

The STANDARD BEARER

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

. . . When the time of our departure comes, our souls enter into the heavenly portals to be with the Lord. Our bodies are stowed away in the grave, asleep in the Lord. There this mortal body awaits the coming of the Lord of glory, Who will send forth the trumpet call, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed. Soul and body will once more be united to glorify God in heavenly perfection.

O death! Where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

See "Christ the Firstfruits" — page 290

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MEDITATION

Cornelius Hanko

Christ the Firstfruits

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

I Corinthians 15:20

If not

If there be no resurrection of the dead

If false teachers should be right, that there is no hereafter, or that it is scientifically impossible for the dead to be raised, so that there is no resurrec-

tion in the last day

Why should anyone be a cross bearer for Christ's sake, be cast into prison, beaten, mutilated, killed by inches for a faith that proves to be a mere fantasy?

Imagine living an antithetical life as stranger and pilgrim in the world, resisting the temptations of the devil and our own flesh, bearing the scorn and mockery of an evil world, spending large sums of money to give our children a Christian education without any assurance that our present affliction works an eternal glory!

Then, indeed, our faith would be vain.

Then those who preach a resurrection from the dead are fanatic deceivers.

Then the Bible itself is not true, for the Bible speaks of a resurrection of the righteous unto eternal life!

Then Christ is not risen from the dead! We are still in our sins! Hopelessly lost! The most miserable of all creatures!

Then God Himself is a liar, for He promises throughout the Scriptures that He will raise His saints in the likeness of Christ's glorified body!

Then He is not the Resurrection and the Life! Then He is not God!

Perish the thought!

But now . . .

Powerful Word of God that defies all opposition!

Triumphant cry of victory that banishes all doubts and assures us that we have the victory over sin and death! Our hope is secure!

But now Christ is risen from the dead!

Besides the witness of the vacated tomb and the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, we have the testimony of many faithful witnesses who saw Him, touched Him, and heard Him speak to them! He was seen by Paul himself!

The Old Testament saints had the promise; they lived and died in the hope of Christ's resurrection. Abraham caught a glimpse of it when he sacrificed his son Isaac. David spoke of it. Elijah and Elisha were assured of it as they raised people from the grave. Even Isaiah spoke of the victory of the Suffering Servant over death and the grave.

This is the gospel of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the New Testament Scriptures, the very essence of Paul's preaching. For he preached Christ crucified and risen!

We have God's own word for it that our hope is not vain!

Christ is risen!

He is the Son of God, the second person of the divine trinity. He is the Word, the revelation of the fulness of the Godhead.

Cornelius Hanko is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

He is chosen eternally to be the Christ, God's Anointed, the chief Servant in God's house. As such He is our eternal Prophet, our devoted Highpriest, and our exalted King. Willingly the Son gave Himself to carry out the eternal counsel and purpose of God.

Immediately after the fall He was promised as the Destroyer of Satan, the Savior of His people. This first promise was enriched by signs and wonders, types and shadows, visions and dreams, and all sorts of revelations. Repeatedly Christ appeared as the Angel of Jehovah, the coming Savior. Prophets spoke of Him, inspired poets sang of Him, believers placed their trust and hope in Him, and were not put to shame.

In the fulness of time the promised Messiah came, born of a virgin, like us in all things, sin excepted. He willingly bowed Himself under the terrific burden of God's wrath against our sins. He became the Man of Sorrows as He entered our valley of death to overcome the power of death and merit for us eternal life.

Sin, death, hell: horrible monsters of destruction!

We enter this world as sinners who add to our sins at every breath we take. Sin is transgression of the divine law that requires of us, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole being!" Breaking God's law makes us guilty, and guilt deserves God's just condemnation, "Accursed is every one who does not abide in all that is written in the book of the law to do it." The soul that sins must die.

Death destroys this body, sometimes brought on by cancer or some loathsome disease, and accompanied by excruciating pain. The body succumbs to the power of the grim reaper. The soul goes to its eternal home. The eye sees no more, the ear hears no more, the mouth can utter no sound. Nothing remains except a cold, lifeless corpse, decomposing, rotting, returning to the dust. As soon as possible these remains are laid away in a grave, which, apart from grace, is a portal to hell. Hell with its ceaseless torment defies description. There the rich man of the parable begs for a drop of water to cool his tongue for a passing second, and even this is refused him. God in His just judgment banishes the guilty sinner from Him with an unending, "Depart from Me, thou worker of iniquity, I know thee not!" The sinner can only turn away in remorse and despair!

He is risen!

Christ entered into our death with all its horror to overcome it from those given to Him by the Father.

The Son of God in our flesh took our death upon Himself, and overcame it, as it were, in reverse. So

to speak, He first entered into our hell and destroyed its power. Then He took our physical death upon Himself, demanding of death to take Him, and destroyed that power. He was surrendered to the grave, and on the third day He arose triumphantly as the mighty Conqueror over Satan, sin, hell, death, and the grave!

God came, took on our flesh in our likeness, and lived for a time among sinners. How hard that must have been for the sinless Jesus. He even bent His back under the tremendous burden of divine wrath against our sins. A close observer must have been able to trace the pain lines on His face and recognize the soul struggle in His demeanor. Always He bore these agonies with His eye fixed on the glory that would follow. Even in Gethsemane that glory had not faded entirely from His sight, though the anticipation of the cross overwhelmed His soul. But on Calvary also that anticipated glory faded from His sights as He descended deeper, ever deeper into black darkness, forsaken, alone, totally isolated from His God, until He cried out, "My God, My God! Where to this awesome loneliness? Why hast Thou cast Me off?" The cry itself revealed perfect self-surrender in humble obedience! God reached down, as it were, and drew His Son, the Christ, out of the depths of hell. For atonement had been made. Life was merited for Himself and us. Now He could surrender Himself to physical death to arise victoriously over all death and the grave!

The Son of God in our flesh had the right and the power to raise His weak, earthly body into a glorious heavenly and spiritual body, fit for immortality and glory!

But now Christ is risen from the dead!

And He is become the Firstfruits of them that slept!

It was the Passover Feast, the Feast of Firstfruits, when the first sheaves of ripening grain were brought into the temple to be presented to the Lord in thanksgiving for the harvest. These firstfruits were God's assurance of an abundant harvest. For

many years they had served as a type of the risen Lord, the proof and assurance of the eternal harvest of the saints with Christ in His glory!

The first Adam has stood as our representative head in paradise. By him sin came into the world and death through sin. Christ came as the last Adam, the representative Head of all those given to Him of the Father. We were in Christ, as chosen in Him from eternity. When He died, we died; when He arose we arose in Him. For as all those who were in Adam died in Adam, so all those who are in Christ are risen in Him. As our Firstfruits He arose in a new resurrection body, a surety that we will be raised with Him. Our weak mortal body will be transformed into the likeness of His glorious body, that we may live and reign with Him forever!

Our Savior surrendered Himself unto death and the grave. His body lay in the tomb among the many millions of dead in this huge cemetery of a passing world. Our Lord broke open His grave, came forth out of the sealed tomb, and had His resurrection announced by angels who guarded the vacated tomb. He is the Firstfruits, the Captain of our salvation, leading many sons into glory!

As newborn creatures in Christ we already experience the power of His resurrection. We are born again, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed, by the operation of Christ's Spirit in us. We have the beginning of eternal life within us; death is swallowed up in victory. When the time of our departure comes, our souls enter into the heavenly portals to be with the Lord. Our bodies are stowed away in the grave, asleep in the Lord. There this mortal body awaits the coming of the Lord of glory, Who will send forth the trumpet call, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed! Soul and body will once more be united to glorify God in heavenly perfection!

O death! Where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Praise be to God, Who has given us the victory in our Lord Jesus Christ!

Editor's Notes

Mistaken Identity. Just in case you wondered, the editorial in the March 1 issue was from the editor's pen, not from Prof. Hanko's. If I believed there was such a thing as gremlins, I would say that

after the copy left my office, the gremlins worked on it and mischievously promoted Prof. Hanko to the editorship and at the same time made him a plagiarist.

Scholarship Applications. This note is somewhat complementary to my editorial in this issue. Our Young People's Federation and its Federation Board maintain a scholarship fund to assist prospective Protestant Reformed teachers and ministers who are attending or planning to attend college. From the Federation Board I received the following announcement: "The Scholarship Fund Committee is taking applications for future teachers/ministers for the 1986-87 school year. If you are interested, please contact Mike Rau, 4165 Jenison St., Grandville, MI 49418, for application forms. An essay of 300 or more words is also required on the topic, 'The Protestant Reformed minister/teacher's calling to set forth the antithesis in preaching and teaching.'" Deadline for applications to be received is June 1, 1986."

* * * * *

RBO News. The Reformed Book Outlet, the bookstore project emanating from our Hudsonville,

Michigan congregation, will be celebrating its first anniversary this month. From the management I have gleaned a few items of interest. 1) It has been more successful than expected in promoting Reformed literature, including our own RFPA publications. Some \$18,000 worth of business was transacted in its first year. Throughout the past year the personnel (volunteer clerks) have experienced that the RBO is a consistent witness to the Reformed truth. Frequently customers have remarked that they can depend on finding Biblical and Reformed books on RBO's shelves. 2) In March RBO expanded into mail-order business on a large scale, with a mailing throughout our Protestant Reformed denomination. If any of our readers desires to get on the mailing list for RBO's catalogues, write to: Reformed Book Outlet, 3505 Kelly, Hudsonville, MI 49426. 3) From April 15-30 there will be a First Anniversary Sale, with all books at reduced prices and all RFPA books at 35% off.

EDITORIAL

Herman C. Hanko

Our Urgent Need of Students for the Ministry

This editorial is occasioned especially by two factors.

In the first place, this is the time of year when our Theological School Committee issues its annual "Call To Aspirants To The Ministry." That call was issued already in our March 1 issue. In fact, actually the time to respond (March 20) will be past when this appears in print, although I have no doubt that the Theological School Committee would be overjoyed to hear from a late applicant. In the second place, the time of high school graduations is fast approaching; and this is naturally the time, too, when young men consider their future as far as higher education is concerned.

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But the basic reason for this editorial lies in the fact that there is indeed an urgent need of students for the ministry in our churches. I do not know in how far our churches and our people are aware of this need and of its urgency. I know that this need has been called to the attention of our churches more than once in recent years, of course. But I do not know in how far the churches are aware of the need and of its urgency. Hence, I take this means to try to underscore the need and its urgency.

First of all, it is not my purpose in these lines to call attention to the urgent need in this regard which is always principally present. I refer in this connection to our Lord's emphasis that the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few, and that we should pray the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into His harvest. My colleague at seminary, Prof. Hanko, called attention to this in

a convocation address some time ago, an address which was also published in *The Standard Bearer*. In this editorial I rather proceed from that principal truth.

In the second place, my purpose is practical. It is my intention to call your attention to the present actual need in our churches. If you will, I aim to draw your attention to the special urgency in our churches of this always urgent need.

A look at some statistics will demonstrate this urgency.

Here are the facts:

1. This year, the Lord willing, we will have three seminary graduates, sufficient to meet the current needs of our three congregations which are without a pastor.

2. At present we have two pre-seminary students, both of whom have three years of pre-seminary training to complete. After this year's graduation there will be no seminary students; and, unless something unforeseen arises, there will be no seminary students for at least another three years.

3. When and if our two current pre-seminary students begin their seminary training, it will be another four years before they can graduate. This brings us seven years down the road, to 1993, before there can be new candidates for the ministry in our denomination. This is the longest period in the history of our seminary and of our denomination in which there will be no new candidates. In previous years, the longest gap was six years.

4. By that time at least two of our currently active ministers, if they live and remain healthy, will be past 70 years old and of an age to retire. One of these is the Rev. G. Lanting; the other is the writer of these lines.

5. It is plain to see, therefore, that, given the above set of statistics, there is only the potential of maintaining our current number of active ministers. This leaves out of the picture the possibility of unforeseen attrition in the ranks of our ministers (a possibility which is very real). It leaves out of the picture the possibility — also very real — of an increase in the number of congregations and in the number of ministerial stations.

It is plain to see, therefore, that the need is very concretely urgent.

Now I am well aware of the fact that this conclusion is based on current statistics and on projections concerning future years of which we know nothing yet. Things may change. These projections may prove to be altogether wrong. The Lord may have some pleasant surprises in store for us in future years. He may also have some keen disap-

pointments in store. Only our covenant God, Who has always provided for us as churches and Who, I am sure, will continue to provide for us, knows what He has in store for us in the future.

From that point of view, we must not and we may not and we need not worry and be anxious. That would be sinful.

This is not to say, however, that we should not be concerned. To be blissfully unconcerned and careless is also sinful. For it belongs to our calling as churches to preach the Word. And as surely as that is our calling, so surely it also belongs to our calling as churches to bring forth and to train *preachers* of that Word. Those preachers must come forth out of the bosom of our churches!

What, then, must we do?

First of all, we must heed the injunction of our Lord, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." We must do this as congregations. We must do this as families and individuals. By this I mean not merely a general prayer for the welfare of our Theological School. But I mean that this specific need and concern in our churches should be addressed in our prayers.

In the second place, pastors and elders, but also parents and even teacher-counsellors, should bring this need to the attention of our young men, particularly young men who appear to them to have talents and gifts and abilities to study and learn. I am well aware that there is a danger of "pushing" someone into preparing for the ministry against his better knowledge. This must not be done; in fact, it is one of the worst things that can be done. But there is also such a thing as wise and discreet guidance and encouraging young men to consider whether the Lord is pointing them in the direction of such preparation.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to address young men directly, particularly young men who are considering the question of further education upon graduation from high school, or even some of our young men who are perhaps already in college. Don't make the mistake of looking at your future simply from a carnal point of view of what you may or may not like to do. But consider and seek the answer to the question, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

*The Standard Bearer
makes a lovely gift for
the sick & shut-in.*

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Herman C. Hanko

Moral Aspects of Medical Technology (4) — Abortion

As we noticed in our last article on this subject, abortion has become a national crime of unparalleled proportions. The Supreme Court of our country has legalized abortion completely so that it can be performed legally in this country at any time during pregnancy. In a recent mailing by a pro-life group, the following is stated:

Is abortion legal throughout nine months of pregnancy?

Yes it is.

Contrary to popular belief, the 1973 Supreme Court decisions, (*Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*), ruled that any state abortion law in the future would have to meet the following guidelines.

First Trimester. During the first three months of pregnancy, the state must leave the abortion decision entirely to a woman and her doctor.

Second Trimester. In the second three months, the state may only enact laws which regulate abortions in ways "reasonably related to maternal health". This simply means that a state may determine who is qualified to perform the abortion and where such an operation may take place. The state may not enact laws which safeguard the lives of the unborn.

Third Trimester. After the woman's sixth or seventh month, the law may forbid her to have an abortion that is not determined to be necessary to preserve her life or health. The court went on to define the word "health" in broad terms: "... the medical judgment may be exercised in the light of all factors — physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman's age — relevant to the well-being of the patient. All these factors may be related to health." (*Doe v. Bolton*, 1973)

On June 8, 1982, after extensive hearings on S.J. Res. 110, (pp. 3-4), the United States Senate Judiciary Committee concluded, "... no significant legal barriers of any kind whatsoever exist today in the United States for a woman to obtain an abortion for any reason during any stage of her pregnancy."

In effect, so long as a woman can find a physician willing to perform one, she has a constitutional right to obtain an abortion in America at any time throughout the nine months of pregnancy, right up to birth.

The result is wholesale murder, condoned and promoted by the highest court of the land. Already millions of abortions have been carried out in our land, and the slaughter continues. The land runs red with the blood of countless murdered infants. What terrible judgments await a country, ostensibly Christian, when such monstrous crimes are committed without a second thought.

In this article we want to examine the moral aspects of abortion so that the teaching of the Word of God may be clear on this matter.

The views of those who support abortion differ widely. A number of evangelicals openly support abortion for limited reasons. Some approve of abortion only when clear evidence is present that the fetus will be, if born, less than human; i.e., that the fetus shows such extensive evidence of brain damage that it cannot live a human life in any significant sense of that term. The trouble with this position is that no one is really able to define what is meant by "significant human life." Some are cautious and would limit the term to those fetuses who show no kind of response to any stimulus of any kind. Others are more broad in their definition, and would include severe mental retardation. The logic of this position, however, leads to yet broader

positions in which any child with any kind of mental handicap is said to be capable of only sub-human life and is a candidate for abortion. It was Jones' position that abortion is permissible when a fetus is obviously sub-human which created all the stir over his book, *Brave New People*. First published by Inter-Varsity Press, it was withdrawn from the market after loud protests by pro-life people. Subsequently, Wm. B. Eerdmans published the book after some minor revisions, although Jones' position was not altered in the least. According to the January 26, 1986 issue of *Christian News*, this book has been approved by Carl F.H. Henry and Lewis Smedes.

Sometimes abortions are condoned on the grounds of physical disabilities of one sort or another in the fetus which have been detected before birth. Others would permit abortion only in cases of rape and incest where conception takes place as a result. Yet others permit abortion when the physical and/or mental well-being of the mother is endangered by a pregnancy brought to term. The feminist movement drives hard for abortion under any circumstances whatsoever if a woman with child desires to have her fetus aborted. These plagues on society argue that a woman's body is her own, and she alone has the right to determine what shall happen to it. The result is that the decision to have an abortion is left to the pregnant woman alone. In many states she need not even secure the permission of her husband — or of the man responsible for her pregnancy. And if the pregnant woman be a young girl, still in the parental home, many states permit her to have an abortion without the consent, or even the knowledge of her parents. John Jefferson Davis writes in his book, *Evangelical Ethics*:

The vast majority of abortions performed in the United States are done not for medical reasons — to preserve the life or health of the mother — but primarily for social reasons: pregnancy outside of marriage, contraceptive failure, economic considerations, questions of personal convenience and lifestyle, and so forth. Even before the 1973 Supreme Court decisions, abortion on strictly medical grounds was becoming increasingly rare (p. 136).

Jefferson is correct. Pregnancies and children interfere with one's personal conveniences, one's life style, one's pursuit of monetary gain. Children cost money. They tie one down. They make the pursuit of pleasure and fun more difficult. They keep women from working outside the home and adding to the family finances with their weekly paycheck. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that the situation in our country is as bad as that which prevailed in Judah when the Israelites offered their children to the god Moloch and burned children in his fiery arms. Today children are offered on the

altar of selfishness to the god pleasure. The crime is as great and the wickedness as horrible.

We want to examine a bit more in detail the position of D. Gareth Jones which he sets forth in his book, *Brave New People*, because it really leads us to the heart of the issue.

While Jones is at great pains to define his position as being as close as possible to the position which various pro-life groups take, even going so far as to disapprove of abortion on the grounds of rape and incest, nevertheless he approves of it in cases of fetal abnormalities. Even here he is very cautious: "I am not, therefore, advocating easy abortion and certainly not abortion-on-demand. My argument is based on the premise that the decision to abort is made on profoundly serious grounds and not for overtly self-centered reasons, and I would always prefer an alternative course of action" (p. 178). Nevertheless, circumstances arise, in Jones' opinion, where abortion is justified. He writes:

A frequently quoted ground for abortion is the mental health of the mother. In the present discussion I am concerned with this as a possible reason for abortion when the fetus is known to be seriously deformed. My contention is that there may be extreme instances where this should be seriously considered, although such instances will always be exceptions to the general rule of fetal protection. By their very nature they are compromises, because what is being done is far from ideal. And yet there may sometimes be family situations in which a whole host of adverse social conditions taken together may lead to an inability to cope with the birth of a severely deformed or retarded child. An abortion may, under such dire circumstances, be regarded as the least tragic of a number of tragic options (p. 178).

When everything else is said and done, therefore, clearly Jones argues in favor of the abortion of seriously deformed children. He considers the birth of such children and, under certain conditions, the consequences of such a birth for the family and for society, to be such great evils that the evil of abortion is to be preferred.

What is particularly interesting is the fact that Jones discusses all this in the context of the question whether a fetus is in fact a person. The implications of this question are discussed at some length by the author. And he frankly admits that, "The view that the fetus has the status of full personhood from the moment of conception implies absolute protection for the embryo and fetus at every stage of development" (p. 164). So clear is this to Jones that the logic of his position leads him to deny the fact that the fetus or embryo is indeed a person at every stage of its development. And this is the crucial point on which the whole argument turns. He writes:

The perspective I wish to develop, therefore, is that each fetus is a human life, representing a *potential* (here the underscoring is ours, H.H.) for personhood from very early in its development. From this early stage it is a potential person, and from about eight weeks onwards has a recognizable individuality as manifested by its circulation and brain activity. It is well on the road to full personhood, and for most practical purposes may be considered to be a person. Nevertheless, I do not wish to draw a line between when a fetus is *not* a person and when a fetus is a person. Throughout the whole of its development the fetus is potentially an actual person, and deserves the respect and treatment due to a being with this sort of potential [p. 162].

After an extremely brief treatment of the Biblical data on this important question, Jones concludes:

. . . Very important as these principles are, they should not be used to suggest that the fetus is to be

equated with a living person . . ." (p. 174).

And that brings us to the heart of the question: Does the Bible teach that the fetus, from the moment of conception, is a person? If the fetus is not a person at some (or every) stage of its fetal development, then abortion is not wrong; it is only the severing, from the body of the mother, of a glob of tissue. Jones may speak all he wants about a potential person, about "the fetus being built into the image and likeness of God" (p. 174), but the fact remains that it only has certain potentials for personhood, and is not in fact a person at all. But if the fetus is a person from conception on, then abortion is murder, because murder is the killing of a person.

But further discussion on this will have to wait till our next issue.

ALL AROUND US

Robert D. Decker

Feminism and the Bible What's Right With Evangelical Worship Did Jesus Really Say That?

Feminism and the Bible

Feminism has made quite an impact upon the churches, more perhaps than we of the relatively small and isolated Protestant Reformed community are aware. Just how serious this movement is was made clear in a recent article by James R. Edwards in *Christianity Today* (February 21, 1986). Edwards' point is that how we refer to God makes a significant difference. Here is what he had to say:

*Who is she,
neither male nor female,
maker of all things
only glimpsed or hinted,
source of life and gender?
She is God,
mother, sister, lover:
in her love we wake,
move and grow, are daunted,
triumph and surrender.*

So begins a recent hymn written from a feminist perspective. Two lines from a Jewish feminist doxology read:

*Blessed is She who in the beginning gave birth . . .
Blessed is She whose womb covers the earth.*

For most Christians, the impact of feminism is doubtless less extreme than these two examples . . . Inclusive language and feminist theology: What is behind it, and where might it lead? Increasingly, our churches will be confronted by the issue. Is it possible to think about it and not simply be buffeted between the poles of convention and trend? Perhaps a look at the wider context of the issue will help . . . Feminist theology concerns itself with woman's role in Creation, redemption, and the church. Such questions are intensified by the fact that, in two millennia of church history, women have rarely been allowed to tell their own story. Within the Judeo-Christian tradition, half the human race has been spoken for (or to), but essentially deprived of a voice in behalf of its own image, faith, and community.

Feminist theology, however, has gone beyond its origins in women's suffrage and civil rights. With Pro-

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methean intimations it is clamoring for a resymbolization of Christianity, based on categories of feminism. Such theology, to quote Elizabeth Achtemeier of Union Theological Seminary (Va.), is "in the process of laying the foundations for a new faith and a new church that are, at best, only loosely related to apostolic Christianity." Feminists who desire to change the names of God from Father, King, and Lord, to "Womb of Being," "Immanent Mother," "Life Force," "Divine Generatrix," or "Ground of Being" are not merely switching labels on a product. They are advocating a shift from a transcendent God to a creation-centered deity. God is no longer our father in heaven, but a "womb covering the earth."

Donald Bloesch tackles the issue of feminist resymbolizations in a recent book, *The Battle for the Trinity* (Servant 1985). . . . Bloesch argues that such resymbolizations of God are, intentionally or not, moving in one of two directions. They lead to making God an abstraction (as opposed to a person) and light years removed in transcendence. Or, with their insistence on an androgynous Godhead ("God/dess," "Creator/Creatrix," "Father/Mother"), they augur a return to fertility worship.

To quote Elizabeth Achtemeier again, "I am sure that much of feminist theology is a return to Baalism Many women, in their dedication to the feminist movement, are being slowly wooed into a new form of religion, widely at variance with the Christian faith. Most such women have no desire to desert their Christian roots, any more than many German Christians had when they accepted National Socialism's resymbolization of the faith in Nazi Germany In *Is the Bible Sexist?* Donald Bloesch asserts, "The debate over sexist language is ultimately a debate concerning the nature of God." What God's nature is *in itself*, the Bible does not say. Presumably God's nature is beyond gender. Nevertheless, according to the biblical tradition, God chooses to relate to creation in a masculine way, as Abba and King.

This is supported not only by Jesus' use of "Abba" and "kingdom of God", but especially by the use of "Lord" in the Bible, a term of sovereign freedom and authority that occurs nearly twice as often as a reference to God than does the word "God" itself. As Creator, God is sovereign initiator; as Sustainer, king-like ruler; and as Redeemer, he is self-sacrificer in Christ — and ultimately Consummator. Paul makes it clear there can be no doubt that God's initiative and power alone effect salvation (see Rom. 3:23 and 5:8-10). To shift this emphasis from a sovereign theocentrism to creation-centrism — whether feminist or otherwise — is no longer innovation but error.

It ought to be obvious that this is serious business indeed! We must refer to God and address Him as God Himself has revealed Himself to us in His Word. (Cf. Exodus 3:13ff.) To do otherwise is to commit blasphemy. The god of feminist theology is an idol of its own imagination.

Read & Study The Standard Bearer!

What's Right With Evangelical Worship

Another movement of no little consequence among the churches these days is that of "Liturgical Renewal." Liturgy refers to the worship of God by the church. The worship services are "parched and barren," it is alleged. The church needs to change its order of worship. Some churches are moving in the direction of less formal services. Usually this means more active participation in the services by the people in the pew. Pastors walk up and down the aisles chatting with the worshipers. There's more singing and personal testimonies and prayer requests, etc. Other churches are moving more in the "high church" direction. The services must be more formal. Much emphasis is placed on symbolism, good music, choirs, etc. Many churches have permanent worship or liturgy committees which plan the services each week so as to avoid sameness and gain variety. While we do not agree with his theology, Franklin Arthur Pyles makes a point well taken when he writes: "The incarnate Christ is immediately accessible to those of us who believe through the Spirit and the Word. And this present accessibility is best realized in the worship service through the sermon. When the sermon is preached, the Word is made available and understandable so that the Holy Spirit may make Jesus Christ real to each listener. The care for a wayward child, a concern for someone's health, an anxiety for a career, and most of all, guilt and shame — all are addressed as the preacher again specifically proclaims what it means that Jesus Christ has come, has died, and has risen for our salvation. While hearing the story and acknowledging its truth again, we are truly worshipping Thus, preaching, not the Eucharist, must remain the central act of worship, for while the Cross is indeed presented at the table, even that sacred meal remains ineffective without the Word.

"If our evangelical worship is parched and barren, it is because we have degraded preaching and the preacher. Let us call on these shepherds to lead us once again beside still waters and to shine a light on the pathway to heaven." (*Christianity Today*, February 21, 1986)

Did Jesus Really Say That? Scholars Decide

A new hierarchy has arisen in Protestantism, that of the professional theologians who stand between the common man and his Bible. These theologians are needed to tell us what in the Bible is God's Word and what is not. *Christian Renewal* (February 17, 1986) reports an instance of this.

More than 15 New Testament scholars have launched a controversial project to develop a consensus on what the historical Jesus probably said or did not say.

The consensus will be sought by voting — proverb by parable by pronouncement story — on the likeliest authentic sayings. After about six years the group hopes to have considered 500 sayings attributed to Jesus in biblical and non-biblical sources. Scholars say they are guided by the weight of biblical critical scholarship, plus their own insights into how many words were put on Jesus' lips by Gospel writers or church tradition.

Dr. Funk says New Testament scholars "have hesitated to broadcast the assured results of historical-critical scholarship out of fear of public controversy and political reprisal."

Colors are being used to symbolize the degree of acceptance or rejection by the scholars. Red stands for yes — a deliberate parallel to the usage in Bibles that have the words of Jesus printed in red. Pink stands for "may be authentic," gray for "probably not," and black for "no." Eventually, the Jesus Seminar hopes to publish a popular "Jesus Bible" with sayings printed in appropriate colors.

The initial balloting, at the St. Meinrad Archabbey and Seminary in southern Indiana, amounted to bad news for the beatitudes and other parts of the Sermon on the Mount.

Blackballed with virtually no discussion was one of Christendom's favorite beatitudes, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God." Similarly "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" got only six pink or red votes out of 30 cast.

Only three of a dozen "blessings" and "woes" in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were deemed to have derived from Jesus, and a fourth ("Blessed are you when men hate you") produced an even split after some debate.

May God give us grace always to bow humbly before His holy, inspired, and infallible Word. In spite of what mere, sinful men say, those holy Scriptures alone are "able to make us wise unto salvation" (II Timothy 3:15).

Good Morning, Alice

Gise J. Van Baren

Gise J. Van Baren is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

It is always difficult to acknowledge one's own mortality. With Alice it was no different. There were the things she insisted on having done — which seemed to us to be so very trivial, especially in light of the fact that she could not live long anymore. When the many cards and letters came, Alice insisted (almost to the very end) on saving every canceled stamp. It did not matter that the stamp was of the most common sort — it had to be torn off and saved. Since she could not do it anymore, we had to do it for her. She and we knew that she would never be able to do anything with those stamps — but they all had to be saved anyway. The same was true with other inconsequential things. Alice was always somewhat of a "pack rat" who insisted on saving many (to our minds) useless things:

picture postcards of every trip she ever took, cheap trinkets, etc. And surely in her present condition, Alice could find no useful purpose for any of these things anymore. What could she ever do with them? Yet she had been saving these sorts of things for most of her life. So we humored her and saved what she requested.

Good Morning Alice:

I've been sitting here for about 15 minutes now thinking whether or not, and then, how to write my feelings to you on this text. I hope you don't mind if I'm completely honest with you. When I first heard of your disease, I looked into it just a little and truthfully what hit me the hardest was that eventually one would not be able to talk. (Which is probably because I do so much of it.) I don't know to what degree this has affected you, but even if and when you can no longer speak to others, you will still be able to "sing" praises unto our God.

Please allow me to be open with my feelings and try to understand what I mean. Once in a while I get frustrated with this one-sided conversation and want to come to see you. I won't because I believe God is blessing us more this way — but I am afraid you are not getting a very true picture of me either.

I'm sure you spend time reading the Bible every day, but you know, as comforting as the Psalter numbers are, you might try "singing" to God every morning for His lovingkindness and every evening for His faithfulness. There is something these songs say to the heart that can be said in no other way.

Please think about this for a while when you lay this note down. It should be the desire of each of us to become closer and closer to God, and it isn't going to happen if we don't direct our thoughts to Him often.

Will you "sing" my favorite tonight: 281, and your own favorite tomorrow morning? I'm sure you can find time alone to do this.*

With love, Your friend

Nahum 1:7

Alice always enjoyed going out with others to a restaurant — even after she herself needed assistance with eating. Several times a week, one or more of the relatives would take her to noon lunch or evening dinner. Some of her friends and cousins did the same with her. It was now her chief diversion and entertainment. However, to move her from the van in her wheelchair to the restaurant and back was very difficult. (We did come to appreciate those "handicapped" parking spaces.) In the restaurant, Alice had to consider carefully what she could eat: it must be soft and easily swallowed, or cut in very small pieces, or she would choke on it. One could see the time coming when this little pleasure would be taken from her too.

Good Morning Alice:

Well, "our" rabbits were at the corn again last night. I was up late and saw three of them and attempted to take a picture. The picture I really want is one of the cardinals. We shall see . . .

Did you know the book of Nahum is about Nineveh? Nineveh for all its show of repentance to Jonah soon turned away from God.

I'm not sure if vs. 7 is to elect in Judah to assure them that God would not destroy them also, or if there were elect in Nineveh itself to be reassured.

But, for sure, this verse comes to elect children of God and so it comes to us too. Our God is good, a fortress, a place to flee when troubles come. And He knoweth them that trust in Him.

"Knoweth . . ." A word with so many meanings, but I think here, the best that fits is the "knoweth" of

Ps. 1:6, "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous . . ."

He knows us in such a way that He has chosen us to receive grace.

Yes, He knoweth us, and to Him we can flee.

When all seems to go wrong, we do have Him to flee to — our Fortress and our Strength.

With love, Your friend

Please read: Exodus 14:12-13

Shopping had always been one of Alice's great pleasures. She enjoyed shopping — and especially for the annual Christmas toys for nieces and nephews. But she loved shopping just for its own sake — and she would shrug off our jokes about this interest. Several times a week she would be taken in her wheelchair up and down the aisles of one of the larger stores. And not infrequently, she would insist on buying yet another dish or other knick-knack for which she would have no possible use. For her, it passed away some of the long hours and provided a kind of entertainment she was able to enjoy still.

Good Morning Alice:

I wonder again this morning as I sit here, how you are feeling about these notes, Alice. It has been very good for me to write them. I have looked into verses and books I didn't know anything about. It has really given me more of a desire to search all of God's Word. I hope that is your desire too. It was only about 14 or 15 years ago that I still couldn't keep it straight who lived before whom: Abraham or Noah. Believe me, that wasn't easy when I married into a family who very often discussed God's Word. I have learned a lot since then, but you know, it was about two and a half years ago now that God used a very dear friend to be an example to me to look inward as I search Scripture, and then desire to live by faith close to God.

I've so often heard Ex. 14:13 explained this way, and I'm sure you have too: the children of Israel, just after the wonderful deliverance on Passover, cried out against God. They would rather return to being slaves in Egypt than to exercise trust in God Who had just delivered them.

Moses trusted and knew that God would provide the way; and he told them not to fear but stand still, or look and trust, and they would see God's way of providing. This is a beautiful promise to us as children of God. When we begin to fear and doubt the way God has chosen for us, we must "stand still," trust in God, and rest assured that He will provide the best way for us.

But today as I read this passage, I wondered if we may be content with that comforting thought. Reading farther, we see that God asked Moses why he was cry-

ing out for the people. He told Moses to lift up his rod and open the way through the sea (Moses here is a type of Christ) and tell the children of Israel to go through; and He would hold back the enemy.

I think we should apply this to our lives too. Christ has provided our salvation, and we must trust God to lead us through our trials but we must go forward too. Not physically, of course, but spiritually — living however we can for Him.

For the Israelites, it was going through the Red Sea. For me it's being an example to my children; obeying my husband; striving to control my selfishness and my tongue; and trying always to learn more about God through Bible reading and listening to sermon tapes. For you, it might be exercising patience; giving a cheerful smile when smiles don't come easily; showing your love of God; learning more about God's Word by reading it and listening to sermon tapes.

We can do these things because the Spirit dwells in our hearts.

With love, Your friend

Please read Luke 22:60-62

With her ability to move decreasing, the time came when it seemed advisable to obtain a hospital bed with electric controls. It was another reminder of the inevitable progression of her disease. Alice could not turn herself anymore in bed, nor could she move herself easily. With adjustable foot and head sections, Alice could push a button and make bodily changes in this way. It relaxed muscles and reduced cramps to change position periodically — and she could do it herself. She had thought first that she did not need this new bed, and rather resented the fact that it had been ordered — but soon came to appreciate it greatly.

Good Morning Alice:

I think I'll stay in the house today — our outside thermometer says 0°. At least it isn't windy.

I could always feel for Peter when I read this story.

I may be wrong, but I think Peter's whole problem was selfishness. Peter loved Jesus, or he wouldn't have been in the high priest's house. But Peter loved himself more. He was afraid for his own life. He couldn't tear himself away; he wanted to see what was going to happen to Jesus, and yet he loved himself more. When it came to confessing Jesus with his mouth, Peter failed. It's not that Peter just quietly said, "I don't know what you're talking about." One of the gospels explains, "He began to curse and to swear saying, I know not the man."

Then came the cock crowing.

Then came Jesus' look.

And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

So often in our disobedience, we deny Him. We love ourselves more than Him.

We will never see that look on Jesus' face, but in His grace He gives us, in our hearts, the sorrow for our sins. Peter had to wait to know forgiveness until Jesus spoke to him; while He gives us that knowledge as soon as we repent. That's the wonderful knowledge of mercy and pardon. And that is the time when the child of God is the closest to God he will ever be on this earth.

Love, Your friend

Please read: I Pet. 4:7; I Pet. 1:9

*Mindful of our human frailty is the God in Whom we trust; He Whose years are everlasting, He remembers we are dust.

Man is like the tender flower, and his days are like the grass. Withered where it lately flourished, by the blighting winds that pass.

Changeless is Jehovah's mercy unto those who fear His Name;

From eternity abiding, to eternity the same.

All the faithful to His covenant shall behold His righteousness;

He will be their strength and refuge, and their children's children bless.

Take the time to ready and study
the Standard Bearer.
Give a gift of the Standard Bearer today!

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS

James D. Slopsema

The Baptism Form

After setting forth the three principal parts of the doctrine of holy baptism, the Baptism form proceeds to establish the basis for infant baptism. It does so in the following paragraphs.

And although our young children do not understand these things, we may not therefore exclude them from baptism, for as they are without their knowledge, partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again received unto grace in Christ; as God speaketh unto Abraham, the father of all the faithful, and therefore unto us and our children (Gen. 17:7), saying, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." This also the Apostle Peter testifieth, with these words (Acts 2:39), "For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Therefore God formerly commanded them to be circumcised, which was a seal of the covenant, and of the righteousness of faith; and therefore Christ also embraced them, laid his hands upon them and blessed them (Mark 10).

Since then baptism is come in the place of circumcision, therefore infants are to be baptized as heirs of the kingdom of God, and of his covenant. And parents are in duty bound, further to instruct their children herein, when they shall arrive to years of discretion.

This section of the baptism form is obviously an answer to those who oppose the baptism of infants.

Infant baptism is opposed in our day by the Baptists. It is the position of the Baptist that only those who have come to a conscious, active faith in Jesus Christ may receive the sacrament of baptism. First one must come to the enjoyment of the washing away of his sins in Christ by faith; then, and only then, may he receive the sign and seal of that reality

through baptism. This, of course, leaves no room for the baptism of infants.

This same position was held, even at the time of the Reformation, by the Anabaptists. The Anabaptists denied the validity of their baptism as infants and thus were baptized again as adults. For that reason they were called Anabaptists ("ana" meaning "again"). It was in response to these Anabaptists that the Baptism form at this point not only defends the practice of baptizing infants of believers, but also insists upon it.

To demonstrate the validity of infant baptism the baptism form first of all shows that even as our children are without their knowledge partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again without their knowledge received unto grace in Christ.

According to this part of the form, our children are without their knowledge partakers of the condemnation in Adam. And this is certainly the case. Adam stood in the garden of Eden as the representative head of the whole human race. When therefore Adam sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit, all mankind sinned. The whole human race that would eventually develop from the loins of Adam sinned in and through Adam and became guilty before God in Adam. Consequently, they all share in the condemnation of that original sin. This certainly is the teaching of the Word of God in Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." All this also includes our children. They are all partakers of the condemnation in Adam long before they were ever born, and therefore long before they can ever come to know these things.

But now the baptism form goes on to say that in like manner our children are also without their knowledge received unto grace in Christ.

We ought to notice that there is a twofold assertion made here. First, the form is saying that children can be received unto grace in Jesus Christ without their knowledge. In other words, children can be the objects and recipients of God's saving grace in Christ without their even knowing it. Secondly, however, the form is also saying here that this is the case with children of believing parents.

According to the baptism form, these truths are evident from especially two passages — Genesis 17:7 and Acts 2:39.

In Genesis 17:7 God says to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

As we discuss this particular passage we must bear in mind that the covenant God promises to establish with Abraham and his seed embraces all peoples. It is not true, as the Baptist of our day claims, that this covenant with Abraham is limited to the natural descendants of Abraham, the Jews. It is certainly true that this was by and large the case in the old dispensation. God's covenant was limited to the nation of Israel. However, in the new dispensation this covenant has been broadened to embrace all nations. Belonging to this covenant are all those who believe in Jesus Christ, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

The baptism form suggests this when it calls Abraham "the father of all the faithful." This expression is no doubt based on Romans 4:11 where we read that Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised." In verse 16 of this same chapter we read that Abraham is the "father of us all." This certainly indicates, does it not, that all those who believe, whether Jew or Gentile, have Abraham as their father. And if Abraham is their father, then they in turn are the seed of Abraham, with whom God has established His eternal covenant of grace. This same truth is beautifully set forth in Galatians 3:7-9: "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." In addition to this we read in verse 29 of this same chapter, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Certainly, therefore, the baptism form properly identifies Abraham as the father of all the faithful. And by

that expression it expresses the truth that all those who believe in Jesus Christ are the true seed of Abraham with whom God has established His eternal covenant of grace.

Secondly, we learn from the promise of God to Abraham in Genesis 17:7 that also the children of believers are included in God's covenant. For God promises to establish His covenant with Abraham and his seed in their generations. This means that not only was Abraham included in this covenant but also his seed, his children. And, according to the promise of God, this would continue from generation to generation. God's covenant of grace would continue throughout the generations of Abraham. From this we certainly may conclude that God's covenant is with believers and their seed. For when one comes to faith in Jesus Christ he manifests himself to be a true seed of Abraham. And as a true seed of Abraham he has this promise of God, that God will continue His covenant in his generations. The covenant of grace is not only with him as a believer but also with his children.

Now this does not mean that all children of believers are true members of the covenant and therefore recipients of God's grace in Jesus Christ. The Word of God makes this very clear in Romans 9:6b-8, "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." On the basis of this and other like passages we are able to distinguish a twofold seed born into the sphere of the covenant. Born to believing parents is first an elect, spiritual seed. These are truly members of the covenant of grace, and even as children are the objects and recipients of God's saving grace. However, also born to believing parents is a carnal, reprobate seed. These are members of the covenant only in an outward and formal sense. They are not as children, nor will they ever be, recipients of God's grace in Jesus Christ. Truly, they are not all Israel that are of Israel.

It's in this sense that we understand the baptism form when it says that our children even without their knowledge are received unto grace in Christ. This is not true of all our children. It certainly is not true of the carnal seed which we as believing parents bring forth. However, God does give to us a spiritual seed with whom He also establishes His eternal covenant of grace. Even as children they are recipients of God's saving grace in Jesus Christ, long before they have any knowledge of these things.

In harmony with all this is the second passage

cited by the baptism form: Acts 2:39. This passage places us in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church. This becomes the occasion for Peter to preach a most wonderful sermon. He informs the crowds that have gathered in amazement that what they have seen and heard is all the work of Jesus Christ of Nazareth Whom they had just crucified but Whom God had raised from the dead and exalted into glory. And when those who are pricked in their hearts ask what they must do, Peter responds that they must repent and believe, "for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Notice that Peter speaks here of the promise. This is the promise of salvation in Jesus Christ, the

promise given by God in His covenant, the promise sealed in baptism. This promise is first to those who responded positively to the gospel and thereby showed the beginning of God's work of grace in their hearts. But that promise is also to their children. Here again we have the principle that God's grace and salvation is for believers and their seed.

Certainly, therefore, we as believing parents may say without any hesitation that whereas our children are without their knowledge partakers of the condemnation in Adam, so are they again without their knowledge received unto grace in Christ.

In our next article we will see from the baptism form how this requires the baptism of our children.

GUIDED INTO ALL TRUTH

Thomas C. Miersma

Meaningful Translation (1)

In this article it is my intention to depart from the line of thought we have been following to take the time to respond to the correspondence of one of our readers, Mr. Harv Nyhof. The issues raised by his letter are important and worthy of an extended reply, as they deal with the question of what constitutes a meaningful translation. The letter addresses itself to some remarks in my column in the December 15 issue of the *Standard Bearer*. To see these remarks in their proper setting and to simplify the discussion for the reader I will quote the paragraphs dealing with this subject in full. I wrote,

The place to begin our answer to this question is first of all to look at our Bibles for a moment and say something about the many Bible translations available. Many of these modern translations slide over difficulties in the text or attempt to simplify them. They are so often not so much translations as paraphrases, in which the translator, so-called, attempts to put into his own words what he thinks or feels the text means rather than translating what it ac-

tually says. There is no good reason for this, and it makes Bible study in English more difficult, not easier.

To use but one example drawn from the current and popular *New International Version*. The opening words of Colossians 3:12 in that version read: "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, . . ." while our King James translation reads, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, . . ." Notice two differences here. First, our *King James Version* uses such historic Reformed doctrinal terminology as "elect." The *KJV* has itself helped to shape our theological vocabulary in English and this is one of the advantages of using it in Bible study. But secondly, notice the difference between "bowels of mercies" and "compassion." The text says "bowels of mercies" in the original. If the text of Scripture is verbally inspired, as we maintain it is, then in our study we want to know as much as is possible what the Holy Spirit actually said and how He said it. Bowels draws a vivid picture before our minds which the mere word compassion does not, though that may be the meaning of the figure here. Fundamentally such paraphrasing is a departure from the Reformed doctrine of verbal inspiration.

It is in this connection that Mr. Nyhof responds,

I am tempted to say, "Come on, Pastor Miersma, you can't be serious." If the spoken or written word is not understood, be it ever so beautiful or descriptive, it has no value. To me the KJV is a beautiful translation with majestic language. Most younger English-speaking people, however, will receive no enlightenment from the phrase "bowels of mercy." They will easily understand the word "compassion." I too believe in careful and accurate translation. Is it not the aim of accurate translation to reproduce in meaningful language for the reader what has been written in a tongue foreign to him? To read in Zeph. 1:12 that men are "settled in their lees" will not be comprehensible to the majority of English speaking people. To read that men are "complacent" can be easily grasped.

Reply to Mr. Nyhof

Thank you for your response and the comments in your letter. In the first place I would point out the context of the remarks which I made as it is rather important. The subject under consideration was that of Bible study. While some of your observations have some merit, it is nevertheless true that for serious or faithful Bible study the simplified translations, "compassion" for "bowels of mercy" and "complacent" for "settled on their lees" are a hindrance and not a help. They are a hindrance because one must first go behind the word "compassion" to the expression "bowels of mercies" to know what the Holy Spirit *actually* said, and to understand *exactly* what the Word of God was in the passage. This must be done before any actual study of the Word of God can begin.

The fact is that in both the examples you cite neither of the alternate renderings are proper *translations* of the text. They are simplifications or paraphrases. The Holy Spirit did not simply say "compassion." The word mercies, meaning basically pity or mercy, can be and sometimes is translated by the word compassion, though there are other words as well which are translated compassion. Whether we translate it mercies or compassion however, in the *NIV* a word of the inspired Scriptures, "bowels," is completely eliminated and dropped by the translation "compassion," and not because it could not be translated into English. While compassion may be an accurate statement of what is the idea of this expression or part of the idea, it is not the Word God gave us, but an interpretation of it, a condensed commentary.

The opposite occurs in the passage you cite from Zephaniah 1:12. The *NIV* actually inserts the word "complacent" into the text, although it is not found in the original. It does so as a commentary and only then adds its actual rendering of the text, "who are like wine left on its dregs." Unless one is familiar with the wine-making process, neither of the actual translations is easily understood. The King James

version has the advantage of being more accurate. Moreover, while inserting words is sometimes necessary for the sake of translation, our *KJV* prints these insertions in italics and thereby tells us it is doing so. The *NIV* does this without indicating that it is doing so and does it not merely for translation, but as commentary on the text. This is adding to the Word of God what God has not said.

Moreover, to use one other example, the *NIV* in addition to adding to and subtracting from the Word of God also paraphrases and changes the meaning of the text. This is done for example in I Corinthians 2:9 where the word "heart" of the original is replaced by the word "mind." Moreover, these changes are made arbitrarily, as is evident from the fact that in other places the word "heart" is used in the *NIV* in contexts similar to that of I Corinthians 2:9. The fact is that the Holy Spirit said "heart," and the text should be translated "heart" and not "mind." The *NIV* is paraphrasing the text, using what are called dynamic equivalents and giving us what is perceived by someone on a translating committee as the meaning of the text and not what the text says. It belongs in a commentary.

The difference between a commentary and a translation is crucial. A translation renders into another language as carefully and faithfully as possible what was written and what was said. Commentaries upon the Word of God are the result of a study of the meaning of the text, and while commentaries are useful they are not the text itself. Calvin's Commentaries, for example, are extremely valuable, but they are not the Bible. We must keep in mind that such condensing, commenting, and paraphrasing are after all nothing more than a shorthand form of writing a commentary. They may be useful tools in Bible study but they cannot replace the text itself nor our own study. If such paraphrases would present themselves for what they are, commentaries, and not translations or versions of the Bible, I would have no complaint with them as such. If for example the *New International Version* were entitled *The New International Simplified Whole Bible Commentary and Paraphrase*, and if it were used as such instead of replacing the Bible in the pew and in Bible study, I would have less trouble with it. This is the same problem with the popular Arminian paraphrase written by K. Taylor called *The Living Bible (Paraphrased)* which was and may still be in vogue in many churches and which was also substituted for real translations of the Word of God in many churches.

As there are a number of other matters which were raised and which deserve further consideration, I will return to this subject, D.V. and continue my response in the next article.

IN HIS FEAR

Barrett L. Gritters

Understanding Church Discipline (4)

Love is the ingredient required in all church discipline. Church discipline must be *loving* church discipline. Whether it be discipline of sins that are public, sins known only by the consistory, or sins dealt with on a private basis, all discipline must be done out of true love for the sinner. And that love must be *shown* to the sinner. Parents who discipline children without a generous portion of love both as their motive and in their administration are in serious error. So the church. Discipline that is not loving church discipline, done with a sincere desire to see the sinner made right with God, is not worthy of the name discipline.

When it is understood that discipline is done out of love for the sinner, most objections that are raised against the Reformed and Biblical practice of church censures will be answered. But because there always are sincere questions and objections, we will try to answer some here.

First Question: *"Doesn't the Bible teach us that we are not supposed to judge others? (Matthew 7:1-5: 'Judge not that ye be not judged . . .') It seems that discipline is judging."*

The passage quoted is very important for us to understand. It condemns severely those who disobey. The kind of judging is important though. Does Jesus mean that no opinions about anyone may be formed? Is it the case that we may never form a judgment about someone's actions? From the context in verse 6, John 7:24, and many other passages, it is clear this is not the case. If that were the case, parents would not even be able to teach their children how to judge which persons they ought to have as close, personal friends.

Judging from the context (see verse 2), the text from Matthew 7 means that men ought not judge *hypocritically*. A man with a beam in his eye cannot "see through" or see clearly to perform the delicate act of removing a sliver from a brother's eye. The significant point, then, is that not *all* judgment is condemned, merely the wrong kind of judgment. Christ clearly tells the church to judge sinners, and He condemns the church which does not (I Cor. 5:1, 2; Rev. 2:20). But required is a "righteous" judgment (John 7:24).

Second question: *"If judgment must be made on sinners, then how is it possible for men who are sinful to make that judgment?"*

There is no doubt that all the men in the church are sinful, no less the consistory members. They must be and are painfully aware of that. Christ calls sinful men to exercise His authority in the church. Thus it cannot be avoided that sinful men carry out what Christ calls the church to perform.

Since all officebearers are sinful, the possibility of partiality is real. Thus there are a number of safeguards that the church uses to protect against hypocritical or unfair judgment. 1) First, and foremost, much prayer is raised to the Lord for wisdom in dealing with sin. Without this the Lord does not bless the work of the consistory. 2) After this the church carefully follows the Biblical and ecclesiastical (Church Order) guidelines to insure that they proceed properly. 3) Another most useful precaution is that not only the consistory involved, but all the consistories in the classis, must give approval to proceed with the step of discipline in which the name is announced. Careful analysis of the consistory's work is made at this classical meeting to make sure the consistory has remained objective in its work. (See previous article on the sec-

ond announcement). 4) If one of the consistory members disagrees with the process taken, he can protest the decision and postpone action until classis meets or until further advice can be sought. 5) Also honored in the process of discipline is the prophetic office of all the believers. If a confessing church member sees that the consistory has used wrong judgment in a particular case, he has opportunity to present it and possibly convince the consistory to change its course. If not, and the member still feels the consistory should reconsider, the classis can help adjudicate the matter. Understanding the danger of "sinners teaching sinners," the Lord provides many ways to prevent partiality.

Third question: *"Why are only a select few people ever disciplined? Should not all the members of the church be disciplined?"*

All God's people are disciplined. God disciplines all His children by convicting them in their hearts. No child has ever gone through the tempestuous years of youth without knowing what the rod feels like. So no child of God has gone through the stormy years fighting his own sinful flesh without knowing God's "rod and staff," which "comfort" him.

But more important, and at the heart of this question, is this truth that must never be forgotten: The only sins that are ever disciplined in the church are unrepentant sins. Why isn't every sin disciplined? Because they are confessed. In my closet I confess my sins to the Lord. At an early age children must learn to confess their sins to God. When my neighbor confronts me with my sins, to him I confess them. But if one refuses to repent of his sin — no matter how small — he must be an object of discipline and eventually excommunicated. On the other hand, the most heinous sins (if they are confessed to God) are never the object of discipline. In other words, the boundary that divides disciplined sins and non-disciplined sins is the clear line between impenitence and repentance. The determination of discipline or no discipline is made by one judgment — repentance.

Fourth question: *"With public sins, it seems that the sinner should be able to have a say in the publicity of his own name. Would it be possible for the sinner himself to decide whether or not his name would be made public if the sin has already been confessed?"*

Solomon said that a good name is to be desired above great riches and more than precious ointment (Proverbs 22:1; Ecclesiastes 7:1). The desire for preserving the honor of one's name is not only real, but proper. A good name is to be treasured. Thus the question is a good one.

When one commits a public sin, he mars his own name. By his sin he has made a mark on his own

reputation. The very purpose of publication of his name is to remove that mark. If nothing is done, the mark would become worse. An announcement is to clear the name of the repentant sinner, proclaiming that he stands right before God and men.

If we understand the other reasons for the publication of the name in discipline (see last article), there can be no question about whether or not it should be announced. For the glory of God's name, for the good of the church, for the silencing of talk, and the reconciliation of the sinner to the rest of the church — all this demands that the name be announced.

Fifth question: *"Would it be more loving to work patiently with sinners instead of placing them under discipline? Discipline seems to fail to show the love of God in Christ."*

There are really two questions involved here. First, discipline and patient working are not mutually exclusive. That is, one can both discipline and deal patiently, as has been shown in the last articles. If there is any evidence whatsoever that the sinner desires to turn, much patience and continued longsuffering is used. The Form for Excommunication speaks of "the least token of repentance" But second, the question also implies that discipline fails to show the love of Christ, which is a more serious matter. It is ironic that nowadays discipline is rejected in the name of love. "We must love one another." John, the apostle of love, wrote that to love God is to walk after His commandments. And as we have seen, the exercise of discipline is one of God's commandments to the church. Thus, whether discipline is seen as a display of love or not, it shows our love to God because Christ commands it.

But we can go further than that. When discipline is used properly it is a profound display of the love of Christ. The love of Christ to me confronts me in my sin every day. To say that leaving a sinner to continue unhindered is more loving than confronting him with church discipline is to say that leaving a child to walk freely into disaster is more loving than bringing an urgent warning. To discipline sinners is the only way to show the love of God in Christ.

Sixth question: *"I don't know if I understand how excommunication is a remedy, as was said earlier. Can you explain that further?"*

A remedy is given with the hope of healing an ill. Excommunication is another measure performed in the hope that the sinner will be ashamed of his sin, see the eternal consequences of his sins, and turn from them. In that way a spiritual wound in the soul of the sinner, as well as in the church body, will be healed. Sometimes, according to God's will,

that does not happen. But the hope and prayers always must be that the remedy will bring healing.

Seventh question: *"If the church does excommunicate a member, is there then any hope for him? I would like to keep working with him."*

Thankfully, there is hope. The Lord can soften the hardest of stubborn hearts — and has. In the early history of the church there was debate about whether or not to let back into the church those who had been excommunicated. (Although the question was not quite that simple.) And at times there was no return possible. But in the back of our *Psalter* we have a form drawn up specifically for that purpose. (Here again, this form would make a profitable study in an after-recess program of a society.)

Excommunication by the church simply declares that if the sinner continues to walk in his sins without confession and repentance, he is bound to die in those sins unforgiven. But if he confesses, he can and will be lovingly restored to church membership. A repentant sinner is granted re-entrance into the "communion of the church" no less than the contrite prodigal son was mercifully taken into his father's home. The Form emphasizes this first in the language of the excommunication.

(See also the Form for Readmitting Excommunicated Persons). "N. is excommunicated . . . from the church of God, and from fellowship with Christ . . . so long as he obstinately and impenitently persists in his sins . . ." And in the prayer: "since the bosom of the church is always open for those who turn away from their wickedness; we therefore humbly beseech thee to kindle in our hearts a pious zeal, that we may labor with good Christian admonitions and examples, to bring again this excommunicated person on the right way . . ." (emphasis mine, BG).

And that brings up the last part of the question. You not only might like to continue working with the excommunicated sinner; you must. It is our duty — for the glory of God's name and the salvation of the sinner.

* * * * *

Discipline never will be easy to receive or to exercise. Objections will always be raised. But until the Lord takes us to perfection where no vice will hold us, we will always be in the flesh, needing the nurture and admonition of the Lord. May God give the church the grace to continue faithful in its calling, and to us sinners the grace to submit, in case we should become delinquent (which may God graciously forbid), to church discipline. God grant it.

CONTRIBUTION

Peter Koole

"The Root of All Evil"

Instant cash! Instant riches! Buy a ticket for only a dollar — rub the surface with a coin — match up the same symbols and/or numbers — and you, too, can be on your way to becoming independently wealthy; in fact, a millionaire.

Sounds very inviting, doesn't it? Have you ever fantasized what you would or could do with a million dollars won with a lottery ticket?

The lottery and its likes are surely to be condemned. The same is to be said of Las Vegas with its possible high winnings by playing the slot machines, blackjack, and various card and dice games that are offered.

But what about what we sometimes consider to

be penny-ante stuff, such as check, baseball, or football pool, nickel and dime poker, etc.? Consistency, thou art a jewel! And on the basis of the principle, they also have to be condemned and labeled as gambling.

Allow me to quote in part Lord's Day 42, Q. and A. 110: "What doth God forbid in the eighth commandment? God forbids not only those thefts, and robberies . . . but he comprehends under the name of thefts all wicked tricks and devices whereby we design to appropriate to ourselves the goods which belong to our neighbor . . . as by unjust weights, ells, measures, fraudulent merchandise, false coins, usury or by any other way forbidden by God, as also all covetousness, all abuse and waste of his

gifts." It is not for naught that we read in I Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

As is plain to see in this quotation from Scripture, the root of all evil is the love of money: the strong all-compelling desire and drive to be rich, to be totally immersed in material goods. Thus, the love of money not merely signifies the sinful lust for gaining money in all possible ways, but also the deepest desire and intent of keeping it all for one's self and/or his immediate family. Whoever thirsts after money and sets that up as his or her god, departs from the faith and pierces him- or herself through with many sorrows. For if one gains the whole world and loses his own soul, what doth it profit him? A man cannot serve two masters — God and Mammon. Mammon is money. We can become a slave to money, and that in turn can become our master, controlling our desires and lusts.

We know from Psalm 73 that the Lord sets the wicked in slippery places; and He often does that through his prosperity and much possessions. But, much to our shame, we also have the strong inclination at times to use the same sliding board.

Today the chief topic of discussion by the government through the media is inflation. What can be done to stop it? Really not a whole lot . . . except maybe some short-term stopgap measures. But in the long run and because of the sinful, greedy nature of man on all levels and in every department, greed and lust will devour and destroy his so-called self-planned economy system. Some day sooner than we think, one world-power will sit on the throne to usher in the Antichrist.

The average man views worldly goods in terms of money, which is the means to obtain other goods. Money is a symbol, and its importance has a universal attachment.

We live surrounded by our possessions. We glow in the enjoyment thereof, and boast in the satisfaction they provide. We become so materialistically minded and pleasure-mad that we seemingly lose our sense of direction as laid down in Scripture.

Today more than ever before it is necessary for us as Christians to learn to detach ourselves from the worship of things for their own sake. The tendency of the age is to instill the idea that happiness consists in material goods, pleasure, and recreation.

On a personal note, I just retired from a factory after working there 36 years, 2 months, and 8 days.

Peter Koole is an elder in Hope Prot. Ref. Church, Walker, Michigan.

For some 25 years we made organs and pianos; but at the present time, because of a seriously depressed market in the musical instrument field, the manufacturing of such items is almost nothing. Why? Because people are spectators and no longer participants. They don't care to apply themselves and to learn to play. They want to watch and spend money for sporting events, TV, video, etc. People's sense of values and priorities has changed; and, sad to say, we have been swept along, instead of combatting the trend of the age. And as for giving, our human nature prefers to keep what we have and to part with as little as possible.

But we are faced with a divine law and Scriptural principles which disturb us, because they have a different scale of values. Yet still we insist on asking ourselves not, "How much can I give?" but, "How much may I keep without violating the law and principle of giving liberally and cheerfully?"

The life to which Christ calls us is a life of wholeheartedness; and wholeheartedness is incompatible with the constant calculation of the extent of our obligation. In practice, our natural man calculates only when it is a question of giving. When it is a question of adding to what we have, we fall to every form of covetousness. Consequently, for all of us the question is not, "How much ought I to give?" but, "Am I giving enough?" Most of us, including myself, give from our surplus. If the truth would be told, and bank books exposed, a lot of Christian causes would have a surplus instead of a deficit.

In the language of theology, love of money is a serious sin, because it separates the mind and heart from God.

For the first time in history a comfortable standard of living is within reach of all. In former days luxury was enjoyed by the privileged few. The means of raising the general standard of living were limited in the extreme. Today life has been made pleasant and easier by the means of mass production.

Comforts have an irresistible attraction for all of us, and sometimes we are obsessed to procure them. Maybe that's one reason so many wives and mothers are out working when they should be at home. That last remark is only an observation, not an accusation.

A Christian who cares for spiritual values and is concerned to be of use in the home, church, and school will make use of monies and time not only for him- or herself, but also for the promotion and well-being of others.

Christ was accused both of worldliness and unworldliness. He loved the poor, and did not refuse the hospitality of the rich. In the Gospels we meet

rich men who are also good men, whose wealth is not made a subject of reproach. At the very outset, we meet the wisemen, persons of rank and birth, who brought their costly gifts as an offering to the infant Jesus. Among other rich men, we might mention Zaccheus and Joseph of Arimathea. Indeed, in everyday life Christ seems to take little interest in the question of riches, although at times He sharply rebukes those who put their trust in them. He mingles equally with the rich and poor, and His feelings in each case are governed by the spirituality of the individual. Christ, as we know about Him

and read about Him, was not a social reformer. He passes no judgment on the distribution of wealth — only that the poor widow gave more than they all who gave of their abundance. He does not criticize the establishment; He is not interested in condemning or reforming the structure of society. He speaks to the heart and soul of men. He takes society as it is, and requires His disciples to serve God and separate themselves from the world.

But He believed and taught that riches can be a hindrance to a godly life. For He said that where your treasure-house is, there your heart is also.

QUESTION BOX

Cornelius Hanko

No Remedy

We received the following question:

"Please explain to us the meaning of the last part of the Scripture passage which is recorded in II Chronicles 36, verse 16, which states: 'until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.'

"Are we correct in believing that God's 'remedy' is His everlasting grace and goodness and mercy toward His covenantal people as found in the work of His Son, Jesus our Savior? Surely there must have been, even very small, a remnant among the people during the days of Zedekiah; what happened here? No 'remedy'?

"Or has the Lord come to a point where there was no way out but to send the 'king of the Chaldees' upon them? No remedy, all destroyed!"

The term "remedy" should not be regarded as being synonymous with God's "everlasting grace and goodness and mercy toward His covenantal people." As is evident from the marginal reference in some Bibles, the word for "remedy" in the original Hebrew is "healing." There was no healing; Judah's ailment was unto death! This does not refer to individuals in Judah, but to Judah organically, as a nation.

We read of the kings who reigned over Judah at that time, that they did evil in the sight of the Lord and committed abominations before Him, making themselves abhorrent in God's sight. King Zedekiah in particular did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah, who spoke in God's name. Also the priesthood was corrupted and became a powerful influence in corrupting the people. We read that they "transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem."

God had not silently ignored these evils, but "the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion upon his people and his dwelling place" (Jer. 26:5; 29:19).

This statement, "because he had compassion upon his people and his dwelling place," is often taken to mean that God had compassion upon the entire nation of Judah. In that case, God insistently and repeatedly sent His servants to plead with and beg rebellious Judah to repent and return to the Lord. Only when God failed to bring them to repentance, when every remedy failed, was He forced to surrender them to the Chaldees. Anyone can see that this interpretation is an outright denial of the sovereignty of God, Whose counsel stands and Who does all His good pleasure. It also makes our salvation dependent on us. Who, then, can be saved?

What may seem a bit strange to us is the fact that the expression "his people" is used in a twofold sense here. In verse 15 we read that God sent messengers "because he had compassion on *his people*, and on his dwelling place." In verse 16 we read that "the wrath of the Lord arose against *his people*, till there was no remedy." Seemingly "his people" refers in both instances to the same people. Yet in the light of all of Scripture this is impossible. God's compassion is eternal, unchangeable, even as God is eternal! God's compassion is based on the atoning death of His dear Son on the cross. God will never ignore that! Yet this creates no real difficulty, since the expression "his people" is used in a twofold manner in the Old Testament. Israel as a nation was the typical people of God. But Israel as a nation was not the same as God's elect in Christ Jesus, who belong to Him on the basis of the aton-

ing death of the cross, resting on sovereign election! In verse 15 God's elect people are referred to, as is evident from the fact that they are mentioned in one breath with God's dwelling place. God remembered His covenant with Abraham, which included the promise, "I will be your God and the God of your seed," as became evident through God's dwelling place in Jerusalem. But in verse 16 God is speaking of Israel as a nation which, with its kings and its priests, had mocked God's messengers, despised His words, and misused His prophets.

Thus the preaching of God's Word had a twofold effect also in the kingdom of Judah in the time of its apostasy. This Word came to God's elect in His compassion with the purpose of saving them out of the midst of an apostate nation. Although their faith was not evidenced at the moment, we know that there were men like Daniel and his three friends who remained faithful to God even in Babylon. We

know also that there were others who hung their harps on the willows, in longing for Jerusalem, who could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land. God's faithful remnant was sustained by the power of His Word, as a savor of life unto life. On the other hand, that same Word, through the same preaching, was a savor of death unto death for those who rebelliously opposed it, mocked with it, and rejected it. They were only hardened by the preaching. They were corrupt, rebellious; their sins were like filthy, festering, ulcerous sores that were eating away at their souls.

Thus they filled their cup of iniquity. God proved Himself just in their condemnation. This was the case with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, of Ahab, king of Israel, of those who crucified the Christ, and will again become evident at the end of the ages when, according to the Book of Revelation, the wicked will reveal their true rebellious nature, for "they repented not"!

Report of Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches met in South Holland, Illinois on March 5, 6, 1986. Classis met all day on Wednesday, until 11:00 PM, and on Thursday morning, until noon. Ten ministers and fourteen elders, representing the churches in the West, made up this Classis. Rev. K. Koole led in opening devotions, addressing Classis from I Peter 5:1-4: "The elders which are among you I exhort . . . Feed the flock of God which is among you . . ." Rev. D. Kuiper was president of this assembly. Elders P. Boer (South Holland) and M. Yonkman (Lynden) and Rev. R. Hanko (Houston) were present at Classis as delegates for the first time, and signed the Formula of Subscription. Classis gave the right of the floor to Rev. W. Bekkering, Rev. G. Lubbers, and Rev. R. Van Overloop. Classis seated Rev. G. Hutton and Deacon J. Clarke, delegated to Classis by the Session of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Larne, Northern Ireland, as delegates from a sister-church, with advisory vote.

Classis approved the "Ministerial Certificate of Dismissal and Testimonial" of Rev. C. Haak, who had recently accepted the call to Lynden, Washington, and authorized the counselor of the Lynden Church to proceed to the installation.

Two Consistories had overtures at Classis. Classis adopted the overture that asked Classis to modify its decision concerning the gift of the bequest of Mr. C. Van Der Molen to the Protestant Reformed Churches in America, by stipulating that

"30% of the interest accumulated on the principle be added each year to the established perpetual fund and 70% of the annual earnings be used exclusively to subsidize the denominational Emeritus Fund." Classis West will offer this gift to our Synod of 1986. The other overture, concerning synodical provision for the social security taxes of our ministers from the emeritus fund, was declared to be illegally before Classis on the ground that the requirement of Article 46 of the Church Order was not complied with.

Classis renewed the mandate of a special committee of Classis, appointed by Classis, September, 1985, to recommend rules limiting the length of appeals brought to Classis.

A brother appealed to Classis against his Consistory's censure of him for his refusal to comply with the income tax laws of our Government, by filing a properly filled out tax form and by paying income taxes. The Consistory charges him with transgression of the 5th Commandment, in rebelling against the authority of the State, with appeal, among other passages, to Romans 13:1-7, as well as to the Reformed Creeds. The member maintains that the income tax laws are unconstitutional and that, therefore, he is not required to obey them. Classis' judgment was the rejection of the member's appeal and the sustaining of the decision of the Consistory to discipline the member, so that he may be brought to repentance. Classis admonished the appellant to submit to the loving

discipline exercised upon him by his Consistory for his salvation.

In closed session, Classis considered the requests of two Consistories for the advice of Classis concerning the second step of censure in the cases of three individuals.

Edgerton, Edmonton, Isabel, Pella, and Houston presented requests for subsidy in 1987 in the amount of \$79,156. Classis approved these requests and forwarded them to Synod. Trinity, Houston also gave in a special request for immediate financial help in the amount of \$7,000. Classis approved this request and forwarded it to Synod.

In response to her request, Doon received classical appointments: June 1, 8 — Rev. D. Kuiper; June 15, 22 — Rev. G. Lanting. For the rest, Doon has made her own arrangements and will seek pulpit supply during the summer months from the seminary.

The Church Visitors reported on their visit of the churches in the West in the past year. This report informed Classis that "the office-bearers are faithfully performing the duties of their offices, and observe in all things the adopted order of the churches,"

and that "the work of the office-bearers is being blessed in the upbuilding of the congregations and the youth. Where, in the recent past, difficulties did exist, there appears to be a marked improvement in the unity, peace, and love among the members."

The results of the voting were the following:

- Classical Committee: Rev. R. Moore (89) and Rev. M. De Vries (87).
- Primus* Delegate *Ad Examina*: Rev. J. Slopsema (89).
- Secundus* Delegate *Ad Examina*: Rev. M. De Vries (89).
- Church Visitors: Rev. D. Engelsma and Rev. G. Lanting.
- Delegates to Synod, 1986:
 - Primi* Minister Delegates: R. Cammenga, D. Engelsma, K. Koole, J. Slopsema.
 - Secundi* Minister Delegates: M. De Vries, G. Lanting, T. Miersma, R. Moore.
 - Primi* Elder Delegates: P. Brummel (Edgerton), R. Brunsting (Hull), H. Meulenberg (Houston), E. Stouwie (South Holland).
 - Secundi* Elder Delegates: E. Bruinsma (Love-land), H. Hoekstra (Hull), J. Sugg (Houston), G. Tolsma (Edmonton).

At the invitation of Trinity, Houston, Classis West will meet next in Houston, Texas, on September 3, 1986, the Lord willing. This will be a "first" for Classis — and for Trinity.

Rev. David Engelsma, Stated Clerk
Classis West

NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 14, at the Holland Protestant Reformed Church. Material to be treated in this session must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk at least three weeks prior to the convening of this session.

Jon Huisken
Stated Clerk

NOTICE!!!

The Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a teacher-administrator for Grades 7 and 8 and for a teacher for the Kindergarten and the 1st Grade for the 1986-87 School Year. Teachers interested in applying for these positions please write to the Hull Protestant Reformed Christian School, 218 2nd Street, Hull, IA 51239, or phone Ron Koole, (712) 439-1060 or Glenn Kooiker, (712) 324-2973.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies and Men Societies of the South Holland Protestant Reformed Church expresses their Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur H. De Jong and family in the recent death of their mother and grandmother, MRS. ANNETTA CARTER.

May God comfort the bereaved with the promises of the Gospel.

"The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy." (Psalm 147:11)

Sharon Maatman, Sec'y.
Garret Flikkema, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies Aid Society of Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker, MI) expresses its Christian Sympathy to Mrs. Sadie Kooienga in the death of her brother, MR. HAROLD WINDEMULLER. May she and her family be comforted by the words of Psalm 34:19 — "Many see the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him from them all."

Prof. H. Hanko, Pres.
Eilene Terpstra, Sec'y.

LEAGUE MEETING NOTICE

The Spring Meeting of the League of Eastern Men's and Ladies' Societies will be held, the Lord willing, on Tuesday, April 22, 1986 at 8:00 p.m. at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church.

Rev. John Heys will speak on "The Signs of the Coming of Antichrist in our Present World." All members and others interested in this topic are urged to attend.

Elsie Kuiper, Secretary