

# THE STANDARD *Bearer* A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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## MEDITATION

### SILENCE IN GREAT AFFLICTION

*"I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it." Psalm 39:9*

There will be a day when the whole world shall be dumb before the Face of the great Judge. Paul speaks of this in Romans 3:19. All their lives they had spoken volubly against the Lord and against His anointed Son. But at the end of days and history there will be one great silence. They see Him whom they pierced. They see the open books: and are silent.

And here is also the great difference between him who fears God and him who does not fear Him.

My text reveals the wondrous wisdom of the child of God. He is in great affliction but is dumb. He does not charge God foolishly. He lies prostrate but does not open his mouth. And the reason is this: he knows that God was the doer of all his woe.

No one knows the occasion of the great sorrow of David at this juncture of his life. But we do know that his affliction was great. His sorrow was stirred; his heart was hot within him; the fire burned in the inner man; God's stroke was upon him; he speaks of the blow of God's hand.

God rebuked David, and as a consequence his beauty was consumed like a moth. He even speaks of "going hence and being no more."

So it is very evident that a very great affliction was David's portion.

But David knows God, and that makes all the difference. He knows that all he suffered by the blow of God's hand is good, adorably good!

And there you have the victory of faith!

\* \* \* \*

We have a song in the Netherlands which is often sung in the assembly of the saints. It is this:

*In de grootste smarten  
Blijven onze harten  
In den Heer gerust.*

Freely translated: In the greatest sorrows

Our hearts remain at peace with the Lord.

And that is the victory of faith.

In a sense it is expressive of our whole life upon this earth. We live in the midst of death. From every direction we are assailed with sorrows and miseries. Even the strength of our days is labor and sorrow, and we fly away.

That is not so clear when we are young, vibrant, strong and youthful. Then life seems rosy, beautiful, and promising.

But it is all vanity.

It is rather usual that the children bury their father and their mother. Then we shed a tear or two, and the departed remain a beautiful memory. And we continue our journey to eternity, until our children lay us away in the grave.

But sometimes the Lord interrupts this usual procedure. And the heart of father and mother slowly breaks when they stare in the open grave where their offspring will rest until the day of the resurrection.

Then the husband or wife with little children weep their hot tears in unspeakable grief. Honestly, I do not know: I cannot fathom such grief, never having tasted it. But that such grief must be enormous is plain from superficial observation.

And God does these things with reason.

\* \* \* \*

We do not know the reason why David was sorely afflicted.

Many questions and answers are given. Some say, Absalom; others venture to guess that Saul was the cause. Either of the two could have been the reason why David is stunned and suffering.

So also many questions and answers are given when we are smitten to the ground by the blow of God's hand.

Accidents? Carelessness? Neglect? Stupidity? Indifference?

Another category of questions are asked, all of them beginning with a terrible word: WHY? And such questions are really directed to the God of heaven and earth.

I call this terrible, and well I might.

All such questions are always sin. It does not behoove us to so question God's conduct. All His ways are majesty. No matter what He does, it is beautiful, just and praiseworthy. When something awful happens to you, never venture to question the Almighty.

Another series of observations are made, all of them beginning with the "If only I had or had not done this or that, then this awful thing would not have happened."

I know, I know, we do not mean it, but those observations destroy the very idea of the Immutable Counsel of God! And our text is the only correct antidote against the futile and vain speeches we make in the midst of our calamities.

It happened! It may have been because we were careless, stupid, indifferent, downright sinful or neglectful, but listen to this: when all is said and done, it was God! He supervises all things and events, and there is no evil in the city, but the terrible Godhead decreed it.

Look at David! When he sat down in all his heartbreaking misery, he said: "Thou didst it!"

That is the only answer, always. And there is no exception.

That is the only answer even in the midst of all manner of mistakes we made, all kinds of blunders committed, all kinds of accidents, neglect, stupidity, evil, sin, etc.

Behind, with and in the human or devilish factors there looms the gigantic stature of the great Jehovah-God!

Listen to Amos, the voice of God: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

And, please, come with me to a very holy place. It is 33 A.D., and we find ourselves at the Place of the Skull. Jesus is hanging in great darkness on the accursed tree.

I would like to ask all of you sufferers: Is there a sorrow in the world like unto His sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Him in the day of His wrath?

And all of you grow silent. No one would dare even to liken his sorrow to the sorrow of the Man of Sorrows.

And who did it?

Oh, there are Judas, the Apostles who were all offended in Him; there are Annas, Caiaphas, the chief priests and elders, the people of Israel, the Gentiles, Pilate, Herod, the soldiers. They all crucified Him.

Are you interested to hear who REALLY did it? Then

listen to this: "For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, FOR TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE!

Is it not beautiful?

Why, even the very devils cannot stir, except by God's hand and counsel.

Sometime ago I quoted a Dutch Psalm. I will do so again:

*Geen ding geschiedt er ooit gewisser,  
Dan 't hoog bevel van 's Heeren mond:  
Zijn Godd'lijk almacht spreekt, en 't is er,  
Zijn wil gebiedt, en 't wordt terstond.*

*Schoon de heid'nen samen  
List op list beramen,  
God verbreekt hun raad;  
Schoon de mogendheden  
Snood' ontwerpen smeden,  
Hij belacht haar haat.*

This is so wonderful that I will translate it for you:

*No thing happens ever surer  
Than the high command of God's counsel.  
His Divine Almighty speaks: and it is there!  
His will commands: and it happens at once!  
Though the heathens together  
Plot their crafts:  
God breaks their counsel.  
Though the great powers  
Hatch their base designs  
He mocks their hatred!*

All of this is so impossible to believe for natural man!

We speak of an unlucky break; somebody made a dreadful mistake; how dumb can you be? And more of the same.

But here is the real reason why accidents, etc. happen: God did it!

When the young and vibrant die, and lie there so still, then say: Thou, O God, didst it!

No, do not say to me: you minimize the human factor and human responsibility. I certainly do not. They have their place, but be sure and give them their rightful place, even as God does it.

Shimei cursed David. David said: God hath said unto him: Curse David. But Solomon executed him, and God shall give him his rightful due.

I have reference to the final answer. I have in mind the answer which will soothe the heart, and heal your wounds. I have in mind God. Give Him His rightful due. He is so worthy of it.

When He says through and by and in all our human failings, mistakes, sins, neglect, and what more we can

enumerate: My child, your time of life has ended, your days are numbered, your place in My heaven is ready: Come to My bosom! then say: I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, for Thou didst it!

\* \* \* \*

And that is not all.

The text is negative. And it includes the positive.

When Jesus said: He that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out, He meant more than just those negative words. He means with those words: When you come unto Me I will receive you, I will fold you in My arms and I will make you experience that you are very welcome with Me!

And so also here.

We have plenty of Biblical examples.

When Job stood in his frontroom there were ten caskets. In one day he buried his ten children.

Among mere men is there an example where you could expect more heartbreak and more rueful speeches than here?

But listen to him: The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord!

That is the sweet victory of faith!

\* \* \* \*

I wrote this because a very young mother among us fell asleep in Jesus. And she took with her a seven months' child.

It's a sad story, but also a heavenly beautiful story. God said: My dear child, your place in heaven is ready! Come up higher! And take the little one with you. You may now begin to be merry! Amen.

G.V.

### Announcement

You are invited to attend the celebration of Rev. H. Hoeksema's 45th anniversary in the ministry. This will be held in Douglas-Walker Park, on 84th St. near Byron Center, Michigan, on August 31, 1960.

Anniversary Committee of  
the First Prot. Ref. Church

### NOTICE

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Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E.,  
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## EDITORIALS

### As to Being Protestant Reformed

It stands to reason that, if we believe that the covenant is the bond of friendship between God and His people in Christ Jesus, and that it is established with Christ and in Him with all whom the Father gave Him, we must also maintain the Scriptural truth of predestination, i.e. election and its counterpart, reprobation.

We, as Protestant Reformed Churches, are often accused of overemphasizing the truth of election and reprobation. In fact, they, i.e., our opponents, spread the story that we preach nothing else. This is, of course, not true. We preach and teach the whole counsel of God.

But we do believe that the truth of predestination is the very heart of the Church and of the truth.

We do believe, therefore, that if anyone preaches a so-called gospel that is not rooted in the truth of God's eternal counsel of predestination, he does not proclaim the gospel at all. We do believe that if anyone camouflages in any way this fundamental truth, he must needs distort the whole truth. Then he cannot maintain the truth of particular atonement, that is, the truth that Christ did not shed His lifeblood for all men without distinction but only for the elect. Then he cannot believe and teach the truth of total depravity, that is, the truth that in soul and body, in mind and heart, in his will and all his affections, he is so corrupt that he cannot, will not, and cannot will to do any good; that he certainly cannot and will not and cannot will to accept Christ but the only thing he will and can do is to hate and reject Him. Then he cannot believe or teach that the saints shall surely persevere because God preserves them. All this he that denies or camouflages the truth of predestination must surely deny.

Yet, many preachers of the gospel do exactly this.

I do not refer now to many so-called preachers of the gospel outside of the Reformed Churches. That men like Billy Graham and others deny the truth of predestination and preach a free-will gospel stands to reason. They never subscribed to the truth of sovereign grace. And to my mind, it is exactly because the "gospel" they preach is not rooted in the fundamental truth of predestination (as well as because of their tremendous organization), that they can have such large crowds. Fact is that men by nature do not want the gospel of sovereign grace and they certainly will not follow one that proclaims it in truth. The true gospel is never popular. This is evident from all Scripture. But I will refer to just one passage of Holy Writ. In John 6 we read of the feeding of the five thousand and of what followed on the next day. When the crowd had been miraculously fed, they were filled with enthusiasm and said: "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." They wanted to

make Him king. But Jesus withdrew Himself into a mountain. Then in the night He joined Himself to His disciples who had left in a ship for Capernaum. He joined them as they were toiling by reason of a great storm and He did so by walking on the water. Then, on the next day, the crowd also came to Capernaum and Jesus. Then followed a most remarkable conversation between the Lord and the multitude. The subject was the Bread of life. At first it appeared that the multitude desired this bread. They even prayed for it: "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

Then, however, came the turningpoint in the conversation.

For, first of all Jesus said unto them: "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Secondly, He reminded them that they believed not: "but I said unto you, That ye also have seen me and believe not."

And thirdly, He plainly told them that it was not in their power, in the power of their freewill, to come unto Him and to believe on His name, but that this was a matter of sovereign grace, for He said unto them: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise them up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

It is when Jesus had thus emphasized the gospel of sovereign grace that the crowd became alienated from Him. They murmured at Him because He had said unto them: "I am the bread of life." They began to understand that the Lord spoke of an entirely different bread than what they wanted. They began to remember that Jesus after all was a common man, the son of Joseph whose father and mother they knew, and that, therefore, He had not come down from heaven. But the Lord once more emphasized the gospel of sovereign grace: "No man can come to me, except the Father which sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

And when the Lord had made plain once more that He spoke of an entirely different bread than that which they desired, and that they must eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood in order to have life, the crowd departed and "walked no more with him."

Thus it was then.

And thus it still is. If anyone preaches the true gospel, the gospel of sovereign grace, he must not expect big crowds to follow him.

Only those whom the Father has given to Jesus will come to Him.

You say, perhaps, that the preacher does not know who are the elect and that, therefore, he must necessarily preach a gospel for all?

I answer that one who preaches the gospel surely must bring the same truth *to all* that hear him, but this does not mean that he can or may preach a gospel *for all*.

In other words, the preaching of the gospel is general, but the contents is particular.

Again, you ask, perhaps, whether there is anything specifically Protestant Reformed in this doctrine that we preach a particular gospel to all that hear and whether not all that call themselves Reformed maintain the same truth. Is there, in this respect, any difference between the Protestant Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches?

There certainly is.

First of all, apart from any specific declaration with regard to this truth, they, i.e., the preachers in the Christian Reformed Church, all believe in a general offer of grace and salvation, that is, in the error that God, on His part, proclaims in the gospel that He seriously seeks the salvation of all that come under the preaching of the Word, if they only will accept Christ and believe on His name. And this is not Reformed but Pelagian and Arminian. It presupposes the ability on the part of man to accept the offer and to come to Christ. Oh, I know that if you confront them with this error, they will object that they also teach that it is only by grace that anyone can accept. But, in the first place, they usually do not add this in their preaching to the error of the general offer. And, secondly, if they would add this to the preaching of the general offer, grace and salvation can be no longer a general offer. How can God offer that which is not the work of man at all but which God only can and must do and that, too, without the will of man?

What is meant by the general offer of grace in salvation, and how the Christian Reformed ministers ought to preach and actually do preach, may be gathered from what the former professor L. Berkhof wrote as his interpretation of Ezekiel 11 and 33 in his booklet on the Three Points, pp. 21, 22. I quote: "That God calls the ungodly to conversion is presented in Holy Scripture as a token of His desire for their salvation. In the prophecy of Ezekiel we listen to the word of the Lord in words that speak of mercy: 'Have I any pleasure at all (even in any measure) in the death of the wicked? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways and live?' And again: 'For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth (i.e., of him that is already dying in his sin), saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.' These passages tell us clearly as may be expressed in words, that God has no pleasure in the death of the sinner (mark you well, that he does not say 'of the elect sinner' but 'of the sinner,' entirely in general);

and the tender calling to which we listen here, witnesses of His great love for sinners and of His desire to save the ungodly."

And again Berkhof writes: "There is still another place in the prophecy of Ezekiel in which the Lord expresses the same thought in still stronger language, and in which he corroborates it with an oath, namely, in 33:11: 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked: but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways and live; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?' Are not these words of tender mercy, in which a Father beseeches his deviating children to return to the house and heart of the Father?"

I ask: is not this interpretation by professor Berkhof a denial of the truth of election and reprobation? Is not this pure Arminianism? Does not this teach in plain words that God, on His part, strongly desires to save all the wicked, that He does all that is in His power to save them and that, if they are not saved, it is entirely up to them?

And mark you well, this is supposed to be the Christian Reformed interpretation of the first of the "Three Points" adopted by the Synod of 1924 and for the denial of which faithful Reformed ministers, elders and deacons, with their congregations, were cast out of the Christian Reformed Church.

Nor is the interpretation of the "First Point" of 1924 as offered by professor Berkhof in the above quoted passages an incorrect explanation of the first of the "Three Points." For that first doctrinal expression of the Synod of 1924 is, indeed, not Reformed but Arminian. Let me quote it once more:

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

It is not my purpose to explain this first point in detail nor to give the reasons why we cannot subscribe to its doctrine. This has been done before.

But we were discussing the general well-meant offer of salvation, which we as Protestant Reformed Churches deny.

But further discussion of this must wait till next time, D.V.

H.H.

# OUR DOCTRINE

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER FOURTEEN

#### *The First Four Vials*

Revelation 16:1-9

In the second place, we may also notice that these plagues this time are universal in their character. There is no exception. There is no escape from them. This is one of the characteristic distinctions between the vials and the trumpets. Notice, in general, that there is progress in the succession of the seals and the trumpets and the vials. In connection with the seals we found that there was mention of one-fourth. And one-fourth, we found, indicates the regular rate of death and destruction upon the earth. Always one-fourth of men die. Always one-fourth of the crops is destroyed. Always one-fourth of the ships are lost. Always there is one-fourth of darkening of the sun, resulting in loss of crops. In the trumpets, however, we found that the one-fourth is changed to one-third, indicating that God at stated times and to control the history of the world and of the nations sends just a little more than the ordinary death-rate and destruction of crops, thus influencing the history of nations and of the world in general. But in the vials there is no mention of a fraction whatever. All of the earth is affected by the first vial. The entire sea is changed into blood by the second. All the rivers and fountains of water are poisoned by the third. And the sun scorches terribly and evidently affects the whole earth. This is also indicated in the difference between the symbols used. The trumpets indicated by their loud resounding that the judgment of God is very near and heavy. But the vials are completely emptied. God has emptied His wrath into the vials, and they again are emptied upon the earth. And therefore the wrath of God in these vials is complete. Further, we may also notice that these plagues differ from the ones symbolized in the trumpets in that they do not affect the saints. The plagues of the trumpets naturally also were plagues for the children of the Most High. They were still on earth; and they suffered from the famine and sickness as well as the children of wrath even though these plagues could not touch them as children of God. But the vials touch only the children of wrath, the worshippers of the beast. And I know of but one reason, namely, this, that the church has been taken away. At the beginning of these signs they have been taken up into glory, and they do not have to suffer because of these universal plagues. Even as in the plagues of Egypt the children of Israel were at first also affected, but with the latter plagues they were ex-

empted, so in these vial-plagues the children of God do not suffer with the children of wrath for the simple reason that they have been taken up into glory. Hence, we come to the conclusion that the plagues of these first four vials are plagues affecting nature in its various spheres, that they are universal in their character, leaving no exception, and that only the worshippers of the beast are troubled by them. This also indicates that these vials are poured out almost at the very end of time.

If now we try to explain these four vials in their individual significance, we may first of all say that it behooves us to be careful. The history of these vials belongs entirely to the remote future. True, in principle we find the four vials upon earth all through this dispensation. They are also in the trumpets, and even in the seals. But in their universal character they have not yet been realized. They belong to the future. And therefore we shall do well not to go beyond the text in this respect. We must not go into detail and try to explain exactly how God shall work in those days, through what agencies He shall bring about the changes in nature, exactly what is meant by the sore on the men that worshipped the beast, by the blood into which the sea and the rivers are turned. All these questions we would not be able to answer with any reasonable amount of certainty. But what we must do is obtain the general idea of each vial, ascertain its effect upon man and upon the kingdom of Antichrist that still exists in those days. And then we shall be satisfied that the Lord has also here given us a clear revelation of the future.

The first vial is poured out upon the earth. If we may at all compare the trumpets with the vials, as must be inferred from their resemblance, we find that with the earth is meant the dry land in distinction from the sea and the rivers, and that too, the dry land and all that it contains. The earth brings forth the substance with which man must prolong his life. On its crops he depends for health and strength, yea, for very life itself. And so we found in connection with the first trumpet that it destroyed the crops, the trees, and the grass for one-third. The earth, therefore, must be taken in the sense of its being the habitation of men, upon which man is dependent for very life. From the earth he derives his food and substance. From that earth he obtains his gold and silver. From the earth he derives his fuel wherewith to protect himself against the cold of winter. In a word, from that earth he derives all the necessities, as well as the luxuries, of life. It is from this same point of view that we must consider the earth here. And then the effect of the first vial is such that man does not die, but that he is stricken with disease. The earth upon which man depends for life and health is affected so that terrible and universal disease breaks out. The text speaks of sores, which may indeed be taken in the literal sense of the word, but which I would rather take as indicating disease in general. A universal disease breaks out. Everybody is suffering from it because the earth is, as it were, poisoned with the wrath of God. The crops



do grow indeed, but they are filled with God's wrath. They supply no health and strength, but poison men, so that sores break out on their bodies and so that they are stricken universally with all kinds of disease. Medical science stands aghast and dumfounded. For even the drugs and medicines that might otherwise be employed must be obtained from the same earth; and therefore they offer no alleviation from suffering. Universal sickness prevails. No more one-third, but all men are stricken. It has become a world of universal misery.

The second vial affects the sea. Also here there is correspondence between the vials and the trumpets. The second trumpet turned one part of the sea into blood, destroyed one-third part of the living creatures and one-third part of the ships. But now the whole sea is turned into a pool of rottenness. Also here we do not have to ask how and through what agencies the Lord will bring this about. This is of little importance. The main fact is clear: the sea is turned into a rotten pool, into blood as of a dead man. This means, in the first place, that the sea as a source of other necessities for man has become worthless. For every living thing in the sea is now dead. Man, who cannot find on the earth what he needs, may turn to the sea to feed himself with the creatures that are in it. But this is now cut off. The earth is poisonous, the sea offers nothing to relieve the suffering. In the second place, we may depend on it that this rotten pool of ocean and sea makes life unbearable and spreads the disease and pestilences still more rapidly. And, in the third place, the sea is no more a means of communication between nation and nation. Commerce is now at a standstill. All the beautiful castles of the sea which man has built and with which he travels around the earth are now lying still in their harbors, or they perish in the rotten sea. The sea, that mighty treasure to man, has lost its value. It no more offers him any aid or comfort.

Still more, the waters and the rivers are also affected. If man in his distress only might turn to these waters for help and feed on its living creatures, drink from its fountains, he might perhaps find some relief. But this is not the case. Also these are influenced and filled with the wrath of God. Again, exactly in what way we do not know. This is certain, however, that they afford man no pleasant and refreshing drink any more. Most likely all this will come upon the earth gradually, rather than suddenly, although it will be but a short time before the end. All the comforts and necessities of life are taken away from man. For certain it is that he does not immediately die. But all spheres of nature are affected. By the third vial the rivers and fountains of waters are turned into blood as the sea and the ocean. And they add to the universal suffering of man.

And finally, the sun is affected. The fourth vial is turned empty upon the sun. It is not darkened. That will be still later. But now it is increased in heat to such an extent that it scorches men by its heat. Naturally, it does not only affect men, but also the crops and the cattle of the meadows

and the beasts of the field. In short, it has become a terrible world to live in. The earth poisoned and bringing disease. The sea and the waters rot and afford no help. The sun scorches with its terrible heat. Nowhere in all creation is there help or comfort. The whole world is now filled with the wrath of God.

In order to understand the combined effect of these seven vials we must first of all recall the actual condition of affairs at this time. Antichrist has established his universal kingdom, a kingdom uniting all nations and having sway over all things in the world. As we have said before, that kingdom shall from a worldly point of view be a glorious kingdom. There shall be great development of human power and talents. There shall be peace and plenty in every way. There shall be joy and luxury. All the world shall be in subjection unto that kingdom of Antichrist. And they shall know how to use all things in creation. It shall be chiefly because of the blessings of that kingdom that it shall be able to establish and maintain itself. It is because of the outward prosperity and because of the wonderful things the beast performs that the whole world wonders after him. But it is a kingdom under Satan and against God and His Christ. God's children, who refuse to worship the beast, may not participate in the blessings of that marvellous kingdom. God is not acknowledged. The beast is supreme. The people of God may not buy or sell.

Now if we view the first four vials in this light, it is very plain what is their significance. In the first place, through them God makes plain that He after all is the One Who sells things in the world. Antichrist acted as if he were supreme. But after all, he was dependent upon God Almighty. Antichrist acted as if he could sovereignly determine who were to buy and sell and enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of earth and sea and river and sun. But now God comes to show that He is sovereign. And He determines that none that worship the beast shall be able to buy or sell, to enjoy the blessings in His creation. He takes everything away from them. He takes the earth away from them, the crops and the rain, the food and the clothing. Just as Antichrist in his godlessness had done to God's people, so God now does to Antichrist. And all of a sudden all things become a curse. And therefore, in the first place, there is just revenge in these four vials. We find an indication of this in the voice of the angel that pours out the third vial. He says: "Righteous art Thou, Who art, and Who wast, thou Holy One, because thou didst thus judge: For they poured out the blood of the saints and prophets, and blood thou hast given them to drink; for they are worthy." The implication is, of course, that in this third plague God metes out unto Antichrist as he has meted unto His people. And that is not only true of the third plague, but of all of them. A short while ago the people of God were outcasts, so that they could neither buy nor sell. Now God shows that He is powerful and supreme, and that the people of Antichrist cannot procure in all creation wherewith to feed and clothe

themselves. It is an act of just revenge. It is for the same reason that the souls beneath the altar also are satisfied. For the voice comes from the altar, saying, "Yea, Lord God, Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." Once more, therefore, the first four vials constitute a just revenge upon the subjects of the beast, who worship his image.

But there is more. The combined effect of these plagues is also that it causes the kingdom of Antichrist to be disintegrated and that it prepares for the great battle that is still to be fought, the battle of Armageddon. You understand that the factor that combined the kingdom was its outward prosperity and its outward peace. Men wondered after the beast because they were blessed under his reign with earthly things. But now the power and the glory of the beast are of a sudden gone, and the time is at hand that Gog and Magog shall break loose and prepare for battle against the center of the antichristian kingdom, to break it to pieces.

Finally, we should not forget that these plagues harden the heart of the individual subjects of the kingdom. We would perhaps imagine that such severe judgments as these would soften the hearts and would cause them to give glory to God and repent in dust and ashes. But just the reverse is the case. Man blasphemes God Who has power over these plagues. The implication seems to be that they realize that the God of creation sends them these plagues. Yet they do not repent. On the contrary, they blaspheme and rise still more in rebellion in the midst of all their suffering. A terrible and solemn lesson this is. It teaches us clearly that absolutely nothing but the grace of God will break the sinner. If the grace of God does not enter our hearts and the Word of His gospel does not call us to His covenant, judgments will only have the effect that men harden their hearts. What a glorious comfort in these four vials! Here is the patience of the saints. As certain as Christ is King, just as certain it is that these judgments shall come. And therefore the saints can afford to be patient. Vengeance belongeth unto the Lord. And He shall surely come to justify Himself and all His people and to prepare the earth for His glorious kingdom.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *The Battle of Armageddon*

#### Revelation 16:10-21

10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

11. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Again the words of our text lead us to the very end of this dispensation. That this is so a most superficial reading of the text will show. It speaks of the battle of the great day of God Almighty. It speaks of the downfall of Babylon the Great and her remembrance before the countenance of the Lord God Almighty, of a terrible shakeup of the heavens and of the earth, so that islands flee away and the mountains are found no more. And it speaks of a last and crushing hail, through which evidently the battle of Armageddon is finished. It is the end of time. It is the close of this entire dispensation. Repeatedly we have stood at the termination of history as we made study of the book of Revelation. In chapter 6:12-17, where the sixth seal is pictured to us, we also found that all the universe was shaken and that it was the great day of the wrath of God and of His Christ. Again, in chapter 11, the chapter that speaks of the two witnesses, we saw the temple opened at the blowing of the seventh trumpet, and signs of great judgments following, the judgments of the final battle of Christ against His opponents. In chapter 14 we also received a picture of the end of time in the vision of the great and final harvest and of the vintage. And also there we found the end was terrible, a treading of the nations in the winepress of the wrath of God. And now again we stand before the same period of time, the very close of history. And again it is a bloody battle and terrible judgments from heaven that are pictured to us here. Those



who dream of a great millennium of peace, who imagine that the kingdom of Christ will gradually have the victory over the kingdom of darkness without any great disturbance and upheaval, certainly find but very little support in the Word of our God and none at all in the book of Revelation. The wicked shall not gradually be won, but they shall be destroyed. Judgments are in store for them. And these judgments shall not gradually diminish in force, but rather increase and become more terrible. The end of time shall not be peace, but war, terrible war, war as the world has not seen before, war in which all the nations of the earth shall participate, and in which Christ shall have the victory. That end and that victory is pictured here in the words of our text more clearly than ever before. There is progress in respect to clearness and vividness of revelation and description as we proceed. And in our text the end is already definitely pictured as a great battle. It is not as if that end is already pictured here in all its detail. No, in succeeding chapters we shall find a detailed description of some of the main scenes that are pictured here in general.

H.H.

## IN MEMORIAM

The Board of the Association for Christian Education of Grand Rapids, Michigan, wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to one of the teachers, Miss Winifred Koole, in the recent death of her father,

MR. JASPER KOOLE

May the family take comfort in the knowledge that when our earthly tabernacle is dissolved, we have an eternal home with our Covenant God in heaven.

Board of the Association  
for Christian Education  
James Heys, President  
Cornelius Jonker, Secretary

## IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid Society of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its fellow members, Mrs. D. Engelsma, in the recent death of her father,

MR. JASPER KOOLE

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

Rev. H. Hanko, President  
Mrs. J. Kalsbeek, Secretary

## IN MEMORIAM

We, the Priscilla Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, extend our heartfelt sympathy to two of our members, Mrs. J. Bartelds and Mrs. G. E. Bylsma in the loss of their mother and mother-in-law,

MRS. EDWARD BYLSMA

In the midst of our sorrows we may rejoice in the fact that our heavenly Father has called one of His children Home, and that we share with her that blessed hope fixed upon our Father's House with its many mansions.

The Priscilla Society,  
Mrs. Charles Pastoor, Secretary

## IN MEMORIAM

It pleased the Lord to take unto Himself our beloved Wife, Mother, Daughter, and Sister,

MRS. AGAELNE VAN BAREN, nee LUBBERS  
aged 24 years.

We are dumb, we have not opened our mouth, for Thou didst it! That is our comfort. We will now patiently wait for the resurrection.

Richard Van Baren  
David John Van Baren  
John C. Lubbers  
Henrietta Lubbers-Schut  
Edward Miedema  
Lorraine Miedema-Lubbers  
Donald Van Overloop  
Correne Van Overloop-Lubbers  
Gary Lee Lubbers  
Joan Kay Lubbers

## IN MEMORIAM

Our society would like to express to our bereaved Brother, Richard Van Baren, how deeply we feel with him in the sudden loss of his beloved Wife,

MRS. RICHARD VAN BAREN, nee LUBBERS

May our Covenant God heal your broken heart, and may He ever keep before your eye of faith the beautiful day of the resurrection of the dead when all God's children shall be reunited.

The Hudsonville Mr. and Mrs. Society,  
Rev. Gerrit Vos, President  
Mrs. Harold Van Overloop, Secretary

## IN MEMORIAM

We wish hereby to express our heartfelt sympathy to our brother Richard Van Baren in the loss of his beloved Wife,

MRS. RICHARD VAN BAREN-LUBBERS

May the Lord comfort him in this sad loss. And may he look for that glad day when the Lord will raise the dead in the glorious resurrection.

His fellow teachers,  
The Hudsonville Sunday School,  
Harry Swak, Superintendent  
Mrs. Henry Boer, Secretary

## IN MEMORIAM

The Hudsonville Men's Society desires to express their sympathy with our fellow member, Mr. John C. Lubbers in the grievous loss of his Daughter,

MRS. AGAELNE VAN BAREN

May the Lord heal the broken hearts of the bereaved family. We have His promises for the wondrous resurrection from the dead.

The Hudsonville Men's Society,  
Rev. Gerrit Vos, President  
Mr. Rhine Lubbers, Secretary

## IN MEMORIAM

Since it pleased our God to take away suddenly the daughter of our fellow member, Mrs. John C. Lubbers, our Society would like to express its heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family. The memory of

MRS. AGAELNE VAN BAREN-LUBBERS

shall always linger on in our hearts. May the Lord drop the balm of Gilead in the bereaved hearts.

The Hudsonville Ladies' Society,  
Rev. Gerrit Vos, President  
Mrs. Bert Maring, Secretary

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Joseph's Economic Policies

*Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land.*

*And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones.*

*And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants. — Genesis 47:23-25*

Almost parenthetically, the Scriptures give to us a brief record of the economic policies which were followed by Joseph in his rule over the land of Egypt. It would appear at first that this portion of Scripture has little to do with the actual manifestation of God's covenant with His people, having little real spiritual value. We are merely given a bit of historical information revealing some of the strange and rather harsh policies that were followed in the monarchies of old. However, a closer look at this portion of Scripture will reveal that actually the policies followed by Joseph were built upon wisdom and an understanding of human nature; in fact, far more so than are many of the supposedly "enlightened" practices of our day.

We have seen in the past how that during the seven years of plenty in Egypt, Joseph labored faithfully in accord with the revelation made known through dreams unto Pharaoh. Appointed to a position of highest authority, he traveled the length and breadth of the land to make preparations for the famine. Storehouses were built and officers were appointed to care for the storage of food. A 20% tax, by no means excessive, was levied upon all the crops of the land. Even the people were urged by word and example to make preparations for the famine to come. The end result was that food was stored up for the future exceeding the ability of the Egyptians to keep count.

When the years of famine finally came, Joseph at first waited before opening the royal storehouses. Although there were by that time exceedingly large storages on hand, he knew that the famine would be lengthy and care had to be taken in rationing them out that they might last until the end. Only after the privately owned stores were used up and the people began to cry for hunger did Joseph open the government reserves for sale. How long this was after the beginning of the famine, we can not say for sure. It may well have been two or three years.

Among the first to come to Joseph with dire need were the peoples from other lands. They had not been forewarned of the famine, nor had they had the wisdom of Joseph to guide them, if, indeed, they had even partaken of the years

of plenty as abundantly as Egypt. These nations first felt the pinch of the famine and came to Egypt for aid. Neither were they turned away. Although it meant that more stringent measures would have to be followed with the Egyptians, Joseph would not turn away those who were needy. Only one qualification was made, all the food procured had to be paid for. This was one of the fundamental principles upon which Joseph built his policies.

It was not long thereafter that also the Egyptians began to come to Pharaoh and Joseph seeking food. Their reserve supplies had also been used up. By Joseph their needs were in turn supplied, and with the same qualification, for all the food that was received, a price had to be paid. It was not long before all of the money both of Canaan and Egypt had flowed into the coffers of Pharaoh.

It would seem, especially in our day, that this policy was unduly harsh and stringent. By many it might be thought ethically wrong. It is generally expected that the poor both of people and nations should have their needs supplied without charge. This is part of the socialistic bent of thinking so common in the world of today, often spoken of as a product of "Christianity." Quite naturally it is skeptical and critical of the policies followed by Joseph.

In this modern way of thinking there is one basic misunderstanding concerning the role of a government. It is not the calling of the government to perform works of charity, and ultimately it is impossible for the government to do so. This duty belongs to the church, specifically through the office of the deacons. The deacons are capable of administering true charity because they do so in the name of Christ and accompany it with the admonition and instruction of the Word of God. By this administration of the Word of God, their works of mercy are protected from gross and general misuse. When, therefore, the government seeks to engage itself in works of "charity," it is incapable of combining it with spiritual instruction; it has no protection from misuse of its work; and, in fact, the work which it performs is not true charity at all. Such work by the government is only an infringement upon the proper sphere of the church. The sad results of this are only too apparent in the world of today. Those who receive "charity" from the state, lacking proper instruction, begin to think of that which they receive as something to which they have a natural right. For it they feel little thankfulness either to God or to man. Being little appreciated, it is little valued and often wasted. More and more men expect and demand of the government that it supply whatever they feel themselves to lack. The government is no longer recognized as a ruler appointed by God; it is rather counted a mere servant of men, to whom no appreciation is owed, to whom no respect need be shown, and whose only function is to satisfy the whimsical desires of men. Saddest of all are the great inroads which this way of thinking has made into the church. People of God are often found more ready to go to the government for aid than to the deacons. For lack of anything better to do, the deacons

use their time and efforts as mere financial managers in the church. The benevolent collections, which should be the church's largest, are but a minor appendage, maintained as a mere matter of form. "For ye have the poor with you always," has become an enigma within the church. Few seem to realize that this is basically a rejection of the mercies of Christ.

Joseph, although he undoubtedly engaged in works of mercy as an individual believer, saw no place for the free disbursement of goods as an officer in the government of Pharaoh. For each sack of grain that was purchased, the proper price had to be paid. Upon this Joseph insisted until the money of the people was completely used up. And, though this might seem harsh, the results were beneficial. No man, having purchased his bread with his own money, could think lightly of what he ate. All food was counted precious and was used sparingly. Frugality became the rule of the day, and such was necessary if the stores of Egypt were to last. The people had never experienced any other treatment from their government and did not complain or rebel.

Once the people's money was gone, however, they were perplexed for they did not know what they could use for the purchase of more food. Soon they came to Joseph with their problem, and he gave to them the answer, "Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail." Gradually the people began to bring their horses and flocks and cattle and asses in exchange for bread. Nonetheless the cattle were not taken out of the hands of the people. Although in name the cattle now belonged to Pharaoh, they were left with the people. Thus they received the individual care that they needed and the people were able to continue to use them profitably for labor, milk, clothing, etc.

Another year passed by and also the Egyptians' cattle were spent. The famine was drawing to its close with only a year or two to go. The storehouses of Egypt were running low. By this time the people had learned that they were not to receive food without themselves bearing the responsibility. They recognized this as being just. It was with a suggestion of their own that the people now approached Joseph. "We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands; Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate." This suggestion manifests the complete confidence which the people had that Joseph would use them aright.

The famine by this time was evidently very severe, and the supplies of Egypt were beginning to run low. It became necessary for Joseph to maintain utmost efficiency in the distribution of grain. For this purpose he gathered all of the people into the cities where the distribution and use of

all food might be watched with the greatest of care. To this the people could not object, for they had sold themselves to Pharaoh.

Finally the time came when the seven years were past and the famine was over. Joseph sent the people back to their land and gave them the last of the reserve supplies to sow their fields. Only one restriction was imposed upon the Egyptians, henceforth 20% of the total product of their labors would be given unto Pharaoh in tax. The response of the people goes far in revealing the successfulness of his venture. "Thou hast saved our lives," they said, "Let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants."

As harsh as Joseph's terms might seem to have been, his efforts were exceedingly successful. By taxing the Egyptians 20% through seven years of plenty, he was able to store up provisions to maintain Egypt and many other nations through seven years of dire famine. By requiring complete payment for all food disbursed, he was able to prevent waste and foolish extravagance during the early years of the famine. Although he took the very land and bodies of the people in payment, he never used this right to needlessly oppress the people. Even after the people all belonged to Pharaoh, the highest tax which was required of them was 20%, no larger than that prior to the famine and small compared to the countless taxes prevalent in the world today. The total effect was that Joseph saved the lives of the people, maintained their morale through a trying period, and in the end re-affirmed their responsibilities to their monarch. This all was in addition to the more important result of saving the children of Israel from death, and from the contamination of Canaan into which they had been falling.

In this all we should note that there were two groups of people that were exempted from the policies of Joseph.

The one group that was not required to pay for its food consisted of the priests of Egypt. These were heathen priests and Godless men. We might question the propriety of extending them this favor. However, it was Pharaoh and not Joseph who assigned to them this favor. Although we have maintained in the past that Pharaoh was undoubtedly a believer, we should not suppose that he immediately had enough boldness to withstand the customs of the land. Further it might be questioned whether such would have been desirable, lest some would have pretended to turn to God not out of conviction but for earthly gain.

The other group which was given its food was Joseph's family. Their needs were provided as a gift in recognition of the services of Joseph. This was necessary. It was of utmost importance that the children of Israel should never be sold in slavery to another nation forfeiting their right to freedom. They had to be left free, that at the proper time they might have full right to return to their promised land.

B.W.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 15

#### IX.

(I Corinthians 15:39-49)

Paul is answering the two questions which he raised in verse 35. The questions are: 1. How are the dead raised up? 2. With what body do they come forth?

We have noticed that the article of the resurrection is a matter of saving faith; the resurrection is not a mere natural development, nor is it a matter which the natural man can believe. It is foolishness to him. However, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is clear from both the sphere of the natural and the spiritual to faith!

In this faith in God, the Father, and in God, the Son, and in God, the Holy Ghost, we will listen to what Paul says concerning the nature of the resurrection body, and the place which it has in the design of God even already at the time of the creation of the world.

It should be very evident from all that we see about us in world of the "living soul," all the creatures that move upon the face of the earth, and all that moves in the deep and in the heights of the heavens, that not all flesh is the *same* flesh. We must discipline our mind to notice this fact. Our faith in the blessed resurrection cannot be bound up in the erroneous assumption of the *sameness* of the present and future organism. That such sameness is not necessary to have a body we are taught by the great diversity among the bodies of man, four-footed domestic animals, fowl and fish. They are all bodies; all are flesh, but all are not the *same* flesh. This is a lesson which we should daily contemplate in our nature studies. We should not simply see this diversity among the creatures as such, but we should rise above the plane of the natural, to the things which are heavenly and spiritual.

This we should underscore!

Is it not true that "we know God out of two books"? (See the Belgic Confession, Art. 2.) And these two books Paul demonstrates in this passage under consideration.

The same is true of the sun, moon and stars. All are heavenly luminaries. But the radiance and the glory of the sun is different from the moon, and the moon's radiance and effulgence differs again from that of the stars. Paul points from this variety in the creation of God, the visible creation, which we can experience as "living soul," to the invisible, or not yet visible reality of the resurrection bodies.

Says he in verse 42: "Thus also is the resurrection of the dead." Paul does not mean to state that there will be

a difference in the glory with which each saint shall be glorified. This is evidently the plain teaching of Scripture elsewhere. However, such is not the teaching of Scripture in this passage. Paul merely means to state that the resurrection body shall be quite otherwise constituted than the present body. He does not compare the saints in glory, but is comparing the present body with the future, the resurrection body.

It is to be noted that Paul in contrasting these two bodies, the present and the future, does not here stress their identity, but rather the *difference within* the identity.

1. This difference is, first of all, a difference in the sense that all that is of sin, death and corruption shall be no more. This I would call a rather accidental difference, that is, it does not really affect the essential constitution of the body. If nothing more took place in the resurrection than the removal of corruption, we would again simply be where the first Adam was as a "living soul." We would simply be free from sin and death, and simply bear the image of the earthy. See verse 49. We would be back on earth, and really not one step nearer to the spiritual and heavenly body. Still this is a difference of great importance. Immortality is more than endless life and existence. And the immortality which is ours in Christ is quite different *qualitatively* from the *not yet* having died of the first Adam in the state of righteousness. For even this being raised in "incorruptibleness," in "glory," in "power" is not be divorced from the fact that in this all we shall bear the image of the Lord from heaven! It is all one picture that we have here.

2. Secondly, there is the difference between the bodies which are in heaven and the bodies which are on earth. Says Paul in verse 40, "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial." Paul, in speaking of the celestial (heavenly) bodies is evidently not referring to the sun, moon and stars! It is also quite evident, it seems to me, that, in thus speaking, he is not referring to the bodies of the angels in heaven. Meyer tries to take this position. He refers to Matthew 22:30, where we read: "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." In our opinion the point is not well-taken to try to maintain that Jesus here teaches that angels have *bodies*. To do so is evidently assuming what must be proved; it is begging the question. The point that Jesus here makes is that even as the angels do not marry, nor are given in marriage, so also in the resurrection we will not be given in marriage. The point of comparison is not in the "body" but in the "marriage." Hence, it is our considered opinion that the heavenly bodies refers to the bodies of the saints as we shall be conformed unto the glorious body of the risen and exalted Christ. There are two kinds of bodies—the earthly and the heavenly. And this is the assumption of Paul throughout in this passage.

3. And it should be noticed that Paul reasons from the reality of the one body to the reality of the other body, that

is, from the reality of the earthly (natural) body to the reality of the heavenly (spiritual) body! Says Paul in verse 44, "If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body." The conditional sentence here is one which expresses determined reality. The protasis, "If there is a natural body" does not place the matter as one of mere possibility. That point is established before all. If this former is true, the latter is equally true. The one body fits with the other. This reasoning from the reality of the natural (psychical) body to the reality of the spiritual (pneumatical) body is not a mere humanly posited proposition. It is rooted in the very nature and purpose of the body of man, as determined by the relationship and difference of the two Adams, the first and the last. This is what has been preached and thus we have believed. The resurrection is no after-thought on the part of God! The coming of sin and death into this world through one man is such that it must needs serve the coming of the second Adam. Hence, if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. The Textus Receptus, it is true, does not here have "if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." It simply reads: "There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." However, the reading we have chosen is well sustained by the unicals A. B. C. D. F. G. And it is a singular reasoning on the part of Paul.

4. It is not an after-thought on the part of God that the heavenly and spiritual body should follow the earthly (earthly) and natural body. For thus it is written in Genesis 2:7: "the first man Adam was made a *living soul*." This refers to Moses' account of the creation act of God whereby he formed man (Adam) out of the dust of the ground. The text in Genesis 2:7, in full, reads as follows: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." What Paul proves from this passage is not that man was created in the image of God, nor that he was created male and female, but rather the nature of Adam's body. He was created unto a *living soul*. Thus it was with the first Adam, who was taken from the earth, and, therefore, was called Adam. He is out of the earth, earthy. He is flesh and blood. He is natural, that is, psychical. His life here is ruled by his soul, the *animal* life. And this is every where first. Afterwards is the spiritual!

5. In speaking of the first Adam as being a "living soul" it should be borne in mind that the term soul (psyche) in the Scriptures refers to more than one thing; it has a rather broad usage. In general it can be said that the term "soul" or "psyche" either refers to the physical soul or to the spiritual soul, considered as a spiritual entity. Taken as the physical soul it refers to the "breath of life," the vital force that animates the body and shows itself in breathing. Closely allied with this meaning is the idea of "physical life" which must be sustained by earthly food and drink. Thus in Matthew 6:25. And then the soul in which there is life, the living soul. From this view-point all the creatures which *move* upon the earth are called *living soul* in Gen. 1, or living

creatures. The living creature is characterized by the fact that it, unlike the plant, is not tied to one place upon the earth, but moves about. Then too the living creature consciously reproduces itself, its young. The living soul is adapted to marriage and being given in marriage, and thus producing the human race. For the first Adam it was not good that he as *living soul* should remain alone. He needs a help-meet. His development is on the earth. And all he brings forth bears the stamp, the imprint, the image of the earthy. Adam could not bring forth heavenly children. He is simply living soul.

In this sense he is *natural*. His body is psychical. It is limited for its knowledge of God and of self to the earthy, and must depend upon the senses of touch, taste, sight, hearing and smelling. Adam could not reach beyond the earthy unto the heavenly as living soul. He is out of the earth, earthy. And all the talk about Adam bringing the entire human race in the way of obedience, by a certain Covenant of Works, to where Christ brings his own, must be deemed to be so much philosophy which cannot stand the touch-stone of the Word of God. He is the *first* Adam, and, as such, he can only bring forth other *living souls*. The body is ever simply psychical, that is, governed by the life of the physical soul, rooted in the blood. It is ever flesh and blood that cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Hence, we must all be changed to enter into the glory of the eternal kingdom.

6. However, the last Adam is different. He is not out of the earth, earthy. He is the *Lord from heaven*! The *second man* (anthropos) is out of heaven. True, he lived on earth, He was born from a woman, suffered and died. But as the *Second Adam*, he is the head of a new human race, the elect. He does not need a help-meet. He does not marry. He saves the human race of the first Adam through water and Spirit. He enters into our death, dies according to the Scriptures for our sins, and is raised the third day according to the Scriptures. And he ascends on high at the right hand of the Father, and He will make all things new. And in the resurrection it will be evident that he is the life-giving Spirit. And then our bodies shall no longer be living soul, which is adapted to the propagation of the human race, and marriage, but we shall then have a spiritual body, adapted to and wholly controlled by the Holy Spirit to serve God day and night in his temple, that God may be all in all.

7. Thus in the wisdom of God the natural is first and then the spiritual. That is no accident. It is thus in the wisdom and goodness of God. And, therefore, if there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body. And we must not ask: how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come. For now we bear the image of the earthy. Presently we shall bear the image of the heavenly. And if we then further inquire into just what this body shall be, then we answer that it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that we shall be like Christ, for we shall see God as He is. And everyone that has his hope upon God purifies himself even as He is pure. G.L.

## IN HIS FEAR

### Interest upon The Principal

(2)

About a year and a half ago we made the acquaintance of a Baptist on the train to Denver. We agreed to send him some of our literature and placed his name on our Reformed Witness Hour radio broadcast's mailing list. Between us there sprang up an irregular correspondence. And it is concerning one of the matters of which he wrote that we would first write at this time.

Very correctly, we believe, he observed that the age in which we are living is the Laodicean age. Or, if you will, it is the lukewarm age. Though as far as our earthly life among the nations is concerned it may be the space age, as far as the church is concerned, it very definitely is the lukewarm or Laodicean age. We cannot agree with him that the church in the world has gone through these seven successive ages or stages of spiritual life in the order of the seven churches of which we read in Revelation two and three. Yet we can surely agree that we are in the last hour and that this last hour is characterized by the lukewarm attitude depicted to be the case in the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22.

There always has been a lukewarm attitude in the church. And this attitude does not appear only at the end of the world. It will manifest itself then as never before on a world-wide scale. But it was ever in the church here below. All is not Israel that is called Israel. And even those who are the true spiritual Israel have the flesh that hankers after the things of the world and is far more interested in the world and its vain treasures and pleasures than in the things of God's kingdom. That also comes to light in the lives of the saints whose lives are treated somewhat extensively on the pages of Holy Writ. Abraham had his times when his faith was but faintly to be seen. There were times when Sarah's faith outshone Abraham's. In the wilderness Israel lost interest in Canaan and was willing to go back to Egypt's bondage. The spirit of indifference in the church today has always been in the flesh of the children of God throughout the ages. This does not simply manifest itself in the last days.

But it surely is here as never before. There is so little interest upon the principal things. The truth? Who cares today what his church teaches? Men are not interested in that to any great degree. For the sake of numbers; for the sake of power and satisfaction of the flesh; for the sake of an unscriptural oneness, they are ready to keep silent exactly on the things which in ages past have made them a separate denomination and group. Beautiful buildings, a rich social life, a lower church budget for the individual by a larger

group, these are the things that interest men in the church today.

You can with great difficulty get them to talk about doctrine. O, they will proudly speak of their mission projects. With glowing faces they will tell you of the money they pour into the work of saving those poor heathens in yonder land. On the map they will show you how far flung their mission activity extends and list the number of missionaries and the size of the groups among whom they labor. But when you come back to home and ask them what *their own children* are being taught, when you want to discuss with them their doctrines and examine them in the light of Scripture, they suddenly remember something that can draw them away from you, or when flight is impossible, they will resort to silence or vague generalities. Interest in the truth of God's Word is at a low ebb today. In a time when more Bibles are printed and sold than ever before, in a time when the facilities for printing spiritual material are far superior to ages past, men do not care to study that Word or take the time to read spiritually edifying literature. It is the lukewarm age. There is apathy, indifference, a what-do-I-care attitude that for the sake of convenience will gladly tolerate your radically different views but does not wish to be disturbed in its vain dreams and worldly pleasures.

O, belonging to a church is all right. It's nice to be a member. Well, it is even the fashionable thing to do. What church does not make much difference. After all there are different roads to heaven, and each church walks on a different road and arrives at a different section of heaven. To be sure, some parts of heaven will be more wonderful than the others, but they are all wonderful; and we need not disturb ourselves too much about what church it is to which we belong, as long as we belong to a church. After all we want to be buried from the church, do we not?

That is not what Jesus said!

He said, "Narrow is the gate and straight is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," Matthew 7:14. He did not seem to know that there was more than one road. He speaks of THE way and THE gate as though there was only one. In that same connection and in that same chapter He also says, "Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom, but he who does the will of my Father Who is in heaven," Matthew 7:21. The age-old argument is raised that we will all be one in heaven, why should we not be one now? In heaven we will not argue and fight about doctrinal issues, why should we do so now? Are we doing the will of our Father in heaven when we separate, call the views of others heresy and are filled with fire to say things just so and allow no other interpretation? Ah, but let us remember that the will of the Father is that we glorify Him. Surely we may not get heated with passion to defend ourselves and our position simply because it is our position. But just as surely we may not be indifferent when God's glory is denied Him. Indeed we will not argue



about doctrine in heaven; but not because then it will not be our calling to maintain God's glory. It will be because there will be none there who desire to do anything else but glorify God. And after all, it is not a question of whether we get to heaven or not, for we do not get there by our works. But it is a question of the glory of God. That is our calling. As His image bearers we have no other calling, and all we are called upon to do centers in that one principal calling of glorifying the God Who created and redeemed us. Those who walk on another road do not walk toward heaven but toward hell. Therefore it is not necessarily so that we shall together walk the street of gold when this earthly pilgrimage is over for us.

Jesus knew also of this.

He declared to His disciples, in connection with His giving of the signs of His return, that the love of many would wax cold, Matthew 24:12. You see that so clearly today, and it will get worse as we approach the end. Even as far as the matter of discipline as well as doctrine is concerned, it does not bother men at all that their church is full of wicked practices. O, it ought not be that way they will concede, but it does not hurt them inwardly to see it that way. They have not been touched enough by the wickedness to see the need and wisdom of applying discipline to such. Indeed, the love has waxed cold. And then we mean the love of God within the church. They have a certain fleshly, carnal love for their fellow church member who does not trouble them with doctrinal and practical questions and lets them dream on in their unreal church-world and life. In that emotional love they rather like the chap who walks in sin and like to treat him as an underdog who needs a little care and protection from the big stick tactics. But the love of God is not there. For it is the love of God in the heart of His office bearers that impels them, for the glory of God, to cleanse His temple and to purify the doctrine and walk of life of the congregation entrusted to their care.

Knowledge of the truth is at a minimum. The covenant youth are given less and less instruction in the truth of God's Word. The age when they are sent to catechism is continually being pushed back. The lessons must be made shorter and simpler. Memorization must be cut to a minimum (whatever that might mean) and, lest they rebel at it, they must not be required to do anything at all in this line when they have arrived at the age when they can best understand these things and benefit from them. Religion is a good idea, and our children ought to get a little religion too. But be sure that it is a little! There are too many other more worthwhile things for them!?

Shame on us! Continue on this way and the day will soon be here when God will also spew us out of His mouth. He will taste nothing pleasing in us. Were we only hot, or were we only cold, He could dwell with us. But as a lukewarm church we would be nauseating unto Him.

And you know, the sad thing about it all is that the very thing that we need to bring us back to spiritual sanity is the very thing we avoid when this spirit of unconcern, this lack of interest upon the principal things of God's kingdom is ours: the Word of God. So much apathy, so little interest is there in the things of God's kingdom that lines such as these are studiously avoided. Men will go to church once a Sunday, if the weather is right and if the minister will cater to them and be sure to get his whole message across in thirty minutes, or better still in twenty minutes. And they seek a church where that which is proclaimed is in harmony with their own apathetic spirit. The very food they need in order to grow spiritually strong, they studiously avoid. And their love waxes colder and colder.

Were it not for the grace of God, we too would go that way and perish. We would hear Jesus say to us, "I never knew you. Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). Were it not for the grace of God and His sovereign, unchangeable decree of election; were it not for the fact that having begun a good work in us, He will perform it until the day of Christ, we would never turn from such indifference and would surely lose our love to Him. But He is faithful, and even though we may run away from His Word, in His faithfulness and mercy He will yet cause His Spirit in our hearts to recall to our memory and bring once again to our consciousness His Word of truth. By it He will call His people back. They may be in Laodicea and find it difficult to have interest in spiritual things in a congregation that has no use for these things. But Revelation 3:20 indicates that He calls His people out of that church by His Word and Spirit. He knocks, not at the door of their hearts but at the door of this church, to call out His elect with the promise that when they leave and reorganize, He will come in and bless their new congregation with His presence. Surely it is of His mercy that we are saved and due to the fact that He is unchangeable that we perish not. May He by His Word and Spirit wake us up and deliver us from our indifference and disinterested spirit. May He bring us back to live in His fear.

J.A.H.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On August 17, 1960, the Lord willing, our dear parents,

REV. and MRS. GEORGE C. LUBBERS

will commemorate their 30th Wedding Anniversary. We are thankful to our God for having spared them for each other, and for us these many years. Our earnest prayer is that He may bless them in the way that lies ahead as they labor in the cause of Jesus Christ.

Their loving children,  
Miss Agatha Lubbers  
Miss Garretta Lubbers  
Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius G. Lubbers  
Mr. Lammert J. Lubbers

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

#### VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

#### FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

#### *Modern Prelates Are Not Apostles*

To determine whether modern bishops are apostles, it is necessary in the first place to determine the nature of the Apostleship, and ascertain whether modern prelates have the gifts, qualifications, and credentials of the office. Who then were the Apostles? They were a definite number of men selected by Christ to be His witnesses, to testify to His doctrines, to the facts of His life, to His death, and specially to His resurrection. To qualify them for this office of authoritative witnesses, it was necessary, (1) That they should have independent and plenary knowledge of the gospel. (2) That they should have seen Christ after His resurrection. (3) That they should be inspired, i.e., that they should be individually and severally so guided by the Spirit as to be infallible in all their instruction. (4) That they should be authenticated as the messengers of Christ, by adherence to the true gospel, by success in preaching (Paul said to the Corinthians that they were the seal of his apostleship, I Cor. 9:2); and by signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Such were the gifts and qualifications and credentials of the original Apostles; and those who claimed the office without possessing these gifts and credentials, were pronounced false apostles and messengers of Satan.

When Paul claimed to be an apostle, he felt it necessary to prove, (1) That he had been appointed not by man nor through men, but immediately by Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:2). (2) That he had not been taught the gospel by others, but received his knowledge by immediate revelation (Gal. 1:12). (3) That he had seen Christ after His resurrection (I Cor. 9:1 and 15:8). (4) That he was inspired, or infallible as a teacher, so that men were bound to recognize his teachings as those of Christ (I Cor. 14:37). (5) That the Lord had authenticated his apostolic mission as fully as he had done that of Peter (Gal. 2:8). (6) "The signs of an apostle," he tells the Corinthians "were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (II Cor. 12:12).

Modern prelates do not claim to possess any one of these gifts. Nor do they pretend to the credentials which authenticated the mission of the Apostles of Christ. They claim no immediate commission; no independent knowledge derived from immediate revelation; no personal infallibility; no vision

of Christ; and no gift of miracles. That is, they claim the authority of the office, but not its reality. It is very plain, therefore, that they are not apostles. They cannot have the authority of the office without having the gifts on which that authority was founded, and from which it emanated. If a man cannot be a prophet without the gift of prophecy; or a miracleworker without the gift of miracles; or have the gift of tongues without the ability to speak other languages than his own; no man can rightfully claim to be an apostle without possessing the gifts which made the original Apostles what they were. The deaf and dumb might as reasonably claim to have the gift of tongues. The world has never seen or suffered a greater imposture than that weak, ignorant, and often immoral men, should claim the same authority to teach and rule that belonged to men to whom the truth was supernaturally revealed, who were confessedly infallible in its communication, and to whose divine mission God Himself bore witness in signs and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost. The office of the Apostles as described in the New Testament, was, therefore, from its nature incapable of being transmitted, and has not in fact been perpetuated.

There is no command given in the New Testament to keep up the succession of the Apostles. When Judas had apostatized, Peter said his place must be filled, but the selection was to be confined to those, as he said, "which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that He was taken up from us" (Acts 1:21, 22). The reason assigned for this appointment was not that the Apostleship might be continued, but that the man selected might be "a witness with us of His resurrection." "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles." (Incidentally, it may well be considered very doubtful whether Matthias may be considered an apostle. Paul certainly was an apostle, and the Scriptures inform us that the number of apostles is twelve.—H.V.) And that was the end. We never hear of Matthias afterward. It is very doubtful whether this appointment of Matthias had any validity. What is here recorded (Acts 1:15-26), took place before the Apostles had been endued with power from on high (Acts 1:8), and, therefore, before they had any authority to act in the premises. Christ in His own time and way completed the number of His witnesses by calling Paul to be an Apostle. But, however this may be, here if ever *exceptio probat regulam*. It proves that the ranks of the Apostles could be filled, and the succession continued only from the number of those who could bear independent witness of the resurrection and doctrines of Christ.

Besides the fact that there is no command to appoint apostles, there is clear evidence that the office was not designed to be perpetuated. With regard to all the permanent officers of the Church, there is, (1) Not only a promise to continue the gifts which pertained to the office,

and the command to appoint suitable persons to fill it, but also a specification of the qualifications to be sought and demanded; and (2) a record of the actual appointment of incumbents; and (3) historical evidence of their continuance in the Church from that day to this. With regard to the Apostleship, all this is wanting. As we have seen, the gifts of the office have not been continued, there is no command to perpetuate the office, no directions to guide the Church in the selection of proper persons to be apostles, no record of their appointment, and no historical evidence of their continuance; on the contrary, they disappear entirely after the death of the original twelve. It might as well be asserted that the Pharaohs of Egypt, or the twelve Caesars of Rome have been continued, as that the race of the apostles has been perpetuated.

It is true that there are a few passages in which persons other than the original twelve seem to be designated as apostles. But from the beginning of the Church until of late, no one has ventured on that account to regard Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, and Titus, as apostles, in the official sense of the word. All the designations given to the officers of the Church in the New Testament, are used in different senses. Thus, "presbyter" or "elder," means, an old man, a Jewish officer, an officer of the Church. The word "deacon" means a domestic, sometimes a secular officer, sometimes any minister of the Church; sometimes the lowest order of church officers. Because Paul and Peter call themselves "deacons," it does not prove that their office was to serve tables. In like manner the word "apostle" is sometimes used in its etymological sense "a messenger," sometimes in a religious sense, as we use the word "missionary"; and sometimes in its strict sense, in which it is confined to the immediate messengers of Christ. Nothing can be plainer from the New Testament than that neither Silas nor Timothy, nor any other persons, is ever spoken of as the official equal of the twelve Apostles. These constitute a class by themselves. They stand out in the New Testament as they do in all Church history, as the authoritative founders of the Christian Church, without peers or colleagues.

If, then, the Apostleship, from its nature and design, was incapable of transmission; if there be this decisive evidence from Scripture and history, that it has not been perpetuated, then the whole theory of the Romanists concerning the Church falls to the ground. That theory is founded on the assumption that prelates are apostles, invested with the same authority to teach and rule, as the original messengers of Christ. If this assumption is unfounded, then all claim to the infallibility of the Church must be given up; for it is not pretended that the mass of the people is infallible nor the priesthood, but simply the episcopate. And bishops are infallible only on the assumption that they are apostles, in the official sense of the term. This they certainly are not. The Church may make priests, and bishops, and even popes; but Christ alone can make an Apostle. For an Apostle was a man

endowed with supernatural knowledge, and with supernatural power.

*Infallibility Founded on a False Interpretation of the Promise of Christ*

The third decisive argument against the infallibility of the Church is, that Christ never promised to preserve it from all error. What is here meant is that Christ never promised the true Church, that is, "the company of true believers," that they should not err in doctrine. He did promise that they should not fatally apostatize from the truth. He did promise that He would grant His true disciples such a measure of divine guidance by His Spirit, that they should know enough to be saved. He, moreover, promised that He would call men into the ministry, and give them the qualifications of faithful teachers, such as were the presbyters whom the Apostles ordained in every city. But there is no promise of infallibility either to the Church as a whole, or to any class of men in the Church. Christ promised to sanctify his people but this was not a promise to make them perfectly holy in this life. He promised to give them joy and peace in believing; but this is not a promise to make them perfectly happy in this life, that they should have no trials or sorrows. Then, why should the promise to teach be a promise to render infallible. As the Church has gone through the world bathed in tears and blood, so has she gone soiled with sin and error. It is just as manifest that she has never been infallible, as that she has never been perfectly holy. Christ no more promised the one than the other. — end of this quote from Hodge as far as this article is concerned. The Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation in our next article.

At this time we wish to make an observation. It is, of course, true that Christ has never promised the individual believers and children of God that they will never err either in walk or doctrine. This none will deny. However, we must surely distinguish between the individual children of God and the Church of God. The Lord Jesus has surely promised His Church that He will lead it into all the truth. And this certainly must mean that this guidance of the Spirit will be infallible. Every guidance of the Holy Spirit is infallible. And when the Scriptures contain the promise that the Church will be guided into all the truth, then we understand this to mean that the Church, whenever confronted by the lie and called upon to defend the truth over against the lie will certainly be led, unerringly, into the truth of the Word of God. Only, we must understand that the Church, as Church, is led unerringly into the truth, and not that a single man, as the pope, is infallibly led by the Spirit of God into all the truth of the Word of God.

H.V.

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How many and wise Thy works are, O Lord!  
The earth with the wealth of wisdom is stored;  
The sea bears in safety the ships to and fro,  
And creatures unnumbered it shelters below.

## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

#### OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

#### REJECTION OF ERRORS

#### Article 7 (continued)

As we mentioned last time, our fathers in this article reject the Arminian contention that temporary faith and saving faith differ only in duration with an appeal to the Parable of the Sower, or, more correctly, the Parable of the Four Kinds of Soil. And they make a comparison between one class of bad soil and the good soil. They single out the stony soil, undoubtedly because, as we have seen, Scripture specifically mentions that these believe for a while and later fall away. And we have already noted that besides this difference of duration there are three points of difference mentioned by the fathers in this seventh article — three points of difference which underlie and explain the difference in duration. We have already quoted the Scriptural passages under consideration; and we may therefore now proceed with our discussion of the details of the three-fold distinction made by our *Canons*.

What, first of all, is the picture of the stony-soil-hearer-of-the-Word?

We must understand that this stony soil is apparently good soil, soil which as far as the surface is concerned is soft soil, but which thinly overlays hard rock. It is not soil that is intermixed with stones, gravel soil. That can after all be fairly good soil. You can have a goodly measure of gravel and stones in the soil, and yet it will yield a fair crop. But this is rocky soil, so that there is a layer of rock under the surface. And the layer of rock is covered by a thin layer of good soil. And that means that apparently, that is, as far as the surface is concerned, it is good soil. You cannot see the hard rock below the surface. And the result is that the seed will fall into such soil, and will probably sprout more quickly than in the good soil. But there is no depth of earth. And because of this, when the sun comes up, the plant is burned and withers. It lacks moisture. And it establishes no deep root. Hence, before the plant can grow up and bear fruit, it dies.

This is a figure, according to the parable, of a certain class of hearers of the Word. And what characterizes these hearers? First of all, they have an evil heart. As far as heart is concerned they are just like the wayside-hearers.

Their heart is hard, like the rock. It is filled with enmity against God. It has no receptivity for the Word whatsoever. It hates the Word of God. And the seed of the Word never penetrates the heart. But, in the second place, in a natural way the make-up of these stony-soil-hearers is soft. The surface that covers that hard heart is like the soil that covers the rock. They are people that are easily affected by anything and by any circumstance. And especially if the preaching is a little emotional and sentimental, like the preaching in many revival meetings, these people are also easily affected by the preaching. And the result is that there is a certain imitation of faith, an imitation which in its external manifestation and activity is very similar to the manifestation and activity of true faith, but which does not have its ground and basis in the power of saving faith in the heart. It does not have its root in the heart and in the principle of regeneration that is instilled in the heart by Christ through His Spirit. Man, who is unable to judge the heart and who sees only that external appearance, is not able to distinguish that imitation or counterfeit faith from the genuine faith in Christ — at least, not at once. But those who manifest that outward activity of this imitation faith are motivated by emotion, by the impulse of conscience, by pride, by various circumstances. However that may be, their action is self-centered and self-seeking rather than God-centered and motivated by the love of God. But they are in a natural way affected by the preaching. They immediately receive the Word with joy. And that seems to be their characteristic, that they receive the Word with joy. That joy is a mere natural and emotional joy, not a spiritual joy in the Lord. But as far as the surface is concerned, you cannot tell the difference at once. Their joy expresses itself in singing and in hallelujahs. They are stirred in the surface of their nature — not in their heart — in such a way that they at once respond to the preaching of the Word with a highly emotional response, so that they may even seem to be more converted than those who receive the Word in true faith. But they have no root in themselves. No more than the surface of their nature is affected and stirred. The heart remains hard. Their joy is not from the heart, but purely natural. They have never been ingrafted into Christ. And their joy does not spring from a heart that abides in living communion with Christ. That is also why their reaction is one of natural joy too, while the first and deepest and principal manifestation of the real life of the kingdom of heaven in this life is sorrow, sorrow over sin.

Thus it is too, in the third place, that they endure but for a time and never bring forth fruit. Like the seed that sprouts quickly but never strikes deep root, and which withers away under the heat of the sun and never brings forth fruit, so these people of immediate and temporary faith with their blooming joy wither under the heat of tribulation and persecution. The chief characteristic of their counterfeit faith is their natural joy. And therefore when the sorrows occasioned by tribulation and persecution arise, these are

completely contrary to their natural joy. They are offended, scandalized, at a Word that involves the sorrow of tribulation. And so the plant of this temporary faith dies before it can ever yield any fruit of patient continuance in well-doing.

Hence, those who believe only for a time do so because they have a hard and unreceptive heart beneath a naturally soft and emotional nature. They believe only for a time because the seed of the Word never penetrates that hard heart and takes root in their heart. And therefore, their faith is only for a time and never produces the fruit of true, saving faith.

In contrast the Lord pictures the good-soil hearers.

In this connection you have, first of all, the picture of the good soil. For the purposes which concern us at present we may note that this good soil is not like the shallow rocky soil in which the seed could not strike root. It is soil that is fertile, well-prepared, clean, and deep. It is receptive to the seed. The seed can penetrate the soil, sprout, strike root, and grow and flourish, and finally bring forth fruit.

This good soil is the figure of a heart that is good and honest, according to the record in Luke. It is a heart that is receptive for the seed of the Word, a regenerated heart. Notice, by the way, that this heart is good and honest, well-prepared and receptive soil, *before* the seed is sown. And that certainly does not mean that the heart is naturally and innately good. But it is a heart that has been prepared by the Holy Spirit for the seed of the Word. For unless a man be born again, he cannot even see the kingdom of God. He is a stranger to it and to the Word of the kingdom from a spiritual point of view. But the Holy Spirit causes a man to be born again and causes the heart to be prepared for the seed of the Word. And after the soil of the heart has been prepared by the Holy Spirit, then the seed of the Word is sown. Hence, indirectly the parable here teaches immediate regeneration. But at any rate, our point now is that the heart of this good-soil hearer is good. It is regenerate. And not only is that heart regenerate and filled with the principle of the love of God, but it is also actually receptive for the seed of the Word, that is, it hungers and thirsts after righteousness, so that when the seed of the Word is sown, that heart is willing and ready to repent and to be sorry for sin and to seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness. For the seed of the Word is sown and sprouts and takes root, firm root, in the heart, from which are the issues of life. And that heart is a heart that is already in abiding connection with Christ and his life. And so the true believer is firmly rooted in Christ. The result is that fruit is produced. When the heart is prepared by the Spirit of Christ and is regenerated and filled with the love of God in principle and thus hungers and thirsts after righteousness, then that hunger and thirst is made conscious and is satisfied, so that the result is repentance and faith and sanctification of life. That is the fruit. It is spiritual fruit, inward fruit, the fruit of a saving faith. That fruit is brought forth in various measure. First of all, it is not always the same in the same person. One time

differs from another in respect to the reception of the seed. Even the Christian is not always the same in bearing fruit. And secondly, one person differs from another in bearing fruit. The seed is the same; and undoubtedly the seed always bears fruit to its full extent. But the persons differ in relation to the seed. While all the good-soil hearers receive the seed in an honest and good heart, they do not all have the same capacity and the same measure of faith. And so they bring forth fruit, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred fold. However that may be, when the seed falls upon the good soil, when the heart is prepared and the seed of the Word is sown, then the bearing of fruit is sure and inevitable. The good-soil hearers bring forth fruit faithfully and perseveringly. In Luke it is emphasized that they bring forth fruit *with patience*. The same tribulation and persecution befall the good-soil hearers as come upon the rocky-soil hearers. And these storms of persecution and tribulation are good for the child of God, who has grace in his heart, because they cause that seed to strike deeper root. The result is that the child of God strikes his roots deeper into Christ, holds on to Christ by His grace. And so he endures to the end, and with patience brings forth more fruit. He is cleansed and sanctified and strengthened. And since his joy is a true joy of heart in God through Christ, the sorrow of tribulation and persecution does not cause him to lose that joy and to be offended, but increases it, so that he rejoices even in tribulation.

Thus it is once more abundantly plain on the basis of Scripture that the Arminian heresy is false and misleading, and that it deprives one of the solid comfort that he shall finally obtain the victory and of the infallible pledge or earnest of eternal glory, without which the elect of God would be of all men the most miserable.

H.C.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of Doon wishes to express their sympathy to our Pastor and family, Rev. and Mrs. G. Van Baren, in the loss of their sister-in-law,

MRS. RICHARD VAN BAREN

May our God comfort the hearts of the bereaved with His glorious grace.

The Consistory,

Jake Van Den Top, Vice President  
James Blankespoor, Clerk

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Board of the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School wishes hereby to express its heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Mr. John C. Lubbers, in the death of his daughter,

MRS. AGAELNE VAN BAREN

whom the Lord took out of our midst so suddenly.

May the Lord comfort him and his family through His Word and Spirit in these days of special grief.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21.

Board of the Hope Prot. Ref.  
Christian School,  
Richard L. Bloem, Secretary

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The General Synod

(Article 50, D.K.O.)

#### *Convening an Early Synod*

When Synods met once every two years, circumstances sometimes arose in the interim that necessitated the calling of the Synod at an earlier date. Provision for this was made in Article 50 of the Church Order, which states: "If it becomes necessary in the opinion of at least three classes to call a meeting of Synod within two years, the local church designated for this purpose shall determine the time and place." Since, however, the churches now meet every year in Synod, the urgency of this rule is reduced by one half. Nevertheless, even within the space of twelve months certain abnormal circumstances can arise that would necessitate a change in the date of the synodical meeting and so it is good to have these provisions in the event such an emergency should arise.

We must make a few observations in this connection concerning our own history during the years 1953 and 1954. The first of these is that in connection with the calling of an early Synod, the Church Order clearly authorizes the calling church to determine the time and place where such meeting is to be held. This is rather important. Our readers will recall that our Synod in June, 1953, did not finish its agenda and decided to reconvene in March of 1954. During the interim the schism, caused by De Wolf and his followers, took place. It must also be kept in mind that during this interim the Classis acted in the controversy. Classis declared Rev. De Wolf and others schismatic and recognized the consistory of Revs. H. Hoeksema and C. Hanko as the legal consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church. And this consistory was the consistory of the calling church of the Synod of 1953. Hence, although it may be admitted that the reconvening of a Synod is not the same as the calling of a new Synod, it is certainly reasonable and logically correct to say that Article 50 of the Church Order gives the calling church the authority to determine the time and place of this meeting. In light of the Church Order this is certainly much more correct than to ascribe this power to the stated clerk of the Synod. Nothing in the Church Order substantiates that. When then the consistory of the First Church, because of the circumstances which had arisen, changed the place of the meeting from First Church to Fourth Church, there was no breach of Church Order nor did this action of the consistory in any way make that Synod illegal as some seem to think. On the other hand, it is unthinkable that the opposition group, though it met at the designated place, could be considered the legal Synod of the denomination. They not only ignored the consistory of the calling church

but they also received those who had been officially and legally declared schismatic by Classis East.

Our second observation here concerns a matter of Church Order that is related to the matter of protest which undersigned submitted to the Synod in 1959 and 1960. I am not going to discuss this protest now because it has been treated very thoroughly by a study committee during the past year and decided by the Synod of 1960 and those who are interested in the matter may obtain all the material by procuring a copy of the *Acts of Synod*. Neither am I going to discuss the decision of Synod or my personal reaction to that decision. The only matter of concern here is my contention in that protest that under our present two Classes system, there are certain rules and regulations of the Church Order which cannot be rigidly enforced. The reason for this is that our Church Order is constructed on the assumption that a Synod is represented by several Classes. The rules incorporated into the Church Order fit that set-up and when they are applied to a different set-up, they simply do not fit. Now with respect to the matter of my protest the relevant question concerned the rights of delegates to vote in matters that concerned their particular Classis and with the decision of the Synod in this matter, one can do very little because, in effect, it says two opposite things. But be that as it may, I can concede that the Church Order would deny the delegates of a classis the right to vote in a matter of protest against that classis and yet, this rule cannot be enforced in a two-classes set-up without doing great injury to the function of the Synod. A modified rule should be adopted but this Synod did not do and so the problem still is there and can easily come up again as it did in 1957.

The same thing is true in Article 50 of the Church Order. It holds that at least three classes must deem it necessary before an early Synod can be convened. The Christian Reformed Church has changed this to read that a majority of the classes must deem it necessary. Taken either way, the rule cannot be enforced in our case because we do not have three classes and you cannot speak of a majority of two. Consequently, we need a new rule to fit our circumstances. Such a rule has also been adopted by Synod in this case. It reads thus:

"When a Classis desires an early Synod, it shall apply to the convening church, whose consistory in turn shall seek the approval of the other classis."

Under this rule it appears to be rather easy to have an early Synod convened. However, in actual practice this is not the case. In fact, it is very difficult to have this done. For example, suppose that toward the end of the calendar year a church or several churches in Classis East desire an early Synod. The matter would be brought to the Classis in January. If the Classis agreed that this was necessary, they would apply to the calling church. The consistory of that church would bring the matter to Classis West which would meet in March and if they also concurred, the Synod could



be convened in April at the earliest which would only be a couple months before the regular time. A Synod that was desired in November, let us say, could not be convened for almost a half year. Now suppose that we reverse this. The matter becomes a little better then. A church in the West brings a request for an early Synod to the September Classis. This Classis applies to the calling church which brings the matter to Classis East in October. A Synod could then be called in November but then notice that this is very unlikely to happen because the Synod has just met in June and this would mean that some very extenuating circumstances would have to arise between June and September to bring this about. And if the situation in the West just missed the September Classis, it would have to wait until March and then the earliest possible time that this process could be completed would be late April or early May. The little time that is gained would hardly make it worth while to go through the process. Fortunately it is rarely necessary as long as annual Synods are being held.

#### *Procedure at Synod*

Most of us are acquainted with the procedure of our ecclesiastical meetings. That the Synod (and Classes or Consistories also) meets and performs its work according to correct procedure is important, not only because Scripture itself demands that all things be done in good order, but also because this is the only way that the work can be done efficiently. Incorrect procedure leads to all kinds of confusion which results in erroneous decisions and these are always detrimental to the churches.

A few years ago our churches adopted a set of rules by which the meetings of Synod are to be regulated. We are not going to discuss these here since they will be included in the new printing of our Church Order book that will be made available at a nominal cost in the near future. Every family will want to have a copy of this book since it will contain much valuable information. No consistory member can afford to be without it. When it is available the committee in charge of having it printed will undoubtedly inform you as to where you can obtain your copy.

To the adoption of rules, some always object. Monsma and Van Dellen express this sentiment with respect to similar rules that were adopted in 1945 by the Christian Reformed Church. They write in "The Church Order Commentary" as follows:

"As stands to reason, some rules of procedure are necessary for the orderly and efficient operation of our synodical gatherings. But we do believe that rules of procedure which go into great detail are apt to work harm as well as good. We feel, for instance, that part VI of the Rules for Synodical Procedure is in many instances too involved and too technical. To multiply rules and stipulations for our ecclesiastical gatherings we deem not only needless but also dangerous."

Then a bit further: "Multiplication of detailed rules and regulations for ecclesiastical assemblies have a binding tendency and are apt to turn our gatherings into the direction of mere business meetings, whereas we should far rather promote the larger consideration of the spiritual interests of the churches. And for the due consideration of the spiritual interests of our churches we need a certain amount of liberty. Rule upon rule and precept upon precept will have a binding and choking effect upon our synods or classes as deliberative gatherings and upon the majority of the delegates to these assemblies. When rules are multiplied, delegates in many instances will hesitate to take the floor for fear of being called to order for transgressing some rule . . ."

Although the dangers that are sounded in this quotation may indeed be considered, we do not believe that the rules that have been adopted by our Synod are in any way detrimental to the function of that body. Neither do we believe that they are as involved as is sometimes presented. Most of the rules merely express orderly practices that have always been accepted. After getting accustomed to the few innovations these rules have introduced, we find that they have had a very healthy effect upon the proceedings of our Synods. Evidence of this was our last held Synod which had a very large agenda and yet all the work was completed in eight days. Without taking away any credit for this that rightly belongs to the capable leadership of the president of Synod, Rev. C. Hanko, we feel that part of this was due to the rules of order and the systematic way in which the work was performed according to these rules.

G.V.d.B.

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### **Consistories Attention**

The following catechism books will be available for use in our churches for the coming season: Bible Stories for Beginners, Book I, Book II, and Book III; Old Testament History for Juniors; New Testament History for Juniors; Old Testament History for Seniors and New Testament History for Seniors. These books may be obtained by writing to Rev. G. Vanden Berg, 9402 - 53rd Court, Oak Lawn, Illinois.

The Committee,  
Rev. J. A. Heys, Sec'y

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### **Notice for Classis West**

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, in Doon, Iowa, on Wednesday, September 21, 1960. The consistories are reminded of the rule that all matters for this classical agendum must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk not later than thirty days before the meeting of Classis.

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

## ALL AROUND US

*Reply to Mr. Vernon Graeser.*

In the July 1st issue of *The Standard Bearer* brother Vernon Graeser of Tucson, Arizona, asked the undersigned for a reply to several questions he raised that have to do with Christian Economics. He suggested that we write a few articles in the S. B. answering the questions he would like answered. To this request we now reply.

Let me say, first of all, that we appreciate the attention the brother has given to our contributions to the S. B. I believe it was Alexander McClaren who said: "It is the oil of appreciation that makes the machinery of social relations run more smoothly." This maxim has significance also for those who are busy in the field of religious journalism. Brother Graeser may conclude therefore that his complimentary remarks were well-taken.

Secondly, however, we believe the brother is mistaken if he concluded that we are an authority on Christian Economics. The articles we wrote that touch on this subject were never intended to be authoritative. Rather, they were merely observations we made relative to the observations of others. The brother writes that he is "studying economics as a sort of hobby." It is very well possible that he could speak with some authority respecting the matters I referred to in my articles.

In the third place, I would remark that we will have to disappoint the brother in his request that we devote a few articles to answering his questions. Important as the questions he raises and the entire matter of Christian Economics may be, the set-up of *The Standard Bearer* does not allow me the space for such a series. Nor do I think such a series is necessary for the treatment of his questions. We will attempt to give him an answer in this writing, and if the brother receives no satisfaction, he may write me signifying the same and we will be happy to correspond privately until satisfaction is reached.

Now as to the questions the brother raises, let me briefly restate them and then try to answer them in the space allotted me.

He asks: Is the Christian to confine himself to merely spiritual matters or is he also concerned with material matters? Would it be wrong for him to attempt in accordance with God's will to remove poverty, promote peace, overcome disease, improve education, etc.? Or should he take the attitude, this is not our permanent home? I'm simply passing thru, therefore I need not concern myself with the material things of this life. The brother informs us that we have Christian doctors, educators, hospitals, psychiatrists, even prime ministers. Why not Christian Economists? Is it wrong for Christian doctors to reestablish health, teachers to improve education, philanthropists to donate gifts to the

needy? Do they do wrong, do they become materialistic and humanistic when they do this? Is it possible for all these people to do all these works of charity and still place the kingdom of God first?

Our reply to the above questions will be built around the following three propositions:

1. The Christian is by virtue of election, regeneration and justification a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.
2. The Christian is required to live for a time in the midst of this present evil world.
3. The Christian in the world is required to live thetically out of the principle of regeneration and according to the revelation of God's will in Scripture in each department of life where God calls him.

Concerning each of these propositions we offer a brief explanation.

In the first place, brother Graeser will agree with me, I'm sure, that the Word of God establishes that first proposition, namely, that the Christian is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Of this the apostle writes in Phil. 3:20: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." The word "conversation" is really "citizenship." The text means that the child of God is an alien, a foreigner, while he is in this world. His only commonwealth to which he belongs is in heaven. It is exactly because this is so that both he and all that he does in this world marks him as a stranger. He simply does not belong here. He belongs in heaven, and to heaven he must go.

It is also true that because he belongs to heaven, that he is to seek the kingdom of God first. Matt. 6:33 teaches, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Brother Graeser understands and subscribes to this principle when he writes: "Now I do not believe that we are to seek first this present world." Without going into a thorough exegesis of the above passage, it seems to me that in the light of the context the Lord teaches that negatively we are not to be concerned, anxious, filled with anxiety or care about the mundane things, what we shall eat, what we shall wear, etc., and positively, we are to be controlled by the principle that the kingdom of God is chief and the only real concern of the child of God. This same truth the apostle expresses in Phil. 4:6, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Here also the apostle would have us not at all anxious about worldly things, and positively, to lay all our requests before God Who cares for us. In Col. 3:1 we read, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

These passages will suffice to show that the prime calling and interest of the child of God is to seek the kingdom of God which is heavenly because of his peculiar relation to God and His kingdom of which he has been counted worthy

to be citizen on the basis of the merits of Christ Who is his federal Head and Redeemer.

In the second place, however, this does not mean that because the Christian is not of this world that he is not in it. Fact is, that for a time the Christian is required to live in the very midst of this present evil world.

Very interesting and instructive is that which we read in the so-called sacerdotal prayer of Jesus in John 17:14-18. "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world."

From this portion of Scripture it is plain that it is not the intention of the Lord Jesus that His people should be separated from the present world in the physical sense of the word. Brother Graeser is aware, no doubt, that there are sects which believe in world flight. They advocate for their following a physical separation in the most literal sense. In distinction from these we believe not in world flight but in world fight.

These separatists undoubtedly interpret the command of the apostle in II Cor. 6:17, "wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate" in the most literal and physical sense. I am not aware of any passage in Scripture that denies the Christian a place in this world or in any of its departments. These departments or spheres of life are many and they seem to increase in number and size as the world develops in history. The areas in which man lives today are much wider in scope, and much more intricate in their involvements than that of say fifty years ago, and even ten years ago. I have often said that if our grandfathers could come forth from their graves for just a moment to see the world in which we live, they would be so frightened they would retreat to their graves for a hiding place. The children of God today are required to live in the space age. And who knows what the age of tomorrow will be if the Lord tarries? In all these areas and departments of life the Christian lives and moves and has his being. There are the departments of the home, school and church; the departments of politics, industry, science, economics, etc.

This does not mean, however, that because the Christian is to live in the world in all its departments, that he has the license to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, that he is to participate with the world in its mad schemes, join its unions, etc. Concerning this the apostle warns in the context of II Cor. 6:17 and again in Rom. 12:2. In the latter passage we read: "And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The word "world" in this text is not "cosmos" but "age." The world is looked at from the viewpoint of its

present evil system. We are therefore not to fashion ourselves according to the scheme of this present evil age, but are to be busy fitting ourselves on the pattern of the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God by the renewing of our minds. In one word, we are to be spiritually different. It means not, that when the world wears laced oxfords we are to wear high-buttoned shoes; but it means that when the world perpetrates evil, we are to choose to do the will of God. It means not that when the world wants to build its picture shows that I must cooperate, but it means that I, standing in the midst of the present evil scheme of things testify, as Noah did for 120 years, that the Lord is coming to destroy the evil world and inaugurate a kingdom in which righteousness shall dwell. It means not, that the Christian is some kind of a savory salt that is aimed to preserve the rotten meat of this world, but he is a savory salt in this sense that he is the manifestation of that which is acceptable to God as he lives and has his being in this world.

This leads me to say in the third place that the Christian in the world is required to live thetically out of the principle of regeneration and according to the revelation of God's will in Scripture in each department of life where God calls him.

He represents the thesis, i.e., he stands for all that is good. The present evil world represents the antithesis, i.e., that which opposes the Christian and the good.

We could illustrate the position of the Christian in the world in the figure of three concentric circles which are drawn with a compass. The point of the compass from which the three circles are drawn represents the regenerated heart of the Christian. The first circle around this point represents the flesh of the Christian. The second circle extending beyond the first represents the world. And the third circle extending beyond the second represents all the departments of life as it is lived in this world. Lines may be drawn from the heart of the circles thru the circles to the circumferences. These represent actions of the Christian which emanate from a regenerated heart, are manifested thru his flesh, in the world, in all of its departments. The life of the thesis which is born of regeneration and regulated by the will of God revealed in Scripture, comes to manifestation in the flesh, in the world in all of its spheres. The converse is also true. All the departments of life which are under the power of sin, as well as the world and our flesh, all oppose the central thesis, and constitute the antithesis.

If brother Graeser applies this figure and the principles set forth in the above propositions, it should not be difficult for him to answer his own questions. Christian doctors, teachers, philanthropists, prime ministers, economists, all are to live the life of regeneration according to the will of God revealed in Scripture wherever God calls them. In which department or departments of life they shall live and move must depend on the calling they receive from God, and be according to His will.

M.S.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

"All the saints salute thee . . ." PHIL. 4:21

July 20, 1960

*Trios* — Creston: Rev. H. Hanko; Cand. J. Kortering; Rev. A. Mulder. Grand Haven: Cand. J. Kortering; Rev. A. Mulder; Rev. J. Van Baren. Hull, Iowa: Cand. J. Kortering; Rev. G. Lubbers; Rev. G. Vos. Randolph, Wis.: Rev. R. Harbach; Cand. J. Kortering; Rev. M. Schipper.

*Called* — Grand Haven: Rev. A. Mulder of Kalamazoo.

Rev. B. Woudenberg has been appointed as counsellor to the churches of Isabel and Forbes, our two newest churches accepted by the last Synod.

### REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST, JULY 6, 1960

Classis met in Southwest Church and was the briefest of any meeting we can remember. In less than two hours all the work on the agendum was finished.

Rev. H. Hanko, chairman of the last meeting, presided in the opening devotions. He was ably succeeded by the Rev. G. Lanting of Holland, while the Rev. H. Hanko recorded the minutes.

All the churches were represented by two delegates each. All the material before Classis was of routine nature.

The Stated Clerk, and Classical Committee tendered their reports. The Church Visitors presented a favorable report of their recent visit to each of the churches in Classis East. According to their report, the Lord is blessing our churches.

Classis decided to grant classical appointments to the churches of Creston, Grand Haven and Randolph as follows: *Grand Haven*, July 17 — C. Hanko; Aug. 14 — G. Vos; Aug. 28 — R. Veldman; Sept. 4 — H. Hanko; Sept. 18 — G. Lanting; Oct. 2 — M. Schipper; Oct. 9 — A. Mulder. *Creston*, July 17 — M. Schipper; Aug. 7 — G. Lanting; Aug. 28 — A. Mulder; Sept. 11 — G. Vos; Sept. 18 — H. Hanko; Oct. 2 — C. Hanko; Oct. 9 — G. Vos. *Randolph*, July 17 — A. Mulder; Aug. 7 — R. Veldman; Aug. 21 — H. Hanko; Aug. 28 — C. Hanko; Sept. 4 — M. Schipper; Sept. 25 — R. Veldman; Oct. 9 — G. Lanting.

Rev. G. Vos was appointed to thank the ladies of Southwest Church for their catering.

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema attended the Classis and was given advisory vote. Classis decided to meet next time in Hudsonville on October 5.

After the closing remarks of the chairman, Prof. Hoeksema closed this session with thanksgiving.

M. Schipper, Stated Clerk.

The following interesting item was sent in to this page by the program committee of the Reformed Witness Hour: During the month of August, D.V., Rev. J. A. Heys, South

Holland's pastor, will deliver the radio sermons heard on the Reformed Witness Hour. The theme of his four messages will be the text found in Genesis 3:15. The sermons will be entitled as follows: "The Answer of Grace," "The Way That Leads Home," "The Life That Cannot Sin," "The Perseverance Of The Persecuted." The Reformed Witness Hour will soon be heard over Trans World Radio, formerly known as "The Voice Of Tangiers." This broadcast of our weekly program is sponsored by the Mission Committee of our churches. Our readers might be interested to learn that Trans World Radio announces the installation of a 100,000 watt transmitter in Monte Carlo, Monaco. Plans call for radio programs on a regular schedule, beginning in September, in 28 languages. The structure housing the new transmitter was built by Adolph Hitler during the German occupation of Monaco, and is now owned by Trans World Radio to carry out its purpose of beaming the Gospel to the countries of Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, North Africa and behind the Iron Curtain. Our Reformed Witness Hour program will, by means of the intricate antenna system, be sent across Europe, with the British Isles as the principal target area. May our Covenant God bless this our mission endeavor.

The Hope School Society needs four additional classrooms in their school. They faced that need realistically recently by conducting a drive to raise the initial \$15,000 needed to accomplish their purpose. The congregations of the three participating churches, Holland, Hudsonville and Hope were canvassed the evenings of July 29 and 30. An incomplete report given July 10 revealed that they were then only \$700 short of the goal.

In spite of the fact that picnics are not the rare, once-a-year events they were in the days before the automobile, our bulletins reveal that our churches cling to the habit of having congregational picnics, usually in the season of the longest days of the year. There is something about them, with their unique friendship and fraternal atmosphere, that sets them apart from the ordinary outings with which we and our children are familiar. Oak Lawn's congregation combines theirs with charity in that Elim School receives some profit from the use of the school picnic grounds and canteen services.

From "The Covenant Witness," the first pamphlet of a series mentioned in our last issue: "God has called us to live in the end of the ages. The Day of the Lord is at hand . . . the world grows more and more wicked . . . iniquity increases . . . How serious our calling is in the light of these facts that we maintain our heritage." Get these pamphlets for yourself and for your friends by writing to "The Covenant Witness," 1545 Wilson Ave., S. W., Grand Rapids, Mich.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.