

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

THE PRAYER REFUSED

"And when He was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Mark 5:18, 19

There are three prayers of some kind in the story of this miracle. There is the prayer of the devils, of the Gadarenes, and of the erstwhile demoniac. It seems to me that Jesus would listen to this poor man's prayer, and give him his petition. But he did not.

I cannot say anything with regard to the devils' prayer. I do not understand anything about it. Why are the devils afraid of being sent out of the country? What benefit do devils have in being sent into the swine? God did not reveal much of the spirit world, and we will have to patiently wait for the day of Christ to learn more about angels and devils.

The prayer of the Gadarenes is most horrible.

It comes down to this: Jesus, please depart out of our coasts!

Ask these poor souls today, as they are in hell!

Here is the Savior of the world! And they have seen His mighty deeds! And they ask Him to please go away! I tremble.

The prayer of the demoniac is easily understood. Indeed, if he had not prayed this prayer we would have been surprised.

"Please, Jesus, may I stay with Thee?"

But, so the Holy Bible tells us, Jesus suffered him not, but said unto him: Go home to thy friends and tell them...

* * * *

This man was a demoniac, that is, a man who was possessed of many demons, devils.

I know of no instance where we find a more miserable man than this one. Imagine: he was possessed of a legion of devils. Now we know that a legion of Roman soldiers was composed of 6000 men. No wonder then that this poor unhappy mortal was roaming the mountains and the tombs, tearing his clothes and cutting himself with stones, all the while screaming and yelling at the top of his voice.

Also, he was untamable.

The people had tried to tame him. They had caught him several times, binding him with fetters and chains, but he had broken the fetters to pieces, and the chains he had simply plucked asunder by almost superhuman strength, engendered through demoniac possession.

But Jesus had healed this unhappy man. As soon as Jesus came out of the ship this man came toward the Savior. If we study this whole history in its context we note that Jesus came purposely across the lake of Galilee in order to save just one of His elect. That is the reason also why this man is led to Jesus the moment He steps ashore.

And the majestic King of the whole Universe says: "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit!"

Then comes the rejoinder by the many devils within: Art Thou come to torment us before the time? (See also Matthew 8:29.)

They, no doubt, refer to the day when Jesus shall cast all devils in the lake of fire.

And then follows the question of Jesus about their name, and the request of the devils to be sent into the swine, rather than to be sent out of the country. And Jesus allowed them to enter the swine.

But the man was healed suddenly.

And when the people of the Gadarenes approach Jesus, they find this formerly so miserable man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, healed and in his right mind.

* * * *

Then Jesus made preparations to return to Galilee. For we read in the text that He was come into the ship. The

erstwhile demoniac, noticing Jesus' intent to depart, prays to Him: O Lord, let me stay with Thee!

That was a very natural reaction by this man.

Do you remember Mary of Magdala? Was there anyone among Jesus' followers that loved Him as Mary did? Of course not! She proved it. Read the story of the resurrection of Jesus.

And God proved it.

When God from all eternity counselled: Whom shall We first show the King of Israel upon His resurrection? The answer of the Godhead eternally is: Mary of Magdala. That is God's reasoning.

Oh yes, Mary the Magdalene showed that she loved Jesus. She is the only one who is not afraid of all the frightening circumstances.

Why?

Love driveth away fear.

Mary has just one thought: I want to be with Jesus!

And there were but(?) seven devils cast out of her.

But this man had had within him a legion of devils, six thousand of them!

And now he had peace, sweet peace.

But he did remember the former unspeakable horrors of demoniac possession. And so we can easily understand the one thought within him: I want to stay close to this wonderful Savior. I want to be forever with this Stranger of Galilee!

And, therefore, his request, his fervent prayer: Jesus, may I stay with Thee?

* * * *

But Jesus suffered him not.

It seems to be entirely contrary to Jesus' program in the world.

How often did Jesus stress that He was sent into the world by the Father to save those that were lost.

He is the Good Shepherd who came to save His sheep. He would leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go upon the mountains to seek that one lost sheep. And having found it, He would lay it on His shoulders and come home and say to His friends: Rejoice with Me: I have found the sheep that was lost.

And the poets sing: Safe in the arms of Jesus.

But here?

Here Jesus comes across the sea of Galilee with but one purpose: I must save that one child of Mine there in the tombs and mountains! There is a legion of devils holding him, infuriating him, and making him so very miserable.

But the whole devil-world is against it! Therefore that

terrible storm arose on the way over, when Jesus was asleep in the ship, and the mariners were afraid they would drown. And therefore you read that Jesus REBUKED the wind. Jesus knew that the very devil was behind this tempestuous sea and wind, and therefore rebuked them.

But Jesus is the King of the whole Universe: even the wind and the sea obey Him. And also the devils. Jesus saves this poor lost sheep.

And when the poor man wants to stay with Him, He refuses!

Dear reader, do you know what this meant for the poor soul? It meant this: he had to stay in heathendom, among the heathens who just had prayed Jesus to get away from them! It meant that he had to stay in the DARKNESS of heathendom. In Decapolis of the Gadarenes there were no Scriptures, no people of God, no Jesus!

Besides, this poor man remembered the devils who had inhabited him. And he is afraid that the devils would return.

Can you blame him for desiring to stay close to Jesus his Deliverer? Of course not.

But Jesus enters the ship, and they depart. Without him. He is divorced from the Fountain of his salvation!

* * * *

And yet, everything is alright.

The same condition is true of the whole church of God.

You can also trace it even with respect to the disciples of Jesus. Read the Gospel of John. They were so sad when Jesus told them that He would leave them and return to heaven whence He came.

And how about the whole Christian Church of all the ages?

Christ came to us, cast out the devils, saved us, and went into the ship: that is, He rose from the grave, walked a while among the church, and ascended. And He is still in heaven, and we are alone here on earth among the wicked.

That is the simple truth.

Christ told His people time and again. Listen to this: Behold, I send you as sheep among the wolves!

And listen to Jesus after the resurrection: Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Of course, we are sent away like sheep among the wolves. And they persecute us, and hate us and slay us. Listen to the cry which is found in both the Old and the New Testament: For Thy sake are we killed, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. See Psalm 44:22 and Romans 8:36.

God wants to reveal the glittering gold and the shining jasper stone of grace in the midst of trial and temptation.

God wants ever to reveal Himself in us among the wicked world. To strengthen us and to condemn the wicked.

* * * *

Therefore Jesus says to this cured demoniac: Go Home!
And there is our charge too. God says to all the church:
Go home to thy friends!

The time to feast with Jesus can wait until later when you may sit at the heavenly table of the Covenant of God.

There is work to do for God.

Go home to thy friends!

That means, negatively, the tombs and the mountains, the raving and yelling, the tearing asunder of fetters and of chains is past. Set thy hand to the plow and do not look backward!

But look forward. Go to thy friends, to the community where I place you.

And then what?

Tell them all the wonderful things God has done for you! And that He had compassion on thee.

Well, this poor man did. We read in the context that he went to the Ten Cities, which is the meaning of Decapolis, and that he did exactly what Jesus told him.

And they were amazed at his testimony.

Do you?

It is not enough that ministers preach, and that writers write.

Go home!

Tell thy friends the wonderful works God did for you.

And His Name will receive the glory that is so due unto it!

G.V.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 7, 1960, our beloved parents,
REV. and MRS. GERRIT VOS
will, the Lord willing, celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.
We thank the Lord for His care and guidance in the past and pray for His blessings in the future.

Their children,
Mr. and Mrs. John Poelstra and family
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Vos and family
Dr. and Mrs. Ben Zandstra and family

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On September 7, 1960, the Lord willing, our beloved pastor and his wife,

REV. and MRS. GERRIT VOS

will commemorate their 40th wedding anniversary. We are thankful to God for having spared them for each other and the church of Hudsonville these many years. We pray our heavenly Father that He may continue to bless them in the days that lie ahead as they labor faithfully in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Consistory of Hudsonville
Protestant Reformed Church
D. Dykstra, Vice President
H. Zwak, Secretary

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EDITORIALS

As to Being Protestant Reformed

The here following article is not a continuation of my last editorial on the above mentioned subject but, although it is related to this subject, is, nevertheless, a digression.

The reason for the digression is that I wish to call the attention of our readers to the correspondence which the last schismatic Synod had with the last Synod of the Christian Reformed Church.

A letter was composed and adopted by the last schismatic Synod and immediately sent to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, and the latter was kind and gracious enough to prepare an answer and send it to the schismatics. Both of these letters are in our possession now. I will quote from the letter of the schismatics and the letter of the Christian Reformed Synod I will present in full.

In the former, the letter of the schismatics, the schismatic Synod first of all express their appreciation for the willingness of the Christian Reformed Synod to seek contact with the schismatics. "We are grateful for your recognition and confidence in us as well as your spirit of Christian charity and statement 'to do all that is possible to effect a reunion.'"

Then they say: "We do not wish to reopen the case and history of 1924 for we realize that differences exist, and will continue to exist, both in your communion and ours regarding the judgment of history and the matter of common grace. 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."

Here I make my first remark.

How, I ask, is it possible for truly Protestant Reformed Churches to reunite with the Christian Reformed Church without discussing the history of 1924? Fact is that several officebearers were deposed from office because they could not subscribe to the Three Points. Now, either this deposition from office was justifiable and, in that case, any Protestant Reformed man, whether officebearer or common member, must confess that he sinned when he refused to subscribe to the Three Points; or the Christian Reformed Church must confess that it was sinful to depose officebearers, in 1924, on the basis of their refusal to subscribe to the Three Points. Besides, the Synod of 1924 had finished the matter of "common grace" for the matter had been addressed to Synod in the proper ecclesiastical way of consistory-classis-synod. But the Synod of 1924 had not advised discipline, nor demanded that anyone must subscribe to the Three Points. In fact, although the committee of preadvice in the matter had urged discipline in the matter in case the accused ministers should refuse to subscribe to the Three Points, and although the two accused ministers plainly expressed on the floor of the Synod that they would not and could not subscribe to them, yet the

Synod never advised discipline but deliberately left out that part of the report of the committee of pre-advice that demanded it. I claim that when a Synod finishes a matter, no classis has the right to take it up again except in the legal ecclesiastical way of protest. Yet, this is exactly what the two classes, Grand Rapids East and West did. I claim, therefore, that the deposition of officebearers in 1924 was wholly illegal, was sinful and, therefore, must be confessed, before any reunion can even be discussed.

How, then, can the schismatics say, "We do not wish to re-open the case and history of 1924"?

This is all the more serious when we consider the main thrust and contents of the letter of the schismatic Synod. It is expressed in the question: "May we urge you, therefore, to consider the Three Points of Common Grace as without any further binding force?" Notice that they do not say that the Three Points never should have had any binding power because they are neither Scriptural nor Confessional but they ask that they may be considered as "without any further binding force." Till the present time they had binding power. And, because of this binding power, they could accomplish their evil work by casting out officebearers that were, according to the testimony of the very Synod that adopted the Three Points, confessionally Reformed. But this the schismatic Synod, evidently, does not mind. All this is implied in the statement of the schismatic Synod: "We do not wish to re-open the case and history of 1924." For thirty-six years the Christian Reformed Church has been walking in sin. But this the schismatics do not mind, if they only are received in the Christian Reformed Church. However, if they join the Christian Reformed Church, they deliberately choose to walk in the same sinful way. Then they assume full responsibility for the deposition from office, in 1924, of the Revs. Danhof, Ophoff and undersigned and of their consistories. And what is true of the schismatic Synod is equally true of all that follow them in this thoroughly evil way.

The schismatics also furnish grounds or reasons for the request that the Three Points be no longer considered binding. The first is that the term "common grace" does not occur in the Bible or in the Confessions. This is a poor ground. For, as to the first, namely, that the term does not occur in the Bible, the fact is that we use all kinds of terms in Dogmatics and Theology that cannot be found in Scripture. And for the contention that the term is not in the Confession, this is not true: the term does occur in the Canons, although it is put in the mouth of the Arminians. The second ground is that the term "common grace" should not be established or denied by ecclesiastical decisions that go beyond our creeds. This is undoubtedly true. But this ground is itself in need of proof, for the Synod of 1924 claimed that the Three Points were based on the Confessions. The third reason or ground is that the forcing of the selection of terms for theological thinking by ecclesiastical decision must be avoided. Yet this has been done time and

again in the history of the Church, especially in times when the truth is attacked and that, too, quite properly so. The fourth reason is that the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands avoided to establish ecclesiastical terminology in their reference to "common grace." This may be true but is no reason why the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 could not do so. And the final reason is that the well-known Conclusions of Utrecht had the desired effect of peace in the Churches. Well, the Christian Reformed Synod in their answer to this letter of the schismatics, claim the adoption of the Three Points had the same salutary effect.

On the basis of all these grounds, the Synod of the schismatics urge the Christian Reformed Synod to relinquish the binding force of the Three Points.

In a further paragraph, after they have stated that they believe in the responsibility of man, the schismatics state the following:

"We appreciate the efforts that you have so far made toward better understanding and relationship with us. We no longer wish to be responsible for the charge of Arminianism and Pelagianism in the adoption of the Three Points which we have made against you as Christian Reformed Church in the past."

And in the next paragraph:

"Although we do not charge that the Three Points are Arminian and Pelagian we continue to regret they were formulated in 1924 . . ."

All this, the reader may notice, is negative: the Three Points are *not* Arminian or Pelagian.

But, I ask, what are they then?

Are they nothing? Are they mere harmless declarations? By implication the schismatics state that they are Reformed. For they declare something about the grace of God. And, therefore, they must be either-or, Arminian or Reformed. It is Reformed to teach that the grace of God is particular, and that God is gracious to the elect only, not to the reprobate; it is Arminian to claim that the grace of God is general and for all men. There can be nothing in between.

This is all the more serious because the Christian Reformed Church in 1924 when they attempted to declare something about what may be called the Kuyperian common grace and tried to base the Three Points on the Confessions (which never speak of a grace for all men) lapsed into the error of Arminian common grace and made the preaching of the gospel grace for all that hear it.

Thus it is very evident that the schismatic Synod, by stating that the Three Points are not Arminian or Pelagian, claim that they are Reformed. And they subscribe to them.

But why then urge the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church to declare that the Three Points will have no further binding force? What wrong is there in making something binding that is Reformed? If the Three Points are Reformed the Protestant Reformed Churches are not. And those that left us in 1953 should beg the Christian Reformed Church to receive them in their midst unconditionally.

Why, then, don't they do this?

I can only guess at the answer to this question, but I am quite confident that my conjecture is correct. It is this: for the sake of the people.

Not all the people that followed the schismatics in 1953 agree with them. Not all of them want to return to the Christian Reformed Church, especially not if by doing so they are required to put their neck under the yoke of the Three Points. Not all the people among them, especially those that have knowledge of the Reformed truth, want to do this. Not all that followed the schismatics in 1953 would subscribe to the statement that the Three Points are not Arminian and Pelagian. And the schismatic Synod knew this very well. Hence, in order to take as many of their group along to the Christian Reformed Church as possible, they ask that let the Three Points, although they are not Arminian and Pelagian, although they are Reformed, be declared as having no further binding force.

Such is my guess.

The letter of the schismatic Synod continues as follows:

"We regret . . . that classis Grand Rapids East and West of the Christian Reformed Church took the action they did subsequent to 1924. It is not our purpose to raise again the issues of 1924 and succeeding years for the purpose of self-justification. Rather our purpose is to make unification possible in an honest way; thereby assuring further efforts toward unity of believers in Jesus Christ."

This part of the letter we already discussed in the preceding part of this editorial.

And then the letter continues as follows:

"In that effort it is ever the calling to lead Christ's flock with pastoral love, being careful in bringing charges and applying penalties. This care, we believe, was not always exercised in the oftentimes bitter struggle during the years of our mutual controversy. 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 our 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."

About this we still have something to say.

But this must wait till next time.

H.H.

Announcement

The Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches will begin its new term, D.V., Tuesday, September 13, at 9 A. M., in the basement of the First Church, Grand Rapids.

H. C. HOEKSEMA, *Rector*

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Battle of Armageddon

Revelation 16:10-21

The fall of Babylon, the coming of the King on the white horse for battle, the loosening of Satan with a view to the nations—all these things will be reviewed before our vision once more before we get the vision of the New Jerusalem that is to come down out of heaven from God. But here we have nevertheless the picture of the end. For in the seven vials which the seven angels pour out the wrath of God is finished.

We must make no mistake as to the time element in these seven vials of wrath. If we do, we shall never be able to understand the whole. Especially must we warn you once more not to consider these seven vials as being strictly successive. It is not thus, that the first of these seven vials must be finished before the second is poured out, that the third must wait till the second has had its effect, the fourth for the fulfillment of the third, etc. Much rather must we conceive of these seven vials as being upon the earth at the same time, so that all their misery together finally combines into one great effect. It may be that the one precedes the other in its coming. And especially is it very well possible, nay, even probable, that the first four vials shall be witnessed before the others. But for the rest we may not refer them to seven different periods in the history of man and of the world. Nor must we, on the other hand, conceive of them as bearing no relation to one another. That is generally not the way in which God works in the history of the world; and that will not be the case in the period of the end. No, also at that time one thing will bring on the other till all the world is steeped in misery and pain and agony. The first four vials evidently belong together from this point of view, and they form one definite group. They are the plagues of God in nature. That they have a combined effect is very plain. The earth and the sea and the rivers and the fountains of water are poisoned with the wrath of God; and the sun is so inflamed by it that it scorches men with its heat. All these plagues together cause sickness and want, hunger and thirst and great suffering, so that they have their influence upon the kingdom of Antichrist. I conceive of these plagues as coming on gradually, and not all of a sudden, so that one moment man enjoys life and the other moment he is lost in the depth of misery. No, rather gradually they come. It shall hardly be noticeable perhaps that anything special is coming upon the world. But gradually the earth shall be-

come more and more poisoned, the sea shall show itself more and more as a rotten pool, the fountains of water shall afford no more relief and refreshment, and the sun shall become more and more intolerably hot, so that it scorches men. Gradually the kingdom of Antichrist, which was such a glorious kingdom, shall lose control of its blessings. And gradually its downfall shall be prepared. And so I also imagine that during this period gradually the fifth vial shall be realized, which shall darken the kingdom of the beast.

We read that the fifth vial is poured out upon the throne of the beast. The beast here is evidently Antichrist. And the throne of the beast stands for the seat of his authority and power to rule. The throne is always a symbol of royal power and authority. The king on his throne issues the laws for his kingdom, executes judgment, and expresses sentences. The king on his throne is obeyed and honored by all his subjects. The king on his throne is the symbol of royal power. When a king is dethroned, he has lost his royal dominion. Thus it is here. Antichrist was enthroned by all the nations of the world. He had a great and glorious dominion. All the nations of the world bow down to him and acknowledge him. They willingly pay him homage. They admire him. They wonder after him. They glorify him. They worship him. People put their trust in him as they do in a god. They expect everything from him. They deem nothing too wonderful for him. They look upon him as their god. And everywhere they make images of him, and worship the image of the beast. The beast, therefore, had a glorious dominion. And it seemed indeed as if the last millennium of peace and bliss had come under his rule upon the world of man. He had control over all things—control over commerce and industry, control over science and art, control over philosophy and religion. And for all these different spheres he freely issued his laws. And those that refused to obey them he banished from the kingdom, made them social outlaws, so that they could occupy no position, find no job, could neither buy nor sell, were miserable and poor. That is implied in the throne, in the dominion and royal authority and power of the beast. But now the fifth vial is poured out upon that throne. And the result is, so our text tells us, that his dominion is darkened. There are some interpreters who have it that “dominion” here must be taken in the sense of territory, the kingdom as the territory over which the beast rules. And then the darkness is to be taken as a darkness in nature. But I do not think so. In the first place, this is little to be harmonized with the scorching heat of the sun, which shall continue, no doubt, also at this time. But besides, the entire contents of this fifth vial is against this interpretation. The meaning evidently is that the dominion of the beast is darkened, his glory wanes, his authority is questioned, his power ceases to be, his appearance ceases to inspire with awe and confidence. People and nations lose their trust in the beast. They used to worship him; they now begin to doubt his divinity. They used to shout, “Who can make war with the beast?” They now are not so sure of his unconquerable

power and his unconquerable nature. They used to admire him. They now withhold their admiration. A sort of political unrest is noticeable in the dominion of the beast, so that the power of his kingdom is darkened.

This is, in the first place, in harmony with the correspondence between the fifth vial and the fifth trumpet. That trumpet spoke of the fierce locusts that rose out of the abyss, the result of which was a terrible, agonizing pessimism, so that men sought death and could not find it. The same is the case here. People had put all their trust in the antichristian kingdom and power. In that kingdom there was plenty and peace and blessing. And they deemed nothing too wonderful for Man to perform. They worshipped the beast and his image. They put their trust in him. But now they lose the object of their hope. They lose their god. The domain of the beast is darkened, and the nations gradually lose their trust in the only object of their hope. For years and years they had hoped for this kingdom. For years and years they had struggled for its establishment. And for a time it seemed possible to reach happiness and bliss without the God of heaven and without His Christ. But now all is vain. Also this hope they lose, but not in order to turn to the true God in repentance. No, they blaspheme the God of heaven. And therefore they are now without any object in which they can put their trust. They are now literally without God in the world. And hence, their despair, their complete hopelessness is coming on as the kingdom is darkened and the authority of what they looked upon as their god is questioned. They gnaw their tongues because of their trouble and their pain and their despair. And, in the second place, this is also entirely in harmony with the effect of the first four vials. As we have said before, the first four vials prepare the way for the last three. They constitute the plagues in nature that deprive the Antichrist and his kingdom of their material blessings. Instead of plenty and blessing there is now suffering and want and hunger and thirst and sickness. And since the people admired the beast especially because of the material blessings that were connected with his reign, it is but natural that his dominion gradually wanes as the plagues in nature become more and more severe. And therefore, the fifth plague brings disturbance over the reign of Antichrist. People are in despair and pain, partly because of the plagues in the nature, partly because they have lost and are losing their only god. And they blaspheme the God of heaven that hath power over these plagues.

Exactly to what extent this darkening of the throne of the beast will be and just what shall take place at that time is not told us. But clear it seems to be that the Christian nations, which, of course, are the antichristian nations proper, are affected first of all. Perhaps we must picture the relation thus, that in course of time one of the Christian, or civilized, nations has gained control and predominance over the other nations of the antichristian confederacy,

so that there the throne of the beast, the government of the kingdom, is seated. Then it is possible that the rest of the civilized nations, especially under the influence of the plagues that come in the first four vials, rise against this throne of the beast and free themselves from antichristian dominion, thus darkening the throne of the beast. In the future we shall read more about this. Now it is plain that the dominion of the antichristian kingdom has lost its hold, first of all, upon the nominally Christian nations, which are the nations of Antichrist proper. But it is not only these that are affected. On the contrary, there are still the other nations, the nations that live outside of the sphere of Christianity in its outward sense, the nations that live at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog. By these are meant all those nations that have never played a part in the history of the world, the millions and millions of Chinese and Japanese, and the inhabitants of India and Africa and Australia. Always they have lived outside of the pale of history proper, and never have they played any appreciable part in that history of the world. When we speak of the history of the world, we refer to the history of but very few nations. And since the coming of Christ, we refer to the nations that have come under the influence of Christianity. The only nations that might possibly form an exception in this respect are the Mohammedans. But for the rest, all the pagan world has had no part in the history of man and of the world. Also these nations have belonged to the antichristian kingdom outwardly. They have naturally somewhat shared in its prosperity, and have at the same time subjected themselves outwardly. But they never formed an integral part of the dominion, and on the whole they simply followed their pagan customs and religions. They lived in separation and isolation, more or less. But the time shall come, so Scripture tells us more than once, that also these nations shall take a definite stand and rise up against God Almighty and His Anointed for battle, in order that they and their gods may have dominion of the world. And that time has come with the sixth and seventh vials.

The sixth vial is poured out on the great river Euphrates, so the text tells us. Also here we may notice the correspondence between the sixth trumpet and the sixth vial. When the sixth trumpet sounded, the four angels that were bound at the great river Euphrates were liberated, and they gathered the army of monstrous warriors from the east to battle against the nations of Christendom. Then one-third of the men were killed. But now we have the sixth vial. And that sixth vial is poured out on the great river, the river Euphrates. But this time it is completely dried up, and that for the purpose that the way might be prepared for the kings that come from the sun-rising, or from the east. It is not necessary to explain again in detail what is the meaning of the great river Euphrates, since this was done in connection with the sixth trumpet.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Jacob Prepares For Death

And the time drew nigh that Israel must die.

Genesis 47:29

By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Hebrews 11:21

"And the time drew nigh that Israel must die."

Death is a hard and difficult thing. It brings man ingloriously to his end, especially when it is a natural death caused by nothing but age. The strength and vitality of youth is gone, and man lies upon his bed in weakness, oft times in pain. The eyes have grown dim, able to see only in vague outline. The ears have grown faint. Even the mind seems often to have lost its sharpness. The keen rules of logic are no longer observed. The distant memories of the past are ascribed greater importance than the realities of the present. The thoughts flit vaguely from one disconnected thought to another. It is not surprising that friends and relatives stand about the bedside with sadness written across their faces. It is a time of sorrow and weeping. Death is a hard and difficult thing.

So the time of Jacob's death drew nigh; and so the marks of death were to be seen. His strength was all but gone, and he had to worship while leaning upon his staff, bowed over the head of his bed. His eyes were dim so that he could hardly recognize the forms of his own grandchildren. The remarks of others to him were of scant concern, to be shrugged aside as interruptions. The important things were the memories of events long past. In fond reminiscence, they dominated his mind. With words whispered and halting, his thoughts wandered over the length and breadth of the past. The waning ways of death were upon him. We see the tears in the eyes of Joseph as he knelt by the side of his father, the looks of confusion on Manasseh and Ephraim who in their youth could not completely understand the seriousness and finality of death. We are given here a clear picture of a death-bed scene with all of its sad characteristics of declining strength. And yet as we examine it again we find that from it there shines a beautiful light. In fact, the more we look with the eyes of faith the stronger the light becomes until the sadness all but disappears before the richness of spiritual glory. The weakness of the flesh gives way to the strength of faith. The dimness of the eyes is forgotten for the surety of hope. The sadness of the end is swallowed up in the confidence of victory. Such is the paradoxical beauty to be found in the death of a saint. It emits the glorious cry of faith, "For me to live is Christ, and to die? — it is gain!"

Jacob knew that death was approaching. Already when he had first come into Egypt, he had fallen on Joseph's neck and said, "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because

thou art yet alive." Still seventeen years passed by before the time finally came. They had been years of peace and joy. His sons had repented from the sinful way of life which they had pursued in Canaan; and he was united again with Joseph, always the son of his love. Although the duties of Joseph were many, we may be sure that he found frequent opportunity to meet and commune with his father. Thus when Jacob felt death approaching, it was Joseph whom he called first to his side.

Jacob had a very serious burden pressing upon his heart which he wished to impart unto Joseph. As soon as Joseph appeared he spoke, "If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace." When Joseph consented to this request, it was not enough. Jacob required him to swear with an oath.

We might wonder about this. We know that among the heathen it was customary to make elaborate preparations for burial. This was especially true among the Egyptians. It was thought by them that the circumstances of their burial would have an effect on the life to come. So they built the pyramids, and so they had them filled with treasures of great value and with mystical symbols of many sorts. But for the children of God such superstitious practices are more than folly. God does not judge a person according to his external circumstances; nor does what happens to the body after death have any effect on the life to come. But why then the great concern of Jacob?

Jacob was a child of faith. From his earliest youth, he had grown in the faith that God would realize His covenant with Abraham and his seed in the land of Canaan. Canaan was a symbol as well as a type of the promise that God had made to his fathers. It was the land in which the covenant promises would be realized. Even when in his old age Jacob left the land of Canaan, his hope remained implanted there. In that land only could his blessing come, and there only could the blessing of his children come. Thus, as Jacob felt the shades of death closing upon him, he felt the importance of stressing this fact upon his children. He must leave them no occasion to think that their future could as well be realized in Egypt as in Canaan. They must tarry there only for a time and then return to Canaan. In insisting that his bones be carried to Canaan, he was telling his children, in terms more forceful than words, that Egypt was in no sense their home. The home of their fathers was the land of Canaan to which they also would have to return. Jacob in his command was preaching to his sons the gospel.

Willingly Joseph made the oath required of his father. He did so with his hand upon his father's thigh, for it was from those loins that according to promise the Messiah would come. It was an oath in effect before God. Thereupon Jacob bowed himself upon the bed's head. It was the attitude of prayer. He was thanking his God in heaven for

the assurance that his final testimony of faith would be given.

Some time passed by during which Jacob grew steadily weaker. Finally a messenger came to Joseph informing him that his father was sick and the end was rapidly approaching. Immediately Joseph called his two sons and went with them to the bedside of their grandfather. There is recorded for us the resulting interview. Clearly the speech of Jacob constitutes the wandering reminiscence of an old man; but through it there shines the consistency and conviction of a faith that has been purged through a lifetime of trial and victory. It is the speech of a saint who, having received God's blessings in the past, looks forward with hope to the future.

Jacob began with recalling one of his most cherished memories. "God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me. And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give the land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession." Twice he had been at Bethel with close to forty years in between. But in the mind of the old patriarch the two events were practically merged into one. Bethel formed the chief foundation for the confidence of his life. There God Almighty had appeared to him, and there he had been given unequivocally the covenant blessing from above. God assured him that unto him would be given the covenant seed, and the promised land of Canaan would be their dwelling place. Through all his troubled life, Jacob had found in this promise his strength. That it should be first in his mind at the approach of death was to be expected.

From Bethel Jacob's mind turned to Joseph and his children. Although the two thoughts might appear to be disconnected, there is a definite relationship between them. Jacob had long wished to pass on the blessing which he received at Bethel to Joseph and his children. At the time of Joseph's youth this had been a firm conviction with him. One of the functions of Joseph's removal into Egypt was to keep this determination from developing as it did in the case of Isaac with Esau. Now after many years of separation, in which Jacob feared Joseph to be dead, he saw the matter in a much more balanced light. Joseph was not to receive the full blessing, although neither was he to be excluded from it completely. The blessing consisted of three different portions: the principedom, the priesthood, and the double portion. Of these Joseph was to receive the last. With the sure conviction of one who was in accord with the will of God, Jacob spoke, "And now thy sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine."

With joy Jacob pronounced those words. They brought back to him the memory of his beloved wife, Rachel. He continued, "When I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in

the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem." One thought had dominated the life and the death of Rachel, the desire to bring forth seed. Jacob had seen it develop in her from a carnal sense of competition with her sister to a deep spiritual longing to bring forth a covenant seed unto God. In her death on the way to Ephrath she had grieved because she thought that her second son would not live and there would be left from her only one son, Joseph. But Benjamin had lived, and to Joseph was given a double portion in the covenant. Even more, as though in answer to Rachel's prayer, Ephraim and Manasseh would serve in Israel as a symbol of the fertility which their grandmother had desired. This Jacob brought clearly forth in what followed.

The aged eyes of Jacob discerned the forms of Ephraim and Manasseh in the shadows of his tent. Because of the weakness of his vision, he was not certain as to their identity. After asking and being assured, he said, "Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them." He kissed and embraced them, and then, while Joseph bowed in reverence, he extended his hands to bless them as the seed of Joseph. "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." It was a beautiful blessing, anticipating the trinitarian benediction of later ages. The first phrase refers to God the Father Who walks in love with His people; the second to God the Holy Spirit Who communes with and nurtures His people; the third to the Angel of Jehovah, God the Son, Who in grace redeems His people from sin. To this Jacob added, "And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth." To them was the name of the covenant, and in them would the greatness of Israel be revealed. So great was to be their greatness that henceforth it would be a byword among Israel, "God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh." The prayer of Rachel was answered.

It was then that Joseph noted his father's hands. While he had led Manasseh to Jacob's right hand and Ephraim to his left, Jacob had crossed over his right hand to Ephraim's head and the left to Manasseh's. Joseph interrupted, "Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head." But Jacob was not to be moved. He spoke and blessed the children not as a man but as a spokesman for the elective counsel of God. To God the order of the flesh is of no matter. Although Manasseh was also to be blessed, the place ordained for Ephraim was the greater. Through faith this was revealed to Jacob, and in accord with it he acted.

Once again, Hebrews 11 tells us, Jacob worshipped, "leaning upon the top of his staff." He said, "Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow."

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 15

X.

(I Corinthians 15:51-58)

There is still a matter which is of extreme importance for the believing church of God in this world which Paul must "make known" to the Corinthians. He is finished with his polemic against the skeptics who asked: with what kind of body do the dead rise and how will this take place.

Paul has shown conclusively that both the manner of the resurrection and the kind of bodies with which we come from the grave is demonstrable from the realm of creation about us. Does not every plant and seed need to die in order to be made alive into a new plant and organism? And is there not such a great variety in the different bodies about us, both in the world of the heavenly bodies as well as the earthly, that we need not doubt that all things proclaim unto us that Christ will come into the flesh, suffer and die and rise again, and that this suffering and death is, indeed, the ground and pattern of our blessed resurrection?

Besides, there is the indisputable truth of the difference between the two Adams, the first and the last; the first is of the earth earthy, and the "last Adam is the Lord out of heaven."

That determines all for Paul.

And such is more than sufficient for us.

However, Paul will still call attention to a detail, an aspect of the resurrection, which is important for us to know that we be comforted, and that we mourn not as those who have no hope. It is the matter of the manner of the resurrection of the saints in the *Parousia*, in the moment at the point of history which he calls in verse 24 "the end"!

The particular section here under discussion reads verbatim as follows: "*Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord.*"

Paul introduces this matter of the revelation of the mystery with the demonstrative particle "behold." Paul calls attention of his readers to the great act of God, the event which will befall the saints in the *Parousia* of Christ, when

Christ will come to remain ever with his saints to have them behold his glory. All the attention of the readers is thus summoned by the apostle.

Paul calls attention to a "Mystery" of God, a mystery of the Kingdom of Christ in His saints.

The question is: what is the *idea* of the term and concept Mystery in Holy Writ? It is the common opinion and conclusion of recognized exegetes and students of Scripture (e.g. Hodge and Lange and others) that the term mystery must not be made to mean that which is *contradictory*, either really or apparently so. Nor is the term in the Bible to be equated with the idea of Mystery such as we find in the heathen, mystic cults; it is in no wise like these. These cults make the term mystery refer to that which is dark and not at all understandable for the human mind. Nor does the term Mystery refer to what is commonly called the contradictory between the sovereignty of God and human responsibility.

Mystery in Scripture is that which belongs to the great acts of God in the salvation of the elect, either as a whole or certain facets and aspects of the same, and, therefore, that which is known and can only be known because it is "revealed" to us by God in Christ, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. To quote Meyer: "Mystery signifies that which is undiscerned by men themselves, has been made known to them by divine revelation (*apokalupsis*) and always refers to relations and developments of the Messianic Kingdom (Matt. 13:11). Thus it frequently denotes with Paul the divine Counsel of redemption through Christ — as a whole or particular parts thereof — because it was veiled from men before God revealed it." — Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:7-10; Eph. 3:5. Or to quote Hodge: "The word *musterion*, secret, is not generally used, in the New Testament, in the sense of the word *mystery*. It means simply, what is hidden or unknown; whether because it is an unrevealed purpose of God; or because it is future, or because it is covered up in Parables or symbols. Whatever needs an *apokalupsis* (revelation) to become the object of knowledge, is a *musterion*. It is therefore used of doctrines of the gospel which are not the truths of reason, but matters of divine revelation; Rom. 16:25; I Cor. 2:7; 4:1; Eph. 6:19 Any further event, therefore, which could be known only by divine revelation is a mystery. The fact that all should not die, though all should be changed, was a mystery. I Cor. 15:51."

The particular event (Mystery) which Paul has in mind here is what will happen in the "end," when all the dead shall rise, to those who are still living in distinction from those who have died already, fallen asleep in the Lord or through Jesus. Paul has in mind the entire church when he says "we," including himself. *We* shall not all sleep but *we* shall all be changed, writes he! There is some difference of opinion concerning the terms "all" in this sentence. Some hold that the first term all, that is "all sleep" refers to the fact that some will still be living at the time of Christ's return, as taught in I Thess. 4. The difficulty seems to center on the

second "all" in the phrase "but all shall be changed." The question is does this "all" refer to those still living at the return of Christ, not all living then shall fall asleep but all shall be changed, or does this "all" mean that the entire church shall be changed, yet not "all" shall fall asleep. We believe that the "all shall be changed" refers to all who do not fall asleep. These all are those who shall not prevent in the Parousia those who have died in Christ. For the dead shall rise first and then those who are remaining will be changed in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump! These shall be changed after the dead have been raised, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Such is the Mystery of which Paul here speaks.

Paul also reveals the manner in which those, who will then be living at Christ's *Parousia*, shall be changed. It will be in a *moment*, in the *twinkling* of an eye. The term in the Greek for moment is *atomo*, that is, in an indivisible moment. We can divide years into months, and months into days, and days into hours, and hours into minutes, and minutes into seconds, and even seconds into parts of seconds on the clock of time! But the time limit wherein this change shall be effected by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit will be indivisible. To accent this miraculous and super-time miracle of grace, this Mystery, Paul adds "in the twinkling of an eye." It will be so swiftly. Not a long process of time at all!

And the time shall be at the last trump. There have been many trumpet blasts before this. They were all the trumpet blasts announcing the work of God and calling to the great feasts of trumpets, the great and eternal Sabbath of God. By this trump of God the elect will be called from the four corners of the earth, and they shall come forth to the resurrection of life to ever be with the Lord. This chapter speaks of the "last" Adam, and here it is the "last" trumpet. History will then be ended. The Omega shall then be reached. The counsel of God fulfilled, God's good-pleasure in His Son.

And that change at that time is a "must." This mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible must put on incorruption. Thus it is planned by Almighty God in His love for the world so that He gave His only begotten Son, that eternal life may be fully received by all the believers, those given to Christ by the Father from before the foundation of the earth. And nothing shall stand in the way of this divine "must"!

For the Scriptures must be fulfilled. The Word of the Lord must come to pass. Wherefore Paul says, "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'" (Isaiah 25:8). That was the word of the Lord, who declares from ancient times that things which shall come to pass, by the mouth of the Seer, Isaiah. Then shall Jerusalem be arrayed in wondrous beauty and glory. And then shall the vail of mourning be removed from the nations, and there shall be fat things upon the lees, and the new wine shall be drunk by Christ with His own in His kingdom. And all the redeemed shall then say: This is our God, for Him we have waited!!

And the glad-tidings of good things shall then be the portion of all who waited for God. The words shall be fulfilled: O death, where is thy sting, O grave, where is thy victory! The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Victory will then be complete and final.

It shall be manifest that all the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Small wonder that Paul ends this grand exposé of all unbelief in the resurrection, that central and mortal attack upon the very heart of the Gospel in Christ, with the very good and sound admonition that we be steadfast, unmovable, that we always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labors and sorrows are never vain in the Lord.

Here is no vanity of vanities of the Preacher.

Here we come to the end, the end of God. Here we receive what ear hath not heard and what eye hath not seen and what hath never entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for His people.

The Word of the Lord is that he hath taken the sting out of death. Death doth not kill us. He that liveth and believeth, though he be dead, shall live, and he that liveth and believeth shall never die! Such is the work of the Lord for us in which we are to abound in faith and hope.

Let the grave then yawn and attempt to swallow us up; it shall not succeed! The Lord has made the grave the entrance into glory. Hallelujah! The law cannot condemn us any more to death and hell. Our dying is no payment for sin but a dying unto sin and an entrance into glory!

It was with the sincere desire to comfort with these words that we have written rather at length on this marvelous apology of Paul.

Thus we have preached and thus ye have believed.

God is great in Zion. He is all in all. His life is manifested in our death.

Comfort one another with these words so that the peace of God which passeth understanding may reign in our hearts, and we be more than victors through our Lord, Jesus Christ!

G.L.

Consistories Attention

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

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

I N H I S F E A R

Interest upon The Principal

(3)

It is that time of the year again.

Children will soon be spending their six hours a day, five days a week in the schools the parents have selected for them.

Hour after hour for a period of some thirty-six weeks they will be subjected to the "philosophies" of life. Impressions will be made into their minds. A way of thinking will be taught them and be absorbed by them. Step by step they will be brought to new concepts and ideologies. They will be taught to see history as the teacher believes it to be, as the author of the text book conceived of it in his mind, as the school system desires to have it understood. The earth and its fulness wherewith it is stored will be presented from the viewpoint of the instructor and textbook, be they devout Godfearing men and women who have seen God's glory in Christ or godfearing men and women "whose god is their belly," as Paul writes to the Philippians, "and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things," Philippians 3:19; and therefore, though they are called godfearing by men actually are Godsneering. For they hold Him in contempt and deny Him His glory. Political subjects, social subjects, the arts and language, arithmetic and spelling similarly are taught as though Jehovah does not exist.

It certainly makes a great deal of difference where our children are taught and by whom.

If we are in a community where by God's providence we as yet have no choice in the matter and the remnant of true believers is too small to fill the covenant obligation either partially or wholly, either on the so-called grade school level or the high school level; or whether we live by His providence where such things are available does make some difference. The one has the calling to put forth every effort to realize such education for the covenant youth; for the other the calling is to use and support the institutions that exist. It is that time of the year again when we are faced with this matter of the education of our children to the utmost of our power in the fear of His name.

But little interest exists upon the principal thing also in this sphere of the education of the covenant youth.

It is true that the Christian School movement is proceeding with rapid strides. Schools are soon too small. Temporary arrangements must be made for classes that are too large for one teacher to handle.

And this is not simply the effect of war babies coming to the age of formal education in the school systems of our land. To be sure this *was* the case also in the Christian School movement. But that does not explain everything. Nor does it explain everything to say that the church world is

becoming more spiritual and therefore more covenant-training conscious. Were that only the case, we would not write that there is so little interest upon the principal things also in the sphere of the education of the covenant youth. There are other contributing factors which present an entirely different aspect.

Whether we like to admit it or not, and whether we confess it or not that all men are born free and equal, we have ourselves known cases where the race question alone has contributed to the increase of the enrollment in the Christian school. It was not a matter of the spiritual advantage or disadvantage. It was not a matter of calling before God. It was simply an aversion to having the children be the minority in a class composed of white and black races! Parents were eager to have their children in a different environment, and therefore they enrolled them in a Christian school where there would be no negro playmates. It was not another spiritual environment that they sought for their children. It was not a case of choosing the one school over the other because of what was taught and how it was taught, but it was simply a social question, a question of who else attended that school from a social viewpoint.

In other instances of which we have personal knowledge parents made the change purely because of financial considerations. That may sound strange in some circles of our land and church-world. For it is an obvious fact that it costs money to send a child to a Christian school. One pays taxes and so supports the local public school. He must pay his share for training that his children do not get; and then he must also foot the bill for the salary of other teachers and for the maintenance of another school where his children actually do receive their training. It would seem strange then to state that for financial reasons parents sometimes take their children out of the public school to send them to the Christian school and pay double tuition.

Yet it is a fact that in some areas where the public schools are consolidated, the children are forced to travel by bus to a distant school in another town or city; and the cost of doing so is a big factor in the child being sent to the Christian School. If one is to pay for tuition above and beyond the regular taxes, the child might just as well have a Christian school education.

And we hardly need to add the matter of convenience in this connection. If the Christian school bus makes a better schedule, there is less time on the road and away from home, the children need not walk so far to catch the Christian school bus especially in the rain and biting winter cold, then the Christian school gets a few extra pupils for any reason but interest upon the principal things.

We could add also that there are those parents who seem to be well meaning and would never think of sending their children anywhere but to the Christian school who, when questioned as to the reason for their stand, can give no better answer than that they do so because they love their children. That, of course, is to be expected. If there is no natural

affection of the parent for his child Paul says that he has a reprobate mind, according to Romans 1:28-31. But if that is all that we have, our motive for sending our children to a Christian school cannot be one that is characterized by the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord says, I love God and for the sake of His praise in my children, I desire to have them taught all things in their natural life from the viewpoint of His Word.

Let us hear the word of God and not harden our hearts against it. The Psalmist declares in Psalm 119:98-100, "Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all of my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts." Again he writes in verse 130, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple." Indeed, and shall we then keep that understanding from our children? Shall we pull down the shade to keep them from that wonderful light? Does the truth of the word of God in this text mean nothing to us? Can we quote it for everything else; quote it for the unchurched, for the Hottentot in Africa, for the church member in his moments of fear, of grief and bereavement; and then shall we say it has nothing to do with our children and their instruction every day concerning the world of God, in which He has placed them to be His royal priesthood?

And again the word of God says in Psalm 111:10, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: His praise endureth for ever." In the light of this truth how can we dare to let those who do not have this fear of the Lord teach our children? If we believe that the unbeliever has not the beginning of wisdom and that the entrance of God's word into the minds of our children and into the instruction that is given them giveth light and understanding, then how can we ever find any reason to fight the cause of Christian instruction or even remain luke warm on the side lines? and say that if people want to send their children to a Christian school it is all right, but I will never give to its support and I will never urge or encourage a man to spend his hard earned money that way. Shame on us! O that this word of God might make its entrance into our souls and lighten us with the truth that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

And seeing that this is absolutely true, namely, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning, the principle of all wisdom, the world can only teach your child foolishness! Do we care? Are we so lukewarm, so untouched, so unmoved by so obvious a truth that we can shrug our shoulders, turn on our heels and turn our thoughts to more fleshly things?

A jet airliner is a wonderful piece of mechanism and design. Smoothly and swiftly it rushes through the stratosphere with its precious cargo of human lives. But take that pilot away. Remove him and the co-pilot. Snatch them by some magical power out of that plane. What value has that

plane now for these passengers as far as reaching their objective is concerned? What safety is there for them as they continue to rush relentlessly forward? That plane is good as long as you have the human factor there to guide it and use it. And you would agree that it is utter folly and murderous wickedness for the management to order the whole crew to take the plane to the stratosphere and then ditch the plane with its load of human cargo. And yet we see this great and glorious universe made by the God in Whom we live and move and have all our being, and we want to teach our children all things concerning His creation as though He is not there! No less folly than to tell your child that the jet liner has life in itself, takes off by itself, reads your mind and knows to what city you wish to go, knows how to take off and land with no human hand on the controls. Indeed, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Rule Him out in your unbelieving ways and you talk utter nonsense.

And shall we send our children to be taught by minds that are ruled by such utter nonsense? *Would* we entrust them to men who believed and taught that this marvelous jet airliner is but the product of some aluminum, steel, wires, rubber, glass, fabric and what not joining each other in definite proportions in the right places, drinking in fuel into the right compartments and then sailing unerringly to a destination controlled by little tickets of paper which this inanimate thing can read? *Shall* we send our children to men and women who speak that way of the universe in which we dwell? Is the one any more rational than the other? How can men be so sure that the jet airliner was designed by a mind and is the product of much thought and is controlled by a rational being, and then look upon this universe which is infinitely more wonderful and glorious and rule God out of it all?

Who made the wonderful eye, the marvellous ear? Long before electricity was discovered by man, who made the amazing nervous system of man with its electrical impulses to the brain? Who sent the sun, the moon and the stars into orbit? And that without any failures and without a tedious count down!

Nay, let your child be taught in such a way that the entrance of God's Word gives him light and understanding. Otherwise, you have the word of God for it, he will remain simple. He will not have even the beginning of wisdom. And he will not even begin to know his life's calling in this world.

In His fear have your child trained in the sphere of His Word.

There will be dividends.

Gold and silver, houses and land, honor and fame you will not get. If that is the interest you seek for yourselves and for your children, you have invested the wrong kind of principal in the wrong kind of bank.

But this is the blessed interest that will be yours when, in interest upon the principal things of God's kingdom, you

(Continued on page 473)

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

The Doctrine Contradicted By Facts

The fourth argument is that the Romish doctrine of the infallibility of the Church is contradicted by undeniable historical facts. It therefore cannot be true. The Church has often erred, and therefore it is not infallible.

Protestants believe that the Church, under all dispensations, has been the same. It has always had the same God; the same Redeemer; the same rule of faith and practice (the written Word of God, at least from the time of Moses), the same promise of the presence and guidance of the Spirit, the same pledge of perpetuity and triumph. To them, therefore, the fact that the whole visible Church repeatedly apostatized during the old economy—and that, not the people only, but all the representatives of the Church, the priests, the Levites, and the elders—is a decisive proof that the external, visible Church may fatally err in matters of faith. No less decisive is the fact that the whole Jewish Church and people, as a church and nation, rejected Christ. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. The vast majority of the people, the chief priests, the scribes and the elders, refused to recognize Him as the Messiah. The Sanhedrin, the great representative body of the Church at that time, pronounced Him worthy of death, and demanded His crucifixion. This, to the Protestants, is overwhelming proof that the Church may err.

Romanists, however, make such a difference between the Church before and after the advent of Christ, that they do not admit the force of this argument. That the Jewish Church erred, they say, is no proof that the Christian Church can err. It will be necessary, therefore, to show that according to the principles and admissions of Romanists themselves, the Church has erred. It taught at one time what it condemned at another, and what the Church of Rome now condemns. To prove this, it will suffice to refer to two undeniable examples.

It is to be borne in mind that by the Church, in this connection, Romanists do not mean the true people of God; nor the body of professing Christians; nor the majority of priests, or doctors of divinity, but the episcopate. What the body of bishops of any age teach, all Christians are bound to believe, because these bishops are so guided by the Spirit as to be infallible in their teaching.

The Arian Apostasy.

The first great historical fact inconsistent with this theory is, that the great majority of the bishops, both of the Eastern and Western Church, including the Pope of Rome, taught Arianism, which the whole Church, both before and afterwards, condemned. The decision of three hundred and eighty bishops at the Council of Nice, ratified by the assent of the great majority of those who did not attend that Council, is fairly taken as proof that the visible Church at that time taught, as Rome now teaches, that the Son is consubstantial with the Father. The fact that some dissented at the time, or that more soon joined in that dissent; or, that in a few years, in the East, the dissentients were in the majority, is not considered as invalidating the decision of that Council as the decision of the Church; because a majority of the bishops, as a body, were still in favor of the Nicene doctrine. Then, by parity of reasoning, the decisions of the two contemporary councils, one at Seleucia in the East, the other at Ariminum in the West, including nearly eight hundred bishops, ratified as those decisions were by the great majority of the bishops of the whole Church (including Liberius, the bishop of Rome), must be accepted as the teaching of the visible Church of that age. But those decisions, according to the previous and subsequent judgment of the Church, were heretical. It has been urged that the language adopted by the Council of Ariminum admits of an orthodox interpretation. In answer to this, it is enough to say, (1) That it was drawn up, proposed, and urged by the avowed opponents of the Nicene Creed. (2) That it was strenuously resisted by the advocates of that creed, and renounced as soon as they gained the ascendancy. (3) That Mr. Palmer himself admits that the Council repudiated the word "consubstantial" as expressing the relation of the Son to the Father. But this was the precise point in dispute between the Orthodox and semi-Arians.

Ancients and moderns unite in testifying to the general prevalence of Arianism at that time. Gregory Nazianzen speaks to this effect. And this is also true of Jerome. Jerome asserts that the whole world had become Arian; and that all the churches were in the possession of heretics. These statements must be taken with due allowance. They nevertheless prove that the great majority of bishops had adopted the Arian, or semi-Arian Creed. Athanasius and Vincent of Lerius express themselves to the same effect. To these ancient testimonies any number of authorities from modern theologians might be added. We give only the testimony of Dr. Jackson, one of the most distinguished theologians of the Church of England: "After this defection of the Romish Church in the bishop Liberius, the whole Roman empire was overspread with Arianism."

Whatever doubt may exist as to details, the general fact of this apostasy cannot be doubted. Through defection from the truth, through the arts of the dominant party, through the influence of the emperor, the great majority of the bish-

ops did join in condemnation of Athanasius, and in subscribing a formula of doctrine drawn up in opposition to the Nicene Creed; a formula afterwards renounced and condemned; a formula for which the Bishop of Rome was banished for two years for refusing to sign, and restored to his see when he consented to subscribe. If, then, we apply to this case the same rules which are applied to the decisions of the Nicene Council, it must be admitted that the external Church apostatized as truly under Constantius, as it professed the true faith under Constantine. If many signed the Eusebian or Arian formula insincerely, so did many hypocritically assent to the decrees of Nice. If many were overborne by authority and fear in the one case, so they were in the other. If many revoked their assent to Arianism, quite as many withdrew their consent to the Athanasian doctrine.

The Romish Evasion Of This Argument

In dealing with this undeniable fact, Romanists and Romanizers are forced to abandon their principle. Their doctrine is that the external Church cannot err, that the majority of the bishops living at any time cannot fail to teach the truth. But under the reign of the Emperor Constantius, it is undeniable that the vast majority, including the Bishop of Rome, did renounce the truth. But, says Bellarmin, the Church continued and was conspicuous in Athanasius, Hilary, Eusebius, and others. And Mr. Palmer, of Oxford says, "The truth was preserved under even Arian bishops." But the question is not, whether the truth shall be preserved and confessed by the true children of God, but, whether any external, organized body, especially the Church of Rome, can err in its teaching. Romanists cannot be allowed, merely to meet an emergency, to avail themselves of the Protestant doctrine that the Church may consist of scattered believers. It is true as Jerome teaches this in his writing. But that is our doctrine, and not the doctrine of Rome. Protestants say with full confidence that the Church maintains the truth. But whether in conspicuous glory as in the time of David, or in scattered believers as in the days of Elias, is not essential.

The Church Of Rome Rejects The Doctrine Of Augustine

A second case in which the external church (and specially the Church of Rome) has departed from what it had itself declared to be true, is in the rejection of the doctrines known in history as Augustinian. That the peculiar doctrines of Augustine, including the doctrine of sinful corruption of nature derived from Adam, which is spiritual death, and involves entire inability on the part of the sinner to convert himself or to cooperate in his own regeneration; the necessity of the certainly efficacious operation of divine grace; the sovereignty of God in election and reprobation, and the certain perseverance of the saints; were sanctioned by the whole Church, and specially by the Church of Rome, cannot be

disputed. The eighteenth chapter of Wiggers' "Augustinianism and Pelagianism," is headed, "The final adoption of the Augustinian system for all Christendom by the third ecumenical council of Ephesus, A.D. 431." It is not denied that many of the eastern bishops, perhaps the majority of them, were secretly opposed to that system in its essential features. All that is insisted upon is that the whole Church, through what Romanists recognize as its official organs, gave its sanction to Augustine's peculiar doctrines; and that so far the Latin Church is concerned this assent was not only for the time general but cordial. It is no less certain that the Council of Trent, while it condemned Pelagianism, and even the peculiar doctrine of semi-Pelagians, who said that man began the work of conversion, thus denying the necessity of preventing grace (*gratia preveniens*), nevertheless repudiated the distinguishing doctrines of Augustine and anathematized all who held them.

The Church of Rome Now Teaches Error

A fifth argument against the infallibility of the Church of Rome, is that that Church now teaches error. Of this there can be no reasonable doubt, if the Scriptures be admitted as the standard of judgment.

1. It is a monstrous error, contrary to the Bible, to its letter and spirit, and shocking to the common sense of mankind, that the salvation of men should be suspended on their acknowledging the Pope to be the head of the Church in the world, or the vicar of Christ. This makes salvation independent of faith and character. A man may be sincere and intelligent in his faith in God and Christ, and perfectly exemplary in his Christian life, yet if he does not acknowledge the Pope, he must perish forever.

2. It is a grievous error, contrary to the express teachings of the Bible, that the sacraments are the only channels of communicating to men the benefits of redemption. In consequence of this false assumption, Romanists teach that all who die unbaptized, even infants, are lost.

3. It is a great error to teach as the Church of Rome does teach, that the ministers of the gospel are priests, that the people have no access to God or Christ, and cannot obtain the remission of sins or other saving blessings, except through their intervention and by their ministrations; that the priests have the power not only of declarative, but of judicial and effective absolution, so that those and those only whom they absolve stand acquitted at the bar of God. This was the grand reason for the Reformation, which was a rebellion against this priestly domination; a demand on the part of the people for the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free — the liberty to go immediately to him with their sins and sorrows, and find relief without the intervention or permission of any man who has no better right of access than themselves.

H.V.

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. Who teach: That it is not absurd that one having lost his first regeneration, is again and even often born anew. For these deny by this doctrine the incorruptibleness of the seed of God, whereby we are born again. Contrary to the testimony of the Apostle Peter: "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible," I Peter 1:23.

The above rendering very well conveys the idea of the original, and therefore needs no correction in the translation. The structure and punctuation of the last two sentences, however, could be improved. A comma, instead of a period, should follow the words "born again," and then the sentence should continue with "contrary to the testimony of the Apostle Peter," etc. Besides, as we have noted before, it would be better consistently to follow the King James Version in the citations from Scripture.

It is rather unfortunate that Reformed people in the discussion of this article tend to lose sight of the main point and to become entangled in the rather involved question of mediate or immediate regeneration. This may be quite natural. And we surely do not mean to say that the question of mediate or immediate regeneration is of no significance, or that a discussion of the question is without benefit. Nevertheless, even though this discussion has arisen since the time when our *Canons* were drawn up, and even though this discussion has often centered about the text in I Peter 1:23, quoted in this article, that discussion is not exactly germane to the issue involved in this article of the Rejection of Errors. The Arminians had, and still have, an altogether different conception of regeneration than the Reformed. And every sound Reformed man, whether he maintains that regeneration is mediate or that it is immediate, will with our *Canons* reject the Arminian view of regeneration.

Although, therefore, we will naturally come to this question of mediate or immediate regeneration in connection with our discussion of the Scriptural proof attached to this article, we intend to give our primary attention to that which is also primary in the article, namely, the erroneous Arminian view of regeneration. And we intend to do this not only because this is in harmony with the article itself, but also because this is very necessary in our day, when this same erroneous

view of regeneration is widely taught as though it were the truth of Scripture.

It may be considered rather strange that in connection with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints this subject of regeneration comes up again and again. In reality, however, this is not strange at all. For the two truths are inseparably related, and the one necessarily follows from the other. If you are Reformed in regard to the doctrine of regeneration, to be consistent you must also be Reformed in regard to the doctrine of perseverance. And if you are Arminian in regard to regeneration, you will also be Arminian in regard to the perseverance. Regeneration, rightly understood, is the essence of perseverance; and perseverance is but the extension of the wonder of regeneration. Regeneration means that the principle of the new life of Christ is implanted in your heart. Perseverance, positively speaking, means nothing else than that Christ from moment to moment continues to give you that life through His indwelling Spirit. Regeneration means that the incorruptible seed has been implanted in you. Perseverance means that that seed remaineth in you, so that no matter how grievously you may fall and no matter how far you may fall, you can never fall so far that the principle of the new life perishes. If, therefore, you deny this truth of regeneration, you have already principally denied the truth of perseverance.

Thus the Arminians necessarily did violence to the truth of regeneration when they attempted to deny the sure perseverance of the saints. They taught, according to this article, "that it is not absurd that one having lost his first regeneration, is again and even often born anew." And our fathers charged that "these deny by this doctrine the incorruptibleness of the seed of God, whereby we are born again." Our fathers go the very core of the Arminians' error in this statement. But there is more than one related error in the Arminian view. And we must, first of all, understand their view. Even in the brief statement of their view in this article we may distinguish these elements: 1) Regeneration is of such a nature that it can be lost. 2) Regeneration is of such a nature that one can be repeatedly regenerated. 3) Regeneration — this by implication — is of such a nature that it can be lost permanently and finally, that is, so that we are never again regenerated.

What, then, is the Arminian teaching on this score?

To put it very bluntly, the Arminian does not believe in regeneration at all. But the term *regeneration* is Scriptural. And since the Bible speaks of being born again or being born from above, the Arminian must also say something about regeneration. In fact, Arminians love to say, "The Bible says . . ." However, they empty the term of its true, Scriptural content; and they substitute for that true meaning of the term their own false notions, which really have nothing to do with the term. They pour into the term an entirely foreign meaning.

In the first place, the Arminian completely denies any necessity of and any room for regeneration in the true sense

of the word. For he denies original sin. And he denies that the will has ever been corrupted. And he denies that the unregenerate man is really and utterly dead and destitute of all powers, and gifts is not necessary (because man never lost man can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life, and can offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit. Hence, there is really no room for and no necessity of a new birth in the Arminian view of man. Man is essentially good.

In the second place, the Arminian teaches that faith is always and only an act — not a bond, nor a power. According to him, in conversion the infusion of new qualities, powers, and gifts is not necessary (because man never lost them), and it does not take place. And therefore faith itself is not a quality or gift infused by God, but only an act of man. The Arminian therefore places all the emphasis upon the act of believing.

In the third place, that act of believing is, in the Arminian view, the very first step in salvation. Peculiarly enough, it is before regeneration. This betrays already — or at least ought to betray to any thinking Christian — that he is playing *hocus-pocus* with the doctrine of regeneration. For if a man is able to believe, this obviates any necessity whatsoever of a being born again. Nevertheless, this is the Arminian view. If you believe and accept Christ, then you will be reborn. They can speak of this silly and absurd thing in the most glowing and persuasive terms. But silly it is, and desperately wicked too, to teach that the wonderful and powerful act of regeneration that is in Scripture so highly celebrated as a new creation and a resurrection from the dead is dependent upon an act of believing to be performed by a dead sinner. Surely, the Bible says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But to say, "Unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you cannot be born again," is just as foreign to Scripture as black is to white. And it is so desperately wicked because it is so deceptive and sounds so nice and pious in the ears of the uninitiated. But once again: this is the Arminian view.

In the fourth place, the Arminian — for he has to speak of this too — corrupts and distorts the grace of God whereby we are converted into a gentle advising. He denies the power of the Word of God and changes it into a mere advisory or persuasive word, even though that word be true in its contents. The power of that Word is dependent on the consent of the hearer.

And now regeneration, finally, means that if a man hears that gentle, advisory, persuasive word and believes it — and only so long as he believes it — there is an influence for good on his life, a change for the better, a "new birth." If, however, that same man tomorrow no more believes, but instead rejects that word, then that new birth is lost too. As long as a man accepts the word, that word has a good influence upon him; if he lets go of that word, then that good influence is also lost. Thus it is possible that a man is regenerated repeatedly. And thus it is possible that he may also lose his regeneration finally and completely, with the

result that though he was born again, he nevertheless perishes forever.

Now our fathers do not take the trouble to go into all the ramifications of the Arminian view to contradict their error. In the first place, they have already dealt with the various errors that are involved. But, in the second place, they pinpoint a single element which makes it obvious beyond a shadow of doubt that the Arminians in fact deny the whole truth of regeneration and maintain a downright absurd view. That one element is this, that the Arminians actually teach that the seed of God, through which we are born again, is corruptible, while the Scriptures teach that we are born again not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed.

This is quite sufficient to overthrow the entire view. And it is a sufficient test for anyone to use in order to determine whether one's view of regeneration is correct. In the light of the Scriptural truth that we are born again of incorruptible seed, it is nothing short of absurd to teach that one can lose his first regeneration and can be again and even often born anew.

The passage from Scripture which our fathers cite is I Peter 1:23. Because we intend to enter into the question of mediate or immediate regeneration in connection with this discussion, we will quote the entire passage of I Peter 1:23-25 for such use as we may make of it in connection with that question. It reads as follows: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

IN HIS FEAR

(Continued from page 469)

do your utmost to see your child trained in these principal things, you will rejoice to behold that God is gathering His children out of your children.

That is interest you will keep in the life to come. Moth and rust shall not corrupt it. Death shall not destroy it. And God promises it to His people. "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Acts 2:39.

J.A.H.

Notice for Classis West

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

Rev. H. Veldman, Stated Clerk

DECENCY and ORDER

The Mission Order

"The missionary work of the churches is regulated by the General Synod in a mission order." — Article 51, D.K.O.

The above article of our Church Order is of recent date. It was written and adopted in 1914 and replaced an article that had become outdated. The original article that had become outdated did not deal with the matter of missions but concerned a situation in the churches of the Netherlands (including both Belgium and Netherlands today) in which two different languages, French and Dutch, were used. The article stipulated that two groups of ecclesiastical gatherings should be maintained. The Dutch-speaking churches held their own consistory meetings, classical gatherings and particular synod. The French-speaking church did the same. This arrangement, however, was no longer necessary in 1914 and consequently this article was eliminated from the Church Order and replaced with the present article dealing with the mission work of the churches.

Monsma and Van Dellen in *The Church Order Commentary*, page 218, make the assertion that "the term 'Missionary Work' in the present article only refers to mission work among pagan peoples, such as the American Indians, the Chinese, etc." They base this contention upon the claim that the English translation, approved by the Synod of 1920, of the Dutch article adopted in 1914 is not as specific as it should have been. The Dutch translation read: "*De arbeid der kerkelijke Zending onder de heidenen en Joden wordt door de Generale Synode in eene Zendings orde geregeld.*"

In view of this the same authors hold that, "This article does not refer to all types of mission work undertaken by our churches . . . Neither does Article 51 refer to Home Missions or Church Extension." This must be maintained, according to the authors, in order to retain the fundamental principle of Reformed Church Polity that the work of evangelization belongs to the local church and therefore each church must be left full liberty to perform as much of this work as possible in its own area. Still this does not exclude the Synod or the Classes from also regulating a certain amount of home mission work or church extension work. This is not a matter of "either-or." There is no conflict between the work of the individual church and that of the churches collectively in this field. It can very well be a "both-and" project. But since the work of home missions does not fall under Article 51 as adopted in 1914, the Christian Reformed Synod in 1936 adopted for practical reasons a new Home Mission Order which placed this work under the care and authority of the synod.

A couple years ago the Christian Reformed Church was considering a proposed change in this article. Whether this

has been adopted or is still in the process of consideration, we do not know. Under the heading "*Evangelism and Missions*," the proposed change would appear as Article 70 in the revised Church Order and would read thus:

"Each church is privileged and in duty bound to bring the gospel to those who do not know Christ and salvation in Him. This task shall, wherever possible, be left to the particular churches, who may execute it singly or in cooperation with one or more neighboring churches. Only if the scope of the work puts it beyond the sphere of local supervision, and demands close denominational cooperation, shall it be regulated by a Synodical Mission Order."

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches has also adopted Article 51 as written in 1914 and approved in its English translation in 1920. Although we have not adopted a separate Home Mission Order, our churches have always interpreted Article 51 to include Domestic as well as Foreign Mission work. This is evident from our Church Order book where a footnote appears under this article referring us to the Constitution of the Mission Committee that appears on pages 46-49 of the same book. It is noteworthy that the preamble to this constitution speaks of church extension, church reformation as well as preaching the blessed gospel to the unchurched and heathen. Although these are distinguished, the application of Article 51 of the Church Order is to them all. The preamble reads:

"The Protestant Reformed Churches believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the church, to preach the blessed Gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, it is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said churches to carry out this calling according to the measure of our God-given ability."

"We believe that this missionary activity includes the work of church extension, and church reformation, as well as the task of carrying out the Gospel to the unchurched and heathen. However, we are convinced that our present duty lies primarily in the field of church extension and church reformation."

"With a view to this persuasion the here following constitution has been drawn up, and any enlargement of the scope of labors would imply changes and enlargements of the present draft constitution."

The Protestant Reformed Churches do *not* believe that the work of the synod excludes the mission endeavors of the local or individual churches. On the contrary, it is our firm belief that each church is duty-bound and privileged, according to its means and ability, to spread the gospel in its own area and that the churches together, under synodical regulation, are to conduct mission work in the broader sphere. In view of this the alleged charge, fabricated by the enemies of the truth, that the Protestant Reformed Churches do not believe in missions, is a malicious lie designed only to deceive the ignorant.

The scope of Article 51 then does not include the mission work that is performed and regulated by the individual church. This work comes into consideration in connection with the questions of church visitation that are asked each consistory under Article 41 of the Church Order. Our present concern is with the work of missions as done by our churches cooperatively and regulated by a synodical order.

The "Mission Order" by which this work is regulated by the synod of our churches is the "Constitution of the Synodical Mission Committee." According to the rules and limitations prescribed in this constitution, the committee must carry out the work assigned to it by the synod. We are not going to quote this constitution in this connection nor are we going to discuss the individual articles but we will briefly refer to the pertinent parts and note a few practical matters that are worthy of our attention.

1. Did you know that the Mission Board cannot call a missionary? Even though this Board is a synodical committee, i.e., a denominational committee, it has no power to call and send out a missionary. This is the task of the church. Just as it is exclusively the prerogative of the church to ordain office bearers, preach the Word, administer baptism and the Lord's Supper, so it is her task to call and send out the missionary. It was the church at Antioch that sent out Paul and Barnabas after they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them (Acts 13:3). Synod, therefore, designates one of the churches as the calling church for this task. When the missionary has been obtained and is ready for the work, the calling church must labor jointly with the committee of synod to determine upon such matters as "field of labor, method of labor and time of labor to be devoted to the field." In his *Principles of Missions*, Rev. Hoeksema states: "It is, of course, perfectly all right that the denomination appoints a mission board to aid the local churches in many respects: to coordinate the work. But those boards must be very careful that they do not take the place of the local church, that they must simply serve the purpose of helping the local church in their labors."

2. Did you know what the duties of the missionary are in relation to the committee of synod and the church that calls and sends him into his field of labor? He is required to submit a bi-monthly report to the committee and the calling church containing information concerning the number of calls he makes, the number of speeches he delivers, the number of radio broadcasts, how much literature is distributed either personally or by mail, how many miles he has traveled — how and why — an opinion as to the progress made and the prospects of the particular field in which he is laboring. Further the missionary is required to submit a monthly statement of his expenses to a sub-committee of the Mission Board which must approve the account before it is paid by the synodical treasurer.

3. Did you know that the missionary and his family are required to have their membership papers in the calling

church? Did you know that he cannot leave his field of labor *immediately* if he chooses to accept a call elsewhere but must give at least two months' notice to the committee? Did you know that he has ex-officio an advisory vote at all synodical meetings dealing with the missionary work in which he is engaged, or in all matters that may affect him and his work?

4. Did you know that our synodical mission work is to be regulated by a Board which is to consist of no less than eight men and is to be chosen from the Eastern branch of our churches? The latter regulation is, of course, not a matter of principle but is so decided for practical reasons since our calling church is now located in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Should synod decide to appoint one of the western churches as the calling church, it is reasonable to assume that the constituency of the synodical mission committee would then be chosen from the west.

5. Did you know that the synod of 1942 authorized the Mission Board to secure the services of ministers and students to carry on the work of missions in the event we have no missionary in the field? And that the synod of 1946 expressed that church extension work ought to be pushed even more than before and further, that the Home Missionary be assured of assistance in his labors by permitting the Mission Committee, in conjunction with the calling church, to ask the help of a fellow-minister? Of course you know that the synod of 1959 decided to embark upon a vast program of foreign radio broadcasting by which the gospel as proclaimed by the Protestant Reformed Churches will be proclaimed to a potential audience of millions!

Still they say: "The Protestant Reformed Churches are not mission-minded."

To us the work of missions is very important. And the reason for this is not social, economic or utilitarian but rather because we believe that "*by His Word and Spirit the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends, and preserves to Himself out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith*" (Heid. Cat., L.D. 21).

G.V.d.B.

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*

ALL AROUND US

The Three Points Still Binding?

The synod of the De Wolf group, according to *The Banner* of July 29, 1960, sent a letter to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church in which it requested "to consider the Three Points of Common Grace as without any further binding force."

To this the synod of the Christian Reformed Church gave the following reply:

"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 any 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. The result could be that such decisions are in effect set aside. 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 rest and peace in the churches.

"c. The fact that such setting aside of the Three Points would run counter to and virtually 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 of the elucidations and interpretations of these given in the 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 by 1924 and further elucidated by 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 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 eventually to a better understanding of the truth; and not bar those who have certain misgivings or divergent interpretations as long as they refrain from propaganda for their 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 be left to the individual consistories and classes in which such attempts toward union would be made."

It is plain from the above quotation that the Christian Reformed Church would still maintain the Three Points of Common Grace. But the question: Are the Three Points still binding? is not positively answered.

You can be a member of the Christian Reformed Church and have scruples regarding the Three Points, provided, of course, that you do not agitate against the official interpretations. If I understand the word "scruple," it means: doubt, conscientious distrust, unbelief. In this case the scruple is with regard to the Three Points. One, therefore, who has scruples regarding these points of doctrine does not believe them, has conscientious objections to them. And I use the word "conscientious" not to indicate some mystical feeling, but I understand it to indicate that strong testimony in the heart of the believer who looks at all things, also the doctrine of common grace, in the light of God's Word, and is convinced by that light and testimony that the doctrine is false. One who has scruples of this kind may be a member of the Christian Reformed Church provided he does not try to gain

others to his view by way of propaganda. Viewed in this light, the Three Points are not binding.

On the other hand, the Three Points are binding to him who would dare to denounce them as Arminian and Pelagian, or who would seek to propagate his divergent views. Such an one could not be a member of the Christian Reformed Church. It is for this reason that the Three Points must be maintained.

We, as history has shown, have not only had scruples concerning the Three Points, but have openly declared with proofs that they are Arminian and Pelagian. The Christian Reformed Church knows this, of course, and therefore, when we also sought discussions with them on this doctrine, have answered us that they do not want "polemical rehearsals of past history." But with those in the De Wolf group, who just as vehemently as we denounced in the past the Three Points as Arminian and Pelagian, with them the Christian Reformed Church is not only willing to discuss but even propose the way to reunion. There can be only one reason for this, and that is that those in the De Wolf group have recanted. The only reason why they ask the Christian Reformed Church to declare the Three Points no longer binding is the fact that they have a rather large segment in their group who find it difficult and maybe even impossible to swallow the Three Points which they have always denounced as heresy. It is with respect to this last element and with respect to us that the Christian Reformed Church would maintain this doctrine of common grace and make the Three Points binding. They cannot afford to have their peace disturbed.

But is not the position set forth in the above quotation a very weak position? Indeed it is. For notice that the church, on the one hand, takes the position that the Three Points are binding, and in 1959 insisted that they were both Scriptural and Confessional; while on the other hand, it is possible to be a member of that church and not believe in the Three Points. The position is that you may believe in them or desist, so long as you do not agitate against the official interpretations. We, as is well known, do not believe the Three Points are Scriptural and Confessional. We could therefore never subscribe to them. But, for the sake of argument, let us suppose that the Three Points are Scriptural and Confessional. Are then the Three Points not binding upon the conscience of the member of the church that maintains them? I believe you have to say they would be. Could one who is a Reformed believer ever refuse to subscribe to Scripture and the Confessions? I think not. Yet the Christian Reformed Church will allow its members and prospective members to desist in subscribing to the Three Points so long as they do not agitate against official interpretations. I say this is a very weak position to say the least. I understand, of course, that it cannot be expected of every member of the church that he understands thoroughly all her doctrine. But certainly such a doctrine as common grace which has devel-

oped out of years of controversy, and which has been held before the public eye by both those for it and against it for so many years, is well understood I would say especially by those who have opposed it, whether they belong to us or De Wolf. We still run into people in the Christian Reformed Church who ask why Rev. Hoeksema made up those Three Points, thus revealing their ignorance. But such ignorance does not obtain among those who are or once were Protestant Reformed. And, therefore, if the Three Points are Scriptural and Confessional, the church that maintains them should bind them on its membership. Doctrines and Confessions are not only instruments to keep out of the church what is in disagreement with it, but they are also instruments to live by.

But there is more to be said about the above quotation. It cannot have passed the reader's notice the reasons offered by the Christian Reformed Church for maintaining the Three Points. The first reason is "the serious situation in 1924 which called these Three Points into being." I am particularly interested in this reason. Of course, the Christian Reformed Church supposes that those to whom their letter was directed would know what that "serious situation in 1924" was, and therefore did not feel impelled to describe it. But because I fear they have a different understanding of that "serious situation" than I do, I am moved to tell our readers what it was. The Christian Reformed Church implies by this expression that its denominational existence was jeopardized by the fact that certain ministers in the church were disturbing the peace of the denomination by publicly asserting their opposition to the doctrine of common grace. And to stop this growing agitation, the Three Points were concocted on the basis of which the various classes in which the agitators resided imposed discipline and ultimately cast them out. Thus according to point b, peace was restored; and point c, this peace they would keep at all costs.

The truth is, that prior to 1924 there were two elements in the church, one conservative group in the minority which held strictly to the Word of God and the Confessions; the other, a liberal element which on the basis of the doctrine of common grace would open the gates for the flood of worldliness to come into the church. They wanted, so to speak, to play ball with the world. Because that first element (many of whom later recanted) loved the church and the truth, and strongly insisted that Athens and Jerusalem could not live together under the same roof, they were cast out and that, too, on the basis of the doctrine of common grace as summarized in the Three Points which is neither Scripture nor the Confessions. Hoeksema, Danhof and Ophoff who were the stalwarts defending the purity of the church, her doctrine and life, were disowned and cast out on the basis of a doctrine formulated and adopted by a majority that refused to be pestered with the truth of God's Word and our Confessions. O, it is true that this liberal element could never have succeeded if their stand had no semblance of truth. So they

hastily prepared texts of Scripture without exegesis, and at random quoted parts of the Confessions that seemed to sustain their view. But to this date, now thirty-six years later, no one has successfully disproved the arguments of those cast out which clearly show up the fallacy of the Three Points.

More honest it would have been, it seems to me, if the Christian Reformed Church had conceded to the De Wolf group that the Three Points had served their purpose, namely, to get men out of the church in 1924 who gave the church no peace in her modernistic and liberal trend. More honest it would have been, it seems to me, if they had said, "We will now scrap the Three Points seeing we have the peace we desired, and it is in harmony with our expansion movement to admit into our churches even the De Wolf group, and that without scruples."

But then, if they did that, they would surely hear from us. So, the Three Points must be retained.

M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Editor of *The Standard Bearer*

Att.: Rev. H. Hoeksema

Dear brother in Christ,

Will you please print these few lines in *The Standard Bearer* in regards to the article in the July 1, 1960, issue under Varia, "Synod of Protestant Reformed Churches 1960," by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema.

In this article the Prof. writes about Article 69 of our Church Order. He writes: "I think these fears (concerning the overture of First Church for the introduction of hymns) are a bit groundless and based on misunderstanding."

I wish to make plain that these fears, especially in the West, are very real and that the people have good grounds to fear, i.e., those who love the Psalms and are convinced that only the Psalms should be sung in our churches.

We are amazed that the overture from the First Church ever reached our Synod. The overture reads as follows: "The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church in recognition of the common use of hymns by our people and the often expressed desire for their use in our church services appeal to your body to consider the matter, and adopt measures enabling their use in our churches, furthermore, in recognition of the present character of Article 69 of the Protestant Reformed Churches we herewith overture Synod the Article to read: "in our church service only the 150 Psalms and hymns as approved and adopted by the Synod shall be sung."

It is very plain that the study committee did not misunderstand the overture and neither does the West. The

study committee writes in the first paragraph of their introduction: "your committee realized that the problem before us is not merely the proposed change of Article 69 of the Church Order, but that the whole question of hymnody is on our table. This is evident from the First Church overture." We do not have a request for faithful versifications of Scripture, but a request to sing hymns. It is this request for hymns that has disturbed and caused much fear in the West. It is like a flock of sheep that have heard the bark of a wolf.

This fear, furthermore, is not groundless. For over nineteen hundred years the faithful church has fought to sing only the Psalms in their church services, and we believe that we are the faithful continuation of that church. Reading the report of the study committee is proof enough that the faithful church is convinced that God has decided and that it pleases Him that His church sing only the Psalms in their services. How then can any Synod decide on other songs. The Psalms *are* the song book of the Scriptures. Just as there are good hymns, there are good books, but they have no place in our church services.

It should be proof enough that if God wanted to have His church sing other songs besides the Psalms He would have had the New Testament Church sing them in their beginning and not when we are looking for the end of all things. If ever the church needs the Psalms, it is now and more so as it approaches the end. The apostate church has no need to sing about God's wrath and vengeance on his enemies, but the faithful church receives great comfort from the Psalms.

Let us all reread the Rev. H. Hoeksema's article in *The Standard Bearer*, Vol. IV pp. 317-319, and take heed to what he writes. We quote: "There is no need for hymns next to the Psalms of David which are presented to us in Holy Scripture. There is in the Psalms a spiritual wealth wherein also the heart of the New Testament Church is able to express itself perfectly, provided one learns to understand those Psalms well."

Remarks have been made that we do not have songs to fit sermons for special days such as Easter and Pentecost. I would like to know why it is not fitting that we sing about this victorious King of Kings and of the wrath of God on His enemies when we hear a sermon on Christ's resurrection and ascension. The Psalms comfort the church through all the ages from beginning to end. If we wish to have our children's children sing the Psalms, then we must not have any other songs besides them. History teaches us that if we do, the Psalms will be crowded out.

God has preserved a church for all these years which sings the Psalms. He will also preserve a church which loves the Psalms and will sing them only in their services until Christ comes again. Again we quote Rev. H. Hoeksema: "Therefore, it is always much safer to keep ourselves to the songs which Scriptures present us."

If we wish to change Article 69, let us go back to the

Synod of Dordrecht and add again what we lost: "all other songs shall be kept out of the churches."

If our Psalter lacks something, let it be proven with good grounds and something better be offered in its place. I urge every member of our Protestant Reformed Churches to read the report of the study committee and Rev. H. Hoeksema's article in Vol. IV, pp. 317-319 in *The Standard Bearer*.

Yours in the Lord,

H. Huisken,
Edgerton, Minn.

Reply:

Our Editor referred this contribution to the undersigned because it is a reflection on some of the comments made by him in the July 1 issue in connection with the hymn-proposal at our 1960 Synod.

In reply, the following:

1) I am very glad that brother Huisken contributed his thoughts on the subject. This is in harmony with my suggestion that we have some discussion of this matter in our *Standard Bearer*. And this, I believe, is good for our *Standard Bearer*, and also good for our people and our churches. Through clear and calm discussion of issues that concern our churches we may all be enlightened and arrive at real unity. I hope that more discussion will follow.

2) I do not intend at this time to offer a thorough reply because I wish to encourage others to contribute their thoughts on the subject. I shall therefore offer only a few remarks which may incite more discussion. And if the occasion and/or the need arises, I will write more in the future.

3) My remarks are as follows:

a. I still think that these fears are a bit groundless and based on misunderstanding, as I wrote originally.

b. I have great respect and love for sheep who are on the alert against the wolves. But in this case I believe the bark of the wolf that brother Huisken refers to is imaginary. At least, I do not think that the Consistory of First Church is the wolf, nor that the wolf's bark can be detected in their overture.

c. I do think that the formulation of the First Church overture is a bit unfortunate and brief, and that this perhaps is the occasion of some of the fears.

d. I do not agree that the whole question of hymnody was on the table of Synod. And certainly, at this time the question has been reduced to one of "faithful versifications of the Scriptures." Personally, I believe that the latter is quite in harmony with the intentions of First Church.

e. If I am not mistaken, this idea of faithful versifications of the Scriptures has been before our churches in the past, and then — without much ado — a committee was given permission to work on such versifications. At that time,

therefore, there was no weighty objection against the idea as such.

f. I would agree if brother Huisken said, "The Psalms are the song book of the Old Testament Scriptures." But, while I have great esteem for both our English Psalter and the Dutch Psalms, I beg to point out that it cannot be said that we sing the 150 Psalms of David in our churches. In other words, our Psalter is not the same as the Psalms, and in some cases far removed from the Psalms.

g. I still feel that especially on some of the special occasions, such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, our Psalter lacks in selections that have direct and pointed application to the occasion concerned.

Perhaps the above will suffice to arouse further discussion, both pro and con. In the meantime, I would especially like to see one or more of the brethren from First Church defend his overture.

H.C.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Aid Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, mourns the loss of one of its faithful members,

MRS. O. VAN ELLEN

who passed away on August 16. May our Heavenly Father comfort the bereaved with the assurance that He doeth all things well.

Mrs. H. Hoeksema, President
Mrs. J. Newhouse, Secretary

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

How blest is he whose trespass
Hath freely been forgiven,
Whose sin is wholly covered
Before the sight of heaven.
Blest he to whom Jehovah
Imputeth not his sin,
Who hath a guileless spirit,
Whose heart is true within.

While I kept guilty silence
My strength was spent with grief,
Thy hand was heavy on me,
My soul found no relief;
But when I owned my trespass,
My sin hid not from Thee,
When I confessed transgression,
Then Thou forgavest me.

Psalms 32:1, 2

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

August 20, 1960

Our congregation at Hull called Candidate J. Kortering from a trio which also included the Revs. G. Vos and G. Lubbers. Randolph's trio consisted of the Revs. R. C. Harbach and M. Schipper and Cand. J. Kortering; the candidate receiving the call. The third call to come to the candidate was from Creston Church whose trio included the Revs. H. Hanko and A. Mulder.

Rev. A. Mulder of Kalamazoo declined the call he had received from the church at Grand Haven.

The Reformed Witness Hour welcomes Rev. A. Mulder, minister of the Word of God in our Kalamazoo Church, as their guest speaker during the month of September. This is Rev. Mulder's initial appearance in the Protestant Reformed radio ministry—a ministry of weekly messages broadcast over many U.S. stations and one European station. Rev. Mulder has taken as the theme of his four radio broadcasts: "The Powers of Praise"; "By Hearing," "By Giving," "By Singing," and "By Praying." Copies of these sermons are available by writing to the Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Michigan.

Correction. Not only members of Holland, Hudsonville and Hope contributed the funds necessary for the four room addition to Hope School (as reported last month) but those of Creston and Southwest also gave generously to that Kingdom cause, as we learned since, from a kind reporter.

Lynden's pastor, Rev. R. C. Harbach, was privileged to expound the Word of God, as found in Matt. 1:21, in the chapel service of the Christian Rest Home Sunday, July 31. The "He shall save His people" gospel revealed in that text is comforting to all ages, and especially to folks waiting the deliverance from the earthly house.

May the joint efforts of Rev. Heys and Rev. Vanden Berg be successful! They are planning to organize a choral society of volunteer singers from both their churches. It is still in the planning stages, but should it be successful it will be another means of grace which many may enjoy—the singers and, when ready to give a concert, the audiences. Truly, the church on earth should be a singing church!

Doon's Consistory decided to add a third elder to their body. At the Congregational meeting, held August 3, E. Van Egdom was chosen, and at the August 7 morning service the brother was installed into the office.

Some spiritual and scriptural propaganda found in South Holland's bulletin: *John* said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth," III John 4; *Joshua* said, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord," Joshua 24:15; The *Psalmist* said, "Walk about Zion, and

go round about her, tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to generations following," Psalm 48:12, 13; *God* said, "Train up a child in the way he should go and he will not depart from it," Prov. 22:6. And what doctrine or idea was Rev. Heys spreading? 'Tis found in this prayer: "May our Covenant God bless our efforts to have a school of our own for our children's joy and benefit."

Convention News. The Young People's 1960 convention was launched with a Beacon Lights pre-convention Hymnsing Sunday evening, August 14, at First Church. The meeting was opened by the president, Dave Engelsma, who introduced the song leader for the evening, Chas. Westra, youth director in our Southeast Church. The audience sang hymns and Psalter numbers appropriate to the Convention theme, "Faithful Today." The singing was accompanied by Bonnie Bylsma at the organ and Mary Pastoor at the piano. A male quartet from Hope's Y.P.S. sang two numbers, Mr. Edw. Ophoff rendered a vocal solo, and a piano-organ duet, "The Heavens are Telling" rounded out the program to the enjoyment of all. Tuesday evening found many people gathered in First Church for the Mass Meeting—open to the public. Rev. H. Hoeksema occupied his usual post, that of Keynote Speaker for the Convention. His topic was, "Faithful In The Truth." Wednesday was the day of the outing, in the A.M. at Saugatuck with its thrilling dune scootering, and in the P.M. at the Chr. Ref. Conf. grounds on Lake Michigan. There business meetings and a program occupied the young people's attention. Speaker for the evening was the Rev. J. A. Heys, of South Holland, who spoke on the topic, "Faithful In Life." Thursday started off with a pancake breakfast at Douglas Walker Park, then back to First Church for more business, a luncheon and a panel discussion on, "How does the world show her hostility to the church?" The final gathering, the eagerly anticipated banquet, was held at the Mayfair Christian School gym with the speaker for that evening, the Rev. G. Vanden Berg, of Oak Lawn. The final topic of the series under the theme, "Faithful Today," was "Faithful unto Death." It is reported that this 20th Annual Convention was carried out without any unpleasant incident to mar it; it was further observed that a few of our churches were not represented by their delegates, which was the only restraint to a wholly successful convention.

Young men: There is a call for aspirants to our Theological School directed to you! In such a reminder found in South Holland's bulletin we find the last paragraph to read as follows: "Make it a matter of prayer, and ask yourself before God whether He does not have labor for you in His Kingdom in this glorious work of proclaiming the truth as He has given it to us as Protestant Reformed people. What a glorious truth to proclaim! Have you any desire to make it known to others?"

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.