



***A Reformed
Semi-Monthly
Magazine***

The Standard Bearer

Death reigned over men the moment they were born. Death reigned and reigns also over the little baby that has not sinned consciously and actually, that does not yet know the difference between his right hand and his left. The reign of death is absolutely universal. Death has passed upon all men!

See Adam and the Race — p. 330

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P.O. Box 603, Grandville, MI 49468-0603.

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EDITORIAL OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Don Doezeema
4949 Ivanrest
Grandville, MI 49418

CHURCH NEWS EDITOR

Mr. Ben Wigger
6597 40th Ave.
Hudsonville, MI 49426

BUSINESS OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
Don Doezeema
P.O. Box 60366 Fraser St.
Grandville, MI
49468-0603

NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

The Standard Bearer
c/o B. VanHerik
Wainuiomata, New Zealand

PH: (616) 531-1490

(616) 538-1778

FAX: (616) 531-3033

UNITED KINGDOM OFFICE

c/o Mr. Jonathan McAuley
164 Church Rd., Glenwherry
Ballymena, Co. Antrim BT42 3EL
Northern Ireland

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In This Issue ...

From the Martin Swart collection of the sermons of Herman Hoeksema comes another meditation. This one continues the series on Romans. The text, Romans 2:4, 5, is much abused in the interests of weakening the sovereignty of God in salvation and enhancing the role of the sinner. Hoeksema will have none of it. "The text does not say: the goodness of God *tries* to lead you to repentance.... It is impossible, if you leave the text in its meaning, to elicit from it a general grace." Do not overlook "Despising God's Goodness."

Prof. Herman Hanko gives us a third installment of his account of the life and labor of "Abraham Kuyper: Dutch Calvinist." To be appreciated in this church historian's analysis of Kuyper is that he does not allow criticism of Kuyper's errors, particularly his doctrine of common grace, to blind us to the Reformed theologian's important contributions to the Reformed churches.

In our missions rubric, Rev. Jason Kortering continues his Reformed examination of "Demon Possession." Although Rev. Kortering writes out of his experiences in Singapore, and specifically for the church in that situation, his subject has benefit for the churches in the West.

No longer is this subject of concern only in relation to heathen cultures. The infiltration of the New Age Movement forces Westerners to come to terms with their own understanding of demons.... All of us do well to have a clear biblical perspective in order that we can properly warn our covenant youth against any experimentation. We do not play with demons (p. 322).

—DJE

Despising God's Goodness

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Romans 2:4, 5

The heart of the text is undoubtedly expressed in the words, "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." This is the undeniable truth around which the entire text in all its details is really grouped. It is the one certainty that can always be applied and always stands, to which there is never an exception: "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance."

For this reason we must not change this statement, so as to fit our notion as to what the goodness of God ought to be. Poison kills; fire burns; bread nourishes; so, the goodness of God leads to repentance. We must not say, or think, or attempt to change the meaning of this statement into something like this: the goodness of God *likes* to lead you to repentance. This is not true. Or, the goodness of God

tries to lead you to repentance. For this is not true either. Nor is it the meaning of the text. But we must leave this word exactly as it is, and say, just as we say, poison kills, fire burns, and bread nourishes, the goodness of God leads to repentance.

It does this always. We may know it or not, it makes no difference, the goodness of God leads to repentance. You may take poison or you may not, it makes no difference, poison kills. You may put your hand in the fire or you may not, it makes no difference, fire burns. You may feel the power of the goodness of God or you may not, it makes no difference, the goodness of God leads to repentance.

But there are those who despise that goodness of God. Despising the goodness of God, they treasure up unto themselves wrath. It is to those that the apostle calls our attention in the text.

The Meaning

The apostle is still addressing the man of verse 1. He is not addressing any particular class. He is not addressing the Jew. Nor is the Jew excluded. The apostle has in mind to apply what he has said to the Jews in a special sense. But here he is addressing man. He is speaking in the singular. This man, the apostle has pictured in a very peculiar and realistic light. That is, he has pictured him just as he

is. He has pictured this man as judging and condemning others, while doing the same things himself. He condemns the liar, and he lies himself. He condemns the thief, and he steals himself. When he condemns the backbiter, he becomes a backbiter himself. This is characteristic of sinful man. God lets him do it in order to make him say that he knows the righteous judgment of God, so that he will be without excuse in the day of judgment.

Now the apostle asks this man (and this is the connection), how do you explain that attitude? How do you come to assume that attitude in which you condemn in others what you do yourself? How must that be explained?

The apostle knows of but two possibilities. The first possibility is expressed in that first question: "Thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?" Is this the explanation? If this is the case, then that attitude is explained.

Or, and this is the other possibility, is that attitude rooted in the sinful contempt in which you say, "I know that I shall be in the judgment, but I don't care"? "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

In the original, four words are

Herman Hoeksema was the first editor of the *Standard Bearer*.

used, where in our English translation there are but three. The text, therefore, should be read this way: "or despisest thou the lovingkindness, forbearance, longsuffering, and goodness of God?" As to the meaning of these various terms, they are so related that goodness includes all the other virtues. God's lovingkindness is His goodness manifest. God's forbearance is His goodness manifest. God's longsuffering is His goodness manifest.

What is God's goodness? In the first place, God's goodness is that virtue of God by which He is in Himself infinite perfection. This is the background of all other goodnesses. God's goodness does not mean that he is our benefactor, that He bestows good upon us. God's goodness means, in the first place, that He is good in the sense of perfection. Because God is good in Himself, He also does good. God does good to all creatures. There is no exception. He does good to all creatures, organically considered and individually considered. God always does good. He does good to the wicked and to the righteous. When God blesses the righteous, He does good. When He curses the wicked, God does good. God would not do good, if He blessed the wicked. This, in the first place. God is in Himself good and the overflowing fountain of all goodnesses.

For this reason there is in the text mention of a threefold manifestation of God's goodness. These three are also related. God's lovingkindness is the first manifestation of His goodness. God's lovingkindness is His inmost desire to bless the righteous. The goodness of God so works and reveals itself that there is in God the eternal desire to bless the righteous. You can never say that of God's attitude toward the wicked. Then He would not be good. There

is in God never a will, a desire, to make the wicked happy. We must understand this. The central thought of the text is to emphasize that it is impossible for God to bless anyone, unless he comes to repentance. As long as he

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does not come to repentance, and as long as he despises and does not know the goodness of God, he cannot taste the blessing of God. We must understand, therefore, that the lovingkindness of God is that manifestation of God's goodness according to which it is His eternal desire to bless the righteous. This is why the natural man despises that lovingkindness of God. Man will never despise a general grace. But he despises that God blesses the righteous.

The other two terms, God's forbearance and longsuffering, are again manifestations of the goodness of God as revealed in time. God's longsuffering is His desire to deliver His suffering people, but waiting until all things are ripe. If I have my child on the operating table and that child begs me to stop, but I keep right on cutting into the live flesh until the operation is completed, I am longsuffering over that child. So God's longsuffering is His purpose finally to bring His people to glory, while permitting them to suffer until the time is ripe.

God's forbearance is the antithesis of longsuffering. It is His will to destroy the wicked in the day of judgment, while allowing them to prosper until that day. God's forbearance is this. I have a man in my home who eats my bread, drinks my water, wears my clothes, and sleeps in my bed. That man ignores me and abuses my children. I forbear from putting him out of my house until the time is ripe. This is God's forbearance. The forbearance and longsuffering of God are manifest.

The apostle asks the sinner:

"despisest thou the lovingkindness, and forbearance, and longsuffering of God; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" To despise a thing presupposes that we come into contact with it to the extent that we know that which we despise. The apostle means to say, therefore, that in some way, to some extent, man always comes into contact with this threefold manifestation of God, the heart of which is: the Lord blesses the righteous.

Despisest thou this?

It is emphatically in the church, where the goodness of God is bestowed, that the goodness of God is despised.

To despise a thing is to think nothing of it. To despise a thing is to judge it worthless, not to want it. So that when the testimony is, "The Lord blesses the righteous," we simply ignore it and continue to walk in sin. Do you not see that the sinner, going on in his own way, despises the goodness of God?

Its Cause

How is this possible? The apostle says that the deepest cause is in his impenitent heart. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart," the text says. The heart is the center of a man's life from a spiritual point of view. From the heart is the life of man as to its spiritual direction. An impenitent heart is a heart that cannot repent. It is not a heart that *does* not repent. An impenitent heart is a heart that *cannot* repent. It is not a heart that *cannot be brought* to repentance. But it is a heart that cannot repent *of itself*.

To repent is to change, so that our judgment of our own sin is as God's judgment of our sin. An impenitent heart is the very opposite. It is a heart that loves sin, that seeks it, that walks in it.

That impenitent heart, the apostle says, is hard. It is not hardened. It is hard. "After thy hardness," says the apostle. Hardness,

this is the characteristic of the impenitent heart. That heart is hard so that it is not receptive to repentance. When that impenitent heart sits under the influence of the Word of God, and even before that Word comes to him, it makes up its mind not to repent. An impenitent heart is always hard. It is not so, that that impenitent heart is first soft and that gradually it hardens. That heart is hard from the beginning. Every impenitent heart is hard.

It is true that there is a hardening of the heart in a natural way, but not in the spiritual sense. Even a hard, impenitent heart can become hardened in a natural way. When first that hard, impenitent heart comes under the influence of the Word of God, there are the pangs of conscience, a certain fear, a trembling, before that Word. But under the influence of the goodness of God that impenitent heart becomes hardened. We can see, often to our deepest sorrow, how the impenitent heart becomes hardened. Because of that impenitent heart, you do not know that the goodness of God leads to repentance. This is the immediate result.

The Arminian distortion is that God is good, in the sense of being gracious to all. He is good, in the sense that He likes to save all. Because He likes to save all, He tries to lead all to repentance. When He does so, there are some who resist that goodness of God. This is the Arminian distortion of the text.

But this is not the expression of the text. The text does not say: the goodness of God *tries* to lead you to repentance. The text makes a statement of fact. The text says that the goodness of God *leads* you to repentance. It is impossible, if you leave the text in its meaning, to elicit from it a general grace. It is a general statement of fact. The

goodness of God leads to repentance.

This becomes manifest in those who come into contact with this fact. It is as though I would say, "Don't you know that fire burns you?" — meaning, of course, as soon as you come into contact with it. Or, "Don't you know that poison kills you?" — meaning, of course, when you come into contact with it. So the apostle says: "Don't you know that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?" — meaning, as soon as you come into contact with it.

The natural man does not know that the goodness of God leads to repentance. Does he not know the fact? He does. This is not the meaning. But he does not know it in the sense that he does not experience, taste, that the goodness of God leads to repentance, and in the sense that he despises it. He despises the goodness of God as it becomes manifest in His lovingkindness, forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing, in the sense of not experiencing, that the goodness of God leads to repentance.

Its Result

Is this the case? If it is, then there is but one result. This is that that man who so despises the goodness of God treasures up wrath against the day of wrath and judgment.

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There comes a day of the revelation of the judgment of God. The text says: "after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." We must not say that there comes a day of the judgment of God. This judgment is always present. But there comes a day when this judgment shall be revealed.

This judgment is now fre-

quently covered up. It is so covered up that frequently we would say that God's judgment is not righteous. The wicked seem to prosper, and the righteous are in trouble. We would say that God's judgment is not righteous. This judgment is so covered up that men have come to the conclusion that there is a general grace. God's judgment is now covered up. But there comes a day when that cover will be taken off. That is the day of the revelation of the judgment of God.

That day will be a day of wrath. For whom? For that man. It will be a day of wrath. That is, it will be a day of nothing but wrath. And that man treasures up wrath. He lays up wrath as one lays up a sum of money in a bank. He piles up wrath. He lays up wrath in the bank of God's judgment. He does that in all his life. He is always increasing his capital of wrath. He treasures up wrath against the day of wrath. You may call that grace if you please. But the apostle knows nothing of that.

What shall we say then?

I will conclude with that with which I started. The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. If you have not come to repentance, you have never known the goodness of God. If in the midst of those men who despise the goodness of God, you become a penitent sinner, what then? Is there any hope? I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That, the apostle still has in mind. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. For in it is revealed the righteousness of God, which is by faith in Christ Jesus. The righteous shall live by faith. Living by faith, they say: being justified by faith, we have peace with God. □

Strictly Confessional Binding

In 1951, the synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC) adopted a document called "A Brief Declaration of Principles of the PRC" (hereafter, the "Declaration"). This was a time of severe internal struggle in the PRC over the doctrine of the covenant. The issue was whether at baptism the covenant promise is made by God to every baptized child or to the elect children only.

The former view maintains that the covenant promise depends for its fulfillment on a condition that the child must perform. The condition is faith.

The latter view holds that the promise is unconditional. The promise made to the elect children itself includes the gift of faith to the child. On the latter view, which has always been that of the PRC, the faith of the child is not a condition unto the fulfillment of the promise and unto the establishing or maintaining of the covenant with the child. This is to say, faith is not a condition unto the salvation of the child. Rather, faith is the means by which the promising God realizes His promise in the child's life and by which the covenanting God establishes His covenant with the child. This is to say, faith is the means by which God saves the covenant child and by which the child appropriates salvation.

Faith is the *necessary* means. But it is the instrumental "means by which," not the "condition unto."

Although the truth of the unconditional promise of the covenant only to the elect children is not the whole content of the "Declaration," it is the main message. Specifically rejected by the "Declaration" is the doctrine of a conditional covenant promise by God at baptism to every baptized child. This was the doctrine of some in Canada with whom the PRC were working at the time in home missions. These were Dutch immigrants who had been members in the Netherlands of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands ("liberated"), or GKN ("lib."). The explicit purpose of the "Declaration" was that it be used by the Mission Committee of the PRC for the organization of churches. The preamble reads:

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, to be used only by the Mission Committee and the missionaries for the organization of prospective churches on the basis of Scripture and the confessions as these have always been maintained in the Protestant Reformed Churches and as these are now further explained in regard to certain principles.

As the PRC were in the process of adopting the "Declaration," the leading theologian of the GKN ("lib."), Prof. Dr. Klaas Schilder, published a booklet criticizing the "Declaration." This booklet has now been translated from the original Dutch into English. With an essay on the covenant by Dr. Jelle

Faber, a theologian in the Canadian Reformed Churches, Schilder's criticism of the "Declaration" has recently been published as the book, *American Secession Theologians on Covenant and Baptism & Extra-Scriptural Binding—a New Danger* (Neerlandia, Alberta, Canada/Pella, Iowa, USA: Inheritance Publications, 1996).

The PRC may be glad that the book is published. It raises the important biblical and Reformed truth of the covenant of God in Jesus Christ with godly parents and their children. Even though the purpose of the book is to oppose the covenant doctrine of the PRC in the Reformed community, it does present our covenant doctrine to the Reformed public. In fact, Schilder's contribution to the book begins by giving the "Declaration" almost in its entirety.

We hope that the book fans the flames of some renewed interest in the doctrine of the covenant among Presbyterian and Reformed churches. May there be discussion, and even vigorous debate, concerning the issues clearly outlined in the "Declaration."

I encourage the readers of the *SB* to obtain and read the 173-page paperback, although they will find Schilder hard going. He is not always characterized by clarity of expression. Especially the ministers in the PRC will want to read the book. Those who cannot read the Dutch now have access in English to Schilder's well-known attack on the "Declaration."

All will be interested in Faber's analysis of the teachings on the covenant of several American theologians whose roots were in the reformatory movement in the Netherlands that is known as the "Secession." They are G. E. Boer; L. J. Hulst; G. K. Hemkes; G. Vos; W. W. Heyns; H. Beuker; and F. M. ten Hoor. In addition, Faber comments on the covenant views of L. Berkhof, H. Hoeksema, and K. Schilder. (I mention in passing that in my own study under Hoeksema, in my reading of Hoeksema's works, and in all my conversations with other PR ministers, I never before heard or discovered that Hoeksema was influenced by Geerhardus Vos, as Faber asserts.) Faber devotes several pages to the interaction between Hoeksema and Schilder.

Of great significance is Faber's candid acknowledgment that the covenant doctrine of Schilder and the "liberated" Reformed (although, curiously, Faber insists that they do not have a covenant theology) is essentially the same as that of Christian Reformed theologian, W. Heyns.

Roelof A. Janssen of Inheritance Publications will not mind that, instead of offering a typical review, I respond briefly to some of the main positions that the book puts forward. Sales will not suffer any on this account.

Schilder was right when he described the "Declaration" as a "binding."

It is binding upon the Mission Committee of the PRC in their organization of new churches. By implication, it is binding upon PR missionaries. They must instruct those with whom they labor in the truth of an unconditional covenant promise to the elect in Jesus Christ only, including the elect children of believers.

It is binding also upon the members of the PRC. This is not because it is a fourth confession in addition to the "Three Forms of Unity." But the "Declaration" was

adopted by synod, and Article 31 of the Church Order of Dordt binds this decision upon all the churches and members of the federation. This is in keeping with the fact that the "Declaration" is the PR testimony concerning the covenant to those who desire to join the PRC. If those who want to join are bound by the testimony, certainly those who give the testimony are bound to believe it.

But Schilder was wrong when he criticized the "Declaration" as "extra-Scriptural." Schilder's attack was two-pronged. He faulted the ecclesiastical act itself of adopting such a document. He charged that the PRC erred in drawing up and adopting a document that further explains some teaching of the confessions, committing the churches to this fuller explanation. At the same time, the document condemns a certain teaching that conflicts with the explanation. The second prong was Schilder's attempt to show that the doctrine of an unconditional covenant with the elect alone is erroneous.

The response to the first prong is that it was proper for the PRC to compose and adopt the "Declaration." The "Declaration" is, as its sub-title states, "A Brief Exposition of the Confessions regarding Certain Points of Doctrine as Maintained by the Protestant Reformed Churches." It consists mostly of quotations from the "Three Forms." What the confessions themselves teach concerning the covenant of God with believers and their children is demonstrated. The confessions are brought to bear on the specific issue of the covenant with our children.

Surely Reformed churches may do this. In times of controversy, they *must* do this. If some are teaching theistic evolution, with appeal to the confessions as permitting this (no imaginary situation!), it is in order that the churches decide synodically that the Reformed confessions, properly interpreted, teach creation in six,

regular, twenty-four-hour days by the Word of God calling distinct creatures into existence. The decision would offer the right explanation of the creeds on this matter. It would also condemn the false doctrine of theistic evolution.

Who would charge such a faithful denomination with "extra-Scriptural binding"?

The second prong of Schilder's attack was the important one. This was his condemnation of the doctrine of the unconditional covenant with the elect children as an error, while defending his own conditional doctrine as the truth. This is also the thrust of Faber's article.

This is, indeed, the issue.

If the doctrine confessed by the PRC is *not* the gospel of grace taught by the "Three Forms," the "Declaration" is certainly "extra-Scriptural binding." But then it is "extra-Scriptural," not because it is a document that further explains and defends a certain teaching of the creeds, but because it corrupts the confessions, spoiling their glorious message of salvation by sovereign, particular grace alone.

Does the "Declaration" do this? Let the discerning Reformed reader judge. It is not difficult to do this. Simply compare the clear, simple explanations of the confessions with the confessions themselves. Do they teach what they are said to teach, or not?

The alternative to judging between the doctrine of an unconditional covenant and the doctrine of a conditional covenant would be to take the position that the difference between the two doctrines is insignificant. In this case both are allowed in the Reformed churches. The PRC do not believe this. They judge the doctrine of a conditional covenant as defended by Schilder and Faber to be fundamental departure from the gospel of salvation by sovereign, particular grace alone. It is condemned by the Reformed confessions, especially the Canons of Dordt.

Nor, despite their protestations

to the contrary, do the Canadian Reformed Churches and the GKN ("lib.") think differently about the doctrine confessed by the PRC. A minister preaching the unconditional covenant with the elect children alone would not be tolerated in those churches. When the Rev. Herman Veldman preached the unconditional covenant to people of "liberated" convictions in a *Protestant Reformed congregation*, he lasted less than a year. The congregation put him out.

There is a real and vital theological difference between the two doctrines of the covenant outlined in the "Declaration" and discussed in *American Secession Theologians*.

The difference is not, as both Faber and Schilder suggest, the difference between infralapsarianism and supralapsarianism. This difference has nothing whatever to do with the controversy over the covenant. The suggestion that it does

is a red herring. The "Declaration" bases itself contentedly on the infralapsarian confessions.

The difference rather is that between particular grace and grace for all baptized children. It is the difference between a love of God only for the elect children and a love of God for all baptized children. It is the difference between a promise of the gospel that always is fulfilled to the object of the promise by the power of the promising God and a promise that depends upon the act of the child. It is the difference between faith as a gift of God included in the promise and faith as a condition that the child must perform, which faith is *not* part of the promise.

In short, the difference is that between particular, sovereign grace originating in and determined by eternal predestination and universal, conditional grace originating in

a will of God to save every baptized child and determined by faith as a condition.

Basic to this difference is the absolutely crucial question, "Is Jesus Christ the head of the new covenant, or not?" The conditional covenant denies it!

I encouraged our readers to get the book defending the conditional covenant.

To the Reformed Free Publishing Association, I suggest that they now publish the "Declaration" as a separate booklet. With the "Declaration" they could publish a skillfully edited version of Herman Hoeksema's explanation and defense of the "Declaration" at the time of its adoption.

This would promote the knowledge and study of the "Declaration."

And this is necessary both within the PRC and without. □

— DJE

A Cloud of Witnesses

Prof. Herman Hanko

Abraham Kuyper: Dutch Calvinist (3)

The Educator

Kuyper was deeply interested in and concerned for Christian education. Not only was he concerned that the children of believers receive instruction in the ways of God's covenant, but he labored long and hard to make Christian education available for

the common folk whose financial burdens were often very great.

But his interests in education went beyond the instruction offered in what we would call grade schools and high schools: Kuyper, dissatisfied with the apostasy in the universities (schools under government control), set his sights on the establishment of a Christian university free from government control. After much labor on his part, the Free University was established on October 20, 1880. It was a school for the orthodox, free from any governmental or ecclesiastical control, operated as a parental in-

stitution, and supported by the gifts and prayers of the people of God.

The university was organized under five disciplines: theology, medicine, jurisprudence, natural science, and philosophy. Its first professors were: Dr. Kuyper, Dr. F.L. Rutgers, Dr. Hoedemaker (all three in theology), Mr. D.P.D. Fabius (in law), and Dr. F.W.J. Dilloo (in letters). Five students were enrolled at the beginning, but it continued to grow and served to supply Reformed ministers to the new denomination which Kuyper had been instrumental in forming.

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

In this university Kuyper lectured in Dogmatics until he was forced to retire because of health.

His interests in university education led him to America. He was invited to deliver the Stone Lectures in 1898 and to receive an honorary degree from Princeton. These lectures, by no means Kuyper's better work, were later published under the title, *Calvinism*.

The Theologian

That Kuyper was a theologian of note goes without saying. His many years of teaching Reformed theology in the Free University, the publication of his *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, and his many theological writings give abundant testimony to his theological acumen.

He was a *Reformed* theologian, unsparing in his attacks on the liberals whose hatred and fury he incurred, and unwearied in his defense of the Reformed faith.

In this respect too he was a theologian of the people. He taught and wrote in a way which could be understood by the least educated of the church; he could make the most profound truths unmistakably clear; he rallied the scattered sheep of the church of Christ around the banner of the Reformed faith.

Yet at the same time his work as theologian was somewhat limited. These limitations were, in large measure, due to his wide interests, his overwhelming work load, and his involvement in all the affairs of the Netherlands, political, ecclesiastical, and social. Although Kuyper was an articulate and powerful defender of the Reformed faith, he made few significant contributions to the organic body of the faith as it had been delivered to the church of his time by the fathers from the past.

I suppose this statement will be sharply challenged, for there are many who see Kuyper as one of the greatest of all original theologians. Nevertheless, where Kuyper

did introduce new ideas into the body of the Reformed faith, these ideas were often outside the mainstream of the Reformed faith of the past and innovative in the sense that they could be challenged as unbiblical, unconfessional, and, therefore, wrong. This was true of his view of presumptive regeneration, e.g., the idea that one must presume the regeneration of all the children born of believing parents. This doctrine became a major bone of contention in later years and it was rejected by the church after him. This was also true of his views on common grace, although here his influence was very wide, and his ideas of common grace are still widely held both in the Netherlands and in this country.

Although attempts have been made to prove that Kuyper, also in the doctrine of common grace, stood in the line of Reformed thought beginning with Calvin, it is generally admitted that Kuyper introduced into Reformed thinking a novelty which can hardly stand up under the test of Scripture and the Reformed confessions. Kuyper's world-view was closely connected to his views on common grace.

Kuyper was a man of the antithesis. He believed strongly that the antithesis required absolute separation of the church from the world in all areas of endeavor, to the point that he himself labored mightily for a Christian labor union, a Christian political party, a Christian system of education free from any government control. Yet he formed a coalition with the Roman Catholics and taught a doctrine of common grace which paved the way for cooperation between believers and unbelievers in many areas of life.

But all this is not to minimize his strenuous efforts, blessed by God, to return the churches in his country to the faith of their fathers.

The Christian Man

Kuyper was also a man among

men and a Christian man among Christian men.

He was a family man who revolved in the life of his own covenant family. To him and his wife were born five sons and two daughters. Family devotions were important to Kuyper. During the evening meal, Kuyper would gather also the servants into the family circle, read the Scriptures with them, explain these Scriptures to them, and lead the household in prayers to God. Mealtime itself was a time of discussion, fellowship, laughter, and fun.

The old year passed away and the new year entered with Kuyper and his family reading the Scriptures and in prayer. This was a family custom preserved until nearly the end of Kuyper's life.

The amount of work Kuyper did was incredible. But he was, after all, human. And the heavy load of work twice brought him to complete nervous exhaustion. Kuyper, as so many faithful servants of Christ, spent himself in the cause of the gospel. When Kuyper learned his own limitations he took three vacations a year, usually spent in Europe and often involving mountain climbing. He had learned to love mountain climbing when he was in Switzerland after his second collapse.

He was also a man of most unusual gifts. His learning was vast, his knowledge of history, philosophy, the natural sciences, and politics was wide and profound. He was capable of speaking fluently many of the languages spoken in Europe. He was thoroughly versed in Greek and Hebrew. He lectured and wrote in Latin.

Sorrow also touched his life. In 1892 his nine-year-old son died, and in 1899, at the age of 58, his beloved wife died. Kuyper never married again and bore the sorrow of these losses to the grave.

Though short of stature, his presence was commanding and his eyes were piercing. He literally preached and spoke hundreds and

hundreds of times. And he could hold his audience spellbound with his marvelous voice and forceful oratorical style. He was uncompromising in his convictions and conveyed what he believed with passion and sincerity. He had the ability to move people deeply.

His own spiritual life was one of devotion and reflection on the Word of God. Though no mystic in the wrong sense of that word, Kuyper spoke often and eloquently of the union of the soul with Christ. That was the joy of his life and the hope that sustained him as he looked beyond life to glory.

But he was not without his own

flaws. It is probably characteristic of a forceful personality, as it was of Kuyper, that he not only held strongly to his convictions, but was intolerant of anyone who disagreed with him. He tended to be dictatorial in ecclesiastical and political affairs, and could not easily abide contradiction from those who were with him in the same cause. As he grew older, these weaknesses became sharper, and the last years of his life were not the happiest. It seems as if the temptations of old age, for one who has labored long and hard in the cause of Christ, are uniquely temptations to succumb

to bitterness. Kuyper did not always successfully resist these temptations.

He died on November 8, 1920. The funeral was attended by thousands, yet the services were simple. Not even one flower or sprig adorned the casket. The climax was the singing, by the throng, of Kuyper's favorite psalm: Psalm 89:7, 8 of the Dutch Psalm book. On his tombstone were engraved the words:

Dr. A. Kuyper
Born October 29, 1837
And fallen asleep in his Saviour
November 8, 1920

□

Go Ye Into All the World

Rev. Jason Kortering

Demon Possession (2)

Subsequent to writing our first article on this subject, I read an interesting reference to demon possession in the book, *Practical Theology and the Ministry of the Church*, published in 1990 and edited by Harvie Conn. Dr. Roger Greenway has a chapter entitled, "Evangelism." In preparation for writing this chapter he sent questions to twenty-five leaders in evangelism within the Reformed and Presbyterian community. One of the questions was, How would you compare your thinking today about evangelism with your thinking on the subject thirty or so years ago? From his summary of these answers I quote one paragraph, entitled "The Missionary Spirit and Demonic Oppression."

Related to this, there is surfacing a clearer recognition of the de-

monic in the lives of individuals and of society. The biblical teaching about Satan and demons is receiving fresh attention. Satan is seen to be very real. He is no longer regarded as belonging largely to some far-off orbit, but his presence and influence are recognized in the world's affairs and in opposition to divine truth and righteousness. In short, there is a fresh emphasis on the immediacy of God and the Holy Spirit and of Satan and his cohorts. The one brings comfort and strength to God's servants, and the other is the archenemy of evangelism.

No longer is this subject of concern only in relation to heathen cultures. The infiltration of the New Age Movement forces Westerners to come to terms with their own understanding of demons. This movement has its roots in pagan religions and with it all the trappings of demons and spirits. All of us do well to have a clear biblical perspective in order that we can properly warn our covenant youth

against any experimentation. We do not play with demons.

The second point we want to make in connection with our subject of demon possession is that Christ has completely stripped Satan of any control or authority over the people of God and His church. In Jesus Christ there is deliverance from the fear of evil spirits and even the horror of demon possession because Jesus is Lord.

The thrill of the Christian gospel is exactly this message.

I wish I could convey to you something of the horror, the fear, and superstition that is associated with heathendom and their being under the control of the devil. Why do eastern religions emphasize so much meditation, clearing of the mind, chanting mantras, focusing on karma, and such like? It is because this is their answer to the dread which surrounds the people. The influence of Taoistic Animism (the presence of the spirits of the dead) and evil spirits keeps the

Rev. Kortering is a Protestant Reformed minister-on-loan to Singapore.

people in the grip of fear. They are afraid of the spirits of the dead reporting to the god of hell that they are not living properly, and of such a god taking vengeance on them. How will he do this? By sending evil spirits into their lives and haunting them, threatening them, even destroying them.

It seems the more "civilized" the heathen becomes, the more he tries to deny such influence and put it behind him. Fact is that his past haunts him no matter how modernized he may become. He will continue to think in terms of appeasing the gods and the spirits. For this reason you see modern women with attaché cases in hand stopping off at the Chinese temple on the way to work. Among the most educated, the Necromancer does a booming business to soothe the superstition of his clients. The more blatant expressions of fear in connection with evil spirits are in the back hills of the undeveloped world. It is their mind-set, for they see evil spirits taking control of much of their life, and they deal with the mediums to try to discover how to gain their favor or appease their wrath. Van Rheen, in his book, *Communicating Christ in an Animistic Culture*, quotes James Frazer in this manner:

They dog his footsteps, dazzle his senses, enter into him, harass and deceive and torment him in a thousand freakish and mischievous ways. The mishaps that befall him, the losses he sustains, the pains he has to endure he commonly sets down, if not to the magic of his enemies, to the spite or anger or caprice of the spirits. Their constant presence wearies him, their sleepless malignity exasperates him; he longs with an unspeakable longing to be rid of them altogether, and from time to time, driven to bay, his patience utterly exhausted, he turns fiercely on his persecutors and makes a desperate effort to chase the whole pack of them from the land, to clear the air of their swarming multitudes, that he may

breathe more freely and go on his way unmolested at least for a time.

How shallow, how horribly man-centered are the attempts of eastern religion to deliver such people from their fears. It is into this setting that God in His wisdom brings the gospel. The Bible speaks to this kind of fear. There is story after story and message after message that tell us that God has given to us His Son who has conquered Satan and all his hosts. The gospel narratives of Jesus' casting out evil spirits speak directly to them. Yes, they are around us all the time. Yes, there are people possessed of devils. Jesus did not destroy the devil and put away all his spirits, but, thanks be to God, there is deliverance and victory over them.

Jesus assured His disciples that such would be the case. We see this in Luke 10:18, "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven." This was Jesus' response to the seventy disciples who returned to Him to report on their ministry. They had said to Jesus, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name." Jesus' answer to them was to point them to Satan's defeat portrayed as lightning falling from heaven. This is subsequently described for us in Revelation 12:9, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

The place from which he was cast is heaven. During the Old Testament times Satan had access to heaven, as we learn from the book of Job. Being cast to the earth symbolizes his ultimate defeat. This is learned from the chorus which the angels sang upon this occasion (vv. 10-12). The theme was that salvation is come to heaven, for the accuser of the brethren is cast down. The inhabitants in heaven are exhorted to rejoice, and the inhabit-

ants of the earth are warned.

Even though the battle is not finished, Satan is defeated. Proof of this can be seen in the reason for the victory of the saints over Satan. It is through the "blood of the Lamb," the "word of their testimony," and their "love for Him, even unto death." Victory over Satan is in the wonderful work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through His blood of atonement, the devil is silenced. He can no more accuse the brethren.

There is a legal and judicial basis for our being received by God, namely, the blood of Jesus on the cross as the payment for sin. For this reason He has power to overcome the devil. This Jesus demonstrated while He was on earth. He personally resisted the temptations of the devil and exercised power to cast out demons. Now in His exaltation, Jesus has given to us the testimony of His Word, the Holy Bible. Through the wonderful work of the grace of the Holy Spirit we are caused to see that God is no more angry with us, for we are reconciled to Him by the death of His own Son. Now are we the sons of God, we are His family. There is a beautiful bond of friendship between God and us.

The main point is this, the fear of evil spirits is taken away because God is for us. The beautiful doctrine of the covenant is such good news to fearful, superstitious pagans. The angels sang of this on the occasion of the ascension of Christ into heaven. We do well to declare it to the nations.

We must emphasize now, in the third place, that it follows from this that Christ Himself is LORD over Satan and his evil spirits. This may sound a bit repetitious, but the point that we want to make here is this. Jesus defeated the devil and is more powerful than he is, that is true. But we must add to this, that even the devils and spirits are now subject to Jesus Christ. The real burden of heathendom and its superstition is this: who is in control

of the spirits? Are they roaming about on their own? Do they strike at will without any reason? The heathen do not have the answer for this.

Most heathen cultures have some fables and myths about how the gods came into being and how a certain hierarchy exists among them. This includes their dealing with anger and avenging themselves on people who do not do as they say. These gods have their evil spirits roaming the world to execute their demands. One thing becomes very apparent, these poor people do not know why or how these spirits may come. Whenever something goes wrong in their life, they take to guessing what they have done wrong to bring such hardship and difficulty. For this reason they are so vulnerable to the temple mediums. The mediums can do or say almost anything and some of these people will listen and blindly follow them. One such medium instructed a woman, who came to him out of concern for her unfaithful husband, that she had to have sexual intercourse with him if she would appease the evil spirit in her husband. She consented to this, only to learn later that his only interest was his own lust. In the extreme, it even involves the killing of children to appease the spirits.

What a gospel it is to tell such people that there are not two forces in this world which are fighting to gain control. It is not the force of good versus evil. It is not some gods fighting to gain control over spirits. The gospel is not simply to say that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are stronger than evil spirits. No, there is only One who is in control, and that is the great Creator God. He is even in control of evil spirits because of the work which Jesus Christ His Son did while He was on earth.

This is demonstrated to us in the Bible as well. In the Old Testament we are reminded that Satan could not even touch Job with

any form of trial without first obtaining the consent of God. We can turn to Mark 5 and read of the account of Jesus as He cast the demons out of him who was named Legion. Jesus had complete control over those demons, to the point that He could either cast them into the deep (out of the country, v. 10), or, as He did, into the swine. Repeatedly (see the parallel account of this event in Matthew 8), when Jesus came face to face with such demons, they feared Him greatly and taunted, "What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Even the "thorn in the flesh" of Paul was a "messenger of Satan to buffet him" (see II Cor. 12:7). That thorn was ultimately from God, for when Paul sought Him to take it away from him, God's answer was, "My grace is sufficient." That thorn from God was used by Satan as a means to tempt Paul, but in that he failed, for God is Lord over Satan.

This has tremendous implications for the gospel as it is brought to those who are gripped in the fear of demons. As they tremble in the presence of demonic power, which is real, they see it about them and have experienced dreadful consequences, the good news of the gospel to them is, fear not! There is a way for deliverance. There is not only a God who is more powerful than demons, but there is a God who even controls the actions of demons and turns them all for good. God's way of deliverance is to enable us to "resist the devil and he will flee from thee, draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to thee" (James 4:7, 8).

The gospel presents demons as very real and powerful, but there is victory over them. The victory comes in the way of putting on the Christian armor mentioned in Ephesians 6, which enables us to prevail in our spiritual warfare. He continues to send his fiery darts, but we are protected and are able to drive him away from us through

the use of the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

In this manner we can exalt in the great doxology of the inspired Paul when he brought the powerful eighth chapter of Romans to a close, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" No, in all these things we are more than conquerors. "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39). Angels are set against demons as contrasting forces in our lives. Not even demons can separate us from the God we love in Jesus Christ.

This brings us to the fourth point of consideration. I can only introduce it in this article and we will have to go into it a bit more in our concluding article. This has to do with demon possession and how one is delivered from it.

We want to say a few things about two aspects of this subject. We should say a few things about the character of demon possession, that is, what marks a person who is possessed and how do we know he is possessed? The second is, what must we as Christians or as a Christian church do if it pleases God to use us to deliver such a one from possession?

Books have been written on these questions, but we should at least address them briefly in our next article so that we can also exult in the Name of our Lord Jesus, who not only delivered people from demons in His day, but continues to do so in our day.

Then we have to say a few words about the remaining two propositions, that is, that the Christian can never become demon possessed, and that the best way to become secure against the wiles of Satan's assaults is to live a holy life with God. □

The Good Shepherd, His Shepherds, and His Sheep (1)

John 10:1-21

John 10 contains the doctrine of Jesus the good shepherd. It is Scripture's *main* passage containing this doctrine. As I Corinthians 15 is with regard to the resurrection; as Philippians 2 is with regard to the incarnation; as Hebrews 11 is with regard to faith, so John 10 is with regard to the truth of Jesus the good shepherd.

The Shepherd Chapter!

As it was in Jesus' day, the doctrine of Jesus the good shepherd is of no little *theological* importance. It is the truth that Jesus is the God-shepherd! It is the truth that Jesus is the saving shepherd!

As it was in Jesus' day, the doctrine of Jesus the good shepherd is

of no little *practical* importance. For the instruction includes instruction and warning about bad shepherds. Then there were *bad* shepherds in the religious community. They did not care for God's sheep. They desired not to feed, but to fleece them! An instance of this bad pastoral ministry in Jewry was in fact the occasion for Jesus' instruction in John 10. The Pharisees had just expelled one of God's sheep from the fold (John 9:24-34)! So today. Many are the undershepherds in Christendom who enter the fold not by the door, but climb up some other way. There are thieves and robbers, strangers and hirelings in the church!

Sheep — watch out!

As it did in Jesus' day, so the

shepherd doctrine today makes for holy sheep. The shepherd doctrine read and studied. The doctrine preached. The shepherd by this very gospel doctrine gathers the lost sheep. He sanctifies the gathered sheep. And they follow Him.

As it did in Jesus' day, so the shepherd doctrine today gives great comfort. The Lord, Jehovah, Jesus is my shepherd! I shall not want! The Lord my shepherd holds me within His tender care! Within His flock He folds me, no want shall find me there! Thankful sheep. One flock from Jew and Gentile. Under one shepherd.

Come, let us search the Scriptures here! About the good shepherd ... and His undershepherds ... and His sheep!

For Study, Meditation, & Discussion

The Good Shepherd

☛ The first verses of John 10 focus on Jesus as the *door* of sheepfold (cf. vv. 1, 2, 7, 9). And the teaching there is especially on how Jesus is the door *with regard to shepherds* false and true. Some shepherds refuse to enter in by the door. They are thieves and robbers, strangers, and hirelings. They

care not for the sheep. But others enter in by the door. They are authorized and lawfully called by Jesus to care for the sheep. These are good shepherds. In further studies we shall turn our attention more in detail to this "door revelation" in verses 1-10. But here in this first study we begin with the heart of the passage. This is where Jesus declares Himself to be the good shepherd (vv. 11, 14). Gleaning from all that John 10 says about good shepherds and bad shepherds, and about Jesus the good shepherd, make a list of the characteristics of Jesus our shepherd.

☛ Jesus' revelation of Himself as shepherd was nothing new. The Old Testament speaks of Him as shepherd. Explain how Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, and other Old Testament passages help us to understand how Jesus is our shepherd. What examples can be cited in the New Testament of Jesus the good shepherd in action (for example, John 9:35ff.)? How have you experienced the good shepherd's care?

☛ Jesus calls Himself the good shepherd. The late Rev. Robert Harbach, in his excellent booklet on this passage, says that this state-

Rev. Dick is pastor of Grace Protestant Reformed Church in Standale, Michigan.

ment of Jesus is equivalent to His saying He is the God-shepherd! How is Jesus asserting His divinity here (cf. Ps. 23:1; Matt. 19:16, 17)? How is Jesus, as God, and as perfectly righteous shepherd, the good shepherd in a way no other shepherd could be?

☛ The goodness and love of the shepherd Jesus is manifested in His laying down His life for the sheep (vv. 11, 15). Regarding this death of Jesus for the sheep, notice that little word “for.” Jesus laid down His life for the sheep. In both verse 11 and verse 15 the Greek is *hyper*. It means “in behalf of,” as in “for the benefit of.” Some people think that the death of Jesus is for the benefit of the sheep only in that His death was an *example* of what kind of sacrifices we ought to make for God. Is this true?

☛ Comparing Scripture with Scripture, and prepositions with prepositions, we are led to passages such as Matthew 20:28 and

Mark 10:45. There we read that Jesus gave His life a ransom *for* many. The Greek preposition used in both places is *anti*. That means: “in the place of,” or, “instead of.” This teaches that Jesus’ death was *as our substitute, in our place*. In other words Jesus’ death for us was a substitutionary atonement. How does this doctrine of the death of Jesus differ from the notion that His death was only an example for us?

☛ Jesus *gives* His life, and lays it *down*. Why is it so important that Jesus *willingly, voluntarily* went to the cross (cf. Heb. 10:7-9)? What does His giving His life have to say about all of the purposes of the wicked men who crucified Him (cf. Gen. 50:20; Prov. 19:2; Acts 2:23; 4:28, and John 10:18a!)?

☛ Jesus declares that the good shepherd gives His life for *the sheep*. How does this text, in light of the immediate context, show that this means Jesus does not lay down His life for all men, head for

head? In connection with this, be able to explain and prove with other Scripture the doctrine and importance of “limited” atonement.

☛ The Father is well pleased with His Son, and loves Him because the Son is obedient to the end in laying down His life according to the will of the Father (v. 17). Discuss what Jesus means when He says that He lays His life down “that (in order that) He might take it again” (hint: confer a text such as Romans 4:25).

☛ The Shepherd-Mediator has the power or authority or right to lay His life down and take it again, having been given commandment of His Father (v. 18). This means that the Lord Jesus is no suicide. This means that He is not self-serving. This means that He comes to do and has done Father’s will. As God’s shepherd! As the God-shepherd! As the good, the beautiful, the most excellent shepherd of the sheep! ☐

Contending for the Faith

Rev. Bernard Woudenberg

The Supra/Infra Controversy

For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

Isaiah 53:4

In recent articles we have considered various biblical texts deal-

ing with predestination from two different points of view, those appearing to fit the pattern of what is called *Infralapsarianism*, and others that of *Supralapsarianism*. The problem is that, even while both are found in Scripture, they are usually looked upon as mutually exclusive; one can believe only one, to the exclusion of the other.

In actuality the terms themselves have a suspicious origin, having been coined by the Remonstrants, the followers and defenders of James Arminius, the man

whose name stands in history as the ultimate opponent of what is Reformed. These terms were first used by them in their *Declaratio Sententiae*, as recorded in the *Acta* of the Synod, where they spoke, rather mockingly, of the “*Supralapsarii*” and the “*Sublapsarii*” (or “*Infralapsarii*”). Clearly, what they had in mind was the distinction with which Arminius had sought to divide and discredit the historical views of predestination, so as to make room for his own. In this latter end he

Rev. Woudenberg is a minister emeritus in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

failed; but the distinction he made lived on, and has divided Reformed theology ever since.

It all began amid the festivities of a wedding celebration. In 1597 Arminius' aunt married Johannes Cuchlinus, regent of the states college at Leiden. While visiting his aunt's home during the week that followed, as was the custom of that day, Arminius met and found opportunity to engage in an extended conversation with another guest, the hero of the Dutch revolution and respected professor of theology at Leiden, Francis Junius. Soon they were engaged in deep discussion concerning a book Junius had recently written entitled, *The First Sin of Adam*, in which he had delved into the problems which arise in relating the fall of man to the sovereignty of God. This was a subject with which Arminius had become increasingly involved during his early years in the ministry, making this exchange of particular interest to him, and especially so when it appeared that Junius might share some of his own misgivings concerning the views of John Calvin and Theodore Beza on these matters. It was not surprising, therefore, that before leaving the festivities he made arrangements to continue their discussion by correspondence.

Arminius opened his presentation of the matter like this, "On the whole there are three opinions about this article [predestination] which have their supporters amongst the Doctors of our Church. One is that which is called Calvin's and Beza's; the second, is that of Thomas [Aquinas] and his followers; the third, that of Augustine and those who imitate him." The second of these three groups, that identified with Aquinas, in time fell by the way, but the first and the third were those which the Remonstrants identified as supralapsarian and infralapsarian, by which they are known to this day.

In a sense the first of these was

the more important; for it was this that Arminius had been taught by Beza during his schooling in Geneva; and, as much as he had admired Beza as a theologian, a preacher, and a leader, this doctrine had never set well with him and his humanist convictions, so that in time his resentment of it grew and became the central focus of his life. His goal was to undermine and destroy it more than anything else; and he began his formal effort to do so in this correspondence, which soon became a debate, with Junius.

It was in this second proposition that he went on to describe these positions. The first, that of Calvin and Beza, he described very briefly in this way, "God when electing and predestinating, also when passing by and reprobating ... (considered) men not yet created, but to be created." The reference here was to the order of the decrees in the counsel of God, according to which he saw them as teaching that the first act of the divine counsel was to elect some and reprobate others with the intent that He might demonstrate His mercy on the elect, and His justice in the rest. To Arminius this made God utterly tyrannical and harsh, as well as the author of sin.

Nor was Arminius alone in this resentment. From the very first days of the Reformation, when the famous Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus turned to attack Martin Luther, there had been those who had stood in opposition to this doctrine, making Arminius and his followers to feel quite justified in taking up this cause as the central focus of their lives.

In its own way, however, the other view, that now known as Infralapsarianism, was also important. Arminius thus went on to describe it as that which "presents them (men, looked at generally) as fallen in Adam, and lying in the mass of corruption and perdition, to Him (God) both when electing and predestinating, and when pass-

ing by and reprobating." Although he claimed to be able to identify this view already with Augustine, as though to provide it with a historical justification, it was essentially a new viewpoint which was just beginning to burst forth upon the scene. For a time, it had seemed, he actually considered taking it as his own, but eventually concluded it could not escape the conclusion that God ordained the fall either, and so he rejected it as well. Behind this view, however, there was a significant new mentality which was beginning to take hold in European theology, leaving its impression on Arminius and many others.

In the Netherlands, not insignificant was the influence of Dirck Volchertsz Coornhert. A leading figure in the Dutch revolution, he served as Secretary of the States General under William of Orange. Being a dedicated admirer of Erasmus, he became at the same time a leading defender of the old Dutch humanism. As such he developed a strong revulsion for the Calvinistic preachers who, having come from Geneva, were beginning to dominate the pulpits and religious life of their land. The result was that Coornhert took to going about to debate these Calvinists whenever and wherever he could.

But the problem went deeper than that. Far more influential all through Europe was the Spanish philosopher monk Luis de Molina. Being a Romanist, he was forced to honor the theology of Thomas Aquinas with its acceptance of divine sovereignty, but at the same time, as a Jesuit, he was committed to defending the papacy against the growing influences of Calvinism. And so it was that he set forth to steer between these by proposing his original and highly influential concept of the *media scientia*, or "middle-knowledge." In this he proposed that between God's knowledge of the cause and effect relations which He had implanted in the universe, and that

of divine freedom whereby He remains free at any time to do what He wills, there is an area of middle-knowledge which God provides for man in which man is granted freedom to do whatever he chooses without outside necessity or predetermination of any kind. This undoubtedly had strong influences on Arminius in the development of his views, but it also seemed to open a window of opportunity for those within the Reformed churches who were uncomfortable with what they considered to be the overly harsh views of Calvin and Beza.

Among those, for example, were two Dutch pastors in the village of Delft, Arrent Corneliszoon and Reynier Donteklok. They had at one point taken on Dirck Coornhert in a public debate, and had been badly bested, with the result that they sought to find a Reformed alternative to the view of Calvin and Beza which would be more generally acceptable. Thus they, along with others, turned to what appeared to be a mild adaptation of middle-knowledge to the Reformed faith. Election, as it is experienced by sinful man, was seen to be projected backward into the counsel of God as a substitute for the view of Calvin. It saw as God's first decree His determination to create a world, after which He decided for some unexplained reason that it should fall into sin. It was only then that predestination entered in as an expression of mercy on some, while others are left in their sin. Somehow, it seemed, this left man more responsible for his sin; and it was this view that Arminius presented as his third alternative, along with his claim that it had historical origins in the views of St. Augustine.

Against this division, however, Junius reacted emphatically. To him it was complete nonsense. Such a division, he insisted, had never existed among those who taught election. Rather, in spite of individual differences in presenta-

tion, there had always been complete agreement as to the first decree in the counsel of God, which he explained in these words:

Eternal life is not here primarily and of itself the work of that Divine predestination, but rather secondarily and by consequence the result of adoption, ... shown by the Apostle, Eph. i.5: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." ... Predestination, if you regard its proper *differentia* (distinguishing mark), Scripture being witness, is "to the adoption of children," to filiation (so to speak) our filial adoption, of which the effect and consequent is eternal life. Thus it is true that we are predestinated to life, but the proper expression is that we are predestinated to "the adoption of children" by the special grace of our heavenly Father.

As far as Junius was concerned, predestination had its *differentia*, or distinguishing mark, in that it was unto the adoption of children. This was the first decree of the counsel and the first intent of God; and all other things were decreed by God, including also the fall, to serve as means to bring this about. The great doctors of theology had always agreed on this; so that, even when they spoke of election among fallen men, this was understood to be behind it all. Both ways of speaking have their place; but, when correctly understood, they are one in the end.

Although the thoughts of Junius in this regard have not been generally remembered, there are those who have seen it that way — as the great Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck, when he wrote, "Whether predestination is made a part of the doctrine of God (the *a priori* order) or is treated as the beginning or in the middle of the doctrine of salvation (the *a posteriori* order) does not necessarily imply an essential difference in principle." And this, it would seem,

was taken up and enlarged upon by Klaas Dijk in his work on the supra/infra controversy when he wrote,

With all of the effort to reconcile these two positions, no one can escape the fact that there is no contradiction between infra- and supralapsarianism. Everyone assumes one or the other of the two considerations without rejecting the other, or without recognizing the worth of the other, which is to say, there is no supralapsarian that does not recognize the usefulness of infralapsarian terms; and there is no infralapsarian who does not finally return to the supralapsarian presentation.

It was, however, Theodore Beza who saw it most clearly, already well before the controversy was begun or its terms born, when he wrote,

In his epistles the Apostle Paul sets down two ways of doing this: the synthetic and the analytic. Here we call "synthetic" the method that is *a priori*, or that descends from the causes to effects, which the Apostle Paul uses in the epistle to the Ephesians. Having explained to us there the ground of the spiritual blessings that we receive from God through Christ, he treats election and its causes before he comes down to its fruits or effects. These effects are the external callings by the Gospel, internal drawing by the Spirit of adoption, and justification, sanctification, and other similar evidences that confirm our election in us. Furthermore, we call "analytic" the method that is *a posteriori*, or that ascends from effects to causes, which the same apostle uses in the epistle to the Romans. He discourses at length and extensively on justification by faith, on hope, and its fruits, and then ascends finally to predestination itself, which comprehends in itself the supreme principles of our hope and our justification by faith. From all these things it is apparent that the chief end of the former method (the "synthetic") is knowledge; but the chief end of the lat-

ter (the “analytic”) is confirmation of faith, hope, patience, and the rest of the Christian virtues.

His terminology of course was different; “supralapsarian” and “infralapsarian” were still decades away. But, clearly, what he saw were those very same concepts, and within their proper biblical

contexts, designating the one as *a priori* (before) or “analytic,” and the other as *a posteriori* (following) or “synthetic.” And both he saw to be not only valid, but having their own particular value and application. The former, our supralapsarianism, has its value in teaching and explaining the ways of God

to His people; while the latter, our infralapsarianism, serves best pastorally for their comfort and encouragement. And so each has its place and its value in bringing to us what “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (I Cor. 2:9). □

Day of Shadows

Homer C. Hoeksema

The Fall of Our First Parents

Appendix

Adam and the Race (1)

In our consideration of Paradise the First and of the two special trees in the garden, as well as of the temptation and fall, we have referred almost exclusively to Adam, or to Adam and Eve. Only occasionally have we made any direct reference to the significance of Adam and of what Adam did and of what would become of Adam with reference to the human race. Yet we must clearly understand that Adam was not created as a mere individual and that he did not stand in the state of rectitude in Paradise, nor fall from that state of rectitude, all alone and individually. On the contrary, there was a very close relationship between Adam and all his descendants, the whole human race. What took place in Paradise was of significance not only for Adam

and Eve, but also for the entire race. What Adam would do in response to God’s command would be of significance not only for Adam, but also for all of us. What would become of Adam, that is, whether he stood in his original righteousness and continued to live in God’s covenant fellowship, or whether he would fall from that righteousness, become guilty, and become subject to death — this, too, would be of significance not only for the individual Adam, but also for all of his descendants.

Although this involves us in the discussion of a subject which to an extent belongs in the realm of dogmatics, particularly anthropology, it should nevertheless be kept in mind that this is of the utmost importance with respect to sacred history. We certainly are not interested merely in the history of Adam as an individual, but we are interested in Adam’s history because it is essentially the history of mankind, the history of God’s covenant, and the history of each one of us. A consideration of this

relationship between Adam and the race, therefore, belongs to our study of the original state of rectitude in Paradise the First, as that original state was the stage upon which the tremendous drama of sin and redemption had its beginning. Otherwise we cannot properly understand the entire history of the temptation and fall as the latter are significant for the entire race and with respect to the hopelessly lost estate of the entire race.

True, the record in Genesis does not directly speak of all this. This is due, undoubtedly, to the fact that the viewpoint of Genesis is strictly historical. Indeed, Genesis already makes plain that Adam and Eve were to be the parents of an entire race. For already in Genesis 1:28 we learn that God had blessed Adam and Eve and said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.” Moreover, in Genesis 2 we have the detailed record of the fact that God provided Adam with a wife, a help meet, thus also making provision for the protection

The late Homer Hoeksema was professor of Dogmatics and Old Testament in the Protestant Reformed Seminary.

of the human race. But other than these two items, there is no mention of the race and its relation to Adam. Genesis presents from a historical viewpoint the origin of sin and death in the race of mankind. But Scripture elsewhere abundantly reminds us of this relationship and traces the universal facts of sin and death to our very definite relation to Adam. In the first place, we all receive our corrupt and depraved nature from Adam as our first father. The corruption of the human race is a matter of propagation: the corrupt stock produces a corrupt offspring, and we are all conceived and born in sin. In the second place, this is due to the fact that we are all guilty in Adam as our representative head.

To these two aspects we call your attention especially in the light of Romans 5:12-14. To do this in this way has the advantage that we do not discuss our relation to Adam merely in the abstract, but concretely from the viewpoint of our relation to Adam's sin and fall. In the passage mentioned we read: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

Universal Death Through One Man

The apostle in these verses draws a parallel between Adam and Christ. They are alike in that both are representative heads of many, although Christ is by far the greater and although grace is much more abundant than sin. This parallel extends from verse 12 to the end of the chapter. The purpose

of the apostle is further to illustrate and firmly to establish the truth of reconciliation through *one*, namely, Christ, and of justification without works and preceding all actual works of righteousness on our part.

Notice that the sentence in the above verses is not finished. The apostle does not finish the sentence in the form in which it is begun. He begins the sentence with the words, "Wherefore as...." You would expect that this would be concluded by the words, "so also...." Instead, the apostle finishes it with the words: "... who is the figure (or: 'type') of him that was to come." Hence, the thought is: even as through one man sin and death entered into the world, so he (that is: that one man) is the figure, the type, of him that was to come, namely, Christ. The question is: how and in what sense? What is the point of comparison here? The answer is: all have sinned through one, and all are righteous through one. In the one case, all who were in Adam sinned through the sin of the one man. In the other case, all who were in Christ are righteous through the righteousness of the one Christ.

In the passage quoted, the emphasis is upon the fact that *all have sinned in the sin of the one man Adam*. To this truth especially we want to call attention in connection with our studies of Paradise and of the Fall, in order that we may see clearly the significance of this history for the whole race, for all of subsequent history, and for God's people.

Notice, first of all, that the apostle in these verses draws our attention to an astounding fact, namely, *that death reigns over all men*. He points to this universal and indisputable fact in proof of the statement that all have sinned: "... and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Death has always reigned over all men. Even before there was any

law of Moses, death reigned. Even over those who did not sin in the same sense in which Adam sinned, death reigned. Death, universal death, is simply an undeniable, a patent fact of man's existence and history. Death reigns! How do you explain it?

However, when the Word of God here speaks of "death," this means death in its full and dreadful significance. There are those who would explain the text as referring only to physical death, the death of the body. But this is in conflict with the context in verse 17: "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." In this verse death in Adam is directly contrasted to *life* in Christ. But life in Christ is much more than the mere life of the body: it is life in its full implications in fellowship with God.

Hence, death also is to be understood in all its significance. It means all the evils which are the result of God's withholding His favor and fellowship from man and cursing him in His wrath. It implies death in its *physical aspect* and all the suffering that is connected with it: the sickness, the misery, the pain, the sorrow which are the lot of all men, without distinction, which wait for men at the cradle, which follow men and haunt them mercilessly, and which finally drag them down into the corruption of Hades. It implies death in its *spiritual aspect* and all the spiritual corruption, the darkness of mind, the perversity of will, the obduracy of heart which this spiritual death includes. It implies *eternal death*, the being cast into the outer darkness of the desolation of hell, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth — the inevitable end.

Still more, the apostle speaks of the *reign* of death. He does not merely say that death was and is universal, but that it *reigns*. This implies that death is a power.

Death, even considered from the mere physical point of view, is the powerful arch-enemy of all life and light and joy and hope. Death is a mighty tyrant, an unconquerable foe — merciless and implacable. It held and it holds undisputed sway. To that mighty tyrant man is subject, and from death's will man cannot deliver himself. There is no way out as far as man is concerned. No one has ever successfully resisted death's onslaught. No one has ever found the solution to the problem of death. There is no escape from its pursuit. Death reigned and reigns: over man's body and over man's soul, corrupting all.

This is a universal and patent fact. Never was there any man who escaped this death. Never was there any man who was born without this death in his body and in his soul. Never was there any man who did not end his existence in the grave.

Even, the apostle says, where there was no law, death reigned. This serves to emphasize the amazing fact of death. You may perhaps say: "God declared his law; and no man kept that law. All actually sinned, and therefore all are punished for this sin with the punishment of death." But the apostle points out that this is not according to reality. He admits here that where there is no law at all, there is no transgression; where there is no transgression, there is no imputation of actual guilt; where there is no imputation of guilt, there can be no punishment, no death. But he points us to the fact that even then death reigned. Even before the law of Moses was ever given, from Adam to Moses, death reigned.

You may, perhaps, object that nevertheless all men have the work of the law written in their hearts, even though they are not given any code of the law such as was handed down through Moses. You may attempt to explain that men died and were subject to death because they

transgressed in that sense. For the apostle himself said in Romans 2: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." Hence, they know better. All men know — thus you may object — either with the law or without the law, that it is sin to steal, that it is wrong to murder, that it is not right to commit adultery.

But how superficial is this argument! Did death begin to reign over men when they had sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression? That is, did death begin to reign over them when they had actually sinned, actually and consciously transgressed the law? The contrary is true. The apostle says that death reigns also over those that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression. Death reigned over men the moment they were born. Death reigned and reigns also over the little baby that has not sinned consciously and actually, that does not yet know the difference between his right hand and his left. The reign of death is absolutely universal. Death has passed upon all men!

This is the awesome fact that the apostle explains in the rest of this passage. The explanation is that all have sinned, and that all have sinned in the one man Adam, that is, by reason of their relation to him. We shall explain this in the next section.

At the moment let us give our attention to the damning evaluation of man that is implied in this Word of God. What does this truth mean?

Evolutionism and all humanistic philosophies — and, let me add, all humanistic, man-centered adulterations of the gospel of sovereign grace — would have us believe that there is hope for man, that man is

on the way upward. They would have us believe, to one degree or another, that man is able to lift himself up by his own power, his own effort, his own will. They would have us believe that man in his present state has ascended from

the state of a mere brute, in a long and painful process of development, to his present level of morality and civilization. They would have us admit that man is better than we would have reason to expect, that he has made and can make amazing progress in the direction of perfection — or at least, that with a little divine help or a gracious offer of help, he can make such progress. They would have us have faith in man. The outlook for man is hopeful. In this philosophy there is no room for sal-

vation, unless salvation means some divine help for a man who is essentially good and struggling upward and willing and able to will to accept any help that is proffered him in that upward struggle.

There is no room in this view for regeneration, real rebirth, only for reformation and building of character. There is no room for Christ, unless He be the modern Christ, the Man of Galilee, the great Teacher who shows us the way, or the worthy example whom man may well follow and imitate, or the compassionate social Reformer whom we ought to assist in building a better world, or even the potential Savior whose power to save is strictly dependent upon man's willingness to accept Him. In this view of man and his worth, there is no need of atonement: the cross of Christ is foolishness indeed! There is no real need of redemption, for sin is not guilt before God, and man is not under condemnation. Man need not be reborn, he must be educated and reformed, or, at best, he is in need of a re-

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birth that is dependent on his willingness to believe and to acknowledge his need of it, which is, after all, no rebirth at all.

But Scripture never gives us this optimistic view of man.

On the contrary, it teaches us that man, every man, is dead. Death reigns! Man is debased. His original state was one of perfection. But he is fallen. He is degraded. He is good no more. He plunged himself from the height of moral and spiritual integrity and life into the depth of depravity and death. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all

men, for that all have sinned." It is not dawn. It is not even twilight. It is night, black night, for man. We are in the darkness of the night of sin and death. There is no hope for man in man. It will not do to flatter him with the hope of reaching perfection in his own strength. That hope is false and vain. It is cruel to tease his vanity with the gospel of salvation that is dependent in last instance upon his will. For death reigns! And man is under death. The situation, as far as man is concerned, is utterly hopeless. He is locked in the prison of sin and death, and he can

never break open the door. Death reigns!

The problem of man's sin and death is not first of all one of being *delivered* from the *power* of death; it is before all else the question of being *redeemed* from *guilt*. Before man can be delivered and escape from death's power he must have the *right* to be free from death's reign. Before he has the right to be delivered, he must atone for his sin. This he can never do, for he is under death — death in all its dreadful power. Dying he dies. He is dead in trespasses and sins, and his inevitable end is everlasting death in hell. □

Book Reviews

Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill, by Curt D. Daniel. Privately published, 1983. Pp. xii-912. \$60.00 (hard cover). [Reviewed by the editor.]

This massive work, huge in size and bristling with footnotes, is the author's doctoral dissertation at the University of Edinburgh. It examines the theological error of hyper-Calvinism, particularly in the teaching of the 18th century Calvinistic Baptist, John Gill. Although Daniel concentrates on Gill, he includes in his study other English theologians associated with Gill, e.g., Brine and Hussey, as well as some contemporary theologians whom Daniel regards as hyper-Calvinists, notably Arthur Pink and Herman Hoeksema.

In his scholarly attempt to determine exactly what the error of hyper-Calvinism consists of, Daniel considers the views of Gill and the others on the sovereignty of God; predestination; the covenant; justification; faith; "the free offer question"; the atonement; law; and grace. A brief history of hyper-Calvinism serves as an introduction.

It is Daniel's contention that there has been, and still is, a hyper-

Calvinistic heresy that has bedeviled genuine Calvinism, that is, the gospel of grace. The heart of this error is its rejection of the "offer" of the gospel to all who hear the preaching. With this denial goes a minimizing of the responsibility of man.

Hyper-Calvinism is that school of Supralapsarian "Five Point" Calvinism which so stresses the sovereignty of God by over-emphasizing the secret over the revealed will and eternity over time, that it minimizes the responsibility of Man, notably with respect to the denial of the word "offer" in relation to the preaching of the Gospel of a finished and limited atonement, thus undermining the universal duty of sinners to believe savingly with the assurance that the Lord Jesus Christ died for them, with the result that presumption is overly warned of, introspection is overly encouraged, and a view of sanctification akin to doctrinal Antinomianism is often approached. This (definition) could be summarized even further: it is the rejection of the word "offer" in connection with evangelism for supposedly Calvinistic reasons (p. 767).

Daniel shows that there was in Gill and in the tradition of English Calvinism that he represents a definite hesitation, if not an express refusal, to call the unconverted sinner to believe on Jesus Christ with true (saving) faith. Daniel says that he was not able to find in Gill "the invitation 'Come to Christ' to the unconverted." Gill restricted this call to "sensible sinners" (pp. 455, 456). Daniel quotes Gill as teaching that the unconverted are obliged merely to believe certain facts about Jesus Christ, e.g., that He is the Son of God. They are not obliged to believe in Him as Savior. Nor are unbelievers who hear the gospel but remain unbelieving condemned for not believing with true (saving) faith.

In his *The Cause of God and Truth*, Gill wrote: "I do not find that any such are exhorted to believe in Christ for salvation; but as sensible of it" (that is, of their state and condition as sinners, by regeneration — DJE; cited on p. 477; see also pp. 461, 462). Daniel concludes that hyper-Calvinism denies that unbelievers "have the responsibility to believe savingly in Christ, for that belongs to those

who have been regenerated" (p. 648).

The reason why hyper-Calvinism denies that the unbeliever is called to believe is its fear that this would compromise Calvinism. To call a reprobate unbeliever for whom Christ did not die to believe in Jesus Christ would compromise the doctrines of election and limited atonement. To call *any* unbeliever to believe would suggest that an unbeliever has the *ability* to believe, thus overthrowing the doctrine of total depravity. Hyper-Calvinism does not understand that God's call, or command, to the reprobate sinner sincerely to repent and truly to believe expresses neither God's purpose nor the sinner's ability, but only the sinner's duty in light of the revelation made in the gospel.

This answer to hyper-Calvinism's basic error, however, is not Daniel's. Daniel responds to hyper-Calvinism along entirely different lines.

Valuable as Daniel's study of this important aspect of the development and struggle of Calvinism is, it suffers from two grave faults. These faults both skew the analysis of the controversy and render false the proposed resolution for a pure Calvinism.

The first is that Daniel does not distinguish "offer" as the promiscuous preaching of Christ as Savior with its command to all hearers to repent and believe on Jesus for salvation from "offer" as the declaration to all hearers that God loves them, Christ died for them, and God is now giving them the chance to be saved by believing. This distinction is both biblical and confessionally Reformed. "Offer" as promiscuous preaching with a summons to all to believe in Christ is the external call of the gospel as taught in Matthew 22:1-14 and in the Canons, II/5. "Offer" as a declaration of universal love and atonement dependent on the sinner's will is the Arminian heresy that the Reformed and Presby-

terian churches condemned at Dordt and Westminster on the basis of the apostle's doctrine in Romans 9:16.

By failing to make this fundamental distinction, Daniel labels all who deny the "offer" as hyper-Calvinists, regardless what specific doctrine of the offer they have in mind. The result is that those whose rejection of the "offer" consists of a denial of universal love dependent on the will of the sinner are tarred with Daniel's broad brush of hyper-Calvinism, even though they preach to all and call all to believe in Jesus Christ.

The second fault is gross. Daniel argues that genuine Calvinism is the doctrine of a saving love of God and a death of Jesus Christ for all without exception. On this basis, the proper "offer" is, in fact, the "bold declaration" to all who hear the gospel, "God loves you, Christ died for you, and now God pleads with you to believe so that you may be saved" (p. 459). Accompanying this offer is "a sufficient common grace" that enables all to accept the offer, if only they will (pp. 161, 162).

It is Daniel's basic thesis that hyper-Calvinism began to develop when, after Calvin, the Reformed faith adopted limited atonement. This jeopardized the offer. What is necessary for the warding off of hyper-Calvinism is the embrace of universal atonement. This involves repudiating the decree of reprobation.

This is the remedy for hyper-Calvinism! This exotic mixture of Arminianism and Amyraldianism, Daniel calls, with a kind of fetching modesty, "Low Calvinism." It is, indeed, low — very low. It is abased and debased "Calvinism." The glory of salvation in this gospel belongs to the sinner. Using his "sufficient common grace" rightly, he not only saves himself by accepting the offer but also makes the death of Christ atoning and the love of God successful.

There is an important warning

here. Those professing Calvinists who insist on an "offer" expressing God's love for all and desire to save all cannot escape universal atonement. When universal atonement is adopted, the eternal, double decree of predestination is rejected.

Running through the work are Daniel's interaction with and criticism of the Protestant Reformed Churches (PRC). He lumps them with the English Baptist hyper-Calvinists, regardless of the protest of the PRC. The Protestant Reformed reader who lacks time and inclination to read the entire work might want to read Chapter VIII, "The Free Offer Question" (pp. 364-495).

As for Daniel's challenge to the PRC to show where their denial of the "well-meant offer" differs from the English hyper-Calvinists' rejection of the external call of the gospel, the differences are important and clear. First, the PRC preach the gospel of Jesus Christ as Savior to all indiscriminately, regardless whether they are converted believers or unconverted unbelievers. They do not, as Hussey advocated, preach Christ as priestly Savior to believers, but Christ as threatening King to unbelievers.

Second, the PRC call, or command, or summon, every sinner to believe in Christ for salvation with true (saving) faith, warning all that those who do not believe will be held guilty by God for this worst of all sins. The PRC do not hesitate, or refuse, to give the imperative to all and sundry, "Come to Christ."

Third, the PRC do not let people think that they can long for salvation and desire to believe, perhaps their life long, and still perish (see p. 359).

In these important matters, the PRC suppose that they are only confessing the historic, creedal Reformed faith.

Hyper-Calvinism and John Gill must be ordered from the author. The address is: 2456 Devonshire Rd., Springfield, IL 62703. □

Report of Classis West

March 5, 1997
at Doon, Iowa

The March meeting of Classis West was held in Doon, Iowa on Wednesday, March 5. The customary Officebearers' Conference was held the day before. The theme of the Conference was "Faithful Preaching vs. the Free Offer." Pastor Carl Haak gave the keynote address, the theme of which was "Preaching the Mercy and Goodness of God to Sinners." Also giving presentations at the conference were Missionary Thomas Miersma, "Preaching and Mission Work Without a Debilitating Offer"; and Pastor Jai Mahtani, "Preaching the Gospel Promiscuously." Rev. Allen Brummel also gave a review of the book by Iain Murray, *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism*. Tuesday evening, in a full church sanctuary in Doon, Pastor Mahtani gave a slide presentation of the work being done by Trinity's congregation in Houston, Texas. The theme of his presentation was "Reaching the Nations with the Gospel of Grace." The discussion and fellowship at the Conference was appreciated by all.

Pastor Steven Key chaired the meeting of Classis on Wednesday. The agenda of Classis was brief.

Peace and unity are evident in the churches of Classis West.

Among the business conducted, Classis gave advice in two discipline cases, in each case giving approval to the actions of the consistory. Bethel Protestant Reformed Church was granted their request to seek from the churches in Classis West offerings for their building fund. Their request will also be forwarded to Synod, seeking approval for offerings also to be taken in the churches of Classis East.

Classis granted classical appointments to South Holland PRC as follows: Rev. S. Key (April 6 and 20); Rev. W. Bekkering (May 18 and 25); Rev. C. Haak (June 15 and 22); Rev. S. Houck (July 13 and 20); Rev. R. Smit (August 10 and 17); and Rev. J. Mahtani (August 31 and September 7).

Classis approved the following subsidy requests and forwarded them to Synod: Bethel PRC—\$20,300; Edgerton PRC—\$9,000; Edmonton PRC—\$32,444; Lacombe PRC—\$25,934; Pella PRC—\$25,000; Trinity PRC—\$30,500.

Voting for delegates to Synod 1997 resulted in the following elections: **Ministers:** *Primi:* W.

Bekkering, A. den Hartog, C. Haak, S. Key, R. Moore; *Secundi:* M. De Vries, S. Houck, M. Joostens, R. Miersma, G. Van Baren. **Elders:** *Primi:* Lamm Lubbers (South Holland), H.P. Meulenberg (Houston), Bill Smit (Lynden), Fred Tolsma (Edmonton), Charles Van Meeteren (Redlands); *Secundi:* Jim den Hartog (Lynden), John Hilton (Edgerton), Robert Kelley (Lynden), Menno Poortenga (Peace), Everett Van Voorthuysen (Redlands).

Among other elections: Rev. S. Houck was re-elected to a three-year term as a Synodical Deputy from Classis West. Revs. R. Moore and G. Van Baren were elected as church visitors, with Revs. A. den Hartog and S. Houck as alternates. Classis also expressed its gratitude to emeritus pastor, Rev. George Lanting, for his many years of faithful service as a church visitor in Classis West. Rev. Lanting, for reasons of age, requested to be relieved of those duties.

The next meeting of Classis will be in Peace PRC, Lansing, Illinois on September 3, 1997, the Lord willing.

Rev. Steven Key,
Stated Clerk

News From Our Churches

Mr. Benjamin Wigger

Congregational Activities

We begin this issue of the "News" by making a correction to the March 1st issue of the *Standard Bearer*. In that "News" I reported that the consistory of the Grace PRC in Standale, MI decided to give both the pamphlet "The Covenant of God" and the book "Reformed Education" to parents coming the first time to have their

children baptized. The credit for this decision should have gone to our Immanuel PRC in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada instead. I apologize for that mix-up, but I am also happy to let you know that since that March 1st issue came out, the consistory of our Grace PRC has decided to follow the lead of our Immanuel consistory and do the same. Now first-time parents in

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

Grace will also receive these two publications. So perhaps I wasn't wrong after all, just a little ahead of myself.

The congregation of our Covenant PRC in Wyckoff, NJ was pleased to have a good turnout at a lecture they sponsored given by Rev. A. Spriensma on March 7 while he was in their midst on classical appointment. In addition to members of the congregation, 30 visitors showed up to hear Rev. Spriensma speak on "God's Covenant of Grace: Agreement or Relationship?" This was the largest number to appear at one of their lectures in more than five years. Included in Rev. Spriensma's remarks was how he had decided to leave the CRC for the PRC. Handouts outlined the PR view of the covenant. Those who attended asked thought-provoking questions and stayed quite late afterwards to talk, a few until almost midnight!

All of the adults in the congregation had gathered on two weekday evenings to help hand address, stamp, and sort flyers to send to parents listed in the directories of several large area Christian schools and to the regular church mailing list. In addition, a bulk mailing went out to every residential address in two neighboring communities. *Standard Bearer* readers may obtain a cassette tape of the lecture and a copy of the handout by writing to Covenant, c/o its Evangelism Committee, 283 Squawbrook Rd., Wyckoff, NJ 07481. A check or money order for \$3.00 to cover the duplicating and mailing costs should be made out to "CPRC Evangelism Fund."

The group "Make a Joyful Noise," originating from the Bethel PRC in Itasca, IL, will be releasing a new cassette/CD this spring entitled, "Volume II Family Favorites." This recording consists of 32 tunes, many from the *Psalter* with a few well-known tunes, such as "Great is Thy Faithfulness," added. "Make a Joyful Noise" includes musicians from the Bethel, South

Holland, and Peace congregations. This recording contains a wide variety of instrument sounds and is of a high recording quality. It includes five new arrangements commissioned for this recording. As in Volume I, the proceeds will benefit the Bethel PRC building fund. Bethel currently worships in a Holiday Inn, battling numerous distractions. Watch for announcements in your bulletins and newsletters regarding order forms.

The Council of the Georgetown PRC in Hudsonville, MI decided that this year's catechism collections will be for the library of the two seminary students who are members of their congregation.

The combined Men's Societies of the Doon, IA, Hull, IA, and Edgerton, MN PRCs met recently at Edgerton to enjoy a Bible study taken from Revelation 2 to consider an after-recess program entitled, "The Pros and Cons of the Computer upon the Life of God's Church."

On Sunday evening, March 23, the choir of the Lynden, WA PRC presented their spring concert. Lynden was invited to join with the choir as they commemorated the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Minister Activities

Rev. R. Cammenga declined the call he had been considering from the Hope PRC in Walker, MI. Rev. S. Key declined the call he had been extended from the South Holland, IL PRC. And Rev. T. Miersma, our home missionary in Colorado, has been extended a call by the Hull, IA PRC to serve as our denomination's missionary to Ghana.

On March 14 and 15, ministers and professors (and their wives) in Michigan and Illinois went on a retreat at Camp Miniwanca, in New Era, MI, the site of the 1997 PRYP Convention. Ministers enjoyed a time of fun and fellowship, as well

as hearing speeches on "The Ministers' Prayer Life" and "Encouragement for Overseers."

School Activities

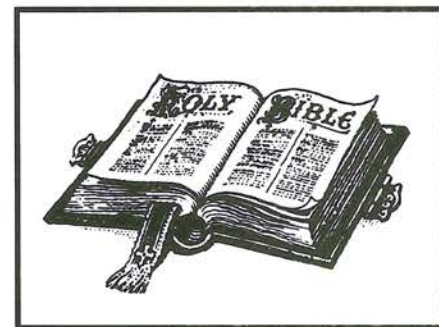
The congregation of the First PRC in Grand Rapids, MI approved a request by the Building Committee of East Side Christian School regarding the use of the church property. This approval calls for tree removal, clearing, grading, and seeding the land southeast of the church building which will allow the committee to proceed with plans for a playground area and the enhancement of a park-like environment. East Side has also received approval from the Fire Marshal to use First's lower level as a school facility. The Lord willing, East Side Christian School will open this fall at First with an anticipated enrollment of around 30 students.

A recent visit to a Lynden rest home by some of the students of the Covenant Christian School in Lynden, WA to present a program there was so well received that it will continue to be done on a monthly basis. Different classes will take turns in order for all students to have an opportunity to share their love for their Lord.

Food for Thought

"A faith that never wept is a faith that never lived."

— Spurgeon □



ANNOUNCEMENTS

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council and Congregation of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, Grandville, MI mourn the loss of its oldest member,

MR. ALBERT BLEYENBERG, whom the Lord called unto himself at the age of 92 years. We are thankful to God for the many years of his faithful witness to the truth that God alone is God. We extend our sympathy to his family with the prayer that they may find comfort in God's Word: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Rev. R. Cammenga, Pres.
Ken Schipper, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Council and Congregation of Southwest Protestant Reformed Church, Grandville, MI herewith express our sympathy to Mrs. Pearl Griffioen and family in the loss of her husband,

MR. ARIE GRIFFIOEN, who passed away on March 9, 1997. May their comfort be in the word of the changeless Jehovah, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Revelation 14:13b).

Rev. R. Cammenga, Pres.
Ken Schipper, Clerk

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Martha Society of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church expresses its Christian sympathy to two of its members, Mrs. Dena Blankespoor and Mrs. Sally Kooiker, in the death of their son and brother,

JOHN BLANKESPOOR.

May they and their families find comfort from God's Word, "But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies" (Lamentations 3:32).

Rev. R.G. Moore, Pres.
Jannet Moore, Sec.

NOTICE!!

Edgerton PRC announces that there are tapes available of the recent marriage seminar speeches featuring Revs. Brummel, Haak, and Key. Although the quality of the tapes is not as good as it could be, the content of the speeches more than makes up for it.

To order the 2-tape set, send \$6.00 to:

Edgerton Protestant
Reformed Church
P.O. Box 403
Edgerton, MN 56128.

RESOLUTION OF SYMPATHY

The Ladies' Society of the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church express their sincere sympathy to Freda Zwak and family in the death of her father,

MR. TED MIEDEMA, SR., at the age of 93. May they find comfort in the word of God found in Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Rev. R. Flikkema, Pres.
Barb Dykstra, Vice-all

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

With thanksgiving to God, we announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

**MR. and MRS. GARRET
FLIKKEMA,**

which took place on March 17, 1997. We are deeply grateful to our covenant God for them and for the many years of love and instruction that they have given to us, as well as for the years that they have been given in their marriage. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them in time to come, and that we may be blessed through them.

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

- * Rev. Richard and
Marcia Flikkema
- Tammy, Tricia, Heidi
- * George and Denise DeJong
Matthew
- * Bill and Pat DeJong
Brenda, Paul, Beth, Joanna
- * Jim Flikkema

Lansing, Illinois

NOTICE!!!

Classis East will meet in regular session on Wednesday, May 14, 1997 at the Hope Protestant Reformed Church (Walker, MI).

Jon J. Huisken,
Stated Clerk