

THE STANDARD BEARER

**A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine**



The Congregation of the Newly-Organized
Protestant Reformed Church in
Norristown, PA.

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Inside this issue . . .

"The Reader asks . . ." which appears for the first time in this issue, is not really a new rubric. It's just a different title for our old "Question Box." The purpose to be served remains the same, namely, to provide space in our periodical for addressing questions of a more general nature that are of concern to our readers — questions like, how should we understand a particular Bible passage, or, what is the position of the Protestant Reformed Churches with regard to . . . It goes without saying, of course, that there are other, more direct, means of getting answers to one's questions. Certainly there are ways that are much quicker than that of sending those questions to the S.B. people. But if you're not in a big hurry, and if you're willing to write out the question, we will certainly appreciate your doing that — because, more often than not, the questions you raise are ones which are of immediate interest to a good number of other people. By sending them in to us, therefore, you will be helping us provide a service to our readers.

Meanwhile, we continue to be delighted by the steady flow of letters. We underscore a line from one of the letters which appears in this issue: "It is our hope and wish that more readers would get involved in airing their views and concerns . . ." In a second letter, another of our readers expresses his view on the use of the "sliding scale" in figuring school tuition — a view a bit different from that taken by one of our department editors in a previous issue. That sort of thing, we think, is exactly what the first letter writer had in mind . . . and what we have in mind. We encourage your response.

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Meditation
Prof. Robert Decker

The Parable of the Budding Fig Tree

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

-Matthew 24:32-35

When you think about the Lord's coming and of the end of the world, how does that make you feel?

Many Christians do not like to think about these things. For some it is because they are too earthly minded and too involved in the things of this world. These are weak Christians at best. But for many these things alarm them and make them afraid. I remember as a boy hearing sermons on the last days and being frightened half to death. One of my pastors said often from the pulpit that he hoped he would be alive when Jesus returned. Not I! I fervently hoped that that day lay in the far distant future! I was

frightened. Maybe some of you feel the same.

It is true that Jesus speaks of some pretty frightening things in this chapter. The Savior talks about wars, earthquakes, famines, falling away, persecution, the stars falling, and the powers of heaven being shaken. Those are scary things! Who would want to go hungry or thirsty? Who would want to see his children starve?

But it is unfortunate, even tragic, that so many of us are alarmed and afraid of these things!

Jesus' intent here is not to frighten us, though there are elements of warning and admonition in this chapter. Jesus' purpose is to comfort and encourage us. Our Lord wants us to live joyfully and in expectation of His coming and of the end of the world. Jesus tells us all about these signs which indicate the nearness of the world and its fiery destruction. He tells us these things so that we may look forward to His coming and the end of the world. Jesus' coming and the end of the world means that our full redemption to the glory of God has come!

For this reason the Lord tells us to learn the parable of the fig tree. The fig tree is a fruit tree common in Palestine. It differs from the other trees in one important respect. While other trees

blossom early in the Spring, the fig tree begins to bud and put forth leaves late in the Spring. Thus, when it begins to blossom, everyone knows that summer is near. All danger of frost is past. The warm summer has arrived.

"So likewise ye," says Jesus, "when you see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." The point of comparison is obvious. Just as the budding of the fig tree indicates the nearness of summer, so the appearance of all these things indicates that the end is near, even at the doors.

What are "all these things"? This must refer to the signs of which Jesus had been speaking. In verses 4-8 Jesus speaks of false christs who would come in His name and deceive many. The Savior speaks of wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.

In verses 9-14 Jesus talks about the persecution of the saints and the abounding lawlessness. He tells us too that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached to the nations for a witness and then the end will come. In verses 15-28 Jesus speaks of the coming of the antichrist and the Great Tribulation. The appearance of all these things indicates that "it is near, even at the doors."

What is that "it" which is near?

Prof. Decker is professor of Practical Theology in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

To answer the question we must remember that Jesus spoke of all these things in answer to the question of His disciples concerning the signs of His coming and the end of the world. This means that the "it" refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, the historic fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic Word and the prefiguration of the final destruction of the heavens and the earth. And, the "it" refers to the coming of our Lord and the end of the world, the ultimate fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic Word.

All these things we have seen and continue to see in our world today! We hear of wars and rumors of war, earthquakes and famines, persecution, apostasy. The only sign we have not seen is that of the antichrist, but even now are there many antichrists.

Jesus' command is to learn the parable and to know that His coming and the end of the world are near! So near that it is right at the doors.

This means that the Lord's coming, which marks the end of the world, is near. It is not a long way off, far in the distant future. Nor does this mean that Jesus is coming quickly. He is, of course, but Jesus' coming is already near! So near that it is right at the doors. It is the next item on God's agenda!

So near is Jesus' coming that "this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." This generation does not refer to the disciples and other contemporaries of Jesus. This simply cannot be, because that generation and many others have already passed and we have not seen the end as yet. The term "generation" is used in the New Testament to refer to "this kind of people." In Acts 2:40 it refers to the kind of people who reject Jesus, unbelievers. In Philippians 2:15 it refers to people who are crooked and perverse. What

Jesus means by "this generation" is the kind of people who see the signs of His coming and who know that these signs mean that the Lord's coming is near. There will always be a generation of believers, a remnant in the world watching for the fulfillment of Jesus' word.

This is the content of the parable of the budding fig tree. The Lord's coming is near; the end of the world is near. You know this do you not?!

This is certain to happen. Notice how Jesus stresses the certainty of all this. Verily (literally Amen) I say, "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." Verily! Amen! I tell you the truth! It shall surely be!

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away! What appears more enduring than heaven and earth? We speak of *terra firma*! Or of having our feet on solid ground. They shall pass away! Heaven and earth shall be utterly destroyed!

But not Jesus' words! They shall never pass away! Let the critics say what they will; let the scientists say what they will! Let man say what he wills about Jesus words! Those words will never pass away! Jesus' words endure forever. They are valid in all of time and for all of eternity! This is the word of God's only begotten Son by whom and for whom the worlds were made. These are the words of the exalted Christ in whom all things consist. These are the words of the Word which was with God in the beginning and which is God! We can depend on these words. They will never pass away. Jesus' coming and the end of the world are near!

We are seeing the signs. They indicate that the end of the world is near. We know this just as surely as we know summer is near when the fig tree blossoms!

How does this make you feel? Does this make a difference in your life? Does it affect the way you go about your everyday affairs?

Our calling is clear. As we see these things we must not be troubled or alarmed. Those who live for the earthly and who seek the things of the world, let them be troubled and alarmed. Their world is about to be destroyed. Why should we be alarmed? We seek God's Kingdom and righteousness.

Neither must we be deceived. God sends the ungodly strong delusion (II Thess. 2) so that they believe a lie. But we who belong to Jesus are not deceived. We know the end is near and we look for Jesus!

Neither must we be afraid! Let the ungodly whose hearts are set on the things of this earth, let them fear! The heavens and the earth are about to be destroyed. But why should we be afraid? Jesus is coming and it will not be long! This is God's sure Word in all these signs we see.

Let us be full of joy! Jesus who died for our sins and who was raised for our justification and who was exalted to glory, He is coming. And His coming marks the end of this world. That is the end of all this darkness and sin, the end of all our sorrows, the end of our sicknesses and pain, the end of our dying!

And the end of this world means the beginning of the new world. Our bodies are going to be raised and transformed, made like the glorious body of Christ. God is going to create a new heaven and earth in which we will be united with all the saints and with Jesus. And in Jesus we shall see God! That will be glory!

Look up! Lift up your heads! Your redemption draws near!

Our response? Come Lord Jesus, yea, come quickly! Amen. □

Editorially speaking . . .

We rejoice with the members of the Protestant Reformed Church of Norristown, Pennsylvania; with the missionary, the Rev. K. Hanks (now pastor of the congregation); and with the calling church in Wyckoff, New Jersey at the recent organization of the Norristown church. The institution of a church that is founded on the Reformed creeds and that proclaims the gospel of God's sovereign grace in Christ Jesus is always the cause of great

joy to all who love Christ's Name. It ought to be of special interest to the Protestant Reformed denomination that a second church is now established in the East, this one in the greater metropolitan area of a large city, Philadelphia, where the Protestant Reformed witness has been slight, or non-existent in the past.

An account of the organization of the congregation, with accompanying pictures, appears elsewhere in this issue.

Welcome, Norristown, to the fellowship of Protestant Reformed churches! May the Head of the church bless you in this fellowship, enrich us by your presence among us, and give you a powerful witness in that area of our country.

Those who might wish to communicate with the church can do so by writing its clerk, Mr. Richard D. Martin, 1304-4 Cynwyd Apts., Wilmington, DE 19808. □ -DJE

Editorial

Conditional Submission? (2)

In answer to a request from a reader in Northern Ireland, we are analyzing the views of the Scottish Presbyterian theologian of the 17th century, Samuel Rutherford, on the duty of the Reformed Christian towards the civil state. (Cf. the April 1, 1989 issue of *The SB* for a summary of Rutherford's doctrine and for the first installment of the critique of this doctrine.) Particularly, the question is whether the Christian's calling to submit to the state is conditional, so that when-

ever the state becomes unjust and tyrannical the Christian may revolt. This was the position of Rutherford in his book, *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince*, as it is the position of many Presbyterian, Reformed, and evangelical Christians in our day.

In the previous editorial, we judged Rutherford's doctrine of a conditional submission to magistrates erroneous inasmuch as it denied the Biblical teaching that the origin of whatever state exists, and of the offices of the

state, is God. The origin is not the people, by means of a contract, as Rutherford held. Since government is ordained of God, as the apostle writes in Romans 13:1, it has its authority — its right to rule — from God, not from the people; and, therefore, the people do not possess the right to strip the government of its authority by means of civil disobedience, threats, and uprising.

It is a second error of Rutherford that he misinterprets the

crucial passage of Scripture on this question: Romans 13:1-7. At bottom, the issue is one of the authority of the Word of God; but then the Word must be rightly divided. Rutherford explains Romans 13 as teaching that the Christian citizen must submit to the government only if the government on its part is carrying out its duty, namely, punishing evildoers and praising well-doers. The submission enjoined in Romans 13 is a conditional submission. This fits his theory as to the origin of government in a contract between the people of a nation and its rulers. They have made a bargain. As soon as the rulers fail to keep their part of the bargain, the people are freed from their obligations. Verses 3 and 4, then, are the condition for the calling of the Christian in verses 1, 2, and 5.

This has become a popular interpretation of the passage among Reformed and evangelical theologians. It is the interpretation of Francis A. Schaeffer in his *A Christian Manifesto*, in which (with express appeal to Rutherford's *Lex, Rex*) this influential evangelical thinker legitimizes the use of civil disobedience and the resort to force by Christians against the government. This is also the interpretation of Romans 13:1-7 of so conservative a Bible expositor as William Hendriksen. Hendriksen does not think that Romans 13:1-7 explicitly answers the question, "Does the moment ever arrive when, because of continued governmental oppression and corruption, the citizens have the right, and perhaps the duty, to overthrow such a government and to establish another in its place?" In fact, he supposes that the passage implies that the answer to this question is yes. For Paul is thinking only of the ruler who does his duty, i.e., rules justly. Hendriksen goes

so far as to mistranslate verse 6: ". . . for when the authorities faithfully devote themselves to this end, they are God's ministers." The text, of course, does not contain the word, "when," reading simply, "for they are God's ministers . . ."

This classic passage on the Christian's calling towards the state does indeed lay down the state's duty towards the people, as well as the Christian citizen's duty towards the state. But the duty of the Christian is not conditioned by the faithfulness of the state. Paul does not write, "Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities, if they show themselves just and good." The gospel-precept of submission is unconditional. It is based solely on the government's being ordained of God. Peter expressly says that submission must be given to the "froward" authority, as well as to the good and gentle authority (I Pet. 2:18). The Roman government of Paul's day was certainly not a good, just, Christian state. It was corrupt. It was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, which blasphemes the Most High, opposes the Kingdom of God, and oppresses the saints. Every Christian to whom Paul wrote knew this well; for this state had condemned and crucified Jesus. But it was still the "higher power." The Christian had still to submit to it. Indeed, most governments and most officials of government are ungodly, unjust, and unfaithful to their calling as servants of God. Rutherford was correct in his response from his deathbed to the officials of Charles II who served him with a summons to appear for trial, that the heaven to which he hoped shortly to go was a place "where few kings and great folks come." If Christians must submit only to Christian governments or to rulers

who are righteous, they will submit to no government at all and to precious few government officials.

In explaining I Peter 2:13 ("Submit yourselves . . . to the king") and Titus 3:1 ("Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates . . ."), Rutherford tries to evade the force of the apostolic admonition by distinguishing between the office and the man occupying the office, as though one might reverence kingship while revolting against the current king:

Also, it is true, subjection to Nero (the New Testament requires submission to the moral monster, Nero! -DJE) . . . is commanded here, but to Nero as such a one as he is obliged, de jure (by right -DJE) to be . . . but that Paul commandeth subjection to Nero, and that principally and solely, as he was such a man, de facto (in actual fact -DJE), I shall then believe, when antichristian prelates turn Paul's bishops . . . (Lex, Rex, Questions XXXIII).

This evasion is not unfamiliar even among us. It is used by the wife who professes to honor the headship of the husband as a general principle, but who rebels against her own particular husband. It is the tactic of the very pious church member who is loud in his protestations that he has the greatest respect for the office of pastor and the office of elder, but who treats his own particular pastor and his own particular elders shamefully. It is the clever distinction that teenagers know how to make: "Oh, yes, I believe that the parental office is authoritative; but I rebel against my own particular parents because they are unworthy of my respect." But the distinction is unbiblical. Scripture calls us to submit to the flesh-and-blood men and women in their offices on account of the office they occupy. Specifically, Romans 13:1-7 and I Peter 2:13,

14 call us to submit to President Bush, Prime Minister Thatcher, my own parents, and the policeman who patrols the highway.

A third error of the Rutherford-position is that it confuses the theocracy of the Old Testament with the nation to which those who maintain this position belong. Rutherford viewed Presbyterian Scotland as the kingdom of God. It ought, therefore, to resist the heathen king and his Arminian, Roman Catholic-leaning bishops with force, just as Israel warred against her godless foes in ancient times. And the Presbyterians ought in this way to restore the kingdom of God in Scotland. This explains his use of the Old Testament to justify resistance. But Scotland never was the kingdom of God! Nor is Northern Ireland God's kingdom, or South Africa, or the United States of America. The kingdom of God is the true church in these nations. It is entirely and radically different and distinct from the state. It is not, and may not be, identified and entangled with the government of the nation. It is spiritual, not earthly. Its power is spiritual, not physical. Its weapon is the Word of God, never gun and sword. The confusion of church and state that began with Constantine in the 4th century has been disastrous. Luther and Calvin began to straighten things out again, so that the church would be the church and the state would be the state, each with its own sphere of authority, each with its own kind of authority, each with its own calling. For Presbyterians to engage in political resistance against ungodly rulers in the name of establishing, or restoring, a Christian nation in the United States or God's kingdom in Ulster is ignorance of the fundamental reality of the kingdom of God.

A fourth error in Rutherford is the sad misunderstanding of the calling of the Presbyterian Christian and of the Presbyterian church under a government that oppresses the saints because of their confession of the truth. This calling is not that the saints defend themselves and the purity of their worship with force, much less that they take the offensive to overthrow the persecuting government. But our calling is to suffer for Christ's sake. Suffering for Christ's sake is not the ultimate evil, to be avoided at all costs, but a privilege and a blessing: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:10). That was the true glory of the Covenanters in the "killing time." It was not the marching of some of them to do battle with the king's dragons, though they were singing Psalm 68 as they came on. But it was their patient endurance of cruel suffering for the sake of the "crown rights of King Jesus." Even when the state becomes the persecuting beast, the believer may not resist.

The submission that has such an important place in the Christian life is unconditional. Unconditionally, we submit to God. Unconditionally, we submit to those whom God puts over us (which does not, I repeat, imply unconditional *obedience*). Conditionality is the bane of the Christian life and the ruin of the vital institutions in which this life is to be lived (as it is the spoiling of the gospel of grace). Wives now submit to their husbands, conditionally — if their husbands please them. Children submit to their parents, conditionally — if they approve their parents' rule. Church members submit to their elders, conditionally — if they like the particular elders and if the elders' decisions suit them. This is supposed to be Protestant

Christianity. It is not. It is revolution and anarchy. It does not come from the Spirit of Him Who submitted to unjust authority. It arises from the king that sits in the breast of each of us. The result is divorce, strife in the home, schism in the church, and shame heaped on the name of Jesus Christ.

Rutherford himself recognized that the practical consequence of his position was the chaos of the mob. To the question, who finally determines whether the rulers are tyrants, his answer was, "There is a court of necessity no less than a court of justice and the fundamental laws must then speak; and it is with the people in this extremity as if they had no ruler." This is to dissolve all order in the nation, and to baptize the disorder as Presbyterian. The dreadful evils to which Rutherford's position leads were starkly illustrated in the cold-blooded murder of Archbishop James Sharp by a band of Presbyterians in the course of their resistance to the higher powers in the 17th century. The deed was dreadful, not only because it was murder, but because it was murder done in the name of Jesus Christ as confessed by the Reformed religion. Of it, even Alexander Smellie, sympathetic though he was to the "men of the covenant," had to say, "The deeds were foully done." But the deed was born of the notion that submission to the state is conditional. Whenever Christians take up the sword to defend Jesus Christ, or to promote His gospel, against a hostile state, similar atrocities will stain His banner. Indeed, the very act of taking up the sword is a blot on His glorious standard.

This is no mere academic study of a slice of history.

The question, conditional or unconditional submission to the higher powers, is a living issue

for every Reformed Christian in every nation. Without exception, Christians are living under governments that are not Christian and under governmental officials who are unjust. Increasingly, the state exalts itself as the ultimate reality in human life, taking on the features of the An-

tichrist. Pressure will be exerted upon the confessing church. Her calling will be what it has always been, namely, faithfulness to her Lord Jesus Christ — faithfulness in pure worship; faithfulness in orthodox confession and preaching; faithfulness in a Biblical liturgy and right church govern-

ment; faithfulness in the godly rearing of the covenant children. There may be no compromise! Jesus Christ is Lord, not the state. We are ready to seal this confession with our blood.

But exactly this faithfulness to King Jesus forbids resistance, unconditionally. □ -DJE

Letters

We like what we read in *The Standard Bearer*. It's instructional in the Scriptures, it's edifying, and it sets forth the Reformed interpretations of the Word of God as we have received it from the fathers of the faith.

How interesting to note that the magazine is being distributed and read in Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, England, and wherever the Lord in His good providence may want it read and reread.

It is our hope and wish that more readers would get involved in airing their views and concerns about the contents, as well as their likes and dislikes of your magazine. Apathy seems to be the spirit of the day.

May the "voice of the *Standard Bearer* ever be heard round the world.

Henry Doorn
Kentwood, MI

In the article, "The Cost of Christian Education" (February 15, 1989), it is stated that the sliding scale in our Christian School system is a good practice because it allows all parents to keep their children in school. Surely a God-fearing parent would seek help from the

deacons in his church prior to sending his children to a public school system.

Furthermore, it is stated that if parents with two or more children could no longer keep these children in school because they were not able to pay the full tuition, that income would be lost to the school and the parents with one child in school would pay even more tuition to make up the deficit. This is not necessarily true, because much of the cost involved in staffing and maintaining a school is proportional to the number of students. For example, if you had fewer students, less staff would be proportionally reducing your costs.

The article goes on to state that "of great concern to the whole church is that Christian education be affordable." If it is indeed of concern to the whole church, then maybe we should get the whole church involved in the process through the office of the deacons instead of letting the parents of one child foot the bill for the rest of the congregation. It would be possible for the deacons to set up a tuition help fund for a person who is truly needy and cannot afford the cost of a quality Christian education.

What would I suggest? I would suggest that every school set up an endowment fund and actively seek donations from every church member, because, as part of God's covenant family, we all have a stake in the development of our children. This method enables those who are blessed financially to help the poorer of the congregation. There is no reason to dump the burden of paying for our covenant children on the families with only one child. The "sliding scale" is archaic and unfair, and should be done away with.

Our schools should be put on firm financial ground, instead of running from behind with huge deficits in our budgets. We should start to build for the future with endowment funds, while there is prosperity, so that our children and grandchildren have less of a burden to bear and our teachers don't have to live at the poverty level.

Robert Van Baren
Crete, IL □

The Reader Asks . . .

May the Deserted Believer Remarry?

My question is this: In I Corinthians 7:15 the apostle Paul instructs us, "Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: But God hath called us in peace" (ASV). Do we understand this passage to teach that a believing spouse who is divorced by an unbelieving spouse, because of the Christian profession of the believing spouse, is no longer under marital obligation to the unbelieving spouse and is hence free to remarry?

A second question which follows this one is, have the Protestant Reformed Churches ever addressed this matter on synodical level, or is there merely a "general sense" in the churches, what their view on this question would be?

I thank you in advance for taking the time to answer this question.

Mark L. Brooks
Valencia, PA

Answer:

I Corinthians 7:15 does not teach that the desertion of a believer by his unbelieving mate dissolves the marriage and frees the believer to marry another. The notion that such is the meaning of the passage rests upon a misunderstanding of the words, "is not under bondage in such cases" (which is also the translation of the KJV). Men read the

phrase as though it were, "is not (any longer) bound (namely, to the deserting mate) in such cases." To be "under bondage" and to be "bound" are two different thoughts and two different words, both in English and in the Greek of the New Testament; and it is inexcusable that interpreters of Scripture confuse them. Paul does not say that the deserted believer is not "bound" to his former mate in such cases, as though God had now dissolved the bond that He made when He joined the two in marriage. But the apostle says that the deserted believer is not "under bondage." This refers to the spiritual state of the believer who has been abandoned by his wife. He need feel no guilt or shame over his marital condition, such as might cause him to live in constant fear of God's condemnation of him because he is not living with his wife, or such as might even cause him to try to get the woman back at the expense of his confession of Christ. Not being under bondage in the text is not a ground for remarrying, but a ground for letting the unbeliever depart.

That not being under bondage describes one's spiritual state before God is borne out by the words in the text that express the opposite of being under bondage: "but God hath called us in peace." Peace is not, by any stretch of the imagination, the

right to remarry, but the spiritual state of a believer who lives in the enjoyment of God's favor, regardless of the most miserable circumstances of earthly life.

If Paul taught in verse 15 that desertion is the dissolution of marriage and the granting of the right to remarry, he would have flagrantly contradicted what he would write a few verses later. For in verse 39 he stated in clearest and sharpest language that married people are "bound" (not: "under bondage") to each other for life, and that death, and death only, gives a married woman the liberty to marry another.

The teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith in Chapter XXIV, VI, that "nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage . . .," is corruption of the Biblical truth of marriage, with deadly serious consequences for those who carry it out in their practice.

Marriage is a life-long bond. The deserted believer, although not under bondage, is very definitely still bound to the woman who has deserted him (as verse 39 establishes beyond any doubt). He is not at liberty to marry another.

Our young people must reckon with this solemn fact when they date and marry. It is possible to

marry an unbeliever in haste, only to repent in the leisure of a long, lonely life, because the unbeliever departs. But it is also possible that a believer is deserted by one who gave every evidence before marriage of being a believer, but who proves herself an unbeliever by deserting. The comfort of this believer is the Holy Spirit's purpose in the text. It simply has nothing whatever to do with the subject of the

grounds for divorce and remarriage.

As for synodical decision by the PRC on the explanation of the passage or on desertion's being a ground for divorce and remarriage, there is none, except insofar as the declaration that marriage is a life-long bond (not only between two believers, but also between a believer and an unbeliever) may have been made in connection with another

aspect of marriage and divorce. It is historically true, however, that the Reformed churches, at least those whose roots are in the Netherlands, have not regarded I Corinthians 7:15 as affording a ground for divorce and remarriage. In this, they differed from Presbyterian churches, which supposed that they found in the text the "Pauline privilege." □

-DJE

Decency and Order

Rev. Ronald Cammenga

Leave of Absence

"If any minister, for the aforesaid or any other reason, is compelled to discontinue his service for a time, which shall not take place without the advice of the consistory, he shall nevertheless at all times be and remain subject to the call of the congregation." Church Order, Article 14.

Article 14 is closely connected to the preceding articles of the *Church Order*. Article 10 deals with dismissal from a congregation by a minister who has accepted a call elsewhere. Article 11 deals with permanent dismissal from service of a minister by his consistory. Article 12 deals with a minister's leaving the ministry for a secular vocation. Article 13 deals with dismissal from service through emeritation. Article 14, now, deals with temporary dismissal from service, what is commonly referred to as leave of absence.

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What is the nature of the leave of absence provided for in Article 14? The minister who has been granted a leave of absence is temporarily excused from his ministerial duties. However, during the leave of absence, the minister's official relationship to the consistory and congregation remains in force.

REASONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The article lays down no clear-cut guidelines with respect to specific reasons for a leave of absence. The article is deliberately vague and flexible: "... for the aforesaid or any other reason, is compelled to discontinue his service for a time"

Nevertheless, the article does speak of a minister being "compelled" to take such a leave of absence. That certainly indicates that there must be a significant reason to justify a leave of absence. This reason is to be judged by the consistory and the reason for the leave definitely

spelled out in the minute book of the consistory.

Historically the background of this article is the persecution of the Reformed churches. Leaves of absence were granted because persecution often separated a minister from his congregation. Because of the persecution threatening his life, a minister was often forced to flee. This warranted a temporary interruption in his ministerial labors in his congregation. At the same time, this did not break the bond between the minister and his congregation. He remained the pastor of that congregation. But he was granted a temporary leave from his labors in the congregation until the persecution subsided and it was possible for him to resume his work.

Even though persecution was a valid reason for a minister temporarily to discontinue his work in his congregation, he remained bound to that congregation. He remained at all times subject to

her call. When the persecution abated, he was obligated to return as her pastor. During the leave, the consistory who had granted him the leave continued to have the jurisdiction over him.

Many other reasons have been used for granting leaves of absence. Leaves have been given for illness. Article 14 speaks of the "aforesaid" reason, referring back to Article 13. It may be the case that illness will not likely permanently incapacitate the minister, requiring emeritation, but only temporarily hinder his work. In that case a leave of absence according to Article 14 would be in order.

Repeatedly ministers have received leaves of absence in order to pursue post-graduate work at some theological school. Leaves have been granted to ministers in order to carry out some commission of the broader assemblies, perhaps serving on an important study committee. Leaves have been granted because of mental or physical exhaustion due to overwork or excessive strain. Leaves have been granted so that a minister might assist in missionary work. Leaves have been granted so that a minister might assist another congregation for a time as a minister-on-loan. The Revs. Baudartium, Bogerman, and Bucerus were given leaves of absence from their consistories in order to work on the new Bible translation authorized by the Synod of Dordt. According to Dr. H. Bouwman, a certain Rev. Lion Cachet obtained a leave of absence in 1891 from the church in Rotterdam in order to investigate the possibility of mission work in India, and the Rev. Vonkenberg received a leave of absence in 1920 from the church in Zwijndrecht in order to serve for a time as director of the Reformed Youth Alliance.

STIPULATIONS OF ARTICLE 14

The first stipulation of Article 14 is that a minister must receive the approval of his consistory in order to take a leave of absence. The article speaks of the "advice of the consistory." Advice here does not mean friendly counsel or suggestion. But advice means approval, consent, agreement, permission. This stands to reason, since the minister exercises his office under the supervision always of the consistory.

The second stipulation of Article 14 is that, at all times during the leaves of absence, the minister remains subject to the re-call of the congregation. At any time during the leave, the consistory may deem it necessary to terminate the leave and re-call the minister. This remains the prerogative of the consistory and a condition on which a leave is always granted.

The third stipulation of Article 14 is that the leave of absence be "for a time." A leave of absence is only "for a time," that is, temporary. A definite length of time is referred to. This may be a stipulated time which is noted when the leave of absence is granted. Or it may be the length of time required as long as the reason exists for which the leave was granted. In any case, the length of the leave ought to be a matter definitely understood between the minister and his consistory.

Article 14 does not allow for indefinite leaves of absence. A leave of absence should cover a specific period of time. The Christian Reformed Church Synod of 1928 ruled against the taking by ministers of indefinite leaves of absence.

CALLING ANOTHER MINISTER

A congregation which has granted its minister a leave of absence would not necessarily be

entitled to classical appointments. The consistory would have to secure its own pulpit supply. The consistory would also have to make arrangements for the other pastoral labors in the congregation: Catechism instruction, sick visiting, etc.

Often today leaves of absence are granted for a stipulated time with the understanding that the minister will not return to labor again in that same congregation. This is usually the case with leaves given for further study. The church granting the leave then proceeds to call another minister. The minister on leave remains officially a minister of that congregation, even though another minister has also been called. When the time of his leave is expired, the consistory makes an appropriate announcement to the churches concerning his eligibility to receive a call. □

Perfect Peace

When I am bowed with grief,
When troubles round me throng,
When there seems no relief,
When I can find no song,
He sends His perfect peace,
From sorrow gives release,
Through all my journey here,
Peace, perfect peace.

When I have doubts within,
When faith is far from strong,
When I behold my sin
And for His grace I long,
His cross He shows to me;
In love He gives to me,
Now and eternally,
Peace, perfect peace.

When all my life is done,
I near death's swelling tide,
Faith's battle fought and won,
God's armor laid aside,
Peace, perfect peace He'll give;
Through death with Him I'll live
Through all eternity;
Peace, perfect peace.

James Jonker
(from *Beacon Lights*, by permission)

From Holy Writ
Rev. George Lubbers

Exposition of John 21:1-14 (3)

That Awesome Breakfast At the Galilean Seashore (vss. 9-12)

We may confidently affirm that this was in really no sense of the word a sacramental meal, though it was a very special heaven-sent breakfast on earth. Surely, it was different in nature from any common breaking of the fast. Literally the Greek text reads "come and break your fast" (*deute haristesate*). The Greek term *hariston* properly is: the first meal. It is a meal in the early morning before the work of day. The term for supper is quite different in the Greek. This refers to a more formal meal, usually held at eventide (John 13:2, 4; Luke 14:17-24; John 21:20).

There is here at this breakfast a rather strange and bewildering relationship. Although no particulars are given to us in the sacred passage, it seems as if there reigned a certain silence of hushed and subdued awe and reverence in the presence of the "Lord." The breakfast consisted of bread and roasted fish. However, the overtones here in this blessed account of Christ's third manifestation speak volumes. Here was the glory of the Lord manifested in every detail of this breakfast at which the Lord is the heavenly host,

ministering to His honored guests. This was the foretold fulfilment of the word "I will meet you there," or "there shall ye see him." This too had been announced by the angels at the tomb, where death had truly been swallowed up in victory!

This breakfast is given as a manifestation of Him who has truly conquered death and hell, merited life eternal and eternal glory. Small wonder that these obedient disciples dared not inquisitively pry into the deep and secret things of God. Yes, a wicked and cruel Herod cunningly searched out every detail concerning the exact time when the Star which the Wisemen had seen in the East had first appeared unto them, but these godly men put off their shoes from their feet; they felt that they stood on holy ground as much as Moses did at the burning bush! At this bush the prophetic word affords vistas of the New Testamental resurrection glory of the risen Christ, as the revelation of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus had shut the mouth of the unbelieving deniers of the resurrection-faith. These deniers were the petrified priesthood of Aaron as represented by such men as Caiaphas and his entire evil generation. But there is here a greater than that "burning bush." He is the God of glory Himself, in Jesus Christ, who ap-

peared unto Abraham (Acts 7:2).

Even when Jesus says "come and breakfast" He still is somehow at a great distance from them. Here there is a "manifestation" of Him whose glory John had seen, full of grace and truth. Here we see the Christ, whose shoe-latchet John the Baptist was not even worthy to tie. John was not worthy to be a lowly boot-black. Somehow these seven disciples felt the truth of the gentle rebuke to Mary Magdalene: "touch me not for I have not yet ascended unto my Father." All former familiarity which might breed contempt is gone.

There is not a word uttered by Jesus concerning Himself in this remarkable and historic self-manifestation. From beginning to end, as Lenski so aptly remarks in his exposition, "everything is action here, omitting to add even the slightest reason for, or explanation for the action," as He did so very clearly in the upper chamber when He told them explicitly that He had given them an example for their Christian, humble conduct (John 13:12, 13). Here we have nothing of that sort. The meal is ready, prepared by a higher hand, as part and parcel of the *manifestation* of the living Christ before their very eyes! There were no questions asked, and there evidently was no "small talk" either on the part

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of these fishermen. All sat in silent expectation.

The question may have arisen in Peter's heart: is this the manner of the foretold rendezvous in Galilee? He must have felt that the half had not been foretold him, or that he had not listened very well to the specific instructions of his Lord. Meanwhile the thoughts of Peter and of the rest were on the strange nature of the events which had befallen them during the past night and morning. All these simply were not such that they could have their source in the heart of man, but were the mysteries of godliness which is great!

This was the third manifestation of the Lord unique in nature and in pedagogical purpose.

The Threefold Simon, Simon, Son of Jonas (John 21:15-19)

The first matter that calls for our careful reflection is the role of Peter in this breakfast appointment. Peter is still the leader, as we have seen earlier in these essays. When Jesus tells all seven disciples to bring of the fish which they have caught, Peter went into action.

There are two interpretations of this word of Jesus. In passing, I would call attention to the fact that Jesus does not direct this word of command merely to Peter. It is quite clear from the Greek verb that this was directed to all the seven disciples who were to share in this breakfast. Peter evidently was the first to go into action with the assistance of all the others. All shared in the task of strenuous effort of pulling this large amount of fish to the shore, and all ascertained the correct count of these fish, that it was one hundred and fifty-three large fish. Even that they were all large is noteworthy, it seems to me.

However, Lenski in his Commentary feels that these large fish were those who had been

selected as "good" fish in contrast with the "bad" fish, according to the analogy of the parable in Matthew 13:47-50. The difficulty that I have with this explanation is that the text does not say "one hundred fifty-three *good* fish." Is it less wonderful that Christ could bring forth these fish than that God prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah in the stormy sea? These fish were in a very special sense also a part of Christ's self-manifestation in His glorious resurrection power, and of His very special providence over the witnesses of the resurrection in all the world. And was this not to be an incontrovertible proof of Christ's resurrection glory?

They were in a very special sense a gift from heaven!

And, as we have observed earlier, they added to the breakfast of fish which lay on the coals on the shore. Where did Jesus obtain those fish and that bread? The entire meal was as much a wonder as was the bread from heaven for forty years in nourishing Israel through the desert to Canaan.

Yes, they were all wonder-fish.

The bread was wonder-bread. It was a special gift from heaven.

Once more, I feel that we stand here in holy awe, and that it behooves us to take the shoes from off our feet!

Such is the awesome setting in which Peter is questioned by Jesus, who is the chief Shepherd of Israel.

A threefold question and a threefold answer. I do not believe that this was what might be called "cross-examination," in order to determine whether Peter was speaking the truth. However, it was a threefold question which accorded with the threefold denial of Jesus by Peter in Caiaphas' court. Yes, that was in the fearful night in which Christ was betrayed by Judas, the son

of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. It was the night in which the cock crowed; yes, it was then that the earth trembled for Peter. Peter did not need any cross-examination here. He had gone out and wept bitterly, and the angels of God had seen it before the face of their Father and had exalted!

Peter says, in effect, "Here I stand, so help me, Lord!" Peter will not "think of himself more highly than he ought to think"; but he thinks of himself soberly, "according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3). Here we see a Peter in action, who has learned deeply the lesson of which he writes in I Peter 5:1-4. He places himself as to his relationship to the church on the same level with the other elders. He is a fellow-elder! And the admonition which he gives to the elders to "tend to the flock of God which is among you (exercising the oversight (*episkopountes*)), not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God, nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as lording it over the charge, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock . . ."

Here stands Peter now in the strength of the Lord, lifted up in due time by God's mighty, saving hand (I Peter 5:6).

Such a Peter is ready for service in the love of God shed abroad in his heart. Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, and that in this love I can do all things, yea, even suffer and die for thy sake!

Feed My Flock, Peter!

Peter is not instructed to go out and to win the world for Christ and to lay it as a votive offering at His feet! God forbid!

Nor will Peter henceforth attempt futilely to bring down the enemies with the edge of the sword; he will no longer try to shield Jesus, but will adore and

worship Him as the LORD of lords and as the KING of kings! Jesus will care for Peter, protect him. This is expressed in the great promise of Matthew 28:20b: "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end (consummation) of the world (ages)."

But Peter has a task to perform in Christ's name, who is the Shepherd of the sheep.

Feed my sheep. Tend my sheep. Feed my sheep.

This is a twofold aspect of the work of a shepherd: *Feed* and *protect*, the under-shepherd is duty-bound to do. And thus he walks in the footsteps of the chief-Shepherd. He feeds that flock and carries the shepherd's staff to correct and to protect the sheep from the wolves and false prophets who come in sheep's clothing but who are inwardly destructive animals! The shepherd even works with trowel and sword. The sword serves to

protect what was builded with the trowel of the positive preaching of the Gospel of the Cross and resurrection.

And so Peter has his work cut out for him. However, this same injunction also holds for John and for all the others at this breakfast rendezvous. Fact is, that this is the pattern for all the elders in the church. It held for Peter as an elder and for John, and so it obtained down the ages for all faithful shepherds of the flock. □

Contribution

Rev. Kenneth Hanko

Norristown Protestant Reformed Church

In early October of 1983 the Mission Committee of the Protestant Reformed Churches sent Ken Hanko, who had just graduated from seminary and was a candidate for the ministry, to the Norristown, PA area to work with a group of eight people who were interested in establishing a Protestant Reformed Church. Pastor Hanko was ordained home missionary in September, 1984, and has worked since that time with the group in Norristown. Though five of the original eight left, the group grew, and was organized in January of this year with six families and four individuals. Because Prof. Hoeksema was instrumental in getting the work started and continued to be closely associated with the works afterwards, he

and his wife came from Australia for the organizational meeting. Prof. Hoeksema preached on Philippians 4:1, "Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."

The congregation is very diverse, a manifestation in miniature of the catholicity of the Church. The people come together on the Sabbath from three states: Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey, and all directions. Because well over half of the congregation drives at least 45 minutes to church, the worship services are at 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., and the people eat lunch together at their meeting-place. They come from Roman Catholic, Fundamentalist, Presbyterian, Reformed, and charismatic backgrounds. Some in fact endure mockery, misunderstanding, and disdain from



Norristown Council: l to r, Mr. Tony VanBrakel, Rev. Ken Hanko, Mr. Melvin Williams, Mr. Richard Martin.

family, friends, and fellow-workers. Some are first generation immigrants; the families of others have been in this country for generations. They have Italian, English, African, Polish, Dutch, Spanish, and German blood. There are seven children ranging in age from a few weeks to eight years, and adults from late teens to mid-fifties. There are

Rev. Hanko is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Norristown, Pennsylvania.

single people and married, families with children and families without. And these have come together in the Protestant Reformed Church in Norristown because they believe and confess one faith.

The members first met in the kitchen in one of the homes, and Pastor Hanco used the kitchen counter for his podium. They then moved for a little while to a historic building owned by the township. When the township received objections to a religious group meeting in a public building, they rented a classroom in a Christian school. About a year later they moved to the

community center in a nearby town. They have met there for about three years.

God has richly blessed this congregation in many ways. Not the least of these blessings has been that, though small, it has been able to be self-supporting since early 1984. Though synod oversaw the financial affairs of the group during all these years, it did not even have to pay the salary of the missionary. Furthermore God has brought together there people who are thoroughly instructed in the Reformed Faith, and committed to living by the Word of God in spite of great loss.

Recently the congregation called Pastor K. Hanco to be its first pastor.

The members rejoice in being organized as a Protestant Reformed Church, and take this opportunity to thank the denomination and its people for the prayers and help given over the last five years.

Any of you who read this and have opportunity to be in our area are cordially invited to visit with us. For the time being anyway you may contact Pastor Hanco at 215-630-0491. □

Day of Shadows
Rev. John Heys

A Rapid Development of Sin

In the mother promise of Genesis 3:15 the word translated as bruise is more correctly translated as crushed. The seed of the serpent's head is going to be crushed and not merely bruised. The heel of the seed of the woman is going to be crushed and not merely suffer a bruise. Therefore take note of the fact that there is an amazing difference as to what happens to the seed of the serpent, and what happens to the seed of the woman. The head of one and the heel of the other are crushed.

Now although we must take that word crush figuratively and not literally, there is a tremen-

dous difference in what happens to these two seeds. The crushing of the heel will bring great pain, and will limit the person's walk severely. But the crushing of the head of the serpent's seed will bring death. One whose heel is crushed will still dwell on this earth. He whose head is crushed is removed from this earth. this earth.

Although the cross of Christ, and His death through it, is what the seed of the serpent brought upon Christ, Satan did not make it impossible for Him to reign upon this earth as the King in the kingdom of heaven. Rather it served God's decree and was a work that served our good. Satan's death, and the death of the seed of the serpent, however,

bring them where they will have nothing but everlasting pain and suffering. The believer is crippled in this life, severely limited, and he may have his life taken from him by the seed of the serpent. But this will not keep him from living everlastingly in the new Jerusalem, when Christ, The Seed of the Woman, returns. The mother promise teaches a limited and temporary suffering for the seed of the woman. It predicts an endless woe and misery for the seed of the serpent.

Therefore when Cain killed Abel, this seed of the woman was cut off from this present earth and its pleasures. But his soul went to heavenly glory. It was limited then in that it did not have the body wherein it was

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born. But when Cain died, his soul went into an everlasting torment from which there is no escape. Abel's wound will be healed when Christ returns. Cain's misery will be intensified. Abel will walk once again on this earth when it is changed and glorified. Cain will never take one small step in that blessed realm where Christ will be king.

What is more, after Cain killed Abel, God presents to us a rapid and inevitable spiritual difference between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The seed of the serpent, having its head crushed, is spiritually dead! And out of that death it will never come. The seed of the woman has flesh which has spiritual death in it; and they all cripple through this life. They stumble and fall into sin; and they will cry out with Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). But that new spiritual life that caused the seed of the woman to be born again can never be taken from them. That promise we have from God. The seed of the serpent can never get spiritual life. The reborn seed of the woman can never have it taken from them.

Yes, the seed of the woman are going to suffer. They will know all the aches and pains that the seed of the serpent know. They will die as surely, and often as violently, as the seed of the serpent. Satan, and that seed of the serpent will also affect their spiritual walk. We will fall into temptation. We will sin, even though our heads have the knowledge of God and our hearts have love for God. But that new man in Christ in us, which makes us the seed of the woman, will not walk in even one sin after by the rebirth we have been given that life. In I John 3:9 we read: "Whosoever is born of God doth

not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

Abel's revealing that holy spiritual life before Cain is what brought upon him the works of the corrupt spiritual life of Cain. That enmity, of which the mother promise speaks, brought violence upon Abel's body by Cain who hated Abel, because he saw the spiritual difference. He saw God in Abel, the God Who had spoken to him and called his attention to his sin. We are not told what Abel said to Cain. We simply read that they talked together. But we can be sure that it was the spiritual enmity of which the mother promise speaks that moved Cain to strike and kill Abel. It was not because Abel broke one of the commandments in the second table of the law. It was because Abel revealed himself as one who was walking in the way of the first table of the law. And because Cain was not keeping the first table of the law, he also broke the second table when he killed Abel.

What our covenant God presents to us, after Cain brought murder into the history of the human race, is the rapid and inevitable spiritual difference between the two seeds that dwelt on the earth. Out of Cain comes the seed of the serpent that brings a rapid and awesome growth of sin. Adam and Eve broke the first table of God's law. They wanted another god, and in their sin they revealed a hatred against the God Who made them, and Who is God alone. That hatred of God always produces hatred toward man who is made in His image. He who breaks the first table of the law will always break the second table as well. Hating God he will not want to serve and honor God. And he surely will hate anyone who manifests love and faith in God.

For a time Adam and Eve could not commit some of the sins mentioned in the second table of God's law. They could wound and kill each other or a son or daughter. Eve could dishonor her husband and lie to him. In a measure they could steal from each other items such as food, which was very scarce at that time. They could covet what the other human being had. But adultery was impossible until another male or female was born and developed to the point when they could be taken into sin. Nevertheless all this was not simply there, but could be expected to grow, as it did. The very first child born to them committed that murder that the human race fears more than theft, adultery, and falsehood, as well as rebellion against authorities.

Lamech, Cain's grandson, introduced openly the sin of adultery and boldly committed Cain's sin of murder. Then in the next generation appeared three males who opened the door to more sins, and to more ways in which hatred toward God could be and would be boldly displayed. Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain came as seed of the serpents and did not invent and explore God's marvelous creation in order to walk in love to Him and serve Him with it. They opened the door for more sins and for more manifestations of hatred against God to be practiced. They got the human race ready for the punishment of the flood. About one thousand six hundred and fifty-seven years of sin had so threatened the life of the seed of the woman, that God came with the flood, crushing the head of the seed of the serpent.

Now, dwelling in tents and raising cattle, as Jabal did; handling harp and organ as Jubal did; and being artificers in brass and iron, as Tubal-cain was, are not

necessarily and automatically evidences of walking in sin. Did the seed of the woman not need cattle for the sacrifices that God commanded? Is it to be branded as sin that David used the harp, and that others used the organ to sing God's praises? Did Moses not need tools of brass or iron to build the ark God commanded him to build? What about the building of the temple? What about the amazing means of transportation and of communication, the ships, trains, planes and automobiles we may use for missionary work? What about the radio and tape recordings, the printed page and the instruments used to write and print our Bible? All this is here because of what Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain wrought way back a few generations after the fall of man.

Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain were seeking the things of this world in order to satisfy the lust of their flesh. And the awesome truth is that Satan was working in and through them to bring forth the antichrist, who would seek to replace Christ. He was using the seed of the serpent in order to crush the head of the seed of the woman. No, he would never crush that head. He would be used so that the heel would be crushed; but his attempt and intention was to crush the head. And were it not for what Tubal-cain discovered and produced, there would have been no iron nails to affix Christ to His cross for our salvation. Never mind Satan's plans. God's plans are what count; and we have comfort, and are assured that His plan will always be executed, exactly as He eternally decreed it would take place.

This information about these three grandsons of Cain is presented for our comfort, and not simply for our information. Things did not slip out of God's hands. He did not have to send

the flood, and destroy His first creation, because of what Satan succeeded in doing. No, all this is written for our instruction and comfort. When He told Satan that HE would put enmity between the unbelievers and the believers, and that the unbelievers were going to have their heads crushed, while the believers would only have their heels crushed; and when He said this before fallen Adam and Eve, we have a most comforting truth that will encourage us in the coming days of increased sins with their violence and pain.

We do well to consider that here we have a shadow of what will come in the days of the antichrist, days which are not far away. All this ought to open our eyes today when we see the violence and wickedness that are becoming greater and more widespread.

Satan was defeated by the flood, and for a time there was only the seed of the woman on this earth: Noah's family. Of course, because we are all conceived and born in sin, there soon appeared the seed of the serpent again, and the sinful nature of the seed of the woman revealed itself. Noah became drunk, and Ham delighted in that sin. It was not long after the flood that God said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren." The spiritual contrast was there again on this earth.

In fact, Genesis 6:5 presents to us the true but sad picture that, "God saw that the wickedness of man was very great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Get those three words: *every, only and continually!* As far as the seed of the serpent is concerned, that is an accurate and undeniable truth concerning them. There is no good in them. For, as God told

Adam, man would die spiritually if he ate of that forbidden fruit. Adam did; and all his descendants, except Christ, Who is the second Person of the Holy Trinity, and was born of a virgin, come into this world with every imagination of the thoughts of the heart being evil only and continually.

It is absolutely impossible then that any one who has Adam as his father can do anything that is pleasing in God's sight, until and unless God causes him to be born again, and in that way becomes the seed of the woman. Living as we do in such a world, we too must expect sin to grow, and the world to become more wicked, trying to crush our heel. In the day of shadows already it became very clear that we need Christ, Who is The Seed of The Woman, to pay for our sins not only, but to give us a new spiritual life. There surely is no room for the seed of the woman to boast. But there is abundant reason for them to praise and thank God for His wonder-work of sending His Son, yea, of coming Himself to deliver us completely from Satan and the cruelty of the seed of the serpent. □

Peace

The sounding surf so surgingly
Pounds the sandy shore;
The wrathful waves break cease-
lessly
And ragingly they roar.

The howling, whist'ling, whipping
wind
Blasts a salty sandy spray.
Nature has no peace nor rest
As I look up to pray.

And then I see His star-lit heavens;
The soft moon shines above.
In my heart and nature there is
peace;
For He looks down in love.

James Jonker
(from *Beacon Lights*, by permission)

All Around Us

Rev. Gise VanBaren

The Horror of Abortion Another Sign? What is debatable?

The Horror of Abortion

This past January we commemorated the 16th anniversary of the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States to legalize abortion. Much has been made of this. The presidential candidates in the last campaign took opposing sides on the issue. The new president has made it a point to show his own abhorrence of the practice. We hear the claim that the present Supreme Court will likely reverse the earlier decision. We await the outcome.

In the meantime, the killings continue. One reader recently sent in statistics that are truly sobering. In all of the wars in which this country was engaged, 1,160,581 soldiers were killed. Abortion kills about 1,600,000 annually! Since 1973 (when the Supreme Court legalized abortion), an estimated 22,500,000 abortions were performed. It is claimed that one out of every three pregnancies ends in abortion. All of this is nothing else than transgression of the sixth command, "Thou shalt not kill."

All of this is another sign of the end of the age, when iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold.

What can one do? Merely to wring one's hands in despair seems inadequate. However, to join with many others who may for various reasons (not necessarily Scriptural) oppose abortion can be a union of light and darkness with one common objective. Scripture has something to say about that (II Cor. 6:14ff.). Such union also presupposes an unscriptural position that in numbers there is strength.

What can one do? Prayer has ever been the chief means of access to the throne of our heavenly Father. Pray that the day of judgment quickly come. Pray for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that though iniquity abounds, the church may be preserved and its members gathered. Rejoice too that while the unregenerate will kill its offspring, God's people continue to bring forth, thankfully, children of whom God gathers also His children.

The Christian also has the opportunity to contact representatives in government to inform them why abortion is sin and must cease.

And when one considers the terrible bloodbath which is taking place under the name of population control, he can only pray more earnestly, "Even so come, quickly, Lord Jesus!"

Another Sign?

A short article in the *Grand Rapids Press*, January 23, 1989, caught my attention. Its title was: "Grain experts worried about drought." The article stated:

The drought of 1988 has now reached into 1989.

And now it has expanded into the country's most important wheat-growing regions, where it has begun to ravage sections of this year's crop.

Grain specialists say they are especially worried by the spread of the drought into areas that produce most of the country's hard red winter wheat, the principal bread wheat . . .

The situation is also causing fresh concerns among food experts who were already uneasy about a dwindling supply of grain in the world. The U.S. wheat reserve is the lowest since crop shortfalls led to the World Food Conference of 1974. And for the second year in a row the world has used more grain than it has produced.

Wheat is the food crop in tightest supply now. World reserves, in percentages of normal use, have dropped to the lowest levels since 1973. With the world using more than it produced last year, the wheat reserve has dropped 30 million tons, to 115 million tons. In 1987, it dropped by the same amount . . .

The threat from drought to the winter wheat crop also comes at a time when several other major producers, including the Soviet Union, Australia and Argentina, are suffering drought problems.

Rev. VanBaren is pastor of the Protestant Reformed Church in Hudsonville, Michigan.

Though throughout history one hears of famines and shortages, surely the words of Revelation 6:6 come to mind: "And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine." It was the word to the black horse with its rider who had in hand a pair of balances. The common, ordinary food (wheat and barley) would be very limited, while the wine and oil (luxuries of this world) would be unaffected. Is this taking place even in our own day?

What is debatable?

One can still be startled at what is being debated in the pages of the *Banner*. In the issue of February 6, 1989, two articles appear in print, one seeking to prove that the Bible is *not* the Word of God and another supporting the proposition that it is. The editor gives a weak rejection of the arguments of the first writer in a brief editorial. The first writer is Herman Bouma, an attorney in Washington, D.C. and member of the CRC there. He is also a graduate of Calvin Theological Seminary. He makes the following claim:

I do not believe that the Bible is the Word of God.

My reason is fairly simple: I do not know of any evidence that it is the Word of God; in fact, there is strong evidence that it is not the Word of God . . .

But my conclusion that the Bible is not the Word of God does not make it meaningless to me. The Bible is the history of redemption. It sets forth what God has done in history, particularly in the person and work of Jesus Christ, to redeem mankind.

Although the Bible sets forth the Word of God, it is itself not the Word of God. It is testimony to what God has said and done. Yet it is still, for the most part, true and valid. "This

is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true," says the gospel of John (21:24).

Testimony can bear truth even though it is not the Word of God . . .

The affirmative position is presented by Lyle D. Bierma who points out that it is both Scriptural and confessional to maintain that Scripture is the Word of God:

. . . But how do we know that the Scriptures are the true and authoritative Word of God? Again, the Belgic Confession: "We believe without a doubt all things contained in [Scripture] not so much because the church receives and approves them as such but above all because the Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts that they are from God, and also because they prove themselves to be from

Alpha And Omega

In the beginning, the eternal Word,
By might unmeasured and unknown to man,
Spoke, and the depths of nothingness were stirred;
And in that great beginning time began.
And in time's fulness, man by sin fast held,
That Word was flesh, time met eternity;
The finite and the Infinite were weld,
And God and man was hanged upon a tree,
But in time's glass will drop the final sand,
The cloud-clothed angel with a lion's roar
Shall set his fiery feet on sea and land,
God's end be reached, and time shall be no more.
Lord, strengthen Thou our failing sight, we pray,
Till with the eye of faith we see that day.

James Jonker
(from *Beacon Lights*, by permission)

God" (Art. V). In other words, besides the testimony of the Spirit, we know the Bible to be the Word of God through the testimony of the church and the testimony of Scripture itself.

The writer then presents in brief and summary form the evidences from Scripture that it is the very Word of God. He concludes:

On the basis of this threefold testimony, then — by the church, by Scripture itself, and by the Spirit — we believe that the Bible is the written Word of God. In an age in which so much of Protestantism no longer holds to the divine inspiration, infallibility, and authority of Scripture, let us in the Christian Reformed Church continue to confidently confess, "We believe without a doubt [that] all things contained in [Scripture] . . . are from God" (Belgic Confession, Art. V).

One can express a hearty "Amen" to the brief summary presented by the second writer concerning this vital truth. What is, however, particularly astounding is that a member in good standing in the church, of theological background and evidently a learned individual, can publicly and in the official church periodical present views contrary to our confessions about what ought to be (in the church) an undebatable subject. All know that many deny Scripture as the inspired, infallible, Word of God. One must indeed keep up with the arguments presented. But can a member of good standing in the church publicly repudiate what the confessions teach, and can the church give such a one a "pulpit" for his views? Does this not mislead simple souls in spite of disclaimers made by the editor of the magazine? One can only express sorrow that this subject should be open for debate *within* the reformed churches in light of the Confessions to which we hold. □

Walking in the Light

Prof. Herman Hanko

Custody Fight Over Fertilized Ova Sex-selection Abortions Sabbath Desecration

While we have, in previous articles in the *Standard Bearer*, discussed the major issues which arise in the field of Christian ethics, there are many subjects which could be treated in these articles, some of which are related to subjects we have already discussed and most of which do not warrant an entire article. We have decided, therefore, to write an article or two concerning various less important issues and concerning developments in various areas which we have already discussed.

Custody Fight Over Fertilized Ova

In an earlier article we discussed at some length the increasingly common practice of artificial fertilization of a mother's ova, and we made some passing reference to the current practice of preserving these ova by freezing and storing them for use at some future time. This abominable practice has led to some problems, not the least of which is court fights over such stored ova.

In a recent issue of the *Grand Rapids Press* an article appeared in which we were told of a court fight that was presently going on in Maryville, Tennessee. A couple

apparently decided to have seven fertilized ova stored at the Fort Sanders Regional Medical Center for future use. In the meantime, the couple are in the process of gaining a divorce and now a custody fight has come to the courts over these fertilized ova. The mother in this case wants to be impregnated with these frozen embryos; but the father has contested the matter, claiming that, if this were done, it would "have an impact on his life." The judge apparently agreed and a restraining order has been placed on the mother's request until further hearings can be held. The point is that the custody fight over jointly held property now includes these stored fetuses.

Many of the advances in the field of medical technology have raised legal as well as moral problems. To some of these legal problems we have called attention in earlier articles. Here is one that clearly shows the stupidity of tampering with God-ordained processes for who knows what reasons. Violations of God's law always lead men to increasingly more serious problems, most of which have no solution, if for no other reason than that the problems arise out of great evils.

Sex-selection Abortions

In the March 17 issue of *Christianity Today*, editorial comment was made on the subject of using

abortion as a means of sex selection. No one knows how widespread this practice is, but it seems to be more widely done than has been admitted in the past. *Christianity Today* refers to an article in *The New York Times* in which doctors who perform abortions admitted that they were "all routinely asked by patients to test fetuses for gender." Almost always female fetuses are the ones aborted. So abortion has now become a means of sex selection among many.

The irony of it all is that the feminist movement, which stood in the forefront of the pro-abortion battle, does not like what it is hearing. Militant feminists now are increasingly of the opinion that abortions on demand have become a method of "femicide" — the wholesale destruction of the female population. Already in India, where such kind of sex selection has been commonly practiced, feminists have succeeded in getting laws passed which ban abortions on the grounds of sexual preference. Feminists in this country are likely to begin pressing for the same laws in this land.

Abortion is a great evil wherever it is practiced. Those who promote and practice it stand under the fierce wrath of a holy God. It is murder of the first degree. It is unbelievably shocking that it can be done in this

Prof. Hanko is professor of Church History and New Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

country with the protection of the law. Not only upon individuals, but also upon countries God's judgment comes with ferocity when His holy law is openly flaunted.

But here we have an illustration of how one sin leads to another. God is never mocked. In fact, God punishes sin with sin, as Romans 1:18ff. clearly teach. As the country sinks deeper into the abyss of moral corruption, sin grows greater and the night of evil grows darker. But the holy God of Israel maintains His righteousness through it all.

Sabbath Desecration

One of the great evils of our times is the desecration of the Sabbath by shopping on the Lord's Day. There was a time in the history of our country when so-called "blue laws" were on the books in every state of the union. These laws made it a civil offense to buy or sell on the Lord's Day. One by one these laws have been struck from the books by decisions of the courts. The result is that, especially in our cities, many, if not most, stores and restaurants are open. In fact, retailers claim that the Lord's Day are some of the biggest shopping days of the week. One finds, even in travelling to church, that the parking lots of malls are jammed with cars, the parking lots of restaurants are filled, and the roads are crowded with vehicles carrying families and individuals to stores and restaurants.

Periodically, a cry is raised against this practice in evangelical and fundamentalist circles. Various writers long for the good old days when everything was closed on the Sabbath, when only the churches were open, and when the shopping was done during the week. The good days were those days when the Sunday dinner was prepared as

much as possible on Saturday night, when all the parents and children had had their baths, and when only the very necessary work was done on the Lord's Day.

I can appreciate the distress which many feel at this desecration of the Lord's Day. It was better when Sabbaths were quiet except for the ringing of church bells; when the beaches were empty; when the streets were uncrowded; when the rattle and clatter of lawn mowers was never heard. What I cannot always appreciate is the line of argumentation which is used in support of keeping public places closed on the Sabbath.

Recently I read an article in which a "Christian" who worked on the Lord's Day as a meat cutter complained about the fact that he had to work, even though he preferred not to do so, because other Christians used the Lord's Day to shop. "It's a shame when Christians have to work on Sunday," he said; "if Christians wouldn't shop on Sunday, Christians wouldn't have to work on Sunday." This line of defense reminds one of the many excuses which Christians make to defend their sinful conduct — a line of reasoning which began when Adam blamed Eve for his sin of eating of the forbidden tree.

But the main line of reasoning in defense of the closing of public places on the Lord's Day follows a somewhat different track. It is often argued that the Sabbath is good for man for various reasons. One writer puts it this way: "God's creation of the Sabbath established more than just a pattern of work and rest; it established the values of community, freedom, and redemption. The Sabbath ministered to basic human needs — physical, emotional, and spiritual. The Lord's Day is designed to meet those same needs. It embodies

eternal values. It offers a respite from chronic materialism. It offers a chance to regain our bearings as we gather as a body of believers and witness to the truth of the resurrection."

In other words, one ought to keep the Sabbath because the keeping of the Sabbath has physical and emotional as well as spiritual benefits. It does one good to take a day off. It is physically and emotionally healthy to refrain from normal and ordinary activities on one day of the week.

I can't buy that argument. I have no quarrel with the argument that the keeping of the law of God is always good for a man. Of course. Just as a violation of God's law brings grief and sorrow, trouble and pain, so the keeping of God's law is good. This is no less true of Sabbath observance than it is of idolatry or adultery. But it seems to me that this line of reasoning misses the point altogether. It reduces the keeping of the law to selfish motives. One ought to keep the law because it is good for him to do that. Avoid what is bad for one's self and do what is healthy. Seek yourself and your best interests, but do so by taking the long-range view of things; i.e., deny yourself immediate pleasure in the interests of a long-range health. If this becomes the motive of keeping the law, what happens to the great commandment of the law: Love God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength? We substitute self-love for love of God as a motive for keeping the law.

When all else is said and done, the sole motive for keeping the law, including the keeping of the Sabbath, is this: God says we must do so; disobedience is a form of hatred of God; we keep His law because we love Him. If God is so gracious that He sends His blessings upon us in the way

of observance of His law, we have not earned that either, and that too is of grace alone.

Such reasoning as mentioned above misses the point. The Sabbath in the old dispensation was on the seventh day. The rule, in keeping with the nature of the law, was: work for seven days to earn that one day in which you can have fellowship with your covenant God. That proved forever impossible. Man cannot earn his salvation, nor work in such a way that he merits God's blessing. Christ arose on the first day of the week and instituted the new dispensation Sabbath. Christ earned all our salvation for us. The great abiding truth of the Sabbath is: Christ gives us the rest of God's covenant; in the strength of that great grace, go forth into your life and work. No longer, work to rest, but rest in order to work. No longer merit — forever impossible; but grace, grace through Christ to do the Lord's work.

It is for this reason too that the argumentation of "Christians" who open their places of business is specious. One Christian store manager said: "If Sunday isn't available to us, we can spend another day with the Lord." This is current thinking even among some very conservative Christians. The choice of the first day of the week as the Lord's Day is arbitrary, not required by God, and done only for reasons of expediency. Such argumentation is fallacious and to be condemned. The Lord's will is that the first day of the week, as part of the creation ordinances, is the Lord's Day. The believer, by frequenting the house of God on the first day of the week, confesses that his strength and power to walk in this world obedient to God depends upon his Christ. To labor six days in the service of his King, he needs that first day to be with Christ in church to hear Christ speak and to be fed with the bread of life.

In obedience to Christ he keeps the Sabbath holy. That must be his motive. □

In God's Country

The rolling fields of brown and green
Embraced the purple mountains high;
The rugged peaks with snowy lips
Reached bravely up and kissed the sky.
The azure blue stretched out its hands,
Pulled up the eastern shining sphere;
The sun with kindly smiling face
Gave light and life and warmth and cheer.
The great Creator, moved by love,
Looked down on hill and plain and wood
And saw His handiwork divine
Tell forth His praise and said,
"Tis good."

James Jonker
(from *Beacon Lights*, by permission)

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Mr. Wigger is an elder in the Protestant Reformed Church of Hudsonville, Michigan.

April 1, 1989

It has been quite a few weeks since I included a church profile, and I have only two left. There doesn't seem to be much news, so now would be a good time to slip one in.

For several years, in the early 1970's, there had been talk of the need for a new Protestant Reformed church in the Grandville-Jenison area of West Michigan. Not only were nearby P.R.

churches crowded, but there were many new families, especially young growing families, moving into the area.

On February 22, 1973, Faith P.R.C. was organized by nineteen families. Worship services were held in the Jenison Jr. High Gymnasium. That same fall, Candidate Meindert Joostens became their first pastor. They also purchased five acres of land on 20th Ave. in

Jenison. In the summer of 1974, Rev. Joostens and his family moved into the new parsonage on the church property.

In 1978 Rev. Joostens accepted a call to First Church in Grand Rapids, and Faith was vacant until Candidate Wilbur Bruinsma accepted their call in October of that year. On December 10, 1978 Faith held their first worship service in their new sanctuary. What a thrill for the congregation to worship once more in a sanctuary and sing to the beautiful strains of an organ!

In 1984, Faith again had a change of pastors when Rev. Bruinsma accepted the call to be missionary to Jamaica and Rev. Wayne Bekkering accepted Faith's call later in the year.

From a small group of mainly very young families Faith has grown into a large congregation of some 82 families with 416 baptized members. Beginning with only fourteen children in catechism classes, there are now 162. From two young people who attended another church's Young People's Society, there are now 55 in the Jr. and Sr. Y.P. Societies at Faith. All age groups are represented and are a vital part of the church life.

One interesting fact is that Faith has been blessed with many children, and presently includes not only triplets but also four sets of twins! A wide variety of occupations can be found among its members: from construction to farmers; from businessmen to teachers and accountants.

When the original plans for Faith were drawn up, it was decided to build in three phases, the sanctuary being the first. Thought is now being given to the second phase, which will be a wing-unit addition.

Through the years Faith has grown physically, but more importantly spiritually as well.

There have been many severe sicknesses and deaths, and there have been many trials. Faith presently is vacant, Rev. Bekkering and the congregation deciding last year to end their pastor-congregation relationship. This has made all the members keenly aware how important the blessedness of the communion of the saints is.

MISSION ACTIVITIES

Classis West in its meeting on March 1 approved of the organization of the mission station at Northwest Chicago. This group consists of 13 families and has taken the name Bethel P.R.C. Organization is tentatively set for March 29.

The new address and phone number of Rev. & Mrs. Steven Houck is 3428 31st St., Grandville, MI 49418. Phone 616-531-4999.

CONGREGATIONAL CALLS

The Faith P.R.C. in Jenison, MI formed a new trio consisting of Revs. Russell Dykstra, Steven Key, and Ronald VanOverloop. From that group of three, they extended the call to Rev. Key. From a trio which included also Rev. Ronald Cammenga and Rev. Richard Moore, Pella extended a call to Rev. Ronald VanOverloop. First Church called Rev. Carl Haak to serve as missionary in Jamaica. And, from a duo of Rev. Russell Dykstra and Rev. Barrett Gritters, Peace Church called Rev. Dykstra.

Rev. Kenneth Hanko, home missionary to the group in Norristown, PA, has accepted the call he received to become the first pastor of the newly organized congregation that grew out of that mission station.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The Hope P.R. Christian School Circle in Walker, MI met in the middle of February. Mr. John Buitter, administrator at Hope, spoke on "The Use of Computers in the Home."

The Hull P.R. Christian School Society has decided to go ahead with plans to build two additional classrooms onto their present school building this summer.

The Covenant Christian High School Band in Walker, MI held a fund-raising playathon on March 14. Supporters were invited to come at any time that evening and watch and/or participate by either playing their instruments or by actually conducting the band themselves. Band members were busy getting pledges to help make the event a successful one.

On February 24, the Loveland P.R. Christian School held a special chapel service in which parents, grandparents, and friends were invited. After the chapel, these friends were invited to visit the classrooms. Hot lunch was also served that day by the Ladies Circle, so that those there could stay and eat dinner with the teachers and students.

CONGREGATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

The consistory of our Loveland P.R.C. in Loveland, CO thanked the same Ladies Circle mentioned above for the purchase of stoves for the new church kitchen, and 24 new Bibles for the auditorium and Fellowship Hall.

The Young People of our Immanuel P.R.C. in Lacombe, Alberta invited the members of the Edmonton congregation to an evening of bowling at the Riverside Bowl in Red Deer.

The Young People's Societies of the Hudsonville P.R.C. in Hudsonville, MI sponsored an exciting night of racquetball and walleyball at Racquetville in Grandville, MI on March 10. All ages were welcomed. Proceeds were going toward the 1989 Convention being sponsored by Hope P.R.C. in Walker, MI. □

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On April 20, 1989, the Lord willing, MR. AND MRS. ROGER KEY will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary. We, their children and grandchildren, rejoice with them in God's faithfulness to us. We also wish to thank them publicly for the years of Christian instruction and counsel they have given us and for their efforts to bring us up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

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

Pastor Steven and Nancy Key
Stephanie, Michelle,
Elisabeth, Mary Anne
Daniel and Judy Key
Jonathan, Deborah,
Timothy
Thomas Key

ATTENTION TEACHERS!!!

Hope Christian School of Redlands, CA is seeking to add a teacher to its staff beginning the 1989-90 school year. Teaching assignment would be either grades K and 1, or 2nd - 4th. Those interested may call Ed Karsemeyer (Principal) at school (714-793-1504) or at home (714-793-7166), or Mike Gritters (Secretary of School Board), at (714) 739-4439. Applications or resumes should be sent to Hope Christian School, 1309 E. Brockton, Redlands, CA 92374.

NOTICE!!!

The Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed Christian School is seeking applications for a teaching position at the lower elementary grade level beginning the 1989/90 school year. Direct all inquiries to: Chester Hunter, Jr.

Administrator
106 Fifth Ave.
Doon, IA 51235
(712) 726-3381

or to:

John Mantel, Board President
R.R. 2, Box 247
Rock Valley, IA 51247
(712) 476-5609

NOTICE!!!

The South Holland Protestant Reformed School is seeking applications for a teaching position at the elementary grade level beginning the 1989/90 school year. Direct all inquiries to:

Lamm Lubbers, Administrator
16511 South Park Avenue
South Holland, IL 60473
(312) 339-6585

or to

James Lanting, Board Sec'y.
16230 Louis Avenue
South Holland, IL 60473
(312) 596-5093

NOTICE!!!

Covenant Christian School of Lynden, WA, is in need of a teacher in the elementary grades. Anyone interested, please contact Mr. John Meyer, Board President, 1255 Van Dyck Road, Lynden, WA, 98264, telephone (206) 354-3354; or Mr. Ben VanderVeen, Board Secretary, 9503 Northwood Road, Lynden, WA, 98264, telephone (206) 354-3188.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Study Society of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Bernie Kamminga in the death of her brother, MR. BERNIE DEN BESTEN.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Rev. Steven Key, Pres.
Miss Audrey Reitsma, Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Mens and Ladies Society of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church mourns the loss of two of its faithful members, MISS ELSIE KUIPER and MR. BASIL HAFER, whom the Lord took home to glory recently.

The society expresses its Christian sympathy to their families. May the sorrows of death be swallowed up in the victory which is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. (I Cor. 15:57)

Mr. Phillip Lotterman, Pres.
Mrs. Ruth De Kraker,
Vice Sec'y.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Adult Bible Class of Peace Protestant Reformed Church, express their heartfelt Christian sympathy to their members, Ken and Marilyn De Jong and family, in the death of their infant daughter, RUTH JOHANNA, on March 1, 1989. May they be comforted in knowing that "... He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry them in His bosom and shall gently lead those that are with you." (Isaiah 40:11)

Don Terpstra, Vice-Pres.
Deb Poortinga, Sec'y.