sympathy to one of our members, Mrs. Catherine Flikkema, in the death of her husband, MR. JOHN FLIKKEMA.

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

Mrs. G. De Vries, Pres.
Mrs. C. Pastoor, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 10, 1985, our beloved parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, MR. AND MRS. GERRIT LUBBERS celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary.

We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for these many years they have had together and for blessing us with God-fearing parents who guided us in His ways. It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them and keep them in His care during their remaining years.

"So we Thy people and sheep of Thy pasture will give Thee thanks forever; we will shew forth Thy praise to all generations. (Psalm 79:13)

Bernie and Ruth Lubbers	Ted and Gloria Miedema
Jay and Donna Lubbers	Dave and Marcia Doezeema
Paul and Carolyn Schipper	26 grandchildren
Glenn Lubbers	32 great-grandchildren

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 19, 1985, our parents, MR. AND MRS. KENNETH LANNING will celebrate their 45th wedding anniversary.

We, their children and grandchildren thank our Heavenly Father who gave them to us. We are grateful for the years of love and instruction they have given to us. It is our prayer that God will continue to be near them and bless them in the years ahead.

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

Judy Lanning	Gary and Pat Lanning
Les and Mary Barnhill	Andy, Nathan, Kerri
Lisa, Danny, Melinda, Tommy	

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Sr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Walker, Michigan, extends its Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. David Hop in the loss of her father, MR. JOHN FLIKKEMA, SR., who passed away on March 18, 1985.

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

Prof. H. Hanko, Pres.
Carole Reitsma, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The South Holland Ladies Society expresses its sympathy to fellow-members Mrs. Cobie Lenting, Joyce Lenting and Trude Lenting in the sudden death of their son and brother-in-law. On March 25, 1985 the Lord called HENRY J. LENTING to his eternal home at the age of 44 years.

We especially remember his bereaved wife, Johanna, and young sons David and Daniel. We commend them to our Father's care, that He will comfort and sustain them with His mercy as He has promised. May they ever be mindful that "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him." (Nahum 1:7)

Rev. David Engelsma, Pres.
Kathy Vander Meulen, Sec'y.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

The Lord willing, on April 25, 1985, our beloved parents, MR. AND MRS. JACOB KUIPER, SR., will commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary. It is with much thankfulness and gratitude to our heavenly Father that we, as their children and grandchildren, come before Him, for with His guiding hand to help them, we have been taught the truths of the Scripture.

It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to bless them and whatever the future holds we may truly say — the Lord has been good to us.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his commandments to do them." (Psalm 103:17, 18)

Henry Kuiper	Art and Mary Bleyenbergh
Isaac and Jane Kuiper	John and Marie Hoekstra
Jacob and Nancy Kuiper	Rich and Betty Peterson
Gerald and Bonnie Kuiper	Robert and Laurie Kuiper
Robert and Etta Van Dyke	Ron and Linda Corson
Clarence and Jan Kuiper	50 grandchildren
Al and Sharon Brummel	6 great-grandchildren

An open house will be held in their honor on Saturday, April 27, from 2 to 4 P.M. in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church, Walker, Michigan.

Read the Standard Bearer today!