

THE STANDARD

Bearers

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MEDITATION

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22, 23

Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, the liberty whereunto ye have been called by and through the Spirit of Pentecost, the indwelling Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ!

If thus ye stand, as being led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. That law can no more condemn you and curse you. That law can no more doom you to the bondage of sin and death. That law can no more function as a heavy burden of outward constraints and compulsions which it is impossible for you to carry. Even when you experience that the flesh, your flesh, lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and that these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would (and, in fact, do the things that ye would not!) — even then stand in your liberty, and remember that, led by the Spirit of liberty, ye are not under the law!

And remember too, O free child of the Spirit, that liberty and license are mutually exclusive! License means that you corrupt your liberty, make a mockery of it, and give free rein to the flesh and its works. It means that you care not for the law and the precepts of your God. It means that you indulge the flesh and its lust against the Spirit. Liberty means that the law is written in your heart, and that from the inner principle of that love of God in your heart you find free and spontaneous delight in the precepts of your God, that you find yourself impelled to do His will. It means not that you care not for the law, but rather that you meditate in God's law day and night and that you fulfill the law. Walk in the Spirit, walk in your liberty, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

For then ye will do the works of the flesh.

And the works of the flesh are manifest . . . They are all that is contrary to the law. And the gospel of grace always conveys the warning that there is no room in the kingdom of God for the flesh and its works: "They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

But the fruit of the Spirit . . . is the very opposite.

Against that fruit of the Spirit of liberty there is no law. How could there be? For the fruit of the Spirit is love. And all the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself!

* * * *

Not nine different, unrelated fruits does the apostle mention here. Nor simply a series of nine orderly fruits does he enumerate. But he speaks of *fruit* in the singular, a nine-fold fruit. And a careful examination of this fruit as described in the text in connection with the context reveals you cannot at random change the order of these various terms. There is a main idea in that fruit of the Spirit; and there is a particular order of development.

The fruit of the Spirit is, first of all, a love-fruit. And that love is characterized by joy and peace. This is the first triad in the text. And it is basic to all the rest. That fruit which is essentially love manifests itself in the Christian virtue of longsuffering, which is in turn characterized by "gentleness" and "goodness." These form the second triad in the text. And, in the third place, that fruit of the Spirit which is essentially love and which reveals itself as longsuffering will be manifest in the spiritual disposition of "faith," characterized by "meekness" and "temperance." But the essence of the entire fruit is love.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

And it could not be otherwise. God is love. And the Spirit Who dwells in the church and in the saints and Who leads them, the Spirit of liberty, is the Spirit of Christ. And the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of God. How, then, could His fruit be anything else than love?

True, the apostle has in mind love in its particular aspect of the love of the neighbor, and, more particularly, the love of the brethren, of the fellow-saints. This is plain from the context. But love of the neighbor is not a different

love. God is love. And love — all love — is of God. Fundamentally love is always the same, whether it is the love of God to Himself, the love of God to us, the love of us to God, or the love of God in us toward the neighbor. God is love; and love is of God. But here the emphasis is on the ultimate, concrete, practical manifestation of that love in the love of the brethren as the fruit of the Spirit.

Love is the bond of perfectness, the bond that unites in the sphere of spiritual, ethical perfection. It implies, in the first place, that the subject of that love, the one who loves, is perfect. His heart and mind and soul are spiritually, ethically perfect: true, righteous, holy. It implies, in the second place, that this ethically perfect lover longs for, wills, has pleasure in a perfect object, the one who is loved. There is no love in darkness, only hatred. Love requires a perfect subject and a perfect object. It implies, in the third place, that the perfect subject is attracted to and attaches himself with all his heart and mind and will to the perfect object, to that which is perfect, and, by the same token, abhors all that which is imperfect, all that is of sin and darkness. It means that the perfect subject of that love at all times seeks, delights in, longs for, breathes after, maintains, defends that which is perfect, strives to manifest and realize it, and, by the same token, condemns and hates all that which is imperfect and of the darkness. And love implies a bond, a mutual bond of fellowship and delight between them that are perfect.

That love is eternally and unchangeably in God Triune. For God is love! Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are united in a mutual bond of divine friendship and love and seek and delight in one another in the sphere of infinite perfection. That love is in God toward us from eternity through Christ Jesus. He first loved us! For while that divine love finds us as the totally unfit object of love, finds us in sin and death and corruption, that is only because from eternity, by sovereign election, God Triune beholds us in Christ Jesus as the perfect object and loves us. That same love, therefore, is revealed and commended to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And we always taste that love, first of all, as God's love to us, revealed in His Son, and shed abroad in our hearts by the Spirit that is given unto us. Then we know that He loves us. That selfsame love we express as love to God too. We love Him, because He first loved us. We love Him and delight in Him, seek Him and serve Him because He is God, the Perfect Object, righteous, just, holy, true, gracious, merciful, full of loving-kindness, altogether lovely. We love Him with all the exertion of our heart, even as we find Him in humility and contrition of heart in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord. It becomes then our meat to do His will.

Now then, that love of God — such is the fruit of the Spirit — is realized finally as love to one another. The saints behold one another as those who have been conformed to the image of God's Son. And thus in the sphere of perfection, in the sphere of the light they know and seek and find and desire and delight in one another. Subject and object are

born of God. Their love is the heart-action that arises out of a spiritual bond of unity between souls that are spiritually akin. In that love they rebuke one another's darkness and condemn the works of the flesh. In that love they seek to draw one another always more and more into the light. They delight not in sin; but they have pleasure in the work of God's grace and in the reflection of God's own love as they behold it in one another.

That love is characterized by joy. Here too it is joy in one another that the apostle has in view. That joy is difficult to define. It emphasizes the spontaneous delight of that love. It means that we find delight in one another's fellowship, even as we have spontaneous delight in the same things, in the same Christ, the same gospel, the same salvation, the same precepts of our God. It is the joy of the psalmist who said: "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me, because I have hoped in thy word."

And, of course, paired with that joy is peace, peace with one another, growing out of love. It is the opposite of war, the opposite of the will to destroy, the opposite of the will to bite and devour and consume one another. How can you be war-minded against him whom you love? It is the relation of harmony and unity and agreement according to which one always seeks and desires the good of the perfect object of his love. Or rather, it is the virtue of the heart that results in such a relation of harmony and unity.

Love, joy, peace — the fruit of the Spirit!

* * * *

Yes, and love will necessarily be manifest, especially as long as that object of our love, the fellow-saint, is only principally perfect, as long as in him too the flesh wars against the Spirit, so that he cannot do the things that he would — it will be manifest in the fruit of longsuffering.

For love suffereth long, and is kind.

Longsuffering is passive. It implies that my imperfect brother causes me suffering, hurts me. And it means that I bear long with him — not with his sin (for love cannot tolerate sin!), but with him, the brother. It means that I continue to love him in my heart because he is a brother, and, in fact, especially to love him at such a time.

Such longsuffering will be manifest in the fruit of "gentleness," "*goedertierenheid*," or kindness, the inner attitude of mind and heart according to which I am tenderly affectioned toward the brother and will and desire his good, his salvation, his repentance. It is the very opposite of the will to get even, the will to get satisfaction, the will to humiliate and to hurt the brother. It will be manifest in what the text calls "goodness." This is the virtue of beneficence or benevolence. According to it I actually do my brother good. I will to bestow upon him actual, concrete benefits both materially and spiritually. I seek his well-being. I will lay down my life for the brother. I speak to him words of light, and that too, in kindness. I rebuke his darkness and his sin, not because he has

hurt my person, but out of the desire to save him and to walk in the light with him, that our love may be perfect.

* * * *

But do not forget: the subject of that love here below is imperfect too. In me also the flesh lusts against the Spirit, so that I cannot do the things that I would. I cannot love as I would. I cannot be kindly affectioned as I would. I cannot do good as I would. The biggest obstacle to that love is after all not in my imperfect brother, but in *me!*

The fruit of the Spirit . . . is faith. Here that faith is not in relation to God but in relation to the saints. It is to be taken in the sense of faithfulness, trustworthiness, dependableness, constancy. It emphasizes that love does not forsake its object in time of difficulty. It does not leave the brother in his sin, especially when that sin is against self. But it remains constant and true in the hour of the deepest need and the greatest difficulty. For that love is characterized by meekness, the ability to bear personal insult and revilement and smiting without being provoked and resentful. It is the ability, in the knowledge that *I* am the chief of sinners, to be trodden down as long as it concerns only my *I*, my ego. It is the willingness to suffer everything in regard to my person, but not to budge or compromise an inch in the cause of the truth and the cause of righteousness and the cause of Christ. And paired with such meekness is temperance, self-control even of one's own carnal wrath, lust, envy, revenge, strife, contention in the face of provocation.

Against such like there is no law. For they are the fulfilling of the law.

And they are the fruit of the Spirit, that which He surely produces in whosoever heart He takes up His abode.

They *are* the fruit!

And thus the exhortation follows: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

H.C.H.

Announcement

The Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches convened in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on June 3, 1960, has examined brother Jason Kortering and declared the aforementioned brother a Candidate for the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments in the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Candidate J. Kortering's eligibility commences on July 3, 1960, one month after the completion of his praeparatoir examination.

Stated Clerk of the Protestant Reformed Churches.

NOTICE

As is customary, *The Standard Bearer* will appear only once a month during June, July, and August.

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EDITORIALS

Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches 1960

As these lines are written, our annual Synod has completed its sessions and already belongs to the past.

It is our purpose to report the highlights of Synod's sessions, so that you need not wait until the appearance of the printed Acts to obtain information as to the various decisions made, and at the same time to kindle your interest sufficiently to induce you to buy a copy of the Acts of 1960 when that little book appears. Our efficient Stated Clerk, Rev. G. Vanden Berg, will undoubtedly see to it that all our consistories have a supply of copies for sale by early fall. Make it a point to get a copy; you will not be disappointed. In the meantime, here is our unofficial, preliminary report.

Organization

Synod met this year at the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids. The president of the 1959 Synod, Rev. J. A. Heys, preached a fitting pre-synodical sermon on the Tuesday evening before Synod convened, which sermon will appear in full in the Acts. To this observer the size of the audience was disappointing, and almost disheartening. One almost receives the impression that in the minds of many this service is meant only for the delegates and that there is not too much interest and "living along" as far as our Synod is concerned. And this ought not to be. Synod is not a mere convention of delegates, but the broadest assembly of our Protestant Reformed Churches, and as such should have the interest and intense concern of all our people.

As usual, the Wednesday morning session was devoted to organization and division of labor. At this Synod the Rev. C. Hanko functioned as our capable, and sometimes necessarily longsuffering, chairman. The Rev. H. Veldman had, by his own testimony, the easiest task, that of vice-president. And the Reverends M. Schipper and J. A. Heys served as clerks. Notably absent from the Classis East delegation was the Rev. G. Vos, who because of his heart condition was not permitted to attend, and who was replaced by Rev. H. Hanko. And the Rev. H. H. Kuiper could not attend as delegate from Classis West due to illness. Rev. R. C. Harbach replaced him. Both of these brethren were remembered in prayer often during our sessions. For the rest, we had full delegations from both classes throughout eight days of meeting. And these delegates labored diligently and unitedly, as well as congenially. This was a pleasant Synod.

Because the amount of work was large this year, especially due to a great number of committee reports, there were four committees of pre-advice appointed. These went to work Wednesday afternoon and prepared their reports to guide Synod's deliberations.

Examination and Graduation and Theological School Matters

The first order of business this year was the examination of Student Jason Kortering, who had finished his course at our seminary. His sample sermon on the assigned text of Isaiah 40:9, 10, having been preached and approved on Thursday morning, he was then examined on Thursday afternoon by Rev. H. Hoeksema in Dogmatics, New Testament exegesis, and confessions. This examination was continued on Friday morning with the undersigned examining in Church Polity, Old Testament History, and Old Testament Exegesis, and the Rev. C. Hanko conducting the examination in Practica. It was a joyful moment for our new candidate and for Synod when Mr. Kortering was informed that he was made a candidate for the ministry in our churches.

We interject the remark at this point, however, that we should safeguard against making these examinations too much of a mere formality. To this observer, the examinations have been becoming less stringent and less thorough through the years. And though perhaps any student would claim that they are "rugged" enough, a little more time might well be allotted to the various subjects at future occasions. The faculty may have a fairly good idea of the student's abilities after three years; but the Synod itself must be convinced that he is qualified for the ministry.

Graduation exercises on the following Monday evening were witnessed by a goodly audience at our Hope Church. Mr. Kortering spoke on "The Unity of the Church." And the rector's address by the Rev. H. Hoeksema was on "The Minister of the Word." Once again we might join in thanking that God has signally blessed our seminary. And our churches may look forward soon to having the "minister-shortage" reduced by one. May God bless the candidate and soon give him a place in the ministry.

As to the future of our school? Next fall, the Lord willing, Mr. Dave Engelsma will begin his seminary course. And our school will return to the basement of First Church, due to the fact that Adams Street School will be in need of the room we have been using. However, it is easy to see that we face a shortage of ministers for some years to come, and a shortage that may well become more severe before it becomes better. May the Lord incline the hearts of more of our young men to prepare for the ministry! There is no more glorious calling than that of the ministry; and the candidate who graduates from our school is to be envied in the good sense of the word. May our churches remember the school and its labors in their prayers. And let us trust that the Lord will provide also in this respect.

Mission Matters

Under this heading we note, first of all, that the churches of Isabel and Forbes, who had already applied last year, were received this year into our denomination. This was upon the advice of the Mission Committee after a year during which

various ministers served these churches for brief periods and at the same time investigated the field further. While all the delegates were convinced that our Dakota brethren are one with us in the Reformed faith, all were not convinced as to the proper course to follow. After a thorough discussion, however, Synod decided to receive them. The two churches were duly notified. And we are glad that they are with us. The two little flocks hope to share one minister. May the Lord bless and prosper them spiritually.

Our home missionary, the Rev. G. Lubbers, was present at Synod. And Synod also had reports of his activities during the past year. Of late he has been laboring in the Pella-Sully area in Iowa. And these labors will be continued at the discretion of the Mission Committee. Let us all remember our missionary in prayer. His labors are often difficult, and somewhat discouraging are the results frequently. Our confidence is that the Lord will surely maintain the cause of His truth and will gather and keep His church.

The third item of note under this heading is the decision of Synod to begin a "foreign mission" project by broadcasting from "The Voice of Tangiers," a station which reaches a goodly part of western Europe. Just when this broadcast will begin the undersigned does not know. It will be financed by our Foreign Mission Fund at a price that will consume about all of the present fund for one year's broadcasts. But we are told that the coverage is well worth the price. This also gives our churches an incentive, by the way, to contribute generously to the two foreign mission collections which every congregation is supposed to take per year.

Under the heading of Mission Matters we may also mention the Foreign Mission Study Report which was before Synod again this year. No conclusion was reached in this matter. Various principles and distinctions were discussed, and the report was given to a new study committee, which is to report next year.

Matters of Church Order

A matter of major interest in this connection is the fact that a project of several years' duration has now been finished. Our Church Order manual has been re-edited (not revised), and the various rules and regulations appended to some of the articles, as well as the rules governing synod and its committees, have been brought up to date as much as possible. We may also note that the Declaration of Principles in its corrected form will appear in this new edition. Many of our members and especially our officebearers have expressed a desire for copies of the Church Order. And this valuable little book will soon make its appearance. Be sure to procure a copy!

Under this heading we may also mention the protest of Rev. G. Vanden Berg against an action of Synod in 1957. This protest was of a couple years' standing, and it had been committed to a study committee. We cannot enter into all the details in this brief report. Suffice it to say that the case concerned some rather knotty problems in connection with

the right to vote and to discuss matters appealed from classis by the delegates of the classis concerned. In 1957 Synod had concerned itself with these problems in a concrete case. This year a study committee brought a divided report on the protest. And Synod was involved in a lengthy discussion of these reports. It is this reporter's candid opinion that as far as the concrete case of 1957 is concerned Synod actually made no advance over the previous decision. And as far as the related problems involved in that case are concerned, Synod decided nothing helpful. The problems are particularly acute because of our two-classes system. But the interested reader may study the reports and decisions in the Acts. It remains, of course, to be seen whether the protestant is satisfied by the decisions taken.

Varia

Last year an overture from Southeast's Consistory as to the proper time for the baptism of adopted children was referred to a study committee. This year the report of this committee was considered, and Synod adopted the general rule that adopted children shall be baptized only when their legal adoption shall have been made final. This rule was adopted, I believe, in harmony with Southeast's overture, and on the grounds presented by them.

An overture from First Church in regard to Article 69 of the Church Order, often misnamed the "hymn question," was also referred to a study committee last year. This study committee presented a lengthy and detailed report on the hymn question, and concluded with a suggested revision of Article 69. Synod, however, was not satisfied as to the details of this reformulation, nor ready to adopt it without good grounds and a clear understanding of its implications. Hence, the matter was returned to the study committee. There seems to have been a good deal of fear, especially in the west, about this matter. Personally, I think these fears are a bit groundless and based on misunderstanding. None of our churches are ready for hymns in the ordinary sense of the word. And I think if the suggested reformulation in its reference to "faithful versifications of Scripture" is clarified next year, we will discover that this is nothing new for our churches, but something on which we have worked in the past in connection with the Psalter-revision project. And then we can come to unity of opinion too. Meanwhile, I suggest that some discussion of this matter in our *Standard Bearer* would not be amiss if conducted in a calm spirit.

Synod adopted, upon overture from Doon, a new subsidy form, one which should clear up many of the difficulties of the past in connection with the information given with subsidy requests. The form is not involved. But let our consistories take a little time to fill it out accurately. Synod is rather far removed from the consistories, and cannot do much with misinformation. It is up to each consistory to justify its own subsidy request clearly.

While we are on financial matters anyway, we may also

(Continued on page 428)

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The First Four Vials

Revelation 16:1-9

1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.
2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.
3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.
4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became as blood.
5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.
6. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.
7. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.
8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.
9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

It will now be plain that chapters 15 and 16 belong together, and that chapter 15 constitutes a mighty prelude to the events pictured in the sixteenth chapter of our book. There we found mention of the song of Moses and of the Lamb. We found that this song was sung at the occasion of the eve of the pouring out of the seven last plagues. Seven angels stand in battle array, ready to receive the command out of the temple to go and pour out the last of the plagues of God. They are brilliantly arrayed with costly, precious stones; and there is a reflection of the holiness of God in their

very appearance. They have come forth out of the temple of God, which is filled with the smoke of His holiness, ready to fill all the earth and to reveal itself as wrath over the ungodly and oppressors of His people. And in their hands they hold seven vials, or bowls, filled with the wrath of God. When these shall have been poured out, God's wrath shall have been spent, and all is finished. This is indicated by the number seven, symbolic of completeness with a view to the coming of the kingdom in this dispensation. But this was also directly stated by John when he says that in these is finished the wrath of God. And this does not mean that the wrath of God is finished in these seven plagues with a view to eternity, but that this dispensation shall have been finished. The power that opposes the kingdom of God shall forever have been destroyed, and the way is open for the descent of the city of our God upon the new earth.

We found, in the second place, that these singers are indicated as those that have not worshipped the beast and his image, but that they have been victorious. First of all, by these that are mentioned in this section are indicated those that have lived in the time of the greatest and most powerful manifestation of Antichrist. They have fought the battle at its very climax. They were deemed worthy to belong to the picked, or selected, forces of Christ. They are also undoubtedly worthy of receiving double honor and of being capable of occupying a special place in the new temple of God. But they are not the only ones. For, in the first place, the power of Antichrist rages throughout the ages, be it not in that form and with that power as it shall be revealed in the last time. In the second place, and for that reason, the battle is in principle the same throughout the ages, not only in the new dispensation but even in the old. And therefore God's people of all ages fight in principle against the beast. And finally, the subjective longing of all the children of God is for this day of the Lord, in the which He may destroy the enemies and establish His kingdom in glory forever. And therefore, all believers here stand at the crystal sea, which is symbolic of the glory and holiness of God, now reflecting the wrath of the Almighty, and of which the Red Sea was a type.

In the third place, we had our attention called to the song itself. It was the song of Moses and of the Lamb. We found that this does not indicate two songs, but only one. It is the one song, and also the one multitude that sings this song, the song of Moses being typical of and essentially the same as the song of the Lamb. And we found in it but another indication that in eternity there shall not be two forces and two kinds of people of God, but one multitude, singing one and the same song, the song of Moses and of the Lamb. Moses is the type of Christ. He is the mediator of the old dispensation. He led his people out of bondage; so did Christ. He was pursued by the enemy; so are Christ and His people pursued by the enemy of God's kingdom. He led his people through the sea of salvation and of wrath at the same time, that is, the Red Sea; so does Christ finally cause His people to be delivered through the sea of

the wrath of God that completely destroys the enemy and that is symbolized in the sea of glass. Moses, finally, taught his people to sing a song of deliverance and glory and triumph; so does Christ teach His people to sing of victory, to the glory of God. It is a song all of God, a song extolling the glory and holiness, the righteousness and the truth and justice of God as having become manifest in all His works and ways.

Now the command goes forth to the angels to pour out the bowls into the earth. Even though the angels have already received their vials of wrath, they must still wait for the command from the temple. For everything proceeds orderly even in the pouring out of the wrath of God, and only at the exact moment may God's judgment begin. And therefore we are now called to discuss the seven last vials of the wrath of God. Four of these are mentioned in the passage we are now discussing.

In regard to the general character of these first four vials, or bowls, I want to call your attention, first of all, to the fact that we must not fall into the rut of false spiritualization and allegorization of the text. As with many portions of the book of Revelation, so also with this part this has been done by many. There are those that allegorize practically every element of the text and give it a spiritual meaning. When the text speaks of the earth, it has a different significance than the literal meaning. When it speaks of the sore boils, it means something spiritual. When it speaks of the sea, it refers to the sea of nations. And the rivers and fountains of water are spiritual rivers and spiritual fountains. When we read that the first vial is poured out upon the earth and causes a sore boil on those who worshipped the beast and his image, there are interpreters who inform us that this is a spiritual boil, a sore of the mind and of the heart, caused by the dissatisfaction that naturally follows all the service of idols, the sad disenchantment of all idolaters. Or, according to others, who can follow the book of Revelation and trace it page after page in the history of mankind in chronological order, it refers to the sore of infidelity that had been festering for a long time, but that ripened under the influence of such men as Paine, Voltaire, and Rousseau, and finally broke out in the terrible French Revolution. Or it is made to mean the corruption of the church just before the Reformation. The second angel pours out his vial into the sea, which means, of course, naval battles, coloring the sea red with the blood of the slain, turning the ocean into blood. And then it is made to refer especially to the naval battles that were fought between Protestant England and the Catholic countries of the continent between 1793 and 1815, resulting in the defeat of the Catholic naval powers and the victory of the Protestant one. Or, since the sea is the symbol of nations and tongues and tribes, the second vial is interpreted as referring in general to the disintegration of the papal power and the shaking off of the yoke of the pope by many kings and powers in Europe. The third angel pours out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters. And

interpreters tell us in all seriousness and sincerity that we have here a prophecy of the victory of Napoleon in the regions of the Alps over the enemy at the very rivers of Switzerland, turning its rivers into blood by the many slain ones, his victorious entry into Rome, and the subjection of the pope. Or, it represents the corruption of the sources of life and thought in the spiritual sense of the word. And so, finally, the fourth vial is interpreted in different ways. It is poured out upon the sun. That sun is Napoleon, who receives power to scorch the nations of Europe by his military genius and becomes a veritable plague to all peoples of the continent. Or it is Christ, scorching those that reject His name with the fire of His wrath.

Such, and other interpretations, have been given of these first four vials. But we cannot agree with this method of interpretation of the book of Revelation. In the first place, as we have remarked time and again, we must not take anything in the spiritual sense unless the book plainly indicates such. That the beast that rises out of the earth is not a real animal, but something extraordinary, to be interpreted in the symbolical sense of the word, is something that needs no argument. Everyone admits that this is so. Its appearance, as well as all that he does, plainly indicates this. That the harvest in chapter 14 is not a real harvest of grain and grapes is also beyond dispute. The book indicates very clearly when we must think of symbolism and spiritualization. But surely that is not the case here. Our text speaks of the pouring out of the vials upon the earth, into the sea, and into the rivers and fountains of waters without anything else. It tells us that the fourth angel pours his vial upon the sun, and that the effect is that the sun increases terribly in heat, so that it scorches men. And there is absolutely no indication that we must or may interpret them in the spiritual sense. If nevertheless we attempt to do so without any indication and guide from the text, the question immediately arises as to which interpretation is the correct one. Are the rivers and fountains of waters springs of life and thought? Is the sore boil a symbol of the corruption of the church? Or is it the sore boil of infidelity? Is the sun Napoleon, or Christ, or perhaps something else? And who will answer these questions? The result is that we leave the book and its interpretation in despair, deeply dissatisfied and quite convinced that we have not hit upon the right interpretation, leaving it to the future perhaps — perhaps even to eternity — to unveil the hidden depths that here are concealed from our eye. So much as to the false allegorization of the text. And as to the historical interpretation, we have partly the same objection. Who will tell us exactly what period of history is represented by each plague? Is it the period of the Reformation? Or is it that of the French Revolution? And, in the second place, it is entirely against the plain indication of the significance of the seven vials themselves. For we are plainly told that in these the wrath of God is finished. Each of these seven vials must pour out the wrath of God upon a certain sphere. And although the wrath of God is not

finished to the full in each of them separately, yet it is certainly complete with a view to the sphere in which it is poured out. But what completion is there in the naval battles of 1793 to 1815? Did that color the entire sea, so that every living creature in it died? Or were they perhaps the last naval battles that were ever fought, so that the sea is never colored again? History of a later date reveals to us a radically different picture. If the sore boil that breaks out with the first vial is the sore of infidelity breaking out in the French Revolution, is it true then that there were never such vials poured out again? Was it the last of its kind? Was the wrath of God finished in that sphere? And if the third vial represents the battles of Napoleon fought over the rivers of Switzerland, is it true that it was the last battle of the kind? And did not God pour out these vials repeatedly in history? If the sun is Napoleon, are there then not many of these suns in later history? Indeed such interpretations of the Word of God can hardly be taken seriously, and they lead us to hopeless confusion.

And therefore we maintain that the first four vials refer to natural phenomena — natural not in the sense that they shall not be extraordinary in measure and scope, for they surely shall be. But they are natural in this sense, that they all affect a sphere of nature. In other words, we take this portion in the literal sense of the word. Of course, there is symbolism in the picture. John beholds a vision. And in one vision he beholds mighty things, things that will perhaps take years to be accomplished and completed. The vial is naturally symbolic. No one of us will imagine that in the end of time it will be possible that God pours His wrath into seven vials in the literal sense of the word and has them poured out upon the wicked world. Wrath is not a substance, and therefore cannot be poured out. No one is there that does not understand this. But for the rest, we may safely take the portion in as literal a sense as possible and as referring to phenomena in nature. In the first place, we may never forget that it is necessary that by the seven last plagues creation is affected. The earth and the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters, yea, even the sun in its effect upon the earth, belong to the kingdom which God originally created with man as its head. And even though man became a subject of the kingdom of Satan, he yet knew in part how to subject the powers of the world to be subject unto his ends. And therefore, also that world must be subjected to the plagues of God. In the second place, as we have pointed out before, it is on that creation, on the earth and the sea and the rivers and fountains of water, that man is absolutely dependent. It is through them that God reaches man. It is through all kinds of agencies that God reaches the health of man and sends unto him sickness and disease. It is through affecting the atmosphere and the heat of the sun that God sends scarcity and famine. And thus God controls the history of the world also through affecting the various spheres of nature. In the third place, this is a plain indication of the text. First of all, let us notice that there are four

of these vials. Do not say that we have arbitrarily separated them from the rest: for that is not the case. It is very plain that there is a difference between the first four and the rest. The first four all relate to different spheres of nature: the earth, the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters, the sun in the heavens are all affected by these first four vials. And they all form a part of nature. But the fifth vial is poured out upon the throne of the beast. The sixth prepares the battle of Armageddon. And the seventh is indeed poured out in the air, but is universal in its effect. And therefore we have here a group of four. Four is the number of the world as creation. And it is creation that is here immediately affected. Then, as we have said before, there is absolutely no reason to take the terms *earth* and *sea*, *rivers and fountains of waters*, and *sun* in a symbolic sense, since there is nothing in the text that warrants such an interpretation. And finally, there is an unmistakable correspondence between the first four vials and the first four trumpets. The first trumpet affects the earth; so does the first vial. The second trumpet affects the sea; so does the second vial. The third trumpet affects the rivers and fountains of waters; so does the third vial. The fourth trumpet affects the heavenly luminaries; so does the fourth vial. And since, as we proved at that time, the first four trumpets all relate to phenomena in nature, so it is also the case with the first four vials. And therefore, once more: the earth is the earth, the sea is the sea, the rivers and fountains of waters are exactly as indicated, and the sun is the heavenly luminary as we know it. The first four vials, therefore, represent the plagues of God in nature. And then, of course, these various spheres of nature as they affect in turn the world of man. H.H.

IN MEMORIAM

On May 30, 1960, it pleased our heavenly Father to take unto Himself our dear wife, mother and grandmother,

MRS. EDWARD BYLSMA

at the age of 81 years.

May the God of all consolation comfort our hearts in these days of sorrow and direct our eyes to the glorious resurrection.

Mr. Edward Bylsma
Mr. and Mrs. George Spruyt
Mr. and Mrs. John Bertelds
Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Griffioen
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph H. Meyer
Mr. and Mrs. Gerard E. Bylsma
Mr. and Mrs. George DeVries
22 grandchildren and
18 great-grandchildren

IN MEMORIAM

The Eunice Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids wishes to express its sincere sympathy to three of our members, Mrs. George Spruyt, Mrs. Ralph Meyer and Mrs. George De Vries, in the recent loss of their mother

MRS. EDWARD BYLSMA

Psalm 116:15: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Mrs. D. Jonker, President
Mrs. H. Velthouse, Secretary

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Israel Before Pharaoh

Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen. — And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh . . . And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. GENESIS 47:1, 2, 7

There were seventy souls of the household of Jacob which came from the land of Canaan to sojourn in Egypt. The number seventy here undoubtedly has special significance ordained by the counsel of God and brought about by His providence. It is the product of seven multiplied by ten. Seven is the number used in Scripture to symbolize the covenant of God. Ten is the number of completeness. The number seventy in this connection, therefore, symbolizes the complete covenant people of God. This is precisely what Jacob's family was. It, in distinction from all of the other nations of the earth, was chosen to be the peculiar people of God, to partake of His covenant, and to live in communion of life with Him. It was now that family which had been brought, according to the counsel of God, to sojourn in the land of Egypt. Once the reunion of Joseph with his family was complete, Joseph began to set forth his plans for their future. It was not to be thought that, with the immigration of Jacob's family to Egypt, all of their problems were immediately cared for. True, the famine was for them no more a cause for concern; but there were now some new and grave dangers which had to be avoided. In the first place, care had to be taken that the children of Israel did not become separated from each other, scattered through the land of Egypt. They were still a peculiar people distinct from all other nations of the earth. It was necessary for them to maintain the unity of life and communion of saints which is always becoming to the children of God. In the second place, the danger had to be avoided of developing permanent attachments to Egypt. God had given His approval to their immigration, but only as a temporary measure. They might not remain there forever. Canaan was still the promised land, and only in Canaan could the final blessing of their nation be realized. To that land of promise they had to return. Finally, it was necessary for them to keep themselves free from contamination by the spiritual corruptions of Egypt. Although there were undoubtedly a number of Egyptians that had been brought to conversion by the witness of Joseph, such as Joseph's wife, Pharaoh, the steward of Joseph's house, and others, the Egyptian people generally formed a very wicked nation. They were a highly civilized nation, and, for that very reason, their sins were very subtle and appealing. The children of Israel could not afford to become very closely associated with them or to allow themselves to be influenced by them.

Within the mind of Joseph the conviction had arisen that his family had to be maintained in the hereditary occupa-

tion of their fathers, to keep sheep and cattle and to continue to live as shepherds. It is remarkable how that throughout the old dispensation, from Abel to David and even to the shepherds on the fields of Ephratah, the covenant people of God were always closely identified with the keepers of sheep and cattle. God had a purpose in causing it to be so. The shepherd is a nomad who in his wandering serves as a figure of the believer's pilgrim journey upon the earth. Even more, it kept the people of God in close familiarity with the animals whose sacrifice filled such an important part in prefiguring the bloody death of Jesus Christ upon Calvary. Joseph seemed to sense the importance of his brethren maintaining this manner of life even while sojourning in Egypt, a land not generally adapted to the keeping of cattle and sheep. Moreover, in continuing to live as shepherds, the children of Israel would erect a natural defense against the dangers that threatened them in this new land. It would serve to prevent them from making close social ties with the Egyptians, for the shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians. The Egyptians considered a keeper of livestock to be on the lowest level of society, and, if the Israelites would continue to care for their herds, the Egyptians would consequently make little effort to mingle with them or intermarry. This had been their greatest danger in Canaan, and it could thus be prevented in Egypt. Again, it would prevent them from becoming overly attached to the land as such. Quite naturally a shepherd in his wandering does not form the attachment to particular plots of land as, for example, a farmer does to the piece of land which he works. Thus the Israelites would be the more ready to leave Egypt when the time of their sojourn was ended. Finally, it would necessitate their dwelling in Goshen, the only portion of Egypt adapted to the keeping of extensive herds of cattle, and the advantages of that would be many. First, Goshen was on the outer fringes of Egypt and inhabited by an alien people. By settling there the children of Israel would not be infringing upon the rights of the Egyptian people. Secondly, there was a natural boundary between Goshen and the rest of Egypt. Kept there by their occupation, the Israelites would not be inclined to drift into other parts of Egypt. Finally, it was the portion of Egypt closest to the land of Canaan. Travelers from Canaan would constantly be passing by them reminding them of their promised inheritance, and, when the time came for them to return, they would not be required to cross over other portions of Egypt. These various considerations all served to crystallize Joseph's plans for the future very clearly.

Still it was necessary before Joseph's plan could be carried out that he obtain permission from Pharaoh. Neither must we think that this was a mere technicality. We are apt to think sometimes that because in the past Pharaoh had given so much power into the hands of Joseph, he must have himself been a rather weak and poor king. Actually the opposite was true. It is the nature of a weak king to keep all of his power jealously to himself, wielding it whimsically to serve his personal desire. It was a sign of greatness on the

part of Pharaoh that he recognized the even greater wisdom with which God had blessed Joseph and delegated sufficient authority to him to enable him to use his ability fully in the serving of the nation. But by the same measure we may be sure that he watched over Joseph carefully that he did not subject his power to misuse. Moreover, because Joseph was a prudent and faithful servant, he was not willing to pursue personal plan for himself and his family without gaining full approval from Pharaoh.

With great care Joseph instructed his brothers so that they might properly make their need known before Pharaoh. It was important that they should not appear before Pharaoh as rough and crude men merely trying to gain what was best for themselves. They should come, rather, in an attitude of humble gratitude for the privilege that Pharaoh had given them to dwell in his land and manifesting an honest concern for what would be best for the Egyptians as well as for themselves. Carefully he advised them, "I will go up, and shew Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; and the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? that ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." Thereupon Joseph selected the five brothers best capable of presenting their case to Pharaoh and brought them to the king. As Joseph had said, it was not long before Pharaoh inquired concerning their occupation. Bearing in mind the instructions of their brother, they answered, "Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers." Humbly they stated their request, "For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen." Pharaoh did not give them an immediate reply. He waited evidently to give to their request careful consideration. Only then did he call Joseph to tell him, "Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any man of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle." Pharaoh was well pleased with the plan which had been suggested. Not only did it give him opportunity to repay Joseph in a small way for all that he had done, but it allowed him to do so without causing undue tension among his own people. According to the counsel of God, Israel was brought for an extended and most significant sojourn in the land of Egypt, one which would have a great effect on the future history of His chosen people.

Once the family was fairly settled in the land of Goshen, Joseph brought also his father to meet with Pharaoh. There

is something extremely affecting about that meeting between those two. Each spoke to the other from a position of personal dignity, but with deepest respect for the other. The attachment which they felt for each other was immediate and real, for they shared together a paternal affection for the person of the same son. To Pharaoh, Joseph was the young man whom he had lifted out of prison unto a position of highest power and glory, and of this exaltation Joseph had proved himself more than worthy. To Jacob, Joseph was the seed of his own loins and the son of the wife that he loved, and to him also Joseph had ever shown a most favorable response of love. Moreover, the relationship that both had maintained toward Joseph was of the deepest spiritual kind. From the earliest years Jacob had instructed his son in the truth that had been given to him from God, and had always rejoiced in the willingness of Joseph to learn. For many years they had shared together their deepest spiritual love. And the relationship between Pharaoh and Joseph had been much the same, just that Joseph had been the teacher and Pharaoh the one that learned. How many hours and days they had spent together like this we can only imagine; but it was sufficient to arouse within Pharaoh a deep respect for the people of God. Now that these two men, sharing together a mutual love, met and talked together, we might wish that their full conversation were recorded for us. Surely they had much in common.

Nevertheless, no sooner did the two meet than it became immediately evident whose dignity was the greater. Pharaoh was the head of a great and mighty nation; Jacob was the head of the covenant people of God. It speaks well, once again, for Pharaoh that he immediately recognized himself as a mere child in faith when compared to this great patriarch of so many years of experience in the matters of the living God. With humble gratitude he bowed his head to receive through the patriarch the blessing of his Almighty God. Finally, after gazing upon the years of experience written across the face of the patriarch, himself having grown in a land where people died much younger, he could only inquire in frank wonderment, "How old art thou?" The answer of Jacob shall ever live on as a classical example of self-evaluation, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." Jacob was not complaining, nor did he hold the least spirit of discontent. Honestly he evaluated his life. He had not attained to the years of his fathers, but during his life he had experienced very much in the way of sin and evil. He had nothing wherein to boast. He anticipated the thought of the Psalmist, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off and we fly away" (Ps. 90:10).

Giving Pharaoh once more his blessing, Jacob turned from him and departed. B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 15

VIII.

(I Corinthians 15:35-38)

b.

We now come to the discussion of the particular elements taught by Paul in this passage concerning the *manner* of the resurrection from the dead.

We have noticed in the former essay that Paul is answering the skeptic, and that he does this not on the basis of unbelief, but rather on the basis of faith in the revelation of God in Christ as well as the revelation of God in all of the works of His hands.

One aspect of the lesson concerning the resurrection of the dead that was noticed is that every plant in creation lives only because in a certain sense it has died. Jesus points out this lesson concerning his own death and resurrection in John 12:24-26 where he says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and it die, it abideth by itself alone, but if it die it beareth much fruit."

Such was the truth which Paul enunciates here when he says, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." That is the lesson concerning the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of all things as increased into every plant that groweth upon the face of all the earth. It is a universal law. The truth of the resurrection stares one in the face on every hand!

However, the text teaches us more!

Paul also teaches us three elements concerning this transformation through the death of that which is sowed, be it wheat or some other grain.

The first element is that what is sown is not the body *that shall be*. It is merely *bare grain* that is sown. Now this grain may be wheat or some other grain. This is true of whatever is sown. It is ever simply bare grain. Nothing more. The body which shall be comes to manifestation and comes forth from this bare grain through its dying. And unless it die there shall not be a *transformation into the body which shall be*!

Now this we ought to underscore just a bit. If one leaves wheat in the bin in the granery it simply remains as it is. It may eventually perish. But shall it continue to live and remain living wheat then it must be sown, and thus it will die in order to live. This is what any farmer knows. He knows that if seed grows too old it will simply be left alone and perish. It will be good for nothing finally. But if it be sown and die then it is transformed into a new organism and lives and bears much fruit.

Thus also the resurrection of the body. The body must die. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Hence, a transformation is imperative. A change *must* come! But shall this come to pass then the present body must die and be made alive. This does not mean that the same form shall return. No, the body shall be made alive. All death shall be destroyed in it. But it must die in order to live. The grave is necessary. It is not a necessary evil. We do not *return from* the dead but we *pass through* death! And this is necessary.

This is the simple yet tremendously profound lesson which we can learn in our own garden, if only we have eyes to see it. True, this is something which we can only see now that the Word has become flesh and dwelt among us. He suffered and died! And he pointed out to us this central fact of his labors, bringing forth as a good scribe things old and new from the treasures of the kingdom. Take notice of this, dear reader! Observe this mighty fact with believing eyes!

More of this will be said when we come to the verses 39-49.

The second element to which we here call attention is one upon which we have reflected somewhat in our former essay. It is the fact, that in this transformation, whether this be in the plant world of creation, or whether this be in the final resurrection of the saints, or the final renewal of all things, is not simply a matter of *natural* process, but that it is most eminently an act of *God's will*!

In all of its transformation it is nothing but what God *gives* it. It is quite evident that the text does not merely state that God works it, brings it about, but that emphasis is placed upon the fact that whatever the plant receives is God's particular *gift* to it. That is true of every plant. The thing made cannot ever say to its Maker, why hast thou made me thus? It is God's sovereignly determined gift to each plant, each creature! And that should be the rock-bottom comfort for us, his children, when we think of this our present body in the light of the hope of being clothed upon from above.

Thus also is the resurrection body. Our present body which we received from our mother's womb is a gift of God. It is as he willed it. It is the body which is ours and which shall remain ours to eternity — just as is the case with our soul. The body is not merely something temporary and transient. It is a part of our very nature. And when presently we receive the resurrection body it will be simply as God willed it. It is not a mere process of nature, but it is an efficacious, recreative act of God.

That too is the end of all contradiction to faith. For if it is an act of the sovereign God who raises the dead to live and calls the things that are not as if they were, then the skeptic is as he is because he will not believe in God. The articles of faith concerning the resurrection of the body is faith in God the Father, and in God the Son, and in God the Holy Spirit. He who denies that God is the creator, who upholds and rules all things by His counsel and providence, must needs deny that this same God gives a body to each

creature as He wills, and that He will give to each man a body in the resurrection as he wills!

The third element to which Paul calls attention is that God gives to "every seed his own body."

Paul does not here speak of the "plant," but of the "seeds." He makes the seed the point of comparison. It is the point of the *sowing* which counts here. The body is sown. Hence, it is like seed entrusted to the ground. It is not Christian to try to preserve this body as did the Egyptians. We need not attempt to keep it above the ground. Nor is it Christian to destroy the body by fire as men do by modern cremation! Neither one reckons with the reality that the body is *sown*! They deny that the body is seed. The one denies it by trying to keep the body from corruption, and the other goes to the other extreme by wholly denying the value of the body. Here the extremes meet as is so often the case!

However, Paul insists that the body that is sown is seed. It is not to be neglected. A Christian burial is *sowing* of the dead! It is as much seed as is any plant. It is possibly seed in a far higher and loftier sense. For when once this seed has died and brings forth its own body by God's almighty, recreative act, then the final harvest has come. That is the end. It will never be sown again. It will never die again. It is not merely the picture. It is the reality.

And each seed receives its *own* body.

First of all this is true of the seeds of the plants in the whole order of vegetation. On the third day of creation God made the plants. Thus we read in Genesis 1:11 as follows: "And God said, let the earth bring forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof upon the earth; and it was so." Hence, there is not a transition from the one plant to the other. Oats does not become wheat through its sowing. A tulip bulb does not bring forth a gladiolus flower. Grapes cannot be gotten from a bramble bush. Every thing is *after its kind*. That is because God has so determined it and so maintains it. He gives each plant its *own* body. It has its own body in the sense that it belongs peculiarly to that plant. The blade, the stem and the ear all belong peculiarly to each plant. Fact is, that such is its distinguishing character.

Thus it is also in the resurrection of the dead.

Each person will then receive from God his own body.

The question may be raised here: just what belongs to the body. This question is especially to the point in view of the fact that physiologists inform us that the body of each person is wholly replaced every seven years by the process of breaking down of cells and tissues and their being replaced by others and new ones. Hence, the question is: what is the body?

We believe that the body, the "soma" is more than what can be touched and handled. It is not to be identified with flesh and blood. Possibly it is best to state that it seems quite in harmony with the teaching of Holy Writ that the body of man is composed of the following elements. In the first place the body of man is material. It is made of a certain sub-

stance. It is not immaterial. This must be true of the body whether this be in earthy form or whether it be in the form of the heavenly. Secondly, the body of man has a certain form. God *formed* man out of the dust of the earth. Thus we read in verse 49: "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Thirdly, we should remember that every body is, as respects man, *personal*. There is personality written in the body of man. He is created after the image of God, and this is somehow reflected in eyes and ears, nose and mouth, in hands and feet! Every person is such that he is a personality in body as well as in soul.

Now we do not believe that the "*own* body" means that every particle of dust is gathered by God into the same body. Yet, we believe that God will bring forth the self-same body from the grave in that day.

He will give to every seed his own body.

Since the body is more than a temporary prison-house, a transitory abode, we believe that God will bring back our bodies from the grave. They have been redeemed by Christ as well as our souls. It is our only comfort in life and in death, that we are not our own, but that we belong to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

No one denies that the very ugly caterpillar and many other worms and grubs change into beautiful winged butterflies. It is the same body in a different form. No one denies that the very ugly tulip bulb is changed into a most beautiful flower, far more fair than Solomon in all his glory. Why then should anyone deny that the very bodies in which we were born and die can come forth from the grave far more glorious through death!?

And to all who deny this hope of the resurrection, claiming that it is irrational and contrary to all sound understanding, we say with Paul: "Thou foolish one, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die."

It is not the believer in the resurrection who is devoid of a reasonable hope and service of God. Such is the sad lot of him who denies the resurrection. He has his eyes closed for the glory of the creator in the entire world about him. He does not see the glory and divinity of God in the things made, and is, therefore, blind for the power and divinity of God in the resurrection of the damned as well as in those of the blessed resurrection. G.L.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby expresses its sincere sympathy to its members, Elder Ralph Meyer and Deacon George De Vries in the recent death of their mother-in-law,

MRS. EDWARD BYLSMA

Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

The Consistory of the First Protestant Ref. Church
G. H. Stadt, Clerk

IN HIS FEAR

Interest upon The Principal

A sum of money deposited in the bank draws interest.

Money invested in a Savings and Loan Association usually draws a bit more interest.

And if you lend a sum of money, you will obtain even a greater amount of interest upon that sum. If you are the one who borrows the money, you will be the one who pays that greater interest.

The amount upon which that interest is paid is called the principal.

Please do not confuse that with our theme which we have placed above. We are quite money-conscious in these days. Making a living is an old-fashioned practice. Today one must see how much he can acquire and lay away for his flesh to enjoy. Today one must keep up with the Joneses. Today one must ever strive for more and more luxuries, more pleasures, more of this world and satisfy more of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Simply to have food, clothing and shelter is, according to modern standards and today's way of thinking, to be in abject poverty. The Government better subsidize such and send its welfare agencies to see what can be done about such miserable people. Therefore we have used the theme above also to catch the eye and to seek to bring God's people down to the earth, or better still to cease setting the affections on the earth and to cause them to be set on the things above, that they may be sought and their joy may be experienced.

We placed over these lines the words "Interest upon The Principal" and not "Interest upon the Principal." There is a tremendous difference. We are not thinking of gold and silver, of houses and of land, of worldly pleasures and luxuries. He who seeks them will lose them all in the moment of death. Jesus once said, in Luke 17:32, "Remember Lot's wife." We say also, "Remember the Rich Fool in Jesus' parable." We have no money for God's Church. The cause of Christ's kingdom can suffer, and it does not phase us in the least. We have not the money for the cause of Christian education for our children. And we give all kinds of other "excuses" and arguments against it. In our folly we think that we shall get away with it before the All-wise and All-knowing God. We heard a rather clever statement over the radio this morning. It was used for gathering financial support of a certain radio broadcast and the institution that sponsored it. But there is an element of truth that is implied in it that can be applied to all support of God's kingdom in every sphere of the work. The statement? Well, it was this: "Do your giving while you're living, while you're knowing where it's going." Ah, yes, remember the Poor Fool—did we call him the Rich Fool a moment ago?—in

Jesus' parable. Solomon has a word for it also, "For God giveth to a man that is good in His sight wisdom and knowledge and joy: but to the sinner He giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God." Ecclesiastes 2:26. The interest we have gotten upon our investments, the profit upon the works of our hands that is used to satisfy our flesh, we not only lose in the moment of death; it testifies against us in the day of days. But the earthly goods we use in the service of our God follow us into the glory of His kingdom. Revelation 14:13. That gold, that silver, those houses and that land does not follow us. It perishes with the earth in the fire of God's righteous judgment. But the work we performed with them in seeking first, last and always the kingdom of God is rewarded in God's grace. And we have not lost these things, we have used them as God demanded of us and find the fruit in everlasting life by His grace. But "me first" and then God means that I never come to stand before God in glory. My luxuries and my pleasures, my keeping up with the Joneses, my social standing, my flesh first, and I will find that God puts me last. You simply do not seek the things of this world and find the kingdom of heaven. Nor does one who seeks the kingdom of God, who lays aside first the support of God's kingdom and refuses to touch it for that which is above his physical needs—and they are usually far fewer than the things we are accustomed to receiving—nor will such find that they are cast into the poverty of hell. Seeking that kingdom first in this life, all we need for the seeking of that kingdom will be added to us while we travel through this valley of tears; and presently the riches of that kingdom shall be added to us everlastingly.

For that reason we are not going to write about interest upon the principal. Rather we chose to write on interest on The principal. And, as you surmised, by that we mean interest upon spiritual things. Interest in the principal things of God's kingdom. Webster has this to say: "Principal, adjective. Highest in rank, authority, or importance, chief, main." A little later he writes, "2. A capital sum placed at interest, due as a debt, or used as a fund;—distinguished from interest and profit." And once again, "3. A fundamental point;—now confused with principle." With interest in the sense of usury or compensation for the use of a sum of money we are not at the moment concerned in these lines. And with principal as a "capital sum placed at interest" we likewise do not wish to be busy at the moment. That all will take care of itself, if we have interest in the principal things of God's kingdom. We speak of interest here in the sense of concern, of having the attention excited and active. He who has concern for God's kingdom, which is The Principal thing, will also make good and proper use of his money and possessions. He will not be squandering it upon pleasures and using it to heap up more treasures at the expense of God's kingdom. You will not find him ready to pay for sports and entertainment, for luxuries and dainties when he knows that it means that he will not have it for kingdom causes. He will not

array himself in silk and satin when he sees the church of God suffer want in any form. He will not be paying for worldly things and things of the flesh while the things of God are provided for his spiritual enjoyment. And the ease of obtaining and the abundance of these things for the flesh today do result in a despising and turning away from the things spiritual.

What we believe is an evidence of this and is the occasion for these lines and, we believe, shows the trend all through the life of many in God's church today, we observed the earlier part of this month. The broadest gathering of our churches assembled for a prayer service the night before the sessions of the Synod began. It was a solemn occasion. Vital questions and important matters were to be treated by Synod for solutions that would be pleasing in God's sight. A student was to be examined as to his beliefs and qualifications for that highest office that man can receive in this life: Minister of the Word of God. The following week his graduation exercises were held. Another solemn and momentous occasion. A night in which the church of God may well rejoice and give thanks for God's abiding faithfulness.

The interest?

Here were principal things!

Do I hear Webster's words beaten out with clear and forceful accent?: Highest in rank; highest in authority; highest in importance; chief; main! Do we think so? Little interest was shown in these principal events. There were little Gideon's bands that did show interest; and by God's grace they shall also receive interest and did receive interest, spiritual interest. But for the greater part we fear, it was interest in other things, lowest in rank, lowest in importance. Man has interest in something. He must. He cannot be without interest as a rational-moral being. Perhaps that interest is in nothing more than idleness, slothfulness. But he has interest. He always has that which arrests and excites his attention. He always gives attention to something.

And although, as we wrote above, the occasion for these lines was the lack of interest by so many for the principal things at the two occasions mentioned above, that alone would never induce us to write these lines. But we are fully aware of the fact that this same lack of interest reveals itself in so many other ways. Sports, entertainment, television, radio, books and magazines of the world are the interest of many church members to such an awful extent that they have no time or interest in the study of God's Word. The study of God's Word in society, the personal study of that Word, the reading of religious literature are rejected because there is no interest in them. Shame on us! No interest in the principal things? The important things?

The same may be said about Sabbath attendance. Once a Sunday is quite enough (or maybe too much?). We may have slept the greater part even of that one worship service

which we attended as far as our physical presence is concerned. But there is no interest in going back again, and this time to pay attention. All too quickly likewise, we find a reason for not going. There are, of course, instances where God Himself makes that impossible. But we ought, before His face—and not behind man's back—to examine our "excuses" and see once whether the rest of our life on the other six days bears out our "excuse." We repeat, God leads some of His children in a way which clearly indicates that they would be showing sinful disregard for the physical well-being of the bodies He has given us to care for in His fear. But when during the week the same exercise or exertion does not harm us when it comes to worldly meetings and gatherings, when it does not hurt us to sit for longer periods while busy with other earthly activities, we better examine ourselves before His face. Such better ask themselves what their interest is and what to them is the principal thing.

The same thing may be said about the season that is upon us. All too often the principal thing is that vacation and the physical rest or diversion of one's activities that goes with it. And the Day of Rest, the things of God's kingdom are forgotten. What? Go to church on my vacation? Leave all this quietness and peace by the lake to go to church? And go twice a Sabbath while on vacation? Some "churches" (?) also take vacations according to their bulletin boards. No interest upon principal things! And what if Jesus comes while that church is on vacation? Will He wait for them all to come home and re-assemble as His Church? Those not interested in Him must not expect Him to be interested in waiting for them so that He may save them. And likewise those who—though their church does not take a vacation—take a vacation from the church must not expect Him to be interested in their spiritual well-being. He is interested in the physical and spiritual well-being of His people; and that we will treat next time, D.V.; but such can have no assurance of this while they have no interest in Him and in His cause.

In His fear we have interest in Him and the principal things of His cause.

J.A.H.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On July 22, 1960, our beloved parents

MR. and MRS. LAMMERT LANTING

will, the Lord willing, celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.

We are grateful to God for the privileges and blessings of His covenant grace in which they and we have shared through the years, and for the assurances given us for the future.

Their children:

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Koole
Rev. and Mrs. George Lanting
Gertie
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Knott
Mr. and Mrs. John De Vries

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

Rome, therefore, contends that the Church, as an external and visible society, consisting of those who profess the Christian religion, united in communion of the same sacraments and subjection to lawful pastors, and especially to the Pope of Rome, is divinely appointed to be the infallible teacher of men in all things pertaining to faith and practice. Rome is qualified for this office of teacher because it possesses the plenary (full) revelation of the truth in the written and unwritten (tradition) word of God and by the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit which has been vouchsafed to the bishops as official successors of the Apostles, too, to the Pope as the successor of Peter in his supremacy over the whole Church, and as vicar of Christ on earth. There is, as Hodge continues to remark, something simple and grand in this theory. It is surely wonderfully adapted to the tastes and wants of men. It relieves them of all personal responsibility. It makes things so easy. Everything is decided for them. Personal study and examination of the Scriptures is no longer necessary. All they need do is listen to and submit to the teachings and decrees of the Church. In this connection the question might arise whether it would not have been a great blessing had Christ instituted such an office in His Church and endowed a man with that infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit so as to be able to speak infallibly and unerringly with respect to all matters of doctrine and walk? However, what positive purpose would this serve? We know that when Christ was on earth all people did not believe on Him. And when the apostles were still living and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit confirmed their authority, the Church was nevertheless distracted by heresies and schisms. We are all familiar, more or less, with the sinful conditions and practices that were rampant already in those days, as in the churches of Corinth, Galatia, etc. An outward and external conformity to what the Church may hold to be true cannot and does not reach and affect the heart. A perpetual body of infallible teachers would only result in an outward and rigid unity and conformity. Besides, of course, we must not be wiser than God. It is simply a fact that the Lord has not willed to appoint such an official and infallible succession of the apostleship. It is His will that pastors and teachers be ordained, through the appointment of the Church, who will preach and teach the Word of the living God. And His way is surely always the best and the wise way.

Also the late Dr. H. Bavinck has expressed himself on this subject. Writing on the attributes of the Holy Scriptures in his *Dogmatics*, Vol. I, pages 420-422, he expresses himself, and we translate: "The doctrine of the affectiones S. Scr. (attributes of the Sacred Scriptures, H.V.) has developed itself entirely out of the struggle against Rome and Anabaptism. In the confession of the inspiration and authority of Scripture there was agreement, but for the rest there was in the locus of Sacred Scripture a great difference between Rome and the Reformation. The relation in which Rome had placed Scripture and church to each other was changed principally in the Reformation. With the church-fathers and the scholastics the Scriptures still stood, at least in theory, far above the church and tradition; it rested in itself, was the normal rule for church and theology. Augustine reasons in such a way that the truth of the Holy Scriptures depends solely upon itself. All (including Bonaventura, Bellarmine, etc., H.V.) were of the opinion that Scripture could be proved sufficiently to be truth out and by itself; the church with its tradition might be *regula fidei* (a rule of faith, H.V.), it was not *fundamentum fidei* (foundation of faith, H.V.). Scripture was that alone.

More and more, however, the church with its office and tradition began to assume an independent position in Rome and to receive authority next to the Holy Scriptures. At first the relation of both (church and the Scriptures, H.V.) was not further defined, but soon it demanded a better or clearer arrangement (*eene betere regeling*). And when the church continued to increase in power and self sufficiency the authority of the Scriptures was more and more removed to the church. Various moments in history indicate the process by which the church exalted itself from a place underneath the Scripture to a place next to the Scripture, and finally to a place above Holy Writ. The question, which of the two, Scripture or the church, had the preeminence, was first clearly and consciously set forth at the time of the reform councils (*reformatiorische concilien*, H.V.). In spite of the opposition of Gerson, d'Ailly, and especially of Nicolaas van Clemange, it was decided in favor of the church. Trent has sanctioned this over against the Reformation. In the struggle against Gallicanism the question was more precisely stated and set forth, and in the Vaticanum of 1870 it was so resolved that the church was declared infallible. However, the subject of this infallibility is not the *ecclesia audiens* (the people of the church), nor the *ecclesia docens* (the teaching element of the church), nor even all the bishops as gathered in a council, but particularly the pope. And then again the pope not as private person, neither as bishop of Rome or patriarch of the West, but as the supreme shepherd of the entire church. It is true that he possesses this infallibility as the head of the church and not apart from the church, but yet he possesses it not by or with it (the church, H.V.), but above and in distinction from it. Even the bishops and councils share in this infallibility, not as separated from but only as in unity with and in subjection

to the pope. He stands above all, and alone renders the church, tradition, the councils and canons or decrees infallible. Councils without the pope can err and have erred. The whole church, docens as well as audiens, is infallible only with and under the Roman pontiff. With this conception the whole relation of church and the Scriptures has been turned about. The church, or more concretely the pope, goes before and stands above the Scriptures. The infallibility of the pope renders the infallibility of the church, of the bishops and councils, and thus also of the Scriptures unnecessary.

Out of this Romish conception of the relation of the church and the Scriptures all the differences arise and flow forth, which exist in the doctrine of Scripture between Rome and the Reformation. They (these differences, H.V.) concern especially the necessity of the Holy Scriptures, the apocrypha of the Old Testament, the editio Vulgata, the interpretation of Scripture and of tradition. Formally this change in the relation of Scripture and church is revealed most clearly herein, that the new Romish theologians treat the doctrine of the church in the *pars formalis* (formal part) of the dogmatics. The church belongs to the *principia fidei* (principle of faith, H.V.). Even as what the Scriptures are for the Reformation, so the church, or really the pope is the formal principle, the *fundamentum fidei*, in the Romish conception" — end of quote from Bavinck.

The late Dr. H. Bavinck, therefore, maintains that, according to Rome, the pope stands above the Holy Scriptures and virtually renders the infallibility of the Word of God unnecessary. And this, to be sure, lies in the very nature of the case. No one, according to Rome, has the right to interpret the Word of God, to teach anything that is contrary to the "Mother Church." The pope alone has the right, the ability to interpret the Word of God. Hence, all true understanding of the Scriptures is completely dependent upon one man, the mortal who occupies the chair of Saint Peter. Besides, Tradition is of equal value with the Scriptures. And also here it is only the pope who can interpret them. None may even dare to dispute his findings. None may go to the Scriptures for instruction and comfort. The pope alone is the sole teacher of mankind.

The Reformation has changed all this. Every child of God has the right and the ability to interpret the Word of God. This is literally taught in I John 2:27, and we quote: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Of course, there is such a thing as denominationalism, denominational activity. The principle of the Reformation does not mean that everybody has the right in a particular church denomination to interpret the truth and teach it as contrary to the teachings of the particular church whereof he is a member. He may interpret the Word of God as he wishes, but then he must affiliate himself with those who are of similar persuasion. This is certainly the meaning of

his baptismal vow. According to that baptismal vow he promises before God and His Church to see that his child or children shall, when come to the years of discretion, be instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine as it is taught in his local Christian Church. If he departs from a certain teaching which is the official doctrine of his particular church, he certainly owes it to that church to reveal his grievances and make them known in the proper church and ecclesiastical way.

Finally, while busy with this subject, it would be well to call attention to Rome's claim of the infallibility of the Church, that is, of the pope. It is clear that Rome's conception or development of the doctrine of infallibility is founded upon the false assumption of the perpetuity of the Apostleship. In this connection we would quote at length from the Systematic Theology of Hodge, Vol. I, pages 138-150, in which this writer very clearly repudiates this claim of Rome. Unto that end Hodge shows the following: 1. Modern prelates are not apostles. 2. Infallibility is founded on a false interpretation of the promise of Christ. 3. The doctrine contradicted by facts. 4. The Arian apostasy. 5. The Romish evasion of this argument. 6. The Church of Rome rejects the doctrines of Augustine. 7. The Church of Rome now teaches error. 8. The Recognition of an infallible Church incompatible with either religious or civil liberty. We will now proceed with this quotation.

"As the first argument against the doctrine of Romanists as to the infallibility of the Church is, that it makes the Church of Rome to be the body to which the attributes, prerogatives, and promises of Christ to true believers belong; the second is that it limits the promise of the teaching of the Spirit, to the bishops as successors of the Apostles. In other words, Romanists falsely assume the perpetuity of the Apostleship. If it be true that the prelates of the Church of Rome, or of any other church, are apostles, invested with the same authority to teach and to rule as the original messengers of Christ, then we must be bound to yield the same faith to their teachings, and the same obedience to their commands, as are due to the inspired writings of the New Testament. And such is the doctrine of the Church of Rome." The Lord willing, we will continue with this quotation in our following article. H.V.

IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Southeast Protestant Reformed Church herewith expresses its sympathy with its fellow member, Elder William Klaassen, in the loss of his mother,

MRS. A. KLAASSEN

May the God of all grace comfort our brother and his loved ones and grant them His peace. "I will say to the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust." Psalm 91:2

The Consistory of the Southeast
Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids
Rev. R. Veldman, President
J. Veltman, Clerk

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article 7. Who teach: That the faith of those, who believe for a time, does not differ from justifying and saving faith except only in duration. For Christ himself, in Matt. 13:20, Luke 8:13, and in other places, evidently notes, besides this duration, a threefold difference between those who believe only for a time and true believers, when he declares that the former receive the seed in stony ground, but the latter in the good ground or heart; that the former are without root, but the latter have a firm root; that the former are without fruit, but that the latter bring forth their fruit in various measure, with constancy and steadfastness.

We have no major corrections to make in the above translation. There are, however, a few minor differences to be noted: 1) Instead of "notes" it would be more correct to have "posits" or "establishes." 2) The phrase "besides this duration" is in the original simply "besides." If the term is to be expanded in translation, it would be better to have "besides this difference of duration." 3) The terms "former" and "latter" are in the original "those" and "these." 4) The terms "constancy" and "steadfastness" could probably better be translated "faithfully" and "perseveringly," eliminating the preposition "with."

We also have a suggested correction as to the textual references in the article. They are not accurate either in the original or in the translation. The reference from Matthew 13 should include verses 21 and 23. And the reference from Luke 8 should include verse 15. That this is true is evident from the fact that the article makes a comparison which it is impossible to make except with the additional verses mentioned. Besides, the reference to "faithfulness" and "perseverance" is found directly in Luke 8:15.

The error that is treated in this article is quite clear in itself, and, we may add at once, quite consistent with the fundamental Arminian position. This, at least, may usually be said for the Arminians—and it is no compliment—that they are consistent in their erroneous views. They want nothing of the truth, but insist upon their own lie all the way through, even when it is obviously contrary to Scripture.

The treatment of this error in the article under discus-

sion is of value for more than one reason. In the first place, this is one of the instances from Scripture which the Arminians often cited as proof of the falling away of the saints. In the second place, there is an apparent reason in Scripture for citing this as proof. The Arminians, who, by the way, are often literalists, can point to the fact that the Scriptures themselves speak in this connection of a falling away, as well as of those who believe for a time, Luke 8:13: "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." And, in the third place, this treatment is valuable because our fathers with a few brief strokes draw the line of the truth that is set forth in the Parable of the Sower, thus exposing the Arminian error once more.

Let us then, first of all, say a few words about this error and its implications.

The Remonstrants taught that there is only a difference of duration between true, saving faith and the faith of those who believe for a time, or so-called temporary faith. The emphasis, of course, falls upon the fact that the Arminians maintain that there is *only* a difference of duration. According to them, there is no other difference; and this difference of duration is the fundamental difference. All depends upon whether your faith is permanent or temporary, whether you persevere, therefore, or whether you fall away. The faith is the same; the difference is solely in duration. Now we too, of course, believe that there is a difference of duration between saving and justifying faith and the faith of those who believe for a time. For it is in the nature of the case that saving faith is permanent and temporary faith is temporary. But we do not believe that this is the *only* difference, first of all. Nor do we believe that this is the essential difference, as becomes very clear in Article 7. The question is: why do some fall away, and from what do they fall away? And: why do some persevere, and in what do they persevere? What is the underlying reason why temporary faith is necessarily only for a time and why saving faith is necessarily permanent? When these questions are asked, the Arminian and the Reformed views come to a radical parting of the ways. And basically, these questions all revolve around the one question: what is saving faith? If you give the correct answer to this question, you cannot avoid giving the correct answer to the question treated in this article: what is the real difference between saving faith and temporary faith.

The Arminians — such is the implication of their error — admit of no true, saving faith in distinction from the faith which Holy Scripture denotes a "dead faith" or a "vain faith." They make no essential distinction between a true faith and a show-faith, a counterfeit faith. There is only a distinction of time: the faith of the one perseveres unto the end, and the faith of the other is lost. In other words, the so-called temporary faith is also true, saving faith; and the

only difference is that the believer does not keep his faith.

Now we may note, first of all, that the Arminian is compelled to teach this. He who maintains that there is a falling away of the saints, of the true believers, must necessarily teach that this temporary faith of those who fall away is essentially true, saving faith. Either this is the case, or else there is no falling away, that is, no falling away of the saints.

But we may well observe, in the second place, that this view of the Arminian is thoroughly in harmony with his idea of faith itself. We must always keep in mind that, according to the Arminian, faith is, first of all, a *deed*, an *act*, not a bond and a power. According to him, faith is not something which you possess or do not possess, but it is always something which you *do* or *don't do*. If you believe, then you are a believer, a saint; if you do not believe, and as soon as you do not believe, then you are not a saint. And secondly, according to the Arminian, that deed of faith is always the deed of the human will, not the work of the Spirit of God. Faith is not in final analysis a gift of God at all, but a work of man. Hence, it is at any given moment up to man and his free will whether he will believe or not believe, whether he will persevere in faith or whether he will cease believing. When at a given moment he ceases believing, there is no more faith in that man: for faith is only in the deed, and when that deed is not performed, there is nothing left but unbelief. Hence, such a man is a saint that has fallen away. He might return, according to the Arminian, and again believe; he might also never believe again, and go lost forever. Such is the Arminian, free-willist position.

Of the Scriptural teaching that man is by nature dead in trespasses and sins, incapable of any good, and inclined to all evil, the Arminian wants nothing; and he refuses to proceed from this truth. Of the Scriptural teaching that true faith is essentially *life*, implanted in the dead sinner by almighty grace through the wonder of regeneration, without the aid of that sinner, the Arminian will not hear. Of the truth that only they who have the life of faith in them are in a position to believe, and that this believing continues because the life of faith cannot die, the Arminian will admit nothing. And the truth that it is God Who works that life in a man, thereby setting him in living communion with Christ, and Who quickens that life of faith into conscious activity, thereby bringing him into conscious possession of all the benefits of salvation merited by Christ—that truth too the Arminian denies.

To these truths our fathers call attention, maintaining that the difference between true faith and temporary faith is much more than a difference of duration merely, but an essential difference. A temporary faith can never be a true faith; and a true faith can never be temporary.

And the fathers do this by referring to the so-called Parable of the Sower, which might more accurately be called

the Parable of the Four Kinds of Soil. They single out just two of the four kinds of soil for this comparison; and they make their comparison only with reference to the question at stake in this Arminian error, namely, the difference between a temporary faith and true, saving faith. In order to understand and benefit from this comparison we should have the Scriptural references to the stony ground and the good soil in mind. In Matthew 13 you have the picture and the explanation of the stony soil into which the seed of the Word falls in verses 5, 6, 20, 21: "Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away . . . But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended." In the same chapter you find the picture and the explanation of the good soil in verses 8 and 23: "But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold . . . But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." In Luke 8 you find the same parable. And because of some differences in presentation we will also quote from this chapter. The stony soil is pictured and explained in verses 6 and 13: "And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture . . . They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away." And Luke presents the Lord's description of the good soil in verses 8a and 15: "And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold . . . But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience." The same parable is also recorded in Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; but we need not quote that passage here since there are no additional points of note.

The fathers call attention to a three-fold distinction between those represented by these two kinds of soil. In the first place, there is a difference of soil: stony soil or good soil, representative of an evil heart or a good heart. In the second place, there is a difference of root: temporary faith is without root, and true faith is characterized by a firm root. In the third place, there is a difference of fruit: temporary faith is void of fruit, and true faith brings forth fruit faithfully and perseveringly, though in various measure.

To the details of this three-fold distinction we must give our attention next time, D.V.

H.C.H.

DECENCY and ORDER

The General Synod

(Article 50, D.K.O.)

Frequency of Meeting

If the rule of Article 50 of the Church Order were observed, our Synod would meet every other year instead of every year as it does now. Joh. Jansen tells us that the Reformed Churches had originally desired an annual synod but due to disturbed civil conditions and intervention by the government this ideal could not be realized. This explains the provision of the Church Order stipulating that *"the general synod shall ordinarily meet once every two years unless there be urgent need to shorten the time."*

For a long time the Reformed Churches in America followed the established custom of the Netherlands and held their synodical meetings every two years. In 1936 the Christian Reformed Churches revised Article 50 of the Church Order so that it now reads, "The General Synod shall ordinarily meet annually . . ." Since the organization of our Synod in 1940, we have also met annually although we have not changed the Church Order. We have adopted certain rules by which the meetings of the Synod are to be regulated. These rules were revised in 1958 and combined with other rules for parliamentary procedure that had been adopted in 1957 and the first of these states that Synod shall meet on the first Wednesday of June each year (unless otherwise designated by the preceding synod).

To hold the meetings of Synod annually is not a violation of the Church Order because insofar as Article 50 states the time of meeting, it is not definite and the very formulation of this article leaves room for more or less meetings than stipulated. It speaks of "ordinarily" meeting once every two years and it adds "unless there be urgent need to shorten the time." Obviously our churches, and other Reformed churches too, have felt that this urgent need existed, and, therefore, make provision for the annual meeting of the synod.

We believe that this is also in the best interest of the churches. About the only arguments that we have ever encountered against this practice are: (1) financially it is not feasible and (2) it is too demanding upon the time that especially the elders must spend away from their work to attend the synod.

Now it is true that synods cost money. However, it must also be remembered that when we consider the total budget of the churches, the actual cost to hold a synod is a very small part of the whole. In our churches it amounts to about 7% of the total budget. In actual figures this would mean that if we would hold our Synod once in two years instead of every year, as we do now, the actual savings would amount

to somewhere between two and three dollars per family per year. This is certainly negligible if the positive gains from an annual Synod are considered.

As far as the second objection is concerned, we may point out that the same elders do not attend the synod every year and, consequently, this objection too falls away. The elders can be remunerated for the time they spend at Synod and when this happens only once in perhaps three or four years it does not create an imposition or hardship upon any one. Very seldom do we hear the elders themselves raising this objection.

On the other hand there are definite advantages in holding a synod every year. The Synod deals with a great variety of matters that are of concern to all the churches. It is good to have these things continuously before the consciousness of the churches and this is accomplished more fully the more frequently such meetings are held. Then, too, in a certain way the bonds of denominational unity are strengthened through the meetings of Synod and this is a very necessary gain to all the churches. In 1936 Classis Sioux Center over-ruled the Christian Reformed Synod to hold annual meetings and gave five reasons for this request. They were:

"a. This is in accordance with the spirit of the Church Order, which favors frequent meetings, Articles 37, 41, 47.

"b. This will make for shorter meetings of Synod. Our Synods at present are too long. Delegates complain that it is difficult for them to be away from their work for so long a time.

"c. This will expedite matters in cases of protests and appeals.

"d. This will open the way for a reduction in the membership of our Boards.

"e. This will promote contact between the various parts of our church, which is in harmony with the spirit of the Church Order."

Although all of these reasons are perhaps not applicable to our circumstances, some of them are very cogent and if consideration is given to them, it will be seen that the merits of annual synods far outweigh the demerits.

Constituency of Synods

Article 50 also has something to say about the number of delegates that shall constitute a synod. Although it does not state specifically how many these shall be, it does specify that there shall be three ministers and three elders out of each classis. And again there is no definite rule that designates the number of classes that are to be represented at the synod but the implication of this article is that it is quite a few. This is plain from the last part of the article which states that it requires at least three classes to convene an early synod. But we shall come back to this later.

The Christian Reformed Church has also changed this rule. They have two ministers and two elders from each

classis delegated to the the general synod. In our churches, where we have only two classes, there are four ministers and four elders delegated to synod. It appears from all of this that the number of delegates is not so very important. It is a rather arbitrary thing that is to be determined to a great extent by circumstances. It cannot be fixed by a hard and fast rule. For this very reason it would seem better not to include it in the body of the Church Order proper but to state it in a by-law since each church body determines this for itself anyway and it appears that these decisions differ in many cases. What is more, a rule of this nature is naturally subject to change from time to time. When the number of classes increases the delegation from each would have to be reduced lest the synod becomes too large. Although our Synod in 1959 decided that "*under the present circumstances it is plain from the investigation of the study committee (appointed for this purpose) that a change to a three classes system is highly impractical*" (Art. 86). It is debatable whether the practical obstacles to this idea are as insurmountable as they may appear. It is also undoubtedly true that there are definite advantages to such an arrangement and should this ever materialize we would again change our rule and very likely have three ministers and three elders delegated to synod from each classis instead of the present four.

More important is the question, "How should the delegates to synod be chosen?" There is the method of voting by ballot, as practiced in our churches, and there is the method of rotation. The latter is followed by consistories when they send elders to classis but it is generally not accepted as a proper method whereby synodical delegates are chosen.

Prof. H. Bouwman of Kampen wrote, "*It is not desirable to designate these delegates by rotation instead of by balloting. For indeed, not all ministers and elders are qualified to consider weighty questions of church government. This becomes very evident when very involved problems regarding the Confession are to be considered, as was the case at the Synod of Dort. For these reasons it is advisable that the best qualified and most experienced brethren be delegated*" (*Ge-reformeerde Kerkrecht*, Vol. II, p. 155).

Ds. Jansen also writes about this. In answer to the question, balloting or rotation? he writes: "*From the very outset, free election by ballot was the rule. As a result very often the same individuals were delegated, because they were the most capable. Complaints were sometimes made concerning this fact, for example, at the Synod of 1581, Middelburg, at which synod the question was asked, whether it would not be well that the same minister should not be delegated twice in succession, in order that the others might also learn. But the synod replied that the consistories, classes, and synods should be free to send 'those whom they deem to be qualified' . . . Ecclesiastical assemblies are no schools of learning and practice but assemblies for government and discipline, at which the strongest men (beste krachten) are needed. And the danger of hierarchism is not so great that the advantages*

of a free election should be sacrificed" (*Korte Verklaring*, p. 225).

Some years ago there were evidently some classes in the Christian Reformed Church that followed the rotary system* of selecting synodical delegates. This occasioned an overture from Classis Pella in 1938 requesting the synod to adopt the following resolution:

"*Synod of 1938, having taken note of the fact that more than one classis has adopted the practice of delegating its ministerial delegates to synod according to the rotation plan, hereby issues a word of serious warning against the dangers involved in this method of delegation to synod, and declares that this method of delegation is not in accord with the genius and letter of our Church Order (cf. Art. 41), and furthermore resolves to urge all the classes to send its delegates to synod only by choice of ballot.*"

But obviously the wording of this resolution was a bit too strong for the synod and the following recommendation of the advisory committee was adopted:

"*Synod declares that there is no warrant in Articles 41 and 50 of the Church Order for synod to enjoin upon the classes a definite method of selecting its delegates to synod but, with a view to the welfare of the churches, it advises against the rotary method of selecting synodical delegates.*"

This method of appointing delegates by rotation is desired by some because it avoids the possibility of the same men being delegated to synod year after year. It is argued that this may lead to hierarchism and against this evil the churches should be very careful to guard themselves. However, it is not said that the classes have to choose the same men every year, nor is the conclusion justified that because certain men attend synod regularly they are lords of the church. This danger can be combatted without sacrificing free elections in choosing synodical delegates.

G.V.d.B.

EDITORIALS

(Continued from page 413)

mention that Synod adopted a new policy in regard to moving expense for needy churches. Rather than the old and slow method of collections in the churches, the new policy was set that needy churches may be helped with their moving expenses from the needy churches fund by the Synodical Finance Committee.

And a last item, which will undoubtedly be good news to some of our smaller churches especially: synodical assessments were reduced this year by \$5 per family for the 1961 fiscal year. Quite an item in these days of rising living costs! It was due to an increase in our total number of families.

Here ends my report. There were more matters before Synod. But these were the major ones.

A good spirit prevailed throughout all our sessions, and the evidence of the Lord's blessing on our churches was abundant.

H.C.H.

ALL AROUND US

Christian Reformed Synod Faces Nigerian Question Again

The reader may recall that about a year ago attention was called to the problem facing the Christian Reformed synod relative to a Theological College of Northern Nigeria. The synod at that time took a definite stand in respect to this problem.

Now, once more, according to the May-June issue of *Torch and Trumpet*, the synod of 1960 will have to cope with the Nigerian question, only this time from a slightly different angle.

It appears from the information given by Rev. H. J. Kuiper that the General Conference of missionaries on the Nigerian field and a majority on the Mission Board of the Christian Reformed Church are flaunting the decisions made at the 1959 synod relative to the Nigerian problem. Also we are told a minority group on the Mission Board is appealing the decisions taken by the Board, and two classes and a consistory are sending overtures to synod protesting the action of the Board of Missions.

As to the decisions of the 1959 synod, it must be remembered that synod was asked to collaborate with others of an un-Reformed background in the establishment of a Theological College in Nigeria. Synod decided, however, first, "to participate in TCNN only to the extent of loaning Dr. Boer as teacher of Reformed theology in the TCNN"; and second, "synod decided, in view of a previously expressed declaration concerning 'its total commitment to the Reformed faith,' to 'instruct the Christian Reformed Board of Missions and the Nigerian General Conference to maintain and develop the Reformed Pastor's Training program in Nigeria with a view to hopefully establishing a Reformed Theological Seminary.'"

Briefly, the above decision came down to this, that the synod of 1959 did not want to go in the direction of establishing an un-Reformed theological school, but felt itself committed to establishing a Reformed theological school of its own. Considered by itself, this was a commendable position to take. However, we hasten to add that we believe it was a mistake to, at the same time, loan Dr. Boer to the un-Reformed College and offer to support him. Consistency, it seems to me, would have demanded that the Christian Reformed synod would have nothing to do with an un-Reformed Theological College. It is perhaps because of this inconsistency that the 1960 synod will be faced with the same problem again.

It appears from Rev. H. J. Kuiper's understanding of "The Theological Background of TCNN," that he is not at all in agreement with the promoters of the movement on their idea of ecumenicity. If Kuiper's interpretation of their

presentation is the correct one, we agree with him that the ecumenism referred to "is modern ecumenism, and modern ecumenism is essentially modernism as applied to ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church). Such ecumenism is concerned about the outward unity of the church, not about its purity in doctrine."

We will be looking for further word about what the synod will do with this matter.

"Our Children Belong to God!"

On this subject Rev. Irving E. Howard writes in the June 14th issue of *Christian Economics*.

The author points up that there are States in the Union which are jailing Amish fathers for refusing to send their children to public schools.

He cites the case of Henry Herschberger, an Amish patriarch, who explained that the Amish do not want their children attending public schools "because they do not believe in the 'monkey theory of man' and because the Amish people object to motion pictures and dancing." He states further that "other reasons have been given, but when the conflict is reduced to the basic issues it is found that the Amish people believe, first, that children belong to God, not to the State and, second, that education is a religious function which cannot be separated from religious convictions."

He concludes his article by saying, "The American people are indebted to the simple Amish folk. By their obduracy they have brought into the open the silent assumption of the educational profession; namely, that children belong to the State and that parents' rights are secondary in the matter of their education.

"It is time Christian people informed themselves about the origin of our public school system and discovered that it is not as indigenous to our Republic as educators have tried to make us think. In fact, public education is an alien importation from Prussia involving assumptions far removed from those implicit in the U.S. Constitution. Indeed, far removed also from what Jesus meant in His words misused by Judge Donald Young: 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's.'"

"Our children belong to God, not to Caesar!"

Concerning the above, we make two remarks:

1. It is an alarming thing when under the freedom of our U.S. Constitution there are States enforcing the divergent law which demands that all children attend the public schools.

2. It is commendable that there are those who dare to defy this unconstitutional ruling and insist that the education of our children is not the work of the State, but of the parents who brought them into the world. We can envision the day when we as parents will no longer be able to realize our Christian and covenant duty to bring up our children in the fear of the Lord, and according to our religious principles.

"Apartheid" — Is It Really Race "Discrimination"?

The subject of "Apartheid" has been discussed freely of late in periodicals religious and secular. Most of these periodicals condemn the idea of Apartheid. Few have been its defenders.

Writing under the above title, Wentzel C. du Plessis, former Ambassador of the Union of South Africa to the U.S., offers some cogent remarks in its defense. He claims that the word "discrimination" has been blown out of proportion. He advocates "it would be a good thing, not only for the friendly intercourse between people but also for the peace of the world if more discrimination were to be applied in the use of the word 'discrimination'."

Writes he, "It is often used as a weapon against those who prize the things proven by tradition, and who set their standards by the good and the beautiful handed on to them by a Western heritage which, thus far, has withstood the test of the centuries reasonably well."

He admits "that the word 'apartheid' has become unacceptable to the world at large. But that is not because the concept is wrong; it is because the word has become twisted and distorted in a process of brainwashing of such scope and of such viciousness that one can only be filled with a sense of foreboding as to what else cannot be done in this world in which we live.

"The fact is that the relationship of individual toward individual, family toward family, group toward group, and nation toward nation, rests squarely on the concept of apartheid — that is to say on 'differentialism' and all that it implies. And what it implies is a recognition of the fact that people, in being different from one another, yet share a common humanity but that, in this sharing, the highest human right which any man can have is that based on his own individuality.

"It also implies that, if any being claims for himself this right to be himself, he must, because this right is inalienable, also concede it to his fellow man.

"The white South African, therefore, does not wish to imitate the Bantu, neither does he wish to force the Bantu to imitate him. He wishes to preserve his own identity, based on his own culture and his own way of life and this he also concedes to the Bantu.

"Whatever the Bantu wishes to accept from the white man's way of life he must do voluntarily, but neither is going to allow the other to force him into a common mold. Not all the immense pressure which the world can exercise will accomplish this because, in fact, if it is accomplished it will mean the death of white as well as Bantu society. The resistance of this will, therefore, come not only from the whites but also from the Bantu, except from those who do not cherish an own identity and who have lost their self-respect."

The author of the above lines as they appeared in the June 20th *U.S. News & World Report*, believes that there

is considerable misunderstanding in respect to the intention of the white South African. He points up that many, even in the U.N., have been conditioned to believe that apartheid is not differentiation but discrimination. Writes he, "Leaving aside, for the moment, the question of discrimination based on religion, the question must be asked: Is it true that differences between people based on race, color, language and sex are discriminatory? It need not be true and by and large it is not true. In the great majority of cases race, color and language, far from being discriminatory, can be identified as the unifying factor in any particular group. They distinguish people from one another and, unless one actually wants this drab universality, it is necessary that people be distinguished from one another, just as the myriad of elements in nature are distinguished from one another and, yet, in the sum total of their diversity form one glorious whole."

Mr. du Plessis, I believe, presents a clever, but solid argument to demonstrate his concept of differentialism when in the following paragraphs he answers the question: "What about discrimination based on sex? This is as big a misconception as the others already mentioned. When Adam told God that he was lonely and wanted a mate, God fortunately did not create another Adam to alleviate his loneliness but in His wisdom He created another human being so different that, even to this day, woman remains one of God's creatures that man does not properly understand. And how happy we can be that, in a world steadily being pushed toward uniformity, this differential, this mystery, remains. Out of this difference, life, and also hope, are constantly born anew and when it ceases humanity's hour will indeed have struck.

"Differentiation based on sex cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called discrimination because it, too, is based on a fact in nature. If it is discrimination then the whole world, in all spheres of the human, animal and plant kingdom, is riddled with it. That is not to say that inequalities do not result. Of course they do. How could it be otherwise? But inequalities do not of themselves mean injustice. It is only when the element of injustice enters that discrimination also enters.

"Therefore, it remains important, and will always so remain, to distinguish between discrimination, differentiation, inequality and, finally, injustice."

The author's concept of uniformity with rich distinction will stand. However, there is one concept which he fails to develop in his thesis and that is the reality of sin and the corruption of the race due to sin. It is because of this factor that injustices that are discriminatory enter into the various relationships that are different. We believe it is also because of this factor that a corrupt human race always attempts to erase the lines of demarcation and set up a unity in which the Man of Sin rules supreme. In this attempt even the modern church will take part and give it leadership.

M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Editor of the S. B. Tucson, Arizona

Rev. Herman Hoeksema June 12, 1960

Dear Sir:

Written in the June 1, 1960 issue of *The Standard Bearer* under the title "All Around Us" is an article by the Rev. M. Schipper. It deals with economics as does another article by the same author which appeared in the Jan. 1, 1960 issue of *The Standard Bearer* entitled "Drug Price Investigation." I read these articles with interest since I enjoy studying economics as a sort of hobby. Especially at this time our national economy seems to be at a crisis. We are all faced with the problem of creeping inflation, mounting taxes and the problem of full employment. Since the Rev. M. Schipper has taken the initiative in the discussion of economics it might be well to go a little further and see if Scripture has anything to say on these problems. I wonder if the Rev. M. Schipper could write a few articles in *The Standard Bearer* answering a few questions I would like to have answered.

Is the Christian to confine himself to merely spiritual matters or is he also concerned with material matters. If I may explain in a little more detail, would it be wrong for him to attempt in accordance with God's will to remove poverty, promote peace, overcome disease, improve education, etc. Or should he take the attitude, this is not our permanent home. I'm simply passing thru, therefore I need not concern myself with the material things of this life. Should a Christian confine himself to only discussing spiritual things, to the exclusion of all else.

Now I do not believe that we are to seek first this present world, nor do I believe this world will ever gradually improve until it reaches perfection, neither do I believe that God is dependent upon us to accomplish his purposes, but I would still like to know if it would be wrong for a Christian to attempt to remove poverty, promote peace, overcome disease, improve education, etc. in accordance with God's will?

We have Christian Doctors, Christian Educators, Christian Hospitals, Christian Psychiatrists and we have even had a Christian Prime Minister, Abraham Kuyper, why not Christian Economists?

When Christian doctors seek to re-establish health in the sick brother, when a Christian school teacher seeks to improve education, when a Christian Philanthropist donates gifts to the needy brethren, is this wrong? Does he by these actions become materialistic and humanistic? Is it possible for these people to do all these works of charity and still place the Kingdom of God first?

Would the Reverend please answer?

An interested reader, just a layman,

VERNON GRAESER

P.S. Concerning "Moral Rearmament" I am in the main in agreement with M. S.

CALL TO ASPIRANTS TO THE MINISTRY

All young men desiring to study for the ministry of the Word in the Protestant Reformed Churches kindly appear at the next meeting of the Theological School Committee which will be held, the Lord willing, on Thursday, July 14, 1960 at 7:30 P. M. in the consistory room of First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The qualifications requisite to enrollment in our Seminary are the following:

1. You must present a letter from your local consistory certifying that you are upright in walk and pure in doctrine.
2. You must have a certificate of health signed by a reputable physician.
3. You must be a graduate from High School and show evidence that you have completed a one-year course in High School in History General and Church History; and have also completed the following College courses: Latin—two years, Greek—two years, German—two years, Philosophy—one year, Psychology—one year, Logic—one semester.

All correspondence relative to the above announcement should be sent to the undersigned:

Secretary of the Theological School Committee
REV. M. SCHIPPER
1636 Martindale Ave., S. W.
Wyoming 9, Michigan

The Standard Bearer has edited a pamphlet entitled
"Unbiblical Divorce and Remarriage"
dealing with the divorce and remarriage question.

Free copies are available from the Business Manager, Mr. James Dykstra, 1326 W. Butler Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet on Wednesday, July 6, 1960, in the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church at 9 A. M. Consistories will please take note of the time and place in the appointment of delegates.

REV. M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

IN MEMORIAM

The Protestant Reformed Men's Chorus hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to one of its members, Mr. George Spruit, in the death of his mother-in-law,

MRS. EDWARD BYLSMA

May our God comfort the bereaved family in the assurance that "those that believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."

Mr. H. Meulenberg, President
Mr. S. Beiboer, Secretary

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

June 20, 1960

Rev. G. Van Baren, of Doon, has declined the call from our church in Randolph, Wisconsin.

Candidate Jason Kortering will be eligible for a call one month after his appointment, and will have the usual six weeks to make a decision.

Professor H. C. Hoeksema will be the guest speaker on the Ref. Witness Hour for the five Sundays of July. The subject for his radio sermons is taken from the Prophecy of Hosea, chapter 7, the general theme being, "The Apostasy of the Church." The speaker has labeled his sermons with titles taken directly from Scripture, and are: "The Unturned Cake," "The Inconsistent Mixture," "The Silly Dove," "The Deceitful Bow," and, "The Church that Misses the Mark." Read and study this portion of Holy Writ and be prepared to listen to the Ref. Witness Hour each Lord's Day for the distinctively Reformed exegesis of this chapter.

Were you there? . . .

. . . May 22, at First Church where the Prot. Ref. Men's Chorus rendered their Spring Concert. The director, Mr. Roland Petersen, chose to render some of the old favorites and some that were new to the audience. The program was augmented by a male quartet from Southwest Church and by a ladies' trio from Southeast Church. The final number, "Creation," by Richter, was a stirring climax to the program, and one fitting to climax the entire Day of praise-worship.

. . . June 6, at Hope Church where the Commencement Exercises of our Seminary were held. The lone graduate, Candidate Jason Kortering, spoke on "The Unity of the Church." The Rector, Rev. H. Hoeksema, gave an address answering the question, "What is a Minister of the Word?" This listener got a mental picture of a mother in the home serving the best of food to her hungry family, when the speaker described the Minister of the Word as one who always serves the Word to God's hungry flock. The speaker, in his personal message to the graduate, stressed that the all important labor of his calling was to minister the Word of God without equivocation, thereby also refuting the lie of Satan to which the flock of God is continually exposed.

. . . June 10, at First Church, where our Adams St. School had its Commencement Exercises. The Class of 1960 holds a unique position in the school's history, for it is the first class to have attended Adams St. school from kindergarten through the ninth grade. They were the first to have the privilege of having ten years of Protestant Reformed education on the grammar school level. Rev. H. Hoeksema, who was the Commencement speaker 10 years ago, was again on

the platform in the same capacity. His message to the graduates was an exhortation to be prepared to fight the battle of faith, the battle in which the Church Militant is always engaged and which is centrally fought around the banner of the truth of the Scriptures. The speaker ended his address to the class with the words: "Never forget, graduates, you have been taught in the Truth of the Word of God: walk in that Truth!"

. . . June 12, again at Hope Church, where the Hope Heralds gave an after-service program. This group is a male chorus, twelve members of Hope Church. One of their members, Roger Kooienga, could not sing with them due to injuries suffered in an auto accident several months ago. The chorus was assisted in presenting the program by trumpet soloist Donald Knoper and by vocalist Arnold Dykstra. The men sang without a director, following the lead of their able accompanist, Lois Schipper.

. . . If you were unable to attend any or all of these events you missed something very worth while.

Did you know . . .

That a new organization has been born in our circles? It is "The Covenant Witness Committee," and is to be found in the congregation of the Hope Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is directly answerable to the Consistory of that church. In a letter accompanying their first mailed pamphlet we find this paragraph: "We believe that, as a congregation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, it is our calling to witness to the truth which our God has given us. Since the very heart of this truth is the doctrine of God's everlasting covenant of grace, we believe this deserves our special attention . . . To this end, we have decided to compose and send out a series of pamphlets dealing with this and related subjects to be mailed to all who are interested throughout the country. This project will cover a number of pamphlets that will arrive at your home at regular intervals in the future. The pamphlet which is enclosed with this letter is introductory." And another sentence which the Committee will appreciate in this column: "In order to accomplish our purpose as effectively as possible, we covet your aid in sending us names and addresses of people whom you know to be interested in these pamphlets, so that we can enlarge our mailing list." More about this wide-awake organization, and an excerpt from the first pamphlet, in our next issue.

In our vacationing this summer, shall we "remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy"?

Let us heed the conclusion of Ecclesiastes: "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.