

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### THE THINGS THINE EYES HAVE SEEN

*"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons, specially the day that thou stoodest before thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children." Deut. 4:9, 10*

THE THINGS WHICH THINE EYES HAVE SEEN! What are they?

In general we may say that they are the things of God's Covenant.

Positively, they are Moses, Aaron and Miriam; the deliverance from Egypt's bondage, the Passover, the journey through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness so far.

Negatively, they are the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, the plagues upon them, the beginning of the destruction of the wicked in Canaan, as also the destruction of Amalek.

They also included the destruction of the wicked among them, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, and also whatever seed of the devil was among them.

They all are the things which their eyes had seen.

But there is more.

They also included the Law in its broadest sense of the word. The Law as the Self-revelation of that great and terrible God.

I said, in the broadest sense of the word, because this Law covered the entire life of Israel, and comprised the moral law, or the 10 words; their civil life and the ceremonial side of their existence.

And never forget: that Law of God was beautiful. Read the three verses which precede my text and you will see it: "Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath a God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"

In particular, the things which their eyes had seen were the fact that Israel stood under the mountain of God and saw and heard the burning with fire unto the midst of heaven, the darkness and the clouds and the thick darkness, the Ten Words, declaring His Covenant, commanding Israel to perform the Ten Words, as also these Ten Words written, engraved on two tables of Stone.

All of that Israel saw and heard.

\* \* \* \*

But we live several thousands of years later.

All the above is fulfilled in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Jesus stood under the Mount of God: the commandment was His, as also the Darkness, Clouds, and Thick Darkness. The Law of God was carved in granite: there was no change possible. There He stood in the trembling of eternal death.

Did you see it?

It is of the utmost importance that you SEE this.

Listen to this: Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

Listen to Paul: But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the Image of God should shine unto them.

Or listen to Mark: And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.

However, on the other hand, listen to the LIVING Christian: But we *see* Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor . . . .

The same thing pertains to the church today as in the days of Moses, Aaron and Miriam: we see the things of the Covenant of God.

God's people are still standing under the Mount of God: trembling because of the sound and the sight of everlasting burnings and darkness.

It is the fulfilment when Christ suffered and died on Golgotha and two kinds of people trembled: the wicked with a trembling of the fear of death, and the good and faithful who also trembled, but it was the trembling of the fear of God which is clean.

\* \* \* \*

And here we are today, so many years later.

But the things which Moses mentioned, the things asserted by Paul and Mark and Jesus are still with us. And still the people tremble.

And as your view is so you tremble.

There was a lot of trembling here a few years ago when Jehovah paid us a special visit: a tornado.

There is much of the same kind of trembling in the depths of the hearts of wicked men, but we see it not. It is hidden. Only God knows of that trembling. God wrote of it often in the Bible. There is always that trembling, a slavish fear of God.

And in the great day of Jesus Christ this trembling will become visible and audible. For then the nations of the world shall say: Mountains fall upon us and hills cover us from the EYE of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb!

You see, it was always there, but in unrighteousness the wicked always kept it under, and so you did not see it. But it is there.

So also the trembling which has its source in the fear of God and the love of God.

And here is a fundamental point: in the same measure that your view of the things of the Kingdom of God is pure, so you tremble.

In 1924 we were given a view of the things of God's

Kingdom which was beautiful: and the Protestant Reformed Churches were born.

We sustained a grievous and severe test in the years 1949-1953, but we emerged from this test victorious, though our number sunk.

The majority rejected the purest view of God and of Christ, and they are in the process of returning to their own vomit. God will judge in that great day. We have a deep pity for them. They knew not what they did.

But you may be sure of this: the view is gradual. All do not see the beautiful fire on the Mountain of God. Nor the great darkness and the thick darkness of Golgotha. None see it as God and Christ see it. And the angels. But the more you see these things of the Kingdom of God the more you have heaven in your hearts. And you tremble. Was it Isaiah who said that there is a people that tremble at His Word?

And how many of you heard that strange song: "Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Did you tremble . . . .?"

That is true.

The Crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest fact of history by far. It is the Focal Point of all history of creation and of re-creation. Of time and of eternity.

\* \* \* \*

And what shall we do with that Focal Point?

Take heed to thyself!

What does that mean?

It means that you watch over yourself; that you listen to yourself; criticize yourself; condemn your wicked self.

Its implications are that you keep your soul diligently. That you save your soul, that you keep it as a peculiar treasure. Listen to Jesus: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Listen to Moses in my text: "Lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen and lest they depart from thy heart . . . ."

Learn to fear Me!

Note: it is a matter of learning!

Why do you think did we build our own schools? And why did we do this at a great expense and sacrifice again and again?

And here is the answer: "Teach them (i.e. the Things of the Kingdom of God and of His Covenant) thy sons and thy sons' sons."

You saw the vision yourself. And there is a hunger, a yearning in your heart that your children and children's

children also may see the same things, that is, the same God and the same Christ under the Mountain of God.

Shall we send our children to the Public School? God forbid.

Shall we send our children to the Christian Reformed Schools? God forbid.

No, but we shall send them to the schools that teach those things of God, of Christ and of His Covenant such as we have loved for so long!

"Gather Me the people together!"

That is the Voice of God Himself!

What shall we say and do then? When He speaks it is the end of all argument.

We will gather the people of God together in the church, the catechism, the home, but also the school. For the object of this gathering is "learning to fear Me."

And the extent? "All the days that they shall live upon the earth."

And that they may teach their children.

This is a call to the dedication and re-dedication of the whole church of Jesus Christ.

If the majority be proven disloyal, disobedient, and if the number of those that tremble be small and ever smaller, we shall continue to teach our children the learning of God, the learning of the Cross, the learning of the Covenant of God.

The day will come, and thinking of it makes me tremble, that the children shall condemn the parents before the face of God.

Then they shall say: Why did you not tell us of these things?

Rather, let us take heed to ourself; let us keep, save our soul diligently; and let us tell our sons' sons, both by ourselves and through others, the beautiful things of God!

G.V.

### Notice of Annual Meeting

The annual membership meeting of the Ref. Free Publishing Association will be held Thursday evening, September 29, 8:00 o'clock at Southwest Prot. Ref. Church. The speaker will be Rev. Herman Hanko. The Board of the R.F.P.A. invites all our Prot. Ref. men to join with us in this work of witnessing for the truth and urges all members to attend this important meeting. Selection of four new board members is to be made from the following nomination: G. E. Bylsma, A. Docter, T. Engelsma, F. Huizinga, N. Klaver, C. Kuiper, T. Reitsma, G. Schimmel.

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### CONTENTS

#### MEDITATION —

The Things Thine Eyes Have Seen.....481  
Rev. G. Vos

#### EDITORIALS —

As to Being Protestant Reformed.....484  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

#### OUR DOCTRINE —

The Book of Revelation.....486  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

#### A CLOUD OF WITNESSES —

Jacob Blessing His Sons.....488  
Rev. B. Woudenberg

#### FROM HOLY WRIT —

Exposition of I John 2:12-14.....490  
Rev. G. Lubbers

#### IN HIS FEAR —

The Freedom of "Bigotry".....492  
Rev. J. A. Heys

#### CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments.....494  
Rev. H. Veldman

#### THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Canons of Dordrecht.....496  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

#### ALL AROUND US —

The Antithesis.....498  
Rev. M. Schipper

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES.....500  
Mr. J. M. Faber

INDEX TO VOLUME XXXVI.....501

## EDITORIALS

### As to Being Protestant Reformed

There is one more item in the letter by the schismatic Synod to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church to which we must call attention. I am referring especially to the following words: "On our part we humbly confess that there should have been a proper appeal to the Synod of 1926 and that we should not have proselytized during such an appeal in your communion as 'Protesting Christian Reformed Churches.' On the other hand, for the sake of Christian charity and freedom of conviction allowable under the Word of God, we cannot concede to any implication or charge of heresy and schism against us, unless through persuasion and conviction from the Confessions or the Word of God."

Now, in the first place, there is a flagrant contradiction between these two sentences. For, either we did not make a proper appeal to the Synod of 1926 and then our action of temporarily organizing as "Protesting Christian Reformed Churches" was an act of schism; or we did make such a proper appeal and then it was perfectly proper that, after Classis East and Classis West ignored our appeal and deposed the office-bearers of Eastern Ave., Kalamazoo, and Hope, we organized as "Protesting Christian Reformed Churches." The letter of the schismatic Synod takes the former standpoint: our appeal to the Synod of 1926 was not a proper appeal. But in that case we were certainly schismatic. Hence, there is a plain contradiction in the two sentences quoted above from the letter of the schismatics.

But in regard to our appeal, whether it was proper or not, consider the following:

1. It is evident that the Synod of 1924 did not advise discipline in case the Rev. H. Danhof and undersigned refused to sign the Three Points. Although in the only speech I was allowed to make on the floor of the Synod I clearly expressed my disagreement with the Three Points; and although the Rev. H. Danhof offered a protest against the Three Points which was read and received by the Synod; and although the committee of pre-advice had clearly expressed that disciplinary action should be taken if the two ministers would refuse to abide by the doctrine of the Three Points; yet, the Synod did not adopt the advice of its committee and, therefore, clearly refused any disciplinary action.

2. The case, therefore, was finished. The matter of "common grace" had come before Synod in the proper way: from consistories, through classes. And the Synod had decided upon the matter. The case was, for the time being, at least, closed. If anyone did not agree with the decision of Synod, he would have to protest, not against the two accused

ministers, but against the decisions of the Synod of 1924. Also such a protest must, of course, go through the legal channels of consistory-classis-synod.

3. However, Classis East took up the matter as if the Synod of 1924 had demanded or advised discipline and proceeded to discipline the Consistory and the pastor of Eastern Ave. on its own authority or rather on its assumed authority.

4. It was against this action of Classis East that, first the Consistory of Eastern Ave. and later also the pastor, protested and appealed to the Synod of 1926. In its first answer to Classis East which demanded that they must place their pastor before the question whether or not he would abide by the Three Points of 1924, they state: "For all these reasons the Consistory is convinced that the Classis, in its decision to demand of the Consistory that they place their pastor before the question whether he fully agrees with the three points, goes beyond the decisions of Synod. The Classis has no right to do this. The Consistory appeals for this opinion to the decisions of Synod of 1924. The Consistory, therefore, kindly and urgently requests Classis not to abide by its decision. If Classis should nevertheless maintain its decision the Consistory must protest and appeals against the decision of Classis to the next Synod."

In reply to another communication of Classis East the Consistory of Eastern Ave. concludes as follows:

"Therefore be it resolved by the Consistory of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church:

"a. To appeal for the interpretation of said decisions of Synod 1924 *in re* protests against our pastor, Reverend H. Hoeksema, as set forth by said Consistory in the above communication to Classis Grand Rapids East, and against the interpretation of these same decisions of said Synod 1924 as set forth by Classis Grand Rapids East in the communication of said Classis to said Consistory of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, dated November 24, 1924.

"To request Classis Grand Rapids East to defer any and all action said Classis might contemplate against the Consistory of said Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church until such time as Synod shall have acted the appeal of said Consistory and rendered final decision in the matter."

After this communication of the Consistory of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, Classis decided now to place the pastor of that Church directly before the questions which the Consistory had refused to ask of its pastor. The latter composed a written reply. But before this answer was delivered to Classis, the Consistory composed another written protest in which they stated: "The Consistory decides to protest against the action of Classis, whereby, disregarding the appeal of the Consistory to Synod, it placed its pastor directly before its question."

And for this it produced the following grounds:

"a. The action is wholly against the Reformed Church

Polity and that according to the very communication of Classis dated Nov. 24, 1924, to said Consistory of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, in which communication Classis declares that any form of discipline must be exercised by the ecclesiastical bodies in the order of Consistory, Classis and Synod.

"b. It is a form of discipline applied by a broader gathering directly to an officebearer of a congregation and proceeds from the assumption that Classis has superior authority, a certain guardianship over churches, yea, over the very persons of the churches. This is still worse than Collegialism. It is popish.

"c. Because the action was taken in spite of the fact, that the Consistory had appealed to Synod, as is evident from its communication to Classis Grand Rapids East, dated December 8, 1924."

I will not quote here the answer of the pastor of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church. This is not necessary. All I wish to prove in this connection is that also he appealed to Synod against the action of Classis Grand Rapids East even at this time and not only after he was deposed from office. He did this in the following paragraph:

"That undersigned, therefore, also appeals to Synod against the interpretation Classis Grand Rapids East offers of the decisions of Synod 1924; this appeal to take place in the same manner as that of the Consistory of the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church, as contained in said communication of said Consistory of Classis and dated Dec. 8, 1924."

Now, why do I write all this?

Simply to prove that our appeal to Synod was not made after my Consistory was deposed from office and I was suspended and, when I did not submit to my suspension, also deposed, but much earlier, and that it was directed against the illegal actions of Classis Grand Rapids East. I had hopes that after my protest and appeal Classis would not continue with our suspension and deposition but would wait until the Synod of 1926 had expressed itself.

But in this I was disappointed.

It is true that, when the Classis had finished their evil work and had deposed my Consistory and myself, the case became virtually hopeless. It may be said that we should have submitted to our deposition pending our appeal. But this was impossible. How could my Consistory have cast the Congregation to the wolves of Classis East, a Congregation of five hundred families and that, too, for a year and a half? The Congregation stood virtually as a man behind the Consistory. Besides, the Classis had made no provision for such a contingency. They had not provided for pulpit supply nor for the election of new officebearers. And, therefore, my Consistory and I remained in office in spite of the action of Classis East. And, in order to have some form of church-

life, in the meantime, pending our appeal, we, i.e. the congregations of Kalamazoo, Hope, and Eastern Avenue organized as Protestant Christian Reformed Churches.

It was the only thing we could do. And only after the Synod of 1926 had rejected our appeal did we adopt the name of Protestant Reformed Churches.

This rather lengthy criticism of the document which the schismatic Synod sent to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Synod of 1960 we deemed necessary in order to show that the appeal we made to the Synod of 1926 was the only proper appeal we could make at the time. Any other form of appeal was made a practical impossibility by Classis East.

\* \* \* \*

But now we must consider the answer of the Christian Reformed Synod to the letter of the schismatics.

I quote it here in full:

"To the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

"Esteemed Brethren:

"We thank you for the fraternal and cordial reply to our Synod's letter to you in June 1959. In reply to this, your communication, we wish to observe that we appreciate the general tenor of this document, which indicates that there is on your part a sincere desire for reconciliation and unification with our church.

"Addressing ourselves to the main thrust of your letter (paragraph 4, page 1) 'May we urge you, therefore, to consider the Three Points of common grace as without further binding force?' we conclude that this question is the heart of the matter which you present to our Synod. You are asking our Synod simply to set aside or discard, without any restrictions or qualifications, that which was done by our Synods of 1924 and 1959. This is evident from your statement (second part of paragraph 3, page 1) 'We, therefore, do not desire to maintain the Three Points or any new formulation or interpretation as necessary for a church to stipulate and insist upon for unification of churches.'

"Synod may on occasion be compelled to make emergency decisions which serve a definite purpose in a given historic moment. Such emergency decisions are dated and may in time become inactive because they have served their purpose and are no longer needed. Reflecting however on the synodical decisions of 1924 respecting the Three Points, we believe that an outright and official setting aside of them is unwarranted for the following reasons:

"a. The serious situation in 1924 which called these Three Points into being.

"b. The salutary effect of these Three Points in producing peace and rest in the churches.

"c. The fact that such setting aside of the Three Points would run counter to and nullify a large measure of agreement which had been achieved.

"We are of the opinion that such a simple discarding of the Three Points, as well as the elucidation and interpretation of those given in a letter of our Synod of 1959, is not desirable. We would rather point out to you a more positive basis upon which we may seek for unification. This positive approach is not to be sought by requesting our Synod virtually to discard what it deemed to be necessary to state in 1924 and what is still necessary to maintain at the present time; nor in demanding of you an expression of total agreement with the Three Points as formulated in 1924, and further elucidated in 1959, but rather by accepting a basis on which we can unite.

"It is our considered judgment that in as much as both your denomination and ours subscribe to the Word of God and the Three Forms of unity, unification of our churches could be effected:

"a. if you will agree that the Three Points are neither Arminian nor Pelagian; that in the light of the official interpretation given by our Synod of 1959, the objection that the Three Points are in conflict with Scripture and the Forms of Unity is not valid; and that you will agree not to agitate against the official interpretations.

"b. if we do not require submission in the sense of demanding total agreement with the Three Points; we recognize and bear with scruples which you may have, in the expectation that we together may come to a better understanding of the truth; and not bar those who have certain misgivings or divergent interpretations as long as they refrain from making propaganda for the interpretations.

"As to the method of effecting such a union we suggest that:

"a. If this is to be worked out on a denominational basis, a committee of your church be appointed to confer with a committee of our church, or,

"b. if this is to be worked out on a local basis, this is to be left to the individual consistories and classis in which such attempts towards union would be made."

This document was signed by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church through its clerk R. J. Danhof.

Discussion of this letter in the next number of our *Standard Bearer*, the Lord willing.

H.H.

All zeal is not commendable, as Oak Lawn's bulletin points out: "Four sorts of zeal are to be condemned: *blind* zeal, Rom. 10:2; *bitter* zeal, James 3:14; *proud* zeal, II Kings 10; *partial* zeal, Matt. 23:23.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER FIFTEEN

#### *The Battle of Armageddon*

#### Revelation 16:10-21

Let me then remind you of the fact that in the literal sense the river Euphrates, flowing through Mesopotamia and Chaldea for hundreds of miles, wide and deep, and emptying itself in the Persian Gulf—that this river in the old dispensation formed the boundary line between the nation of Israel and the heathen nations, the boundary line, therefore, between the people of God in the outward sense of the word and the nations of heathendom. As such it is a fit symbol of the boundary line between the Christian nations and the heathen nations in the new dispensation, the line of demarcation and separation between Christendom and Gog and Magog. At this time, when Christendom shall be Antichristendom, it will naturally be the boundary line between Antichrist and the nations that live on the four corners of the earth. Some take it that with his sixth vial the river Euphrates shall be literally dried up, so that the nations may pass through it. Of course, there is nothing against such an explanation. It is very well possible for God to do so if it pleases Him. No one can doubt this. But this is not very likely the explanation. Evidently we again must think of symbolism in connection with the sixth vial. If the nations wish to gather for battle, a river would surely not keep them from it, even if it is never dried up. And therefore, the drying up of the river merely refers to the removal of all obstacles from the external point of view. There shall come a time that these nations on the four corners of the earth shall be capable of meeting the armies of the civilized world. They shall gradually be prepared, till all external obstacles shall have been removed.

At the same time, however, there is a spiritual agency at work among these nations. We read: "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. For they are spirits of devils, working miracles." Many attempts have been made to ascertain definitely what these three evil and unclean spirits might signify. And often they have had personal application. But naturally the very question is irrelevant, is at least impossible to be answered definitely from the text. And therefore the answers that have been suggested are naturally absurd. All we can do is follow the text and gather from it the information that it affords. In the first place, it tells us that the unclean spirits proceed from the mouth of the in-



fernal trinity — the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. The dragon, you recognize, is the devil, the old serpent, who is after all the real king over the kingdom of Antichrist. The beast is the monster with its ten horns and seven heads, Antichrist from its political aspect. And the false prophet is the same as the second beast, that has the two horns, as a lamb, but speaks like the dragon. And we may also remember that the relation between these three is such that the beast, or Antichrist, is the representative of the dragon upon the earth, exists for him and works for him, and that the false prophet in turn labors and deceives the nations in behalf of the beast and its image. The Christian nations have been deceived by their work. They make an image for the beast, and worship him. They are filled with enmity against God and His Christ and His saints. But the nations that live at the four corners of the earth are not so easily converted. They do not understand this establishment of the kingdom of Antichrist. They are heathen. They serve their idols. They cannot erect the image of the beast and fall down before it. And therefore the infernal trinity work together to convert the whole world for Antichristendom. Just as it is the task of Christianity to preach the gospel to all nations, so that they all may bow before the God of heaven and His Christ, so the dragon and the beast and the false prophet cannot rest before all the nations of the earth have come under the influence of their antichristian principles. The principles of that kingdom must be spread. They must be disseminated among the Gentiles. They must be preached far and wide over the whole world, so that finally all the world shall have been won for Antichrist. It is to my mind this antichristian missionary work which is symbolized in these unclean spirits proceeding out of the mouth of the infernal trinity. They are unclean spirits, demons in nature, naturally, for they preach opposition against God and His Christ. They spread and sow the seed of infidelity and conscious opposition against Almighty God and His people. They go forth unto the kings of the whole earth, our text tells us, evidently referring to the kings that rule at the four corners of the earth. Everywhere they preach their infernal doctrine, that the whole world may be civilized in the antichristian sense of the word. But God also uses evil spirits to reach His purpose. For the text tells us that in very fact they gather the nations for the great day of the war of God Almighty. Of course, that is not the dragon's purpose. His purpose was to gain these nations for his own kingdom. But through these evil spirits the Almighty gains His own purpose. For Christ rules the world, and rules all things for the completion of His kingdom.

What then is the relation of things? At the same time that these evil spirits sow the seeds of hatred against Christ and against God Almighty and against His people in the hearts of all the nations outside of the pale of Christianity the throne of the beast is darkened, and the terrible plagues, from which also Gog and Magog suffer, are upon the earth. As I have suggested before, I imagine that the darkening of the throne of the beast will consist of an uprising in the anti-

christian world itself among the nominally Christian nations against the central government of Antichrist. But at the same time the nations that live at the four corners of the earth shall fully wake up. They shall look upon these nominally Christian nations, that fight against the throne of the beast, as being true Christendom, against which their hearts have been filled with hatred by the three unclean spirits. They shall come up for war against the civilized nations. They shall gather their armies, and so shall the nations of Europe and America. All the world shall fly to arms. And all the nations of the world shall gather for battle, so our text tells us, at the place which is called Armageddon. Armageddon literally means "Mount Megiddo." Historically and geographically it is the mount situated on the great plain of Esdraelon in Issachar, near the famous valley of Jezreel. It was one of the great battle fields of Canaan. It was on that field that Josiah, the God-fearing king of Judah, was slain when he went to war against Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, II Kings 23:29-30. It was there too that Ahaziah, king of Judah, fleeing together with Joram before the face of Jehu, was killed. But in connection with the words of our text it must be taken in a different significance. It was on the battlefield of Megiddo that Deborah and Barak had their great victory over the Canaanites that had opposed the people of God. Of it Deborah sings: "The kings came and fought, then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo," Judges 5:19. And it is undoubtedly in the light of that historical event that the field is mentioned in this connection. Whether the last battle of the nations shall be literally fought in that neighborhood, which is very well possible, or not, fact is that the symbolical significance of the battlefield of Megiddo is such that it represents the defeat of the enemies of the kingdom of God. The unclean spirits, therefore, although their purpose is far different, gather the armies of the nations on the battlefield of their final defeat by Christ and His saints. The devil is ultimately but an instrument in the hand of God to work his own destruction. And all things must work together in such a way that the plan of the Almighty is carried out to the full.

There, then, are the nations gathered. It is the last battle that shall ever be fought on earth. It is the battle that shall finish all. It is the battle that shall lead to the destruction of all the enemies of God and of His Anointed. Terrible is the bloodshed that shall then be witnessed. And the nations shall destroy one another. They are in the great winepress of the wrath of God. But still more: as they are battling, the seventh vial is poured out into the air, and a voice is heard, "It is finished." The voice proceeds from the temple of heaven, from the throne. It is no doubt the voice of Christ that is here heard. Once before He used these very words when the battle was finished in principle on the bloody cross. Then He fought the battle as the suffering Servant, and finished it. But since then He has been exalted. And as the exalted Son of Man He continued the work throughout the ages of the new dispensation. H.H.

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Jacob Blessing His Sons

*And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days . . . .*

*And this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.*  
Genesis 49:1, 28

Jacob was dying, and he called his sons unto him that he might impart unto them his final blessing. It is important that we should understand this final act of Jacob aright.

The blessing which Jacob gave unto his sons was not just a matter of personal opinion. A father upon his death bed may easily be inclined to express a wish or a personal prediction concerning the future state of his children. But we should not evaluate this act of Jacob as being nothing more than that. He predicted the future of his children, and he did so with an authority that was sure. It is true that some of the blessings were based on the individual actions of his children, and some were even based on the meaning of their names. In this Jacob revealed a sharp spiritual discernment as to which of each son's characteristics would continue to live on in their children. However, these predictions were not based on mere personal opinion; it was revealed to him through faith by God. Thus we find blessings which were both positive and negative in their content. Some were promises of great good; others were warnings against weaknesses and sins.

Generally speaking, the blessings that Jacob spoke that day were materialistic. They were concerned with the position which each tribe would have in the nation of Israel and particularly in the promised land of Canaan. But this does not mean that they were devoid of spiritual import. It is to be remembered that the land of Canaan was in the old dispensation typical of the kingdom of heaven. For those of Israel who were of spiritual discernment, the place which they filled in the land of promise was a visible representation of the spiritual place which they filled in the Church of God. Merely to be included in that nation and that land, was for the spiritually minded a blessing of greatest value. It was an assurance for them that they had a place in the spiritual union of God's chosen people and in the Messiah, the promised Seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations would be blessed.

In the consciousness of this all Jacob spoke.

"Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch." Reuben was the first-

fruits of Jacob's strength, ordained by God to be the firstborn of the children of Israel. But there belonged to him one besetting weakness and sin: he was unstable, rash and impulsive. This sin had manifested itself in the past when he had defiled his father's bed with the terrible sin of incest. It, moreover, was carried on by his children into the future so that we find of his tribe Dathan and Abiram, leaders in the revolt against Moses and Aaron. For this reason he could not serve as a leader and savior to Israel as ordinarily his birth right would imply. Reuben would not obtain pre-eminence. It was a warning to him and his children of the seriousness of this sin.

"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel." Simeon and Levi were born second and third among Jacob's sons; but they too must be passed by as the leaders of Israel because of their sin. They had shown strong inclination toward unrighteous wrath and anger, particularly in the rape of Shechem. Because of this, their position in Israel was to be very indistinct. Both tribes became scattered through the nation. Nonetheless, Levi eventually did receive the privilege of the priesthood. Was it perhaps because Levi particularly took to heart this admonition of his father?

"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes; His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." Having passed by three of the sons with admonitions, Jacob now comes to the one upon whom he may lay the greatest blessings, and his words wax particularly eloquent. In Canaan he would possess the marks of blessing. Vines would so abound in his land that they would be used as hitching-posts for the animals. His clothes would be washed as it were with juice because of the abundance of grapes he would tread. His eyes would be dark and his teeth white from the abundance of wine and of milk. But, even more, to him would be strength. As a young lion, he would be strong to conquer; and as an old lion, he would be immovable. Judah would be the ruler of the nation. The scepter would be in his hand, resting between his feet. Jacob saw, as it were, the strength and glory that would be seen in the kingdom of David. In fact, he saw even more than



that the coming of Jesus Christ, the Shiloh under whom the people would receive eternal rest. In this Jacob's blessing came to its greatest height. This was the heart of the whole blessing. Before Shiloh all the tribes would bow down. As Judah's name implied, he would be "praised."

"Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon." Zebulun was to dwell at the northern border of Israel close to the shore of the sea. Jacob gives a play on the name Zebulun, which means "dwelling." The thought is that Zebulun would be the commercial gateway of the nation. This would give to Zebulun a great opportunity to serve as a witness to the nations of the distinctiveness of Israel. But with it there was also a danger, the danger that Zebulun would let itself fall under the influence of the wicked.

"Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute." Issachar would taste of the blessedness of Canaan and its pleasantness. It was to be a tribe given to healthy labor and the satisfaction of receiving its fruits. But Jacob discerned in Issachar's name, meaning "hire" or "wages," a hint of predominant weakness which he would pass on to his children. Issachar desired rest. It was not the spiritual rest of God which they sought. They were hesitant and lethargic when it came to striving with the enemies of Israel. They found it easier to submit and pay tribute.

"Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Dan's name meant "to judge." Building upon this, Jacob proclaimed that Dan would judge his people. Thus it was that Samson came from Dan as a judge of Israel. There also was revealed a certain concern for justice in the removal of Dan to Laish. However, Dan was tempted as a tribe to be subtle and crafty in its ways. This weakness was clearly demonstrated in their taking of the young Levite from the home of Micah. It brought them deeply into sin.

Suddenly Jacob's thought pattern was interrupted, and he exclaimed, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." Struck by the strength and weaknesses of his sons, he could not restrain himself from this cry. In the waiting for the salvation of God would be Israel's strength. The neglect of this principle would be its weakness. It was a cry of admonition which his sons could well take to heart. Only after he had expressed it could he continue.

"Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last." It was Gad more than any other tribe that in latter years was overrun by invading tribes of enemies. They tasted bitterly the hatred of the enemy. But under its affliction Gad became strong and brave in the cause of the Lord. They overcame in the fear of the Lord.

"Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." Unto Asher was given one of the most fruitful portions of Canaan. As Jacob foresaw, the portion of Asher brought forth some of the richest delicacies of Canaan.

"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words." The truth of this prophecy manifested itself most clearly in the time of Deborah. The men of Naphtali were swift in battle. They constituted with Zebulun the army of Barak. As Deborah and Barak afterward sang, "Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardized their lives unto the death in the high places of the field . . . They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." The very song itself is our best example of Naphtali's "goodly words."

"Joseph is a fruitful bough even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel; even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: the blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren." Once again Jacob returned with enthusiasm to his favorite son Joseph. Now before the brothers he related the essence of the blessing which previously he had laid upon the sons of Joseph privately. In accord with the deep desire of Rachel, Joseph would be a fruitful bough blessed by the hand of the Lord. With the double portion of the blessing he would manifest miraculous growth of the nation which is blessed of the Lord.

"Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." Benjamin was to be warlike as a hunting wolf. Fighting the battles of the Lord, his sons would divide the spoils of the enemy. The Scriptures abound with accounts of the warriors of Benjamin, slingers and archers, men like Ehud, Saul, and Jonathan. Actively they took part in the battles of Israel.

"All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them." As in a vision, Jacob saw the great nation which was being formed in Egypt spread out through the coasts of Canaan. In its blessings and riches and strength, as well as in its weaknesses, it would be the nation blessed of the Lord, each tribe fitting in its place to make the whole. But even in that it was but a picture, a figure and a type, of the greater nation yet to come, the holy nation which is the body of Jesus Christ ruled eternally by the lion of Judah's tribe.

B.W.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I John 2:12-14

a.

There is a fundamental truth of Scripture which must ever be kept in mind, shall we rightly understand the Word of God and rightly divide it. I refer, of course, to the fact that there are a two-fold people in the world: the children of God and the children of the Devil. This we read in I John 3:10, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil." God has put enmity between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, when he preached and revealed the first gospel, the Protevangel, to him. Gen. 3:15.

In close connection with the foregoing there is still another matter of great and relevant importance for the proper understanding of the Word of God. It is the oft-repeated truth that he who has, shall receive more and have abundance, and he who has not, from him shall be taken what he thinketh to have. This is the truth singled out by Jesus in Matthew 13:11, 12, "And answering he said, unto you it hath been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it hath not been given. For whosoever hath, to him it shall be given and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." See also Mark 4:25 and Luke 8:18. The importance of this tremendous principle is underscored in the last chapter of the book of Revelation, where we read in verse 11, "The one who is unrighteous let him be unrighteous still, the filthy one let him be filthy still, and the righteous let him be righteous still, and he that is holy let him be holy still."

Our text speaks in line with this truth of God's Word.

In our text, taken from I John 2:12-14, Paul assigns the *ground* for addressing the believers. He addresses them on the ground (because of) of what they are in Christ, and because of what they have experienced of God in Christ by a living faith. It has been alleged that unless one has a general promise to preach to all upon condition of faith, or unless one preaches a well-meant offer of the gospel to all who hear, that one then lacks the "concrete addressableness" in the preaching. The latter we, of course, deny. John does not have a well-meant offer to all here, but a very definite and particular message to a very definite and particular people, whom he designates as being "my beloved" or "my little children," and he addresses them because they are who they are!

We do well to take careful notice of the text which reads in full as follows:

*"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. I have written unto you little children because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."* Verses 12-14.

We do well to establish at the very outset that those addressed here by the apostle John are the children of God. They have received the right and authority from God to become the children of God (John 1:12); they have believed in Christ's Name, and are born not of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh and by the call of blood, but they are born out of God. John 1:12, 13; John 3:3. By the Spirit of regeneration they have been brought forth as some first-fruits of God's creation. Wherefore John exclaims in I John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew him not."

Such are those who are here addressed.

John writes to them in our text and designates them as "little children," "fathers" and "young men."

The question is: what is meant by each of these?

It is our settled conviction that the triad here indicated by John in the text does not refer to the distinction in age from a purely natural point of view. Notice the order: *little children, fathers and young men*. Surely that is not the natural order of ascending scale. Then we would read: *little children, young men, fathers*, or conversely in descending scale: *fathers, young men, little children*. But now this order is broken; it is: *little children, fathers, young men*!

Hence, we do not have here the natural order!

Rather, it must be maintained that we have here the entire congregation from a threefold aspect of her relationship to God in Christ and all the riches of salvation. I write this advisedly. I do not hold that the apostle is viewing here *three groups* in the church. Such is really the view of none of the accredited Bible scholars. At best they posit two separate groups here in the church: fathers and young men, while "little children" refers then to the entire congregation, old or young! I do not believe that the distinction between "fathers" and "young men" can be one strictly of age-level. It is rather one of relationship to God and to the world at whose head we find the "wicked one."

But we are anticipating.

Let us notice then first of all, that the designation "little children" (*tekna* and *neaniskoi*) is a term which John uses throughout this entire epistle while addressing the *entire*

congregation. And, it seems to me, that here we have the key to the proper understanding of the text. If "little children" must refer to people who are octogenarians (past eighty!), then fathers too can have a broader connotation, and the same holds true for the term "young men"! A superficial perusal of this epistle of John will bear out that "little children" refers to the entire congregation in their new relationship to Christ, as new-born babes in Christ. Thus in I John 2:1 we read, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not . . ." Again in chapter 2:18 we read, "Little children, it is the last hour . . ." And, again, in verse 28 of this same chapter we read, "And now, little children, abide in him . . ." Or read I John 3:7, "Little children, let no man deceive you . . ." In verse 18 of this same chapter we read, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue . . ." And in the last sentence of this epistle (chapter 5:21), "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

In all of these instances John is addressing the entire congregation. The term indicates that the addressees are children of John in the limited sense that he is their spiritual father and adviser in the Lord. The deeper sense is that they are the children of God. It is the most endearing term of the apostle. It speaks of the great and tender love of God which moves the apostle thus to write.

Let it then be established that the term "little children" refers to the entire congregation and not simply to the little children *in* the congregation.

Of these "little children" John writes two things, which at once are the "ground" for his addressing them:

- a. Because they are those whose sins are forgiven for His name's sake, verse 12;
- b. Because they are such who know the Father, verse 12.

Concerning the first of these we would notice that the phrase "His name's sake" evidently refers to Christ; the one who is our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one. He suffered and died. In his person and work he revealed the Father to us, declared him unto us. The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth became through Jesus Christ. John 1:17. And all that is revealed of the person and work of Christ—that is his Name. His is the name which is above every name. There is none other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Heb. 1:1-4; Acts 3:6b. Into this "name" they are baptized. It is the "name" of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. It is what God the Father determined to do, what God the Son did for us, and what God the Spirit of Christ does in us. Such is this name! It means to be taken up into the covenant of God, the New Testament in his blood. Thus we read in Hebrews 10:16, "This is the Covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put

my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Jer. 31:33 and Heb. 8:12).

Such is the name of Jesus, Jehovah-saves: He saves his people from their sins. That is his great and glorious name, his honor which he gives to none other! I am the LORD!

In this name and for the sake of this name the "little children" have their sins forgiven them, and as such they are *concretely addressable*. And only in this capacity are they addressable. They are delivered from the house of bondage; they have the redemption in Christ's blood of the Covenant, the forgiveness of sins. To stress this actuality of the possession of the forgiveness of sins, the covenant written in their hearts, John uses the perfect tense. It is theirs as an ever *present* possession, completed up till the present moment! Writes he: because your sins *are* forgiven you. Hence, they are consciously living in the favor of God as sons. They may remember their sins, but God is greater than their heart and knoweth all things. You stand in the new relationship, the covenant relationship. Your sins are remembered no more by the Lord, and he has written his law upon your hearts and in your mind.

I write you, little children!

I have written you, little children!

You need this warning, admonition, correction, little children, exactly because you are such little children. It fits with none other; it could not possibly be addressed to anyone else. Yours is the calling to daily repentance, and to flee from worldly lusts and pleasures; to work out your salvation with fear and holy trembling in an evil world!

Thus the entire congregation is addressed.

Such is the need of old and young in the church in the world, the militant church which must wage her spiritual warfare and battle for the name of God in the world. Such is the enmity in which she is placed in the world. She is in the world yet not of her. The world does not know her.

Here is no antinomian license. Here is the stressing of the need for walking in all good works. The little children have the law written in their hearts and upon their minds.

I write you little children.

I have written you, little children!

I do not tempt God in the church by separating what he hath in his good-pleasure joined together, namely, that God confers the grace of obedience through admonition.

For in this having your sins forgiven you, ye know the Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his infinite forgiving love.

(to be continued)

G.L.

## IN HIS FEAR

### The Freedom of "Bigotry"

That is, indeed, a nasty word.

Webster gives this definition of it: "Bigotry — State of mind of a bigot, also of beliefs ensuing from such a state."

And for bigot he has the following to say, "One obstinately and intolerantly devoted to his own church, party, belief or opinion."

He presents enthusiast as a synonym for bigot. The difference which he points out between an enthusiast and a bigot is also interesting. "An enthusiast," he states, "is a person of keen and ardent interest; the term sometimes implies a subordination of judgment to enthusiasm; as the dreams of an enthusiast." But of the bigot he says, "A bigot is obstinately, often blindly devoted to his own (especially religious) beliefs or opinions; as compared with fanatic and zealot, bigot implies dogged intolerance rather than misguided zeal."

We have heard that word recently, and we will hear it more in the coming political campaign for the presidency of these United States of America. One who refuses to vote for Senator Kennedy because he is a Roman Catholic will be called a bigot. If his religion is the reason for the negative vote, the decision to vote against him roots in bigotry and is an act of bigotry. It may be argued, of course, that the Roman Catholic citizen who votes for him because he belongs to the same church and uses this solely as his reason is likewise guilty of bigotry. And strangely enough that men will vote for a candidate simply because he is a Republican or a Democrat, that one votes for the candidate of his party in nothing else than loyalty to that party, is never called bigotry but praised as loyalty.

But is it so that to vote against a man because of his religious convictions makes one guilty of bigotry? And having serious scruples against a candidate because he is either a Roman Catholic, or is not, is that so terrible a crime to deserve such a nasty name?

We are not going to tell you how to vote. And these lines are not meant to be political propaganda for either major political party. If it does serve that purpose, it is simply due to the fact that a candidate for the presidency has been nominated who belongs to the Roman Catholic Church and to the fact that this Roman Catholic Church has an entirely different view of the relationship between Church and State than Protestantism. That is what makes church membership an issue in this campaign. It is not that these two main branches of Christianity in our land have different

doctrines of the way and nature of salvation. It may even be argued that in this respect much similarity and agreement can be found between the Roman Catholic Church and many Protestant Churches. If we rule out the modernistic churches, who are classified in Protestantism and deny many of the cardinal truths of Scripture and, doing so, are farther departed from the truth than the Roman Catholic Church, it may be pointed out that both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism agree in general upon the doctrine of The Trinity, The Virgin Birth of the Saviour, The Divine Nature of Christ, The Atonement of the Cross, The Resurrection of the Body and Life Everlasting, to mention a few.

But it is the stand of the Roman Catholic Church that the Pope is not only the head of the church on earth but also of the state that makes church affiliation an issue in this campaign. And coupled with this is the fact that it is Roman Catholic doctrine that the Pope has power to cast into hell those who depart from the ways of his church and do not seek its advantage at every turn. Therefore the fear arises that he can wield tremendous influence and power over such a candidate, should he become President of the United States. Whether this fear is wellfounded, whether a President alone can turn the tide in America to Roman Catholicism is not our concern in this article. However we are firmly convinced that we may not before God support or invite anything that would threaten the truth as it was given to the Church through the Reformation. We will therefore also somewhat later quote to you that which is taught in Roman Catholic schools today.

As we said, this is not written to serve as political propaganda. What we wish to point out at this time in this series is that no child of God may be anything else than obstinate in his faith and intolerant with all wickedness. It simply belongs to the luke-warm age in which we live that men are so tolerant with evil and false doctrines and have no deep, serious and unshaken convictions. Men are not obstinate in the truth, but as James writes in his epistle, they are doubleminded. Today men will place Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Mormonism, Buddhism and Mohammedanism on the same level. They are all good religions. Take your pick. You cannot go wrong with any one of them. The main thing is that you believe something. What you believe is not so important. And the other fellow's faith and religion is always just as good as yours. If you deny that, if you obstinately maintain your faith and are intolerant with false doctrines, you are a bigot.

Then we say, Give us the freedom of "bigotry!"

What?

Should we be expected to be obstinate and intolerant in devotion to our country, to our political party and not to our God?

Are we bigots when we vote against our party's can-

didate because of his religion and traitors when we claim to see something good in Communism? Are we bigots when we obstinately hold fast that which God has revealed to us of the truth; and does freedom of religion in our land mean that we have to be disloyal to our God and the faith He has given us in order to remain a loyal citizen and a faithful party member? Then give us no freedom of religion but freedom of "bigotry." We will still place it in quotation marks, because we do not believe that such a vile name fits and ought to be applied to a man who is intolerant for the truth's sake and obstinately devoted to the only true God: Jehovah the God of our salvation in Christ.

We frown on men who defect to Communism. We would be labeled as being "Red," or surely bright "Pink" if we were to say that the communistic form of government is just as good as the democratic form, that whether a man is ruled by a dictator or by the people themselves through free voting makes little difference and that Cuba and Africa have a perfect right to go communistic and to spread its propaganda through South America. No, you must be obstinately opposed to all this. You must be intolerant with all the attempts of the Russians to go forward and spread their lies and hate against the free nations.

But is Russia greater than our God?

Hate against Him, the lie concerning Him and His Son, idolatry and image worship, blasphemy and mockery must be tolerated? May we sin against our consciences and defend the lie in any form and to every degree? According to some that is the very idea and value of freedom of religion. It means that the lie must have the same freedom that the truth has to be spread and to be cherished by men. To them it makes no difference what a man's church affiliation is, and the one faith has as much right to triumph over the other as the one political party has the right to triumph over the other. If only it means a few more dollars in the pocketbook or bank, if only it means that we are kept from poverty and war, from social unrest and crime, it makes no difference what opinions of God are held by the citizens of our land. One is considered to be a bigot, if he votes against a candidate because he considers the religious beliefs of that candidate to pose a serious threat to his own church and faith. But no one thinks of calling the candidate a bigot because he obstinately holds on to his religious faith even though that faith in times past has shown itself to be intolerant to Protestantism to the extent of bloody and violent persecutions, and shows schools that yet today teach the children to be obstinate in their stand for this church and its earthly head, and frown very strongly upon marriage with mates of another faith.

If such a candidate may—and indeed by the decrees of his church, he must—be intolerant of all other faiths, we should not accuse those of bigotry who for these reasons vote against him.

But our chief concern at the moment is, as we said, to point out that we must be intolerant with the lie and obstinate in our stand for the truth of the Word of God and for His Church. Would to God we had more men today who would stand unshaken in their faith and would turn a deaf ear to praise of men and gold and silver, to walk straightforward in the cause of God's kingdom. We are not interested in men either, for that matter, who can claim to be of one faith and can mix with other faiths and attend churches of other faiths with joy and relish. Let a man stand for what he believes. Let him be honest before God. Let him search the Scriptures and make an honest and serious attempt to compare all the isms with the Word of God, and then let him be faithful unto God, faithful unto death. Let him dare to do that which will possibly bring him the title of bigot. And when faith in God demands it, let him choose obstinately to be faithful to his God at the expense of being loyal even to his country. For here we have no abiding city, but we seek one whose builder and maker is God. Let us walk as citizens of that kingdom. For only in that way can we be pleasing to our God. And that counts above all. Peter said that we ought to obey God rather than man. And we may add that we ought to be loyal to God also rather than to man. When our loyalty and obedience to man and his earthly welfare and ambitions means disloyalty to God and His truth and glory, we have no choice but to be obstinate and intolerant in our devotion to Him.

Therefore next time, D.V., we like to call your attention to a few passages of Holy Writ which have something to say about this firmness of faith and loyalty to God which may, in man's eyes, class us with the bigots. O, to be free from fear of men, from lust of eye and flesh to stand firm in the truth, to be intolerant with all evil, to hate it in every form and to despise all wickedness! Give us that freedom of "bigotry" rather than this lukewarm, indifferent, carnal attitude that bread and butter, gold and silver, wages and earthly peace are worth more than the favour of our God and life everlasting in His kingdom of true peace and joy.

J.A.H.

#### THE ISSUES OF LIFE

O'er them soon shall rule the just,  
All their beauty turn to dust;  
God my waiting soul shall save,  
He will raise me from the grave.  
Let no fear disturb your peace  
Though one's house and wealth increase;  
Death shall end his fleeting day,  
He shall carry naught away.

Psalm 49:3

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

#### VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

#### FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

4. The doctrine of the merit of good works as taught by Romanists is another most prolific error. They hold that works done after regeneration have real merit (*meritum condigni*), and that they are the ground of the sinner's justification before God. They hold that a man may do more than the law requires of him, and perform works of supererogation, and thus obtain more merit than is necessary for his own salvation and beatification. That this superfluous merit goes into the treasury of the Church, and may be dispensed for the benefit of others. On this ground indulgences are granted or sold, to take effect not only in this life but in the life to come.

5. With this is connected the further error concerning Purgatory. The Church of Rome teaches that those dying in the communion of the Church, who have not in this life made full satisfaction for their sins, or acquired sufficient merit to entitle them to admission into heaven, do at death pass into a state of suffering, there to remain until due satisfaction is made and proper purification is effected. There is no necessary termination to this state of purgatory but the day of judgment or the end of the world. It may last for a thousand or many thousands of years. But Purgatory is under the power of the keys. The sufferings of souls in that state may be alleviated or shortened by the authorized ministers of the Church. There is no limit to the power of men who are believed to hold the keys of heaven in their hand, to shut out and no man opens, and to open and no man shuts. Of all incredibilities the most incredible is that God would commit such power as this, to weak, ignorant, and often wicked men.

6. The Romish Church teaches grievous error concerning the Lord's Supper. It teaches, (1) That when consecrated by the priest the whole substance of the bread and the whole substance of the wine are transmuted into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. (2) That as His body is inseparable from His soul and divinity, where the one is there the other must be. The whole Christ, therefore, body, soul, and divinity, is present in the consecrated wafer, which is to be worshipped as Christ Himself is worshipped. This is the reason why the Church of England in her Homilies pronounces the service of the Mass in the Romish Church idolatrous. (3) That Church further teaches that

the body and blood of Christ thus locally and substantially present in the Eucharist are offered as a true propitiatory sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin, the application of which is determined by the intention of the officiating priest.

7. Idolatry consists not only in the worship of false gods, but in the worship of the true God by images. The second Commandment of the Decalogue expressly forbids the bowing down to, or serving the likeness of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath. The precise thing, therefore, that is forbidden is that which the Church of Rome permits and enjoins, namely, the use of images in religious worship, prostration before them, and doing them reverence.

8. Another great error of the Church of Rome is the worship of saints and angels, and especially of the Virgin Mary. It is not merely that they are regarded as objects of reverence, but that the service rendered them involves the ascription of divine attributes. They are assumed to be everywhere present, able to hear and answer prayer, to help and to save. They become the ground of confidence to the people, and the objects of their religious affections. They are to them precisely what the gods of the heathen were to the Greeks and Romans.

Such are some of the errors taught by the Church of Rome, and they prove that that Church instead of being infallible, is so corrupt that it is the duty of the people of God to come out of it and to renounce its fellowship.

#### *The Recognition of an Infallible Church Incompatible with either Religious or Civil Liberty*

A Church which claims to be infallible, ipso facto, claims to be the mistress of the world; and those who admit its infallibility, thereby admit their entire subjection to its authority. It avails nothing to say that this infallibility is limited to matters of faith and morals, for under those heads is included the whole life of man, religious, moral, domestic, social, and political.

A church which claims the right to decide what is true in doctrine and obligatory in morals, and asserts the power to enforce submission to its decisions on the pain of eternal perdition, leaves no room for any other authority upon earth. In the presence of the authority of God, every other disappears.

With the claim to infallibility is inseparably connected the claim to pardon sin. The Church does not assume merely the right to declare the conditions on which sin will be forgiven at the bar of God, but it asserts that it has the prerogative to grant, or to withhold that forgiveness. "Ego te absolvo," is the formula the Church puts into the mouth of the priesthood. Those who receive that absolution are saved; those whom the Church refuses to absolve must bear the penalty of their offences.

An infallible church is thus the only institute of salvation.



All within its pale are saved; all without it perish. Those only are in the Church who believe what it teaches, who do what it commands, and are subject to its officers, and especially its head, the Roman pontiff. Any man, therefore, whom the Church excommunicates is thereby shut out of the kingdom of heaven; any nation placed under its ban is not only deprived of the consolation of religious services, but of the necessary means of salvation.

If the Church be infallible, its authority is no less absolute in the sphere of social and political life. It is immoral to contract or to continue an unlawful marriage, to keep an unlawful oath, to enact unjust laws, to obey a sovereign hostile to the Church. The Church, therefore, has the right to dissolve marriages, to free men from the obligations of their oaths, and citizens from their allegiance, to abrogate civil laws, and to depose sovereigns. These prerogatives have not only been claimed, but time and again exercised by the Church of Rome. They all of right belong to that Church, if it be infallible. As these claims are enforced by penalties involving the loss of the soul, they cannot be resisted by those who admit the Church to be infallible. It is obvious, therefore, that where this doctrine is held there can be no liberty of opinion, no freedom of conscience, no civil or political freedom. As the recent ecumenical Council of the Vatican has decided that this infallibility is vested in the Pope, it is henceforth a matter of faith with Romanists, that the Roman pontiff is the absolute sovereign of the world. All men are bound, on the penalty of eternal death, to believe what he declares to be true, and to do whatever he decides is obligatory. — end of quote from Hodge, Vol. 1, pages 138-150.

#### THE REFORMATION VERSUS FALSE MYSTICISM

The reader may recall that we are discussing the views on the Church during the time of the Reformation. We have noted that the main principles of the Reformation of the sixteenth century are usually considered to be two and distinguished as the formal and material principle. The formal principle of the Reformation is that the Reformers acknowledged only one source of authority: the Holy Scriptures. With this principle they stood opposed to Roman Catholicism, False Mysticism (Quakers, Anabaptists, etc.) and to Rationalism. We are still discussing this formal principle of the Reformation. We have called the attention of the reader at length to the view of Roman Catholicism which claims that the right and power to interpret the Bible belongs to the Church, that is, to the clergy, and this means ultimately to the pope who has been declared infallible by that Church whenever he functions and acts officially. This doctrine of infallibility, established by Rome during the last century, means that the pope has always been infallible, ever since he succeeded the apostle Peter. It is well that we bear

this in mind. This means, of course, that whatever a pope has declared in the past, also in connection with the Roman Catholic doctrine that the pope is the temporal ruler of the world as well as the spiritual head and ruler of the Church cannot be altered or violated, inasmuch as any declaration to that effect was by Divine inspiration and all such utterances are infallible. We now wish to call attention to the view of the Church of the Reformation as this stood opposed to False Mysticism. False Mysticism is characterized by rejecting the objective authority of the Bible and relying upon "inner light"; Protestants claimed that the objective revelation in Scripture must be the sole and only reliable canon and rule for all faith and life.

We must distinguish, of course, between Mysticism and False Mysticism. There is, we surely understand, a certain type of Mysticism in the sound and Scriptural sense of the word and that must be maintained. True Christianity is surely mystical in a very real sense of the word. Christianity, in the true and living sense, is certainly never to be divorced from an inner, spiritual and living fellowship and experience of the heart. True Mysticism is certainly expressed by the psalmist in Psalm 66:16, and we quote: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." And this also applies to what we read in Galatians 2:20, and we again quote: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." The opposite of Mysticism in the sound and Scriptural sense of the word is dead orthodoxy, a dead intellectualism, a dead and lifeless agreement with and assent to the truths of the Word of God. If it be true that to divorce one's inner and spiritual life and experience from the objective standard of the Word of God will deprive a child of God of all firm assurance and confidence and will ultimately lead the Church of God into gross error, it is just as true that to divorce all knowledge of the Scriptures from an inner and living experience of the same will plunge the Church of God headlong into the midst of the world. True religion is certainly mystical in the true sense of the word. This must be maintained. However, we must be on our guard against False Mysticism. And False Mysticism is oftentimes the reaction against a cold and dead intellectual assent to the truths of the Word of God. It is to this False Mysticism and the stand of the Church of the Reformation against it that we wish to call attention in subsequent articles.

H.V.

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The heavens and earth, by right divine,  
The world and all therein, are Thine;  
The whole creation's wondrous frame  
Proclaims its Maker's glorious Name.

## 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 8 (continued)

Our fathers obviously cite the text in I Peter 1:23 in order to make one point, namely, that we are born again out of *incorruptible seed*. This, to them, makes the Arminian teaching of regeneration that can be lost and of frequent regenerations of the same individual absurd. That this is indeed the fathers' purpose in quoting this passage is plain from their reply to the Arminians: "For these deny by this doctrine the incorruptibleness of the seed of God, whereby we are born again." This, then, is their sole point. *In itself* it makes no difference what you say about the interpretation of the passage. *In itself* it makes no difference whether you speak of mediate or immediate regeneration in this connection. Over against the Arminians this passage proves plainly that we are born again out of incorruptible seed, that therefore this regeneration cannot be lost, that thus there can be no necessity of and no room for frequent regenerations. On this single term hinges the truth that once regenerated means forever regenerated, and that there cannot possibly be a falling away of those who are regenerated. You would have to blot this term out of the Scriptures in order to maintain that a single regenerated saint could ever lose his regeneration!

For what does the contrast between corruptible and incorruptible seed mean? Abstractly considered, a corruptible seed is a seed that is subject to corruption from without, able to be corrupted. And the permanence, the abiding character, therefore, of that which is able to be corrupted is, of course, not at all guaranteed. If our life of regeneration were out of corruptible seed, then there would at least be always the possibility that finally the power of corruption would gain entrance into us, and that we would finally succumb to that power of corruption, and thus lose our regeneration. That, as such, is the meaning of *corruptible seed*. If we were born again out of a corruptible seed, then the very principle and the beginning of our whole existence would be subject to corruption. Concretely, however, the apostle undoubtedly has reference in this passage to the contrast between our first birth and our second birth, and therefore means by this corruptible seed the human seed out of which we are born, the seed of a human being in conception. That human seed is corruptible, that is, subject to corruption. In fact, the

seed out of which we are born is corrupted already at the time of our conception. And therefore, it cannot last: it has in it the principle of death. The result is, as far as our first life is concerned, that dying we die.

But now the apostle says that this seed of regeneration, that is, this very first, inner principle or beginning out of which all our life as saints springs, is not a corruptible, but an *incorruptible* seed. Not only is there no corruption in it, but it is not subject to corruption, is not able to be corrupted. There is no death in it, and it is not subject to death. The reason for this is, of course, the fact that the life-principle of this seed is Christ, Who is incorruptible. Because Christ died as the Prince of life in behalf of His people, He overcame death in their behalf. His life, and our life in Him, is resurrection-life, life that is victorious over death in the absolute sense of the word. This life Christ through the Holy Spirit imparts unto His own. And so the seed that is implanted in the elect is incorruptible. Out of that seed that life of regeneration springs. And it can never die. No more than Christ and His life are subject to death, no more are the elect and their life in Christ subject to death. Regeneration can never be lost. And there is never any need for a repetition of regeneration. Once regenerated is always regenerated. And it is all of grace. There is no falling away of the saints.

And now we return to the matter mentioned in the beginning of our discussion of this article, namely, that of mediate or immediate regeneration. As we mentioned, this question arises, or rather, is introduced, in connection with this article. And we are therefore almost forced to discuss it also even though it is not as such pertinent to a treatment of our *Canons*. Nor would we deny that a discussion of this subject can be beneficial, even for a better understanding of the truth of perseverance as set forth in our *Canons*. For, in the first place, the more one considers this entire passage in I Peter 1:23-25, and that too, in connection with this "incorruptible seed" which our fathers point to, the more one can understand the beauty and the strength of our Reformed position, and the more one can see the utter absurdity of the Arminian position. In the second place, while we certainly would not deny that truly Reformed men have maintained that regeneration is mediate, we believe that the stand of those who maintain mediate regeneration, even though unintentionally, allows room for a misunderstanding that could ultimately land one in the camp of the Arminian. For if one maintains that regeneration is through the means of the preaching of the Word, and then changes the preaching of the Word into an Arminian well-meant offer or invitation, dependent upon the acceptance of the hearer, it is not difficult to become entirely Arminian and to adopt the position which our fathers reject in this very article. Let me emphasize: no truly Reformed man, even though he believes regeneration to be mediate, would countenance this Arminian heresy. But the possibility is there.

And that possibility is not there if regeneration is immediate. And, in the third place, this question is important with a view to the matter of infants in the covenant of grace. For either those who believe in mediate regeneration must exclude the regeneration of infants, or they must allow for an exception in the case of infants of believers—an exception which then becomes much more common than the rule. This latter difficulty many adherents of mediate regeneration pass by without an acceptable and satisfying answer. Hence, we may profitably give our attention to this whole question in connection with this passage from I Peter 1.

First of all, however, I wish to quote from the commentary of Ds. T. Bos on this article of our *Canons*. He enters into this question at some length, in order at the very end of his comments to deal with the main issue of the article, i.e., the Arminian heresy. I quote in free translation from pp. 250-252:

“Here there is mention of the ‘seed of God,’ which is the seed of regeneration, in connection with Peter’s teaching concerning the ‘incorruptible seed.’ In that connection it becomes plain to us how our fathers, gathered at the Synod, conceived of these words of Peter, in distinction from the interpretation which some give. Peter places the living and abiding word of God over against all flesh and all glory of man: that latter is as the flower of the grass, which withers and falls away, and is thus corruptible. Moreover, he says of the Word of the Lord that it abideth, the word, namely, that is preached unto them.

“Now the Son is never called ‘the word of God,’ only the Word. And that Son can also not be called ‘the seed of God,’ as that seed appears here. The seed of God and the word of God and ‘the word of the Lord’ is the preached word of the Gospel. Here then is indeed proof that the preached word, the word of the Gospel, is here considered as the seed of regeneration, as the Apostle Paul also speaks of a ‘being begotten’ through the word.

“The connection between regeneration and Word may not be broken because the Scriptures lay that connection and because in our Confessions that connection is maintained.

“That connection, however, does no injustice to the Scriptural doctrine that the Holy Spirit implants the new life in a man, changes the heart, gives conversion unto life, and regenerates. The acceptance of the means is no denial of the operation of the Workmaster. How the Holy Spirit uses the preached word in regeneration will indeed never be fully explained by us.

“To let go of the connection between word and regeneration with an appeal to the case of infants, who can be regenerated before they can ever understand the word—this is to use the one truth of Scripture in order to oppose the other truth, something that is highly dangerous, because then one does not compare Scripture with Scripture, but brings Scripture in conflict with itself. Whoever wants to explain everything in this area, or solve everything for our

human understanding, begins something he cannot finish. It is much more in harmony with Scripture in the case of little children to reckon with the word of promise given to the children of the Church; for where the Word, or preaching of the Gospel is not, there the promise of the Spirit is also not pledged to the children. The word therefore also in the case of children is before the Spirit; the Holy Spirit follows the Son in the preached word, just as the Son follows the Father with the word according to the line of election.

“In regeneration the Holy Spirit prepares the heart as fruitful soil, through which the seed of the word finds response in the heart, and, being accepted through faith, is kept. Now that word, having fallen in the heart, having been accepted, having become a reality, and having its effects upon the entire heart, on the entire soul-life with all its faculties, and thus on one’s entire life; that word abides because it is an incorruptible seed, and so it always continues to work on, in greater or smaller measure, again and again strengthened under the application of the Spirit.”

After thus elaborating on this whole matter of mediate regeneration, the author devotes brief attention to the Arminian error discussed in the 8th article of *Canons* V, B. Quite obviously he was bent on putting across the notion of mediate regeneration.

We cannot finish our discussion in the present issue. For the time being, however, we point out:

1) That it cannot be said on the basis of this article that the fathers of Dordrecht were given to the view of mediate regeneration. In this particular article they give absolutely no indication of this.

2) That the issue in mediate *versus* immediate regeneration is not whether there is a connection between regeneration and the Word. The issue is rather: what *is* the connection between the two? Is the Word preached the means of regeneration, or must regeneration itself precede any spiritual hearing of the Word preached? The matter must certainly not be presented thus, that the adherents of immediate regeneration deny the general principle of a connection between regeneration and the Word preached. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

3) It is gross over-simplification to say that those who bring up the case of infants are guilty of bringing Scripture in conflict with Scripture instead of comparing Scripture with Scripture. This is simply an easy way of lightly dismissing the problem rather than facing it. If, however, one compares Scripture with Scripture, and then finds that his particular view of regeneration stands in conflict with a plain Scriptural truth, is it not much more correct to say that it is high time to re-examine one’s view? But one must not imply that the adherents of immediate regeneration oppose one truth (supposedly the “truth” of mediate regeneration) with another truth (the truth of infant regeneration).

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

## ALL AROUND US

### *The Antithesis.*

The Rev. H. J. Kuiper, managing editor of *Torch and Trumpet*, writes in the July-August, 1960 issue on "The Antithesis as a Cornerstone of Christian Life and Action." This article we read not only rather carefully but also critically. The subject has always been intriguing to us as we believe it should be to anyone who loves the Reformed truth.

Writing under the sub-division "The Antithesis In Theology," Rev. Kuiper tells us: "We do not speak of the antithesis as *the* cornerstone but as *a* cornerstone of Christian life and action." We have always associated the cornerstone with that dedicated and ceremoniously laid stone which declares the purpose of the whole building which rests upon it. It must mean then that in Rev. Kuiper's conception there are several more such stones in the building of the truth. But of these he does not speak.

Nor does Rev. Kuiper tell us what moved him to write on this subject. We can only guess, and our guess may be wrong. Was it because he sees so much synthesis in the church he serves that has no place for this doctrine in theory or practise? Was it perhaps the recent controversy in the Christian Reformed Church on the Nigerian question in which a large element favored a syncretical theological seminary? Or, was it perhaps the fact that a group of erstwhile Protestant Reformed people now seeking entrance into the Chr. Ref. Church, people who once were grounded in the doctrine of the antithesis, and who perhaps evinced some antipathy to the doctrine of common grace and the Three Points because it destroys the antithesis? We wonder.

Though the editor gave his readers a long article on the subject, attempting to show how the antithesis is brought or should be brought to manifestation in every department of life, there is much wanting in his article and also some with which we entirely disagree.

Through the years we have come into conversation with people who are supposed to be of Reformed background, also people in the Christian Reformed Church, who prate about their peculiar doctrine of the antithesis. But our conversations revealed that their conception of antithesis was nothing more than a dualistic conception. Some years ago we heard of an old Arminianistic-Methodist preacher who spoke to an audience of ministers of a certain rural community gathered for the purpose of effecting some kind of legislation that would keep out of the community certain forces for evil. He spoke rather enthusiastically of a great tug of war that was going on. He said, God was on one side, at one end of the rope, and the devil on the other end. And with all the oratory he could muster, he urged his audience to hurry up and get on God's side, lest the tug of war end in victory

for the devil. We say there are many also in Reformed circles who have this same conception. We do not accuse Rev. Kuiper of presenting this dualistic conception, yet we are not so sure that those of his readers who hold to this dualistic view of antithesis will not be strengthened in their view by the reading of his article.

Here are two examples of what we mean. Writing under the sub-division: "Division for Christ's sake in the home," Kuiper says: "However, it is bound to be seen in a home of the world where God enters with his grace into the heart of one or more in that home without saving all its members; and it is also seen in that Christian home *where one or more have chosen the side of the evil one and live a life of sin*" (Italics mine). Again, writing under the sub-division: "The Antithesis in the Church," he says: "One congregation may be on the side of the seed of the serpent while another congregation of the same communion, located perhaps in the same city, may be on the side of the Seed of the Woman, namely Christ."

Now, we do not believe that Kuiper wants this dualistic conception himself. But it certainly behooved him to make clear both in his definition of antithesis and in the rest of his writing that there is day and night difference between dualism and antithesis.

Rev. Kuiper's definition and understanding of the doctrine of the antithesis is expressed in the following two paragraphs:

"By antithesis is meant the fundamental contrast, division, and antagonism between the people of God and those who are of the world, between the thinking of those who are Christians and those who are not, between the activities of Kingdom workers and those outside the Kingdom of God. The antithesis is the result of the existence of two diametrically opposed forces in the human race. The one is man's sin, the other God's grace. If either of these forces had not entered the world, there would have been no antithesis. If sin had not come, all of man's thoughts and actions would be pleasing to God and mankind would be one under God. If after the entrance of sin God had not caused his grace to enter the hearts of some, all of man's thoughts and actions would have been antagonistic to God.

"The antithesis dates from the day, after Adam's fall, when God said: 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.' This enmity or hostility is produced by God, not by man. It does not justify or imply hatred on the part of believers against their fellowmen, but it does mean that there is a division, an ineradicable line of separation, between the party of God and the party of Satan. That division puts an unbridgeable gulf between the ideals and strivings of believers on the one hand and unbelievers on the other."

Now no one who understands the word and the doctrine of the antithesis will deny that it implies "the fundamental

contrast, division, and antagonism between the people of God and those who are of the world," etc. But if you say no more, this definition can very easily be understood to imply the dualistic conception of God versus the devil, light versus darkness, truth versus the lie, etc., and each of these contrasts vying for supremacy.

Nor could any deny that "this enmity or hostility is produced by God, not by man." If Rev. Kuiper had developed this thought we might have had a much better article. Fact is, in our explanation of this doctrine, this truth must receive the emphasis.

Moreover, it should not pass our notice that Rev. Kuiper has his dates mixed up a bit. He tells us that "the antithesis dates from the day after Adam's fall," etc. But is it not true that God introduced the antithesis already before the fall when he placed man before the trees of life and of the knowledge of good and evil? Is it not true that historically man did not know anything but the word "yes" until God showed him the word "no" by the tree of knowledge of good and evil? The answer to both of these questions is undoubtedly affirmative. The point we are making is that antithesis is not something accidental, something that is brought on by the fact of sin, historically speaking, but antithesis is the working out of the divine plan that God would reach his highest glory through the way of sin and grace. God not only "produced" the antithesis, but he willed it. For a correct conception of antithesis, we shall therefore have to begin and end with God.

It should be clearly understood that in God himself there is no antithesis. Though the antithesis is of Him, it is not in Him. God is pure thesis. The word "antithesis," as any good dictionary will tell you, is composed of two words: *anti* and *thesis*. *Anti* means, against. *Thesis* comes from a Greek word meaning: to place or set. Thesis, therefore, is that which is put, or set; while antithesis is that which opposes that which is set. Now, God is, as we said, the thesis. He is light, and there is no darkness in him. He is the truth, and there is no lie in him. He is righteousness, and there is no unrighteousness in him. God never, from this point of view, suffers opposition, experiences contrary winds, has any antithesis in himself. If there is any antithesis, and there is, he creates it. Of this he speaks in Isaiah 45:7: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things." See also Amos 3:6. God willed and created the darkness that he might forever hate it; and on the other hand, he willed to reveal all the glory of his thetical being on the dark background of sin and evil and so creates the darkness to be a servant.

And the truth is that God also put the thesis in his people by his grace. And so he commands them to live thetically in every department of life as lights in the world of darkness. Just because the thesis is put in his people they shine as lights in the world, are a savory salt that is pleasing to him. And just because they are of God, the antithesis, the

devil, the world, and their own sinful flesh, always opposes them. O, it is true that, as Rev. Kuiper writes, "if God had not caused his grace to enter the hearts of some, all of man's thoughts and actions would be antagonistic to God." The reason is that God's people by nature, like the wicked world out of which they are born, stand in open rebellion against God and all that is holy. But there is much more to be said.

In the final sense of the word, the antithesis is planned by God to serve not only his own glory, but also the glory of his redeemed people. Is it not true that according to Scripture all things work together for good to them that love God, the called according to his purpose? Is it not true that ultimately the devil, the world, the darkness, death and all that seems to oppose God's people, become servants divinely purposed to bring us to glory? And if that is true ultimately, is it not also true right now while they experience the opposition? The answer must be: Yes, of course.

Let no one conclude from what we have just written, that the antithesis is not real, that darkness, lie, devil, wicked world, etc., do not really exist, do not really oppose. Nor should anyone conclude that the opposition the powers of darkness exert against the Lord and His Anointed, and which is also raised against His people in the world, is of no consequence. Indeed, the devil, the world, and my own sinful flesh are formidable opponents, and of them all the latter is undoubtedly the most formidable and the most treacherous to withstand.

Was it not the warfare of the flesh against the Spirit in the apostle Paul that made him cry out in Romans 7, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" As the English preacher once said: "My greatest enemy I carry under my own waistcoat." O, indeed, the antithesis is real. But let it be emphasized: "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

We said in the beginning that there were some things which Rev. Kuiper wrote with which we cannot agree. Let me mention one or two things.

In the first place, as we have indicated above, we do not agree with the apparent tenor of his article, as though it is up to the believing Christian to realize the antithesis. According to Kuiper the Christian is to realize the antithesis in the home, school, church, science, theology, society, politics and art. We believe the Christian is to live thetically as a child of light in all these spheres. When he so lives, he will of necessity experience the antithesis, the opposition of the forces of darkness.

In the second place, when Rev. Kuiper writes under "The Antithesis in the Social Sphere," he appears to be in conflict with himself when he tells us on the one hand, "common grace makes some cooperation of a limited nature with non-Christians possible;" and on the other, "however, in

(Continued on page 501)

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

Sept. 5, 1960

Candidate J. Kortering has accepted the call from our Hull congregation and has already taken up residence there. His installation into office awaits his examination before Classis West, September 21.

Grand Haven has submitted another trio consisting of the Revs. H. Hanko, R. C. Harbach and G. Lubbers.

Our two newest churches, Isabel and Forbes, have jointly called the Rev. C. Hanko from a trio which included Rev. Harbach and Rev. Lubbers.

Edgerton's school opened the 60-61 year with a half day session August 28, with Dale Kuiper and Evelyn Huizenga comprising the teaching staff. Hope and Adams St. Schools opened their doors after Labor Day.

At a recent congregational meeting, First Church decided to make some alteration in the church basement, partitioning the large catechism room to furnish a new room which will be given to the Theological School for classroom use. The Theological School has been holding classes in our Adams St. School for the last few years, but Adams St. needed the room due to increased enrollment. So, once again, an emergency has been met benefiting all concerned.

Doon's bulletin reveals that two young men have been added to their list of confessing members by public confession of faith in their church; and, from Edgerton comes the notice that they have accepted the confession of faith of six of their young people. How happy we may be when we recognize this internal growth to be the evidence of God's favor upon us as He produces fruit upon the pure preaching of the Word among us. I Cor. 3:6, 7.

All of our church bulletins carried invitations to help First Church celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of Rev. H. Hoeksema's installation into the office of the Ministry. The response was very gratifying, for visitors included those from Muskegon, Grand Haven, Holland and Kalamazoo, Michigan; from South Holland, Ill., and from South Dakota; and even one well-wisher from far off California! At this celebration were Mrs. Hoeksema, Rev. M. Schipper and his father and mother, and Mrs. N. Jonker, who were also at the Dominee's installation service forty-five years ago, they being members of his first congregation in Holland, Mich. It was an old fashioned picnic that was prepared for the celebration, old fashioned because it was an afternoon-evening affair with a serious speech on each program — speeches and group singing as we used to enjoy them when picnics were annual events instead of weekly outings as we know them today.

Rev. G. M. Ophoff opened the afternoon program with prayer. We were all happy that Rev. Hoeksema's best friend and stalwart ally was able to do this for him. By co-incidence

it was a red letter day for Rev. and Mrs. Ophoff too, for they were remembering their fortieth wedding anniversary on that date. Following the opening prayer we enjoyed some group singing, featuring Dutch Psalms exclusively. The canopy of tall shade trees, under which the tables were grouped, served as an admirable cathedral in which to sing the songs of Zion.

The afternoon program featured a speech by the Rev. Hoeksema's colleague in First Church, Rev. C. Hanko. The speaker reflected upon the Word of God as found in Gen. 49:22-24, drawing a parallel between the lives of those two men of God, Joseph and the guest of honor at the picnic. Truly, it might be affirmed that "the archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him," and no less might be confessed that "his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob."

Rev. G. Vos asked the blessing before supper, and Rev. R. Veldman opened the evening program with prayer. The Hope Heralds, a male choir from Hope Church, rendered two fine selections from the Psalter; and Arnold Dykstra, from Hudsonville, praised God with the singing of a vocal solo.

Rev. M. Schipper, the speaker of the evening, shared with us a few incidents from his early acquaintance with the Dominee, and then spoke on the admonition found in God's Word as it is recorded in I Thes. 5:12, 13. This speaker stressed the point that we owe esteem to the workers in God's vineyard for their work's sake. Indeed, both speakers of the day led us in the contemplation of God's grace unto His Church in the gift of men appointed and equipped by Him to gather His Church through the foolishness of preaching. Both speeches forbade our praise of men, but definitely fixed it upon the glory and honor of the God of our salvation.

A generous offering was taken to start a fund for a "Rev. H. Hoeksema Memorial Library" to be administered by the Theological School Society.

Rev. Hoeksema was then called to the microphone by the master of ceremonies, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema. The Reverend reminisced about his first year skirmish in his forty-five years battle for the Truth, the first one being the truth of the covenant responsibility of the parents in Christian instruction for their children. He agreed with the preceding speakers, ascribing all thanks, honor and praise to the King of the Church, who alone provideth the means listed in I Cor. 12:28 for the gathering of His elect. He then led us in closing prayer, confessing our sins, and praising God for the gift of His Son Who took our sins upon Himself, thereby redeeming His own unto all eternity.

May this be our prayer: "Lord, make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am." Psalm 39:4.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.



**ALL AROUND US***(Continued from page 499)*

most social organizations important issues will arise which reveal irreconcilability of viewpoint between Christians and non-Christians. That is particularly true of organizations which concern themselves with the most fundamental needs and relationships of men, as for example labor unions."

We believe that consistency demands that if the former is true, the latter must also follow; i.e., if there is some co-operation, be it of a limited nature, with the powers of darkness on the basis of common grace, then it follows not only that I may but also must seek that cooperation in the ungodly labor unions. We do not believe, of course, either in common grace or in affiliation of Reformed Christians in ungodly labor unions. It appears that Rev. Kuiper does not believe there is much common grace operative in the labor unions for he says, "As a rule cooperation in this and many other so-called neutral organizations is possible only at the cost of a surrender or denial of Christian principles and convictions."

M.S.

**Announcement**

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on Wednesday, October 5, at 9 A. M. in the Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church, D.V.

Consistories will please consider this an official announcement and accordingly appoint delegates to attend this meeting.

REV. M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk***Announcement**

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. Anyone who is in need of lodging should write James Blankespoor, Box C, Doon, Iowa.

REV. H. VELDMAN, *Stated Clerk***INDEX TO VOLUME XXXVI****TEXT INDEX**

SUBJECT	Author	Page	No.
Genesis 32:3, 6, 7	B.W.	9	1
Genesis 32:10a	G.V.	145	7
Genesis 32:31	B.W.	34	2
Genesis 33:1, 3, 4	B.W.	57	3
Genesis 34:1, 2, 25-26	B.W.	81	4
Genesis 35:1	B.W.	106	5
Genesis 37:3-5	B.W.	130	6
Genesis 37:28	B.W.	153	7
Genesis 38:26	B.W.	178	8
Genesis 39:2-4, 20	B.W.	201	9

SUBJECT	Author	Page	No.
Genesis 39:20, 21	B.W.	226	10
Genesis 41:14, 25	B.W.	248	11
Genesis 41:38-40	B.W.	274	12
Genesis 42:5, 8	B.W.	298	13
Genesis 43:11, 13, 14	B.W.	322	14
Genesis 43:15	B.W.	346	15
Genesis 44:16, 30-34	B.W.	369	16
Genesis 45:28	B.W.	394	17
Genesis 47:1, 2, 7	B.W.	417	18
Genesis 47:23-25	B.W.	442	19
Genesis 47:29	B.W.	464	20
Genesis 49:1, 28	B.W.	488	21
Genesis 54:1-3	B.W.	369	16
Deuteronomy 4:9, 10	G.V.	481	21
Deuteronomy 24:1-4	H.H.	254	11
Job 42:5, 6	G.V.	25	2
Psalms 16:11	G.V.	73	4
Psalms 19:12	G.V.	49	3
Psalms 22:2	G.V.	265	12
Psalms 23:5	G.V.	169	8
Psalms 27:4	C.H.	385	17
Psalms 34:8	G.V.	217	10
Psalms 36:7-9	G.V.	97	5
Psalms 39:9	G.V.	433	19
Psalms 68:19, 20	G.V.	193	9
Psalms 73:25	G.V.	362	16
Psalms 103:3, 4	G.V.	337	15
Proverbs 28:13	G.V.	241	11
Matthew 2:1, 2	G.V.	121	6
Matthew 19:7, 8	H.H.	254	11
Matthew 27:25	G.V.	289	13
Mark 5:18, 19	G.V.	457	20
Mark 16:6	G.V.	313	14
Luke 1:46-52	G.L.	132	6
Luke 1:57-66	G.L.	155	7
Romans 15:9b	G.L.	11	1
Romans 15:10, 11	G.L.	36	2
Romans 15:12	G.L.	59	3
Romans 15:12	G.L.	83	4
Romans 15:13	G.L.	108	5
Romans 15:14-21	G.L.	180	8
Romans 15:22-29	G.L.	203	9
Romans 15:30-35	G.L.	228	10
I Corinthians 15:1-11	G.L.	250	11
I Corinthians 15:12-19	G.L.	276	12
I Corinthians 15:20-28	G.L.	300	13
I Corinthians 15:20-28	G.L.	324	14
I Corinthians 15:29-34	G.L.	348	15
I Corinthians 15:29-34	G.L.	371	16
I Corinthians 15:35-38	G.L.	396	17
I Corinthians 15:35-38	G.L.	419	18
I Corinthians 15:39-49	G.L.	444	19
I Corinthians 15:51-58	G.L.	466	20
Galatians 5:22-23	H.C.H.	409	18
Philippians 2:12b, 13	G.V.	1	1
II Timothy 2:1, 2	H.H.	4	1
Hebrews 11:21	B.W.	464	20
I John 2:12-14	G.L.	490	21
Revelation 12:1-6	H.H.	7	1
Revelation 12:1-6	H.H.	30	2
Revelation 12:7-12	H.H.	32	2
Revelation 12:7-12	H.H.	54	3
Revelation 12:7-12	H.H.	78	4
Revelation 12:13-17	H.H.	78	4
Revelation 12:13-17	H.H.	102	5

SUBJECT	Author	Page	No.	SUBJECT	Author	Page	No.
Revelation 13:1-10 .....	H.H.	126	6	Christelijke Encyclopedie by F. W. Grosheide			
Revelation 13:1-10 .....	H.H.	151	7	and G. Van Itterzon .....	H.H.	271	12
Revelation 13:11-18 .....	H.H.	176	8	Christianity and Liberalism by J. G. Machen.....	H.H.	270	12
Revelation 13:11-18 .....	H.H.	198	9	Christian Perspectives by Dr. Van Riessen,			
Revelation 13:11-18 .....	H.H.	223	10	Prof. Farris and Dr. Runner .....	H.H.	318	14
Revelation 14:1-5 .....	H.H.	223	10	Epistle of Paul to Colossians and to			
Revelation 14:1-5 .....	H.H.	247	11	Philemon by H. M. Carson .....	H.H.	390	17
Revelation 14:1-5 .....	H.H.	271	12	Epistle of Paul to the Philippians			
Revelation 14:6-13 .....	H.H.	273	12	by R. P. Martin .....	H.H.	342	15
Revelation 14:6-13 .....	H.H.	294	13	Epistle to the Romans by J. Murray .....	H.H.	342	15
Revelation 14:6-13 .....	H.H.	319	14	God Hath Spoken by T. R. Philips .....	H.H.	318	14
Revelation 14:14-20 .....	H.H.	319	14	Gospel According to St. John			
Revelation 14:14-20 .....	H.H.	343	15	by R. V. G. Tasker .....	H.H.	342	15
Revelation 15:1-8 .....	H.H.	366	16	Luther's Works by C. N. Impeta .....	H.H.	150	7
Revelation 15:1-8 .....	H.H.	391	17	Tempest Over Scotland by N. E. Nygaard .....	H.H.	270	12
Revelation 16:1-9 .....	H.H.	414	18	Witness of the Spirit by B. Ramm .....	H.H.	318	14
Revelation 16:1-9 .....	H.H.	438	19	Bountiful Host .....	G.V.	169	8
Revelation 16:10-21 .....	H.H.	440	19	Burden of Jesus' Blood .....	G.V.	289	13
Revelation 16:10-21 .....	H.H.	462	20				
Revelation 16:10-21 .....	H.H.	486	21				

## SUBJECT INDEX

## - A -

Advisory Members of Classis .....	G.V.d.B.	188	8
Air Force Training Manual Draws N.C.C. Fire.....	M.S.	286	12
A-Millennarianism .....	H.H.	364	16
An Attempt To Discipline .....	H.H.	125	6
An Attempt To Discipline .....	H.H.	148	7
An Attempt To Discipline .....	H.H.	172	8
Another Attempt To Unite the Liberated			
and Synodicals .....	M.S.	215	9
Antithesis, The .....	M.S.	498	21
Apartheid - Is It Really Race Discrimination.....	M.S.	430	18
Appeal Denied .....	H.H.	174	8
Are Officebearers Bound In Their Beliefs.....	M.S.	287	12
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	53	3
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	100	5
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	124	6
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	173	8
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	196	9
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	220	10
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	244	11
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	268	12
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	293	13
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	317	14
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	436	19
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	460	20
As To Being Protestant Reformed .....	H.H.	484	21

## - B -

Bad Conditions .....	H.H.	269	12
Benefactor, The Great .....	G.V.	337	15
Blessed Knowledge of the Path of Life .....	G.V.	73	4
Bless the Lord .....	G.V.	193	9
Books, As To:			
Abraham Kuyper by F. Vanden Berg .....	H.H.	271	12
Calvinism by A. Kuyper .....	H.H.	150	7
Calvin on Scripture and Divine Sovereignty			
by J. Murray .....	H.H.	390	17
Calvinistic Concept of Culture by H. Van Til.....	H.H.	246	11
Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life			
by R. S. Wallace .....	H.H.	150	7

## - C -

Calvin and the Burning of Servetus .....	R.V.	211	9
Canons of Dordrecht:			
Head V, Chapter 12 .....	H.C.H.	17	1
Head V, Chapter 12 .....	H.C.H.	42	2
Head V, Chapter 13 .....	H.C.H.	43	2
Head V, Chapter 13 .....	H.C.H.	63	3
Head V, Chapter 13 .....	H.C.H.	89	4
Head V, Chapter 13 .....	H.C.H.	114	5
Head V, Chapter 14 .....	H.C.H.	138	6
Head V, Chapter 14 .....	H.C.H.	186	8
Head V, Chapter 15 .....	H.C.H.	209	9
Rejection of Errors, Art. 1 .....	H.C.H.	234	10
Rejection of Errors, Art. 1 .....	H.C.H.	258	11
Rejection of Errors, Art. 2 .....	H.C.H.	282	12
Rejection of Errors, Art. 3 .....	H.C.H.	306	13
Rejection of Errors, Art. 3 .....	H.C.H.	330	14
Rejection of Errors, Art. 4 .....	H.C.H.	331	14
Rejection of Errors, Art. 5 .....	H.C.H.	354	15
Rejection of Errors, Art. 5 .....	H.C.H.	377	16
Rejection of Errors, Art. 6 .....	H.C.H.	378	16
Rejection of Errors, Art. 6 .....	H.C.H.	402	17
Rejection of Errors, Art. 7 .....	H.C.H.	425	18
Rejection of Errors, Art. 7 .....	H.C.H.	450	19
Rejection of Errors, Art. 8 .....	H.C.H.	472	20
Rejection of Errors, Art. 8 .....	H.C.H.	496	21
Capital Punishment Wrong? .....	M.S.	67	3
Caught on the Horns of a Dilemma .....	M.S.	46	2
Christ and Moses Concerning Divorce .....	H.H.	254	11
Christian Education in Our Country .....	H.H.	292	13
Christian Education in Our Country .....	H.H.	316	14
Christian Education in Our Country .....	H.H.	340	15
Christian Reformed Synod Faces Nigerian			
Question Again .....	M.S.	429	18
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	40	2
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	61	3
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	87	4
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	112	5
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	136	6
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	159	7
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	184	8
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	207	9
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	232	10

SUBJECT	Author	Page	No.	SUBJECT	Author	Page	No.
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	280	12	— F —			
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	304	13	Fear That Removes Fear .....	J.A.H.	13	1
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	328	14	Feature Articles' Schedule for 1960 .....		20	1
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	352	15	Feature Articles:			
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	375	16	Calvin and the Burning of Servetus .....	R.V.	211	9
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	400	17	Christ and Moses Concerning Divorce .....	H.H.	254	11
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	423	18	Knox, John, and the Reformation .....	G.V.B.	302	13
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	448	19	Proper Relation Between Church and School .....	C.H.	161	7
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	470	20	Reformation Prepared In Luther's Soul .....	C.H.	15	1
Church And Sacraments .....	H.V.	494	21	Fight Against Obscenity .....	M.S.	118	5
Church And School .....	C.H.	161	7	For the Next Census .....	M.S.	167	7
Churches of the Dakotas .....	M.S.	358	15	Freedom of "Bigotry," The .....	J.A.H.	492	21
Church Order:				Freedom of Speech .....	J.A.H.	38	2
Article 39 .....	G.V.d.B.	19	1	Freedom of Speech .....	J.A.H.	85	4
Article 40 .....	G.V.d.B.	44	2	Freedom of Speech .....	J.A.H.	110	5
Article 40 .....	G.V.d.B.	65	3	Freedom of Speech .....	J.A.H.	134	6
Article 41 .....	G.V.d.B.	66	3	Freedom of Speech .....	J.A.H.	157	7
Article 41 .....	G.V.d.B.	91	4	Freedom of Speech .....	J.A.H.	182	8
Article 41 .....	G.V.d.B.	116	5	Fruit of the Spirit .....	H.C.H.	409	18
Article 41 .....	G.V.d.B.	140	6				
Article 41 .....	G.V.d.B.	164	7	— G —			
Article 42 .....	G.V.d.B.	188	8	Graeser, Reply to Mr. Vernon .....	M.S.	454	19
Article 43 .....	G.V.d.B.	236	10				
Article 44 .....	G.V.d.B.	260	11	— H —			
Article 44 .....	G.V.d.B.	284	12	Heads As Well As Hearts .....	M.S.	406	17
Article 44 .....	G.V.d.B.	308	13	History of the Protestant Reformed Church .....	W.G.	256	11
Article 45 .....	G.V.d.B.	332	14				
Article 46 .....	G.V.d.B.	356	15	— I —			
Article 47 .....	G.V.d.B.	356	15	Ideology and Co-existence .....	M.S.	406	17
Article 48 .....	G.V.d.B.	379	16	Interest Upon The Principal .....	J.A.H.	421	18
Article 49 .....	G.V.d.B.	379	16	Interest Upon The Principal .....	J.A.H.	446	19
Article 49 .....	G.V.d.B.	404	17	Interest Upon The Principal .....	J.A.H.	468	20
Article 50 .....	G.V.d.B.	405	17	Inter-synodical Correspondence .....	G.V.d.B.	379	16
Article 50 .....	G.V.d.B.	427	18	Is Anti-Semitism Also Anti-Christian? .....	M.S.	239	10
Article 50 .....	G.V.d.B.	452	19	Israel Before Pharaoh .....	B.W.	417	18
Article 50 .....	G.V.d.B.	452	19	Israel's Children Reunited .....	B.W.	369	16
Article 51 .....	G.V.d.B.	474	20	It's Wrong But . . . ..	M.S.	190	8
Church Visitation .....	G.V.d.B.	260	11				
Church Visitation .....	G.V.d.B.	284	12	— J —			
Church Visitation .....	G.V.d.B.	308	13	Jacob and Joseph Reunited .....	B.W.	394	17
Classis, The .....	G.V.d.B.	66	3	Jacob Blessing His Sons .....	B.W.	488	21
Conservatives and Liberals in the Southern				Jacob Preparing To Meet Esau .....	B.W.	9	1
Presbyterian Church .....	H.H.	388	17	Jacob Prepares For Death .....	B.W.	464	20
Correction and Instruction .....	M.S.	215	9	Joseph and Potiphar .....	B.W.	201	9
				Joseph Before Pharaoh .....	B.W.	248	11
— D —				Joseph In Prison .....	B.W.	226	10
Deacons' Meetings .....	G.V.d.B.	44	2	Joseph Ruler of Egypt .....	B.W.	274	12
Deacons' Meetings .....	G.V.d.B.	65	3	Joseph's Economic Policies .....	B.W.	442	19
Debate over Divine Election .....	M.S.	67	3	Joseph's Meeting With His Brothers .....	B.W.	298	13
Dog's Vomit .....	J.F.	23	1	Joseph Sold By His Brothers .....	B.W.	153	7
Dreamer, The .....	B.W.	130	6				
Drug Price Investigation .....	M.S.	167	7	— K —			
				Knott's, Rev. E's Position Regarding Re-union			
— E —				in Question .....	M.S.	334	14
Ecclesiastical Censure .....	G.V.d.B.	236	10	Knox, John, and the Reformation .....	G.V.B.	302	13
Economics and Scripture .....	V.G.	431	18				
Editorials (Listed Alphabetically Under Separate Headings)				— L —			
Eligible For A Call .....	M.S.	143	6	Lessons on Matthew 5 .....	M.S.	118	5
Evolution, Long Periods, or Days .....	H.H.	52	3	Life's Desire .....	G.V.	362	16
Exhortation To Theological Professors .....	H.H.	4	1				
Explanation .....	H.H.	77	4				

SUBJECT	Author	Page	No.	SUBJECT	Author	Page	No.
- M -				- R -			
Making Molehills Out of Mountains	M.S.	262	11	Reformation Prepared in Luther's Soul	C.H.	15	1
Meditations (Listed Alphabetically Under Separate Titles)				Report of Eastern Ladies' League	R.C.	92	4
Meeting of Jacob and Esau	B.W.	57	3	Report of Eastern Ladies' League	B.W.	383	16
Mission Order	G.V.d.B.	474	20	Report of Western Ladies' League	C.K.	93	4
More Comment on the Liberated Synodical Merger	M.S.	310	13	Report of Western Ladies' League	G.H.	393	17
More Debate Respecting Infallibility	M.S.	190	8	Resurrection, The	G.V.	313	14
- N -				Returning To Bethel	B.W.	106	5
National Council of Churches	H.H.	28	2	Return To Egypt	B.W.	322	14
Needed: A Philosophy of Christian Education	M.S.	166	7	Rights of Consistory Members At Congregational Meetings	M.S.	68	3
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	24	1	Roman Catholics Becoming More Tolerant?	M.S.	286	12
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	48	2	Rome Speaks With Authority	M.S.	335	14
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	71	3	- S -			
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	96	4	Secret Errors	G.V.	49	3
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	120	5	Sin of Judah	B.W.	178	8
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	144	6	Shechem	B.W.	81	4
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	168	7	Some Thoughts on Infant Baptism	M.S.	94	4
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	192	8	Speech of True Penitence	G.V.	25	2
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	216	9	Standard Bearer's Witness	B.W.	69	3
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	240	10	Statistics	M.S.	335	14
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	264	11	Strong Protest Against N.C.C.C.	M.S.	21	1
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	288	12	Study Posits Hell On Way Out	M.S.	94	4
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	312	13	Suffering Worshipper	G.V.	265	12
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	336	14	Synod, The	G.V.d.B.	356	15
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	360	15	Synod, The	G.V.d.B.	405	17
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	384	16	Synod, The	G.V.d.B.	427	18
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	408	17	Synod, The	G.V.d.B.	452	19
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	432	18	Synod Of The Protestant Reformed Churches, 1960	H.C.H.	412	18
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	456	19	Synod Of The Protestant Reformed Churches, 1960	H.H.	478	20
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	480	20	Synodical Committees	G.V.d.B.	379	16
News From Our Churches	J.M.F.	500	21	Synodical Committees	G.V.d.B.	404	17
- O -				- T -			
Observations	J.A.H.	398	17	Taxation and the Churches	M.S.	214	9
One Desire	C.H.	385	17	Ten Brothers With Benjamin Before Joseph	B.W.	346	15
Only Theology The Bible Knows	M.S.	166	7	Things Thine Eyes Have Seen, The	G.V.	481	21
O Taste and See	G.V.	217	10	Three Points Still Binding?	M.S.	476	20
Our Children Belong To God	M.S.	429	18	Treatment Of Our Sins	G.V.	241	11
- P -				True Church, The	M.S.	381	16
Passing Over Penuel	B.W.	34	2	- U -			
Population Problem	M.S.	142	6	Union?	H.H.	76	4
Praise of God's Lovingkindness	G.V.	97	5	Unorganized Churches	G.V.d.B.	19	1
Prayer, Refused	G.V.	457	20	- V -			
Precedents Considered	G.V.d.B.	356	15	Visit of the Wise Men	G.V.	121	6
Proper Mood	G.V.	145	7	- W -			
Punishment or Praise	J.A.H.	205	9	What About The Children?	J.A.H.	326	14
Punishment or Praise	J.A.H.	230	10	What About The Children?	J.A.H.	350	15
Punishment or Praise	J.A.H.	252	11	What About The Children?	J.A.H.	373	16
Punishment or Praise	J.A.H.	278	12	Why Jews Remain Jews?	M.S.	238	10
- Q -				Will Religion Be An Issue in the 1960 Election	M.S.	214	9
Questions of Article 41, D.K.O.	G.V.d.B.	116	5	Work Out Your Salvation	G.V.	1	1
Questions of Article 41, D.K.O.	G.V.d.B.	140	6	Index by Rev. G. Vanden Berg			
Questions of Article 41, D.K.O.	G.V.d.B.	164	7				
Question of Re-union	H.H.	101	5				
Records of Ecclesiastical Assemblies	G.V.d.B.	332	14				