

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

LIFE'S DESIRE

Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.

Psalm 73:25

Asaph had made a study of wicked men and their works. And he found them in great peace and tranquility. There were no bonds in their death and their strength was firm. There were no troubles and no plagues; they bathed themselves in pride and violence; their eyes stood out in fatness: they had so much that they could not enjoy the totality of their riches. Their wish fell short of opportunities for more carousal.

And they were very wicked: their tongue wandered around the earth and even set itself against the God of heaven.

And they seemed to get away with it.

How different was his portion!

Waters of a full cup were wrung out for him: he was plagued all the day long. And he was chastened every morning.

Did God know? Was there knowledge with the Almighty?

However, he would not speak thus, for he was afraid that such would be an offense to the people of God!

And then he entered the sanctuary of God and God showed him the truth.

All the freedom, pleasure and abandon of the wicked were so many slippery places upon which the Lord had set them. They were sliding down into everlasting destruction.

Asaph shivered: How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors! As a dream when one awaketh, Thou shalt despise their image.

All this instruction helped to concentrate all his desire on the living God.

* * * *

This is a meditation about desire, longing, yearning for God.

That is Psalm 73. That is the heart of that psalm.

And what is necessary for knowledge of God?

Well, there are three things you must have in order to have knowledge of God.

First, there is revelation. And under that heading there are two heads: nature and the Bible.

Asaph had both.

The Gentiles had just the knowledge of nature: the voices of God.

Yes, nature is as a choir of voices that blend and charm you when listening. Color, shape, form, fragrance, substance, number, and a great order confront you in nature, and many are the books written about this concert of God.

The whole of it is overwhelming, but it cannot bring you the loving knowledge of God!

Second, in order to know God you must have the Bible. And Asaph did not only have the Bible, he *wrote* the Bible! The Bible went through his entire being. He is one of the happy men who were mentioned in Hebrews 1:1. They spoke the Word of God.

And what shall I say of that Word? The time would fail me. From Genesis to Revelation it paints a picture of Jesus Christ and He is the Countenance of God.

You know, God is so very far from us! How shall we know Him? And so, the Lord has given us His revelation in the Face of Jesus Christ. And when you desire to know the Triune God, you must look strongly at Jesus whose picture you have in the Bible. Looking strongly at Jesus, you receive the "light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ." II Cor. 4:6.

But that is not enough. Or, rather, you do not receive

that light of the knowledge of the glory of God, just by looking and reading in the Bible.

And, therefore, you must have the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ. There are unhappy mortals who have known the voice of God in nature, and in the Bible, and nevertheless are lost forever!

They never saw God in all His eternal wonders of grace and mercy. God in all His loveliness, goodness and beauty never charmed their hearts, souls and spirits.

In order to see God in all His glory you must have the Spirit of Christ in your heart.

And in the third place, you must have the grace of God, of Christ, and of that Spirit in your heart.

Oh, that grace of God!

It is the very fountain of all blessed knowledge of God!

Grace is beauty, attractiveness, and beauteous power. It transforms your heart and makes *you* lovely and attractive. Grace pours into you the beauty of the Godhead.

You know, by grace are ye saved, through faith! So, even faith is out of grace.

If you have all three: the Word of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the grace of God, you are a happy person.

And that is what Asaph had.

* * * *

Then you look around you in this earth, and you say: there is none upon earth which I desire beside Thee!

The earth gives much.

There are earthly life, love of dear ones, food and drink of great deliciousness, money and possessions, name and place and honor among men, beauty and singing and music, the look at the Universe above us with the glittering stars and planets.

And make no mistake: they are good in themselves. They are even necessary in order to exist here on earth. They are not sinful in themselves.

But here is the point: there is a hunger in Asaph which cannot be filled by the earth and the things of the earth. And he means to tell you: "If I must miss my God with all these things, then they do not satisfy me at all!"

Compared to communion with God, these things are a nothing and vanity. They simply cannot fill a certain need I have.

If necessary, we will cast all the things of this earth away in order to possess God.

Remember the martyrs: they literally did so in order to have God.

But how about heaven?

And here you have to excuse me, for I know so little of heaven.

However, that little is very charming. There are the angels and powers; the unspeakable things of which Paul told us; there are the harps of God and their music; there is the voice of angels and their singing; there are the souls of men made perfect; there are no sin, deceit, guilt or sickness; there are no sighing and crying. Oh, but heaven must be a charming abode!

But Asaph says that there is no one in heaven for him but God!

That is strong language. It means that if Asaph has to be in heaven without God, he would rather not be there!

Listen to him: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee?"

Oh, all that other beauty in heaven is good and glorious, but it is only glorious to Asaph, because God is there! That's the point.

Allow me to put it this way: Heaven without God is no heaven!

Listen to a trio of God's chosen saints:

Solomon, looking at all the beauty of this earth, says: Vanities of vanities, it is all vanity!

David, when thinking of the earth: "Dry, without water!"

Paul: "Loss and dung!"

Yes, dear reader, Asaph loved God very much. He reminds me of David when he composed the forty-second psalm: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

* * * *

The question arises: how did all this come about? What makes Asaph so exclusive?

Here is the answer: we are created after His image, after His likeness. We are created after Him. And that means that the water seeks the fountain. It means that there can be no real joy for such a creature unless we have Him.

If we have God, and if we know that He thinks on us, even though we may be in the midst of the flames of the stake, we are happy.

But the knowledge of God, which made Adam and Eve happy, is lost. Irretrievably lost.

We sinned. That's all. That's the end of everything. All that is left is hell for all eternity.

The deepest hell is Godforsakenness.

But thanks be to God, for He has opened another way.

And that other Way is Christ Jesus, our beloved Lord.

Now then, when God has sought you out, and entered your heart by His Word, Spirit and grace, you are blest.

Then the earth and all its treasures cannot charm you any more. Oh yes, we have our flesh with us, and it lusts after the things of the earth not only, but also after sin and corruption, but we crucify our flesh, we hate ourselves for Christ's sake, and we mortify the deeds of the body.

Then we do not hunger for heaven for heaven's sake. Oh no. We long for heaven for God's sake.

To my mind there is no more beautiful sentence in the Bible than the Holland rendering of Psalm 42:3, "Mijne ziel dorst naar God, naar den levenden God: wanneer zal ik ingaan en voor Gods aangezicht verschijnen?" (It is verse 2 in your English Bible.)

I have never been in heaven, but I know that in heaven every atom of every inhabitant is directed to the great white throne on which God is seated. All the issues of all the creatures in the new heaven and the new earth shall everlastingly be turned to Him!

I know that, because there is that urgency in me now.

You know the name of that urgency of that thrust?

It is this: *eternal life*! Read John 17:3.

For a little while Asaph wandered away from God, and became envious of the foolish. But eternal grace and mercy pitied him. It led him to God's sanctuary. There he found wisdom: "But it is good for me to draw near to God!" Amen. G.V.

CALL TO SYNOD OF 1960

In harmony with the decision of the Synod of 1959, the Consistory of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, hereby notifies the churches that the 1960 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene on Wednesday, June 1, at 9:00 A.M. in the above mentioned church, D.V.

The pre-synodical service will be held on Tuesday evening, May 31, at 8:00 P.M. in above mentioned First Church. Rev. J. A. Heys, president of last year's Synod, will lead the service.

Synodical delegates will kindly meet with the consistory before this service.

If any of the delegates need lodging, please contact our clerk, Mr. G. H. Stadt, 754 Prince St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Consistory of the First Protestant
Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich.

REV. C. HANKO, *President*
G. H. STADT, *Clerk*

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EDITORIALS

A-Millenarianism

The Baptist Examiner is running a series of articles on amillenarianism by pastor E. Garrett of Hamilton, Ohio. Garrett is, evidently, a premillennialist, although he does not subscribe to all the excesses usually connected with that system of thought. In his articles he criticizes the amillenarian conception of the final coming of the Lord, that is, the view that denies that there will be a thousand years of the reign of Christ on earth before the end of all things.

It is not my purpose to criticize in detail what pastor Garrett writes. It promises to be quite a lengthy series and the author has just begun to write on this subject.

I only wish to call attention to one item which, to my mind, is rather important. It is that the author accuses the amillenarians of refusing to take Scripture at its word and of introducing a figurative or symbolical meaning in the text of the Bible where it should be interpreted literally.

Writes he:

"The one thing that is apt to make one amillennialist or premillennialist is whether he takes a *literal* interpretation or an unjustified *spiritual* interpretation of the Word of God. When one takes a spiritualizing or allegorizing interpretation of the Scriptures — without evident ground for doing so — he may come up with anything he so desires. But to interpret a passage literally — unless there is cause to do otherwise — is to be bound to the exact meaning of the words used. In the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament as well as the context will have a qualifying adjective or statement which will forbid us from taking a passage literally when it is to be spiritualized. Passages that are clearly set forth in the New Testament as allegorized portions are such as Galatians 5:22-31 and Hebrews 12:18-24; but to say that the actual persons and places mentioned in the passages are not actual is evident heresy."

Now, in both the articles that have thus far occurred on the subject, the author, evidently, accuses those that hold the amillenarian position of such false spiritualizing or allegorizing. And I will briefly show that he is in error.

To do this, I will limit myself for the time being to the book of Revelation and, more particularly, to the numbers occurring in that part of Holy Writ.

Pastor Garrett must admit that the only place, in the whole Bible, that speaks of a thousand years is Revelation 20. If, then, I can show that all the numbers in this last book of the Bible have a symbolical significance, it is not erroneous but sound exegesis to interpret the number one thousand in Rev. 20 in the same way, i.e. as having a symbolical meaning.

First of all, then, there is the frequently occurring number seven. This number denotes a fulness, whether you understand it as the sum of three and four, indicating God and the world, or as the sum of six and one, the six days of the week and the rest of the sabbath.

This number occurs already in the first chapter of Revelation where we read of the seven stars and the seven golden candlesticks. Here the Lord explains the symbolism Himself in 1:20: "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." Do not object that the number seven here has no symbolical significance. Perhaps, you will say that only the stars and the candlesticks have a figurative meaning, but that the number seven must be taken literally. But this is not true. Surely, the seven churches to which the Lord through John addresses the seven letters are really existing churches. But why should the Lord select only these seven churches? There were other churches at that time. The only answer is that the number seven is a symbolical number indicating the fulness and completeness of the church in the world and in history.

Moreover, pastor Garrett knows as well as I do that the number seven as the sum of three and four and as the sum of six plus one constitutes the basis of the entire book of Revelation. There are seven seals, seven trumpets and seven vials. Besides, the number seven, also in this case, is plainly revealed as four plus three and six plus one. The first four seals become revealed as the four horsemen sitting upon white, red, black, and pale horses. Besides, the sixth seal is dissolved into seven trumpets, so that it is very evident the seals represent the number seven, both as three and four and as six plus one. Here, therefore, we have symbolism pure and simple, the symbolism of the number seven. The same is true of the seven trumpets. If you will read chapters eight, nine, and sixteen of the book of Revelation, you will find that also the seven trumpets in which the seventh seal is revealed, are distinguished as four and three, and that the seventh trumpet is revealed in the seven vials. And the same may be said of the seven vials, i.e. that they represent the numbers four and three. There can be no question therefore, that the entire book of Revelation is full of the symbolism of numbers, particularly of the numbers three, four, and seven.

Remember that I wish to show that we must interpret the number one thousand in Rev. 20 as having symbolical significance and that to explain it in the literal sense does violence to the whole book.

Again, we read in chapter seven of Revelation of the sealing of the one hundred and forty-four thousand. An angel, having the seal of the living God, cried to the four angels to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea: "Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there

were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel." And then it continues to inform us that out of every tribe there were sealed exactly twelve thousand. Now, for the present I am not interested in the question whether we must understand the name Israel in the literal sense of the word, as referring to the nation of the Jews, or in the spiritual sense, as referring to the Church, though there is sufficient reason in the chapter to prefer the latter. But I am writing about the numbers in the book of Revelation. And who can doubt, even though there is nothing in the immediate context to suggest the symbolical interpretation, that it must be understood in the latter sense? This is clear from the rest of the book especially from chapter 21 where we read of the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. There, too, the number twelve predominates. We read: "And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. . . . And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is of the angel."

It is self evident that the numbers that are mentioned in this passage cannot possibly be interpreted in the literal sense. One hundred and forty and four thousand is a symbolical number. And the same is true of the number one hundred and forty and four thousand in chapter seven.

The number in that chapter must be explained as three times four times twelve times ten times ten times ten times ten. Three is the number of the trinity, four is the number of the world (cf. "the four corners of the earth," "the four winds"), ten is the number of completeness, and thousand refers to a great number. And thus we obtain the result of a large number of saints that stand in covenant fellowship with God, i.e. the Church of God in the world. At any rate, it is very evident that also in these passages, not the literal interpretation, but the symbolical or figurative explanation is the only correct one.

And what, please, would pastor Garrett do with the numbers that are mentioned in chapter eleven? There we read in vs. 3: "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth." And in vs. 9: "And they of the people and kindred and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves." And in vs. 11: "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great

fear fell upon all that saw them." Would he explain all these numbers literally? I would like to see him attempt it.

That the number twelve hundred and sixty days in chapter eleven refers to the entire new dispensation of the Church in the world is evident from chapter 12:6: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three score days." The woman that is mentioned here is, evidently, the Church. In the chapter she is described, first of all, as the Church of the old dispensation. For we read: "And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." vs. 2. And later we read: "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne." The dragon that is mentioned in the chapter is the devil. All through the old dispensation the devil stood before the woman, in order to destroy her even before the man child should be born or to destroy the child as soon as he should see the light of day. But the child, that is, Christ, is born and is exalted at the right hand of God. And now, in the new dispensation, the devil persecuted the woman. To this the twelve hundred and sixty days of vs. 6 as well as the "time, and times, and a half a time" (vs. 14) has reference.

But, at any rate, it is evident all these numbers cannot be explained in the literal sense, but have symbolical or figurative meaning.

There is also the number of the beast, chapter 13:17, 18: "And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." Six is the number of the week without the sabbath. Hence, the number of the beast means that antichrist never enters into the rest and never succeeds to realize his kingdom.

But let this be sufficient.

I believe that I have proved that the numbers in the book of Revelation all have a symbolical meaning.

Hence, I am not doing violence to Scripture when I also explain the number one thousand in chapter 20 of the book of Revelation in the same symbolical sense.

H.H.

"A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children; and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the righteous." Proverbs 13:22.

"Behold this only have I found: that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Ecclesiastes 7:29

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Song of Moses and of the Lamb

Revelation 15:1-8

1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.
2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.
3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.
4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.
5. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:
6. And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.
7. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.
8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

You will remember, no doubt, that in connection with our interpretation of chapter 11 we called your attention to the fact that in that passage things were revealed only in general outline, while they were to be explained in detail in future chapters. If in that light you consider the passage we are now called to discuss, you will have no difficulty finding its counterpart in chapter 11. Chapter 11 spoke of the two witnesses that were oppressed and persecuted and cast out by Antichrist, but caught up to God in heaven. And after the witnesses were caught up, we read of the sounding of the seven trumpets, the voices that sing in heaven, and the opening of the temple of God that is in heaven, followed by signs of great judgment upon the earth. Evidently this

passage is now worked out in detail, not only in the present chapter but also in future chapters. Already we have studied the rise of Antichrist and his power. We have received an insight into his nature and work. And we have seen how he would persecute the church that refuses to worship the beast and his image. We have also become acquainted with the attitude of God over against this power of Antichrist, and seen that in the end He would redeem and fully deliver His church and destroy the wicked antichristian kingdom. Now then, the destruction of Antichrist is worked out in greater detail in the chapters following. In chapters 15 and 16 we have a vision of the seven vials of the wrath of God as poured out on the earth by the seven angels. These two chapters belong together, and they are related in such a way that our present chapter serves as an introduction to chapter 16, while in the latter the actual pouring out of the seven vials is pictured.

Of course, here we are reminded of the general plan of the book of Revelation. There are seven seals. And when all of these seven seals are opened, the wrath of God and of the Lamb against the kingdom of Antichrist will be finished. But these seven seals do not maintain their character as seals throughout. The seventh seal reveals itself as seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet as seven vials. We must remember, as we have repeatedly stated, that it is not in harmony with the contents to take these seals and trumpets as being strictly successive, nor as being entirely contemporaneous. Taking them as a whole, they are both successive and contemporaneous. In principle there is nothing new in the seven vials. Only there is progress again, so that the destruction, which was more complete in the seven trumpets than in the seven seals, is now entirely complete in the seven vials, and the wrath of God is finished in them. Let us therefore now, first of all, discuss the passage of chapter 15, which speaks of the song of Moses and the Lamb.

The first verse of the chapter announces the general theme of its contents. John tells us: "And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God." John speaks here of another sign in contrast with the signs he has seen before. The sign of the woman arrayed with the sun and with the moon under her feet, the sign of the beast with the seven heads and ten horns, and the other sign, of the two-horned beast, the sign of the angels flying in mid-heaven and of the Lamb on Mount Zion, of the Holy One coming to reap, being seated on the white cloud — all these signs John has already seen. And now he beholds another sign. That sign which he now beholds is great and marvellous. It is, in other words, awe-inspiring and wonderful. And no wonder: for the sign which he now beholds is of the greatest importance. It cannot be looked upon without having the effect of filling our hearts with an overflowing emotion of wonder and joy. John beholds seven angels. And although, no doubt, the sight of these seven angels standing side by side is already astounding — for they are glorious and

beautiful, shining in their appearance, pure and bright — yet their purpose and message is still more awful. These are the angels that have the seven last plagues, John tells us. Just in general he tells us here that they have the seven plagues. Evidently they do not have these seven plagues of themselves. No, angels are also creatures: and they have no power except it be given them from above. But the power of these seven plagues is given them, and they now hold this power. They possess the power of pouring out these plagues and evidently destroying the earth. For the destruction implied in these plagues is complete. The text tells us that in these plagues is finished the wrath of God. Evidently that does not mean that with these seven plagues the final judgment has already come upon all nations before the throne of God. Still less does it imply that when these seven plagues shall have been finished, the subjects of the kingdom of Antichrist shall have received all their punishment. No, in that sense the wrath of God is not finished in these plagues. That wrath of God is infinite, as His majesty is infinite. If that infinite majesty is attacked, it is simply the demand of the law that the creature thus attacking that infinite majesty also be subject to infinite wrath and death eternal. And therefore, the wrath of God in that sense of the word is not fulfilled in these seven plagues. But with a view to time the wrath of God is now finished. Even as in the vision of the harvest we called your attention to the fact that in it we were given a vision not of the last and final judgment of all before the throne of God, but simply of the end of time, of the finishing of the wrath of God with a view to this sinful and wicked world, thus it is also here. When these angels shall have sent the seven plagues which they have, the wrath of God shall have been finished in so far that there shall be no power on earth any more that shall provoke His wrath. The wicked world shall be no more. Antichrist and his kingdom shall have been completely destroyed. The end of this dispensation shall have come. And therefore, with a view to this significance John might well speak of the greatness and marvelousness of this sign of the seven angels that were about to realize all these things.

However, John does not merely behold their general presence and appearance on the scene of his vision. He also is privileged to describe some of the details concerning them. In the first place, he tells us of their origin, informs us whence they come as angels of the wrath of God. For he tells us: "And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues." Also in chapter 11 we came into contact with the same idea. In connection with the seventh trumpet we there read: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." And then the significant expression was added: "and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." And there we explained that the symbol evidently meant that when God is about to make of all the

earth His temple, judgments of destruction are sure to follow. Thus it is also here. The temple is His holy place, His dwelling, in the narrower sense of the word. But now that temple is still in heaven, is limited, therefore. Surely, He also dwells in this dispensation in the hearts of His people. But, in the first place, it must not be forgotten that at this stage there shall be no more people of God on the earth, and, in the second place, that God shall make of all creation His city and His dwellingplace. He therefore shall break forth from His holy place which is in heaven. He shall break forth as the Holy One. He shall break forth with His testimony, His law, in order to establish His righteousness in all the earth. And when He thus issues forth from His holy place for the purpose of making of all the earth His temple, when He thus issues forth in the fire of His holiness, the result cannot but be that all sin and wickedness is bound to meet with destruction and distress. Only He does not issue forth personally. No, the seven angels come out of His temple, out of the temple of God which is in heaven. They must reveal themselves as angels of wrath, which spell woe to the wicked world. In the second place, John is able to describe their appearance. They are seven in number, which symbolizes what John has already mentioned in the first verse, namely, that in their plagues which they have the wrath of God shall be finished, and, at the same time, that by the work of these angels the kingdom of God shall finally be completed. Seven is the symbol of the completion of the kingdom. And for that reason there were seven seals and seven trumpets. Only in the case of the seven seals and also in the case of the seven trumpets the work ceased with the sixth; and after the sixth had been fulfilled, the scene was allowed to change. The wrath of God, therefore, had not yet been finished. But now it is different. Not six angels shall pour out their vials, but all seven. And when all of these seven shall have done their work, the kingdom of God shall have come to its completion, and all the power of opposition shall have been broken down. They appear bright and pure and beautiful, arrayed with precious stones, pure and bright. A golden girdle, which reminds us of the royal priesthood of the King of kings, is about their breasts. They are, as it were, over-poured with the glory of the holiness of God, Whose wrath they now represent. With a reflection of the glory of the Holy One, from Whose presence they issue forth, they now enter upon their work. In the third place, John describes how they receive their vials of wrath from the creatures, from one of the four. There is a beautiful symbolism in the vials, or bowls, of wrath. Each of them receives a vial. And that vial is filled with the wrath of God, that is, with His holiness in relation to the world of sin. And as each pours His vial upon the wicked world, that wrath of God becomes a powerful force of destruction. And as far as the fact is concerned that in the vision they receive that vial from one of the four creatures, he tells us in beautiful symbolism that all creation is concerned in the work these angels are to perform. The four living creatures that rep-

resent all animate creation in its state of perfection are concerned in the work of these angels. They are privileged to hand them the vials of the wrath of God.

And thus they stand, these angels, ready to finish their work, just waiting for the command. It is therefore indeed a sign, great and marvellous. It is one of the most wonderful periods in all the history of the world. It is the eve of the realization of all things, the eve of that moment when God shall appear in all the power of His holiness, when His Word shall appear to be the truth also over the wicked world, when His name shall appear glorious and victorious over all things. It is the eve of that greatest of all events, for which the hearts of all God's people long and yearn, for which the souls beneath the altar cry day and night without rest. It is the eve of that event when Christ shall appear as the Lamb that hath been slain, as the victorious King of kings, as the Mighty One that has power over all things, as the Anointed One over Zion, His holy place. It is the eve of that event which shall show the futility of all the works of the devil and shall forevermore do away with the kingdom of darkness. It is the most momentous period in the history of the world, the eve of the realization of all God's counsel. And it is on the eve of this greatest of all events that we hear the song of those that stand at the crystal sea, singing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. It is that event, which they already see, which they do celebrate in their song.

John says: "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." We ask: who are these singers at the sea of glass? In the first place, we learn of them that they are the ones that come off victorious from the beast and his image and the number of his name. In the most literal sense of the word, therefore, they are those that have lived at the time of the final manifestation of the antichristian kingdom. When the Antichrist reigned supreme and all the world wondered after the beast, when he established his universal emblem and gave to all men a sign, they lived on the earth. They were in tribulation. They were the ones that refused to worship the beast. They were the ones that could neither buy nor sell, that could not live in the midst of society, that were the outcasts in the streets of Jerusalem, that is spiritually Sodom and Gomorrah, where also our Lord was crucified. They, therefore, have fought a fierce battle. But in their battle they were sustained by the faith in Jesus and by His testimony, and they remained faithful. Outcasts in the earth for the name of Jesus, they looked forward to the day of their final victory. Exiles and refugees, without a place to stand, they nevertheless refused to worship the beast; and they remained faithful even to the end. Now they stand by the glass sea, and at the eve of their final victory, already glorified themselves but awaiting

the final destruction of their enemy; and they sing the song of victory.

But is this multitude then limited to a small number of the people of God that have lived at the time of Antichrist? We do not think so. Truly, they have been in the thickest of the battle. It was for them to live at the time of Antichrist in all his power and fulness. The honor and privilege to live at that time was in store for them. For thus it is in reality. It will be a time of special privilege for the people of God to live at the time of Antichrist. It is much rather a cause of longing and yearning, than of fear and trembling, for the people of God to live at that time. Is not a soldier in the battle honored by being in the thickest of the battle? And shall not the soldier of the kingdom of Christ by faith deem it an honor to be in the thickest of the fight against the power of Antichrist and to show that he fears nothing even though he be hated of all men and of all nations? And therefore, it is a special honor to be deemed worthy to live at that time. God shall have His strongest children, His best forces, in the world at that last period. And therefore, to belong to those picked forces of Christ in the world at the time of Antichrist shall be the greatest honor conceivable. For that same reason I have no doubt but that there shall be a special place in store for them in the new heaven and the new earth—a place which they alone can occupy. I have no doubt but that they are the leaders in the chorus that is here singing at the sea of glass. Nevertheless, I do not think that this number is limited to them. For, in the first place, as we have said before, in principle the Antichrist and his power are in the world from the very beginning. Not merely in the end, but also at the time of the apostles he was already in the world, denying that Jesus is the Christ. Still more: not merely in the new dispensation, but also in the old that same power was already in the world, trying to realize itself and opposing the kingdom that was to come. It was already in the time of Elijah, in the time of Moses, in the time of Abraham, in the time of Nimrod, that he attempted to establish his kingdom. It was at the time of Enoch, who testified of the coming of the Lord against it, and even at the time of Abel, who clung to the truth and became a martyr. And therefore, it may be said indeed that in principle the people of God fight the same battle all through the ages even though this battle shall rage most severely in the time of the full manifestation of the antichristian kingdom. Abel fought that same battle. Enoch fought the battle. Noah fought the battle. All the witnesses and prophets of the Old Testament fought that same battle. All the martyrs of the new dispensation also fought that same battle. Only that one great battle becomes most severe at the time when Antichrist shall reveal himself in all his power. And, in the third place, subjectively it may also be said that all the saints of the old, as well as of the new dispensation, hoped and longed for the coming of that day of which these victorious ones sing. It was the hope of Israel. It was the keynote in the prophecies of the old dispensation.

H.H.

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Israel's Children Reunited

And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants . . .

Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing his life is bound up in the lad's life; It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave . . .

Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father.

Then Joseph could not refrain himself . . . and he cried, . . . I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?

Genesis 44:16, 30, 31, 33, 34; 54:1, 3

Ten solemn men made their way back to the home of Joseph in Egypt. There were no bitter words, no angry accusations, no inner resentments; there were only spirits troubled and sad. How could they prove Benjamin innocent against such clear circumstantial evidence? Yet, how could they believe him guilty? They knew Benjamin far better than that. And how could they ever return to their homes without him? One question only they did not need to ask. Why did this have to happen to them? They knew the answer to that. It was not the mischief of Benjamin. It was not a strange quirk of fate. It was the hand of God which rested upon them. They had sinned very grievously against God, and against His people, and His covenant. For well over twenty years they had tried to forget the fact. They had acted as if it had never happened and in their own minds put it off with excuses. But now God was bringing it out into the open. It no longer worked to excuse their actions or to lay the blame upon others. The judgment of God had come. Each knew in his own heart that he was guilty, and for that they were being punished.

More burdened than all of the rest was Judah. Rather unintentionally he had come in the preceding weeks to a position of leadership over his brothers. It was under his pleading that their father had consented to allow Benjamin to come with them to Egypt. He had offered himself a surety for the safety of the youngest brother, and their father had acquiesced. Now he felt even more responsible than did the rest. He too felt the sting of guilt. For himself he might have made excuses and possibly in former years had done so. It was after all due to him that Joseph had been sold as a slave instead of slain. But that would work no longer. The fact of their responsibility loomed too close. He should have withstood his brothers to the face, and that he had failed to do. He was responsible as were the rest. And now his responsibility appeared even greater. He had pledged himself to keep their brother in safety, and the hand of the Lord was against them. What was he to do?

When all too soon the brothers arrived at Joseph's house, they found him anxiously pacing. Little did they realize the real reason for his anxiety. His test had at last arrived at its concluding phase, and the results, he felt, for him would be crucial. Once again the brothers approached, and trembling as never before bowed with their faces to the ground. With words as harsh as he had ever spoken, Joseph questioned them through his interpreter. "What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

Cringing before his words, the brothers stood fearfully mute while Judah stepped to the fore. With eyes cast to the ground and in a voice scarcely audible, he spoke. "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found."

The words tore at Joseph's heart. He saw his brothers standing there as he had never seen them in former years. Gone was the brazen boldness with which they had formerly reveled in their sins. There were no excuses, no defiant claims of innocence, but only the humble admittance that they had sinned. And the face of each one of the brothers showed that in his heart he agreed. What more could Joseph want? What else could he desire? But still could he be sure that if pressed the brothers would not do the same again? With the greatest of effort Joseph kept his composure. Working with Judah's suggestion that they would all be his servants, he would give them full opportunity to desert their youngest brother. "God forbid," he said, "that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father."

To Judah fell the duty of answering, and what could he say? He could think of nothing else than to present the matter in complete honesty, leaving God to do with it what was right. The result was one of the most passionately beautiful prayers of Scripture. With his whole heart and soul he spoke, "Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as Pharaoh."

"My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have ye a father, or a brother?'

"And we said unto my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.'

'And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.'

"And we said unto my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die.'

"And thou saidst unto thy servants, 'Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more.'

"And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, 'Go again, and buy us a little food.'

"And we said, 'We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us.'

"And thy servant my father said unto us, 'Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: and the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: and if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.'

"Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, 'If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever.'

"Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

It was Martin Luther that exclaimed concerning this prayer, "Oh, that we could thus step before God and make known our needs to Him as Judah addressed his brother! . . . May it be granted to us to plead with God in Jesus' name with the same earnestness when our troubles press heavily upon us, and may we be sure that as Joseph was moved by the petition of Judah, so God will be moved even more to hear our prayers and help us."

To analyze such a plea is, of course, difficult and can be dangerous lest by taking it apart we destroy its feeling and beauty. Nonetheless there are certain things which we should note. 1) First there is its sincerity. The prayer was very evidently the outpouring of a burdened soul. Once Judah had begun to speak, the words flowed on of themselves until the whole burden of his soul was exposed. 2) Secondly, there is the humility of the prayer. Throughout Judah maintained an attitude of deep respect for the authority of Joseph. There were no excuses, no protestations of innocence. The plea began with an admittance of guilt, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants"; and at the end where he spoke of their father's possible death, it was with the recognition that they were the responsible parties, "Thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave." He had no rights to claim but only pleaded on the mercies of the ruler before whom he stood. 3) Thirdly, the prayer showed a deep concern for the welfare of their father. The closing words speak for themselves. "For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father." How it contrasted with the hard in-

difference which Joseph had experienced at their hands so many years before. 4) Finally, and perhaps the most significant of all, was the demonstration of spiritual love revealed in the words "Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren." It anticipated the saying of his own Seed yet many years away, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13). Still it did not so much anticipate as follow from that Seed, who, although He was not to be born for many generations, paradoxically pre-dated Judah because He is eternally in the bosom of the Father, "the firstborn of many brethren."

Joseph could withhold himself no longer before this plea. Every word penetrated his heart with a joy so great it hurt; his eyes were clouded with tears. He had learned from Judah's words all that he had yearned to know concerning the spiritual condition of his brothers. In fact his testing of them had brought to the minds of the brothers a clearer recognition of their guilt and sorrow for their sin than there ever would have been without it. Joseph saw them now as penitent sinners, and that was all he wanted. His heart bursting with the pain of extreme joy, he ordered all of the Egyptians from the room. It was no time for strangers to be watching. Turning to his brothers, he exclaimed with a burst of joy, "I am Joseph! doth my father yet live?" Long had he been anticipating this moment, to talk to them as a brother. His first wish was to hear of his father, not as an inquiring stranger, but as a brother and a son.

The brothers cringed in fear. For days and months they had been laboring under the oppressive consciousness of their guilt. They had thought over and over again on the greatness of the punishment that they deserved. They had almost despaired of the possibility of even obtaining mercy from God. Now suddenly there loomed before them the very man against whom they had sinned. Could they expect mercy from him?

Troubled by their fear, Joseph exclaimed again, "Come near to me, I pray you. I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." Gradually the kind voice of Joseph calmed their troubled fears. Even more there began to dawn for them an entirely new perspective on their lives. They had sinned. There was no escaping their guilt in that. Nonetheless so great is the love of God for His people that He had used it for good. With amazement and thankfulness in their hearts they sat and talked with their brother as with one who in the love of God still counted them as being dear.

B.W.

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of I Corinthians 15

VI.

(I Corinthians 15:29-34)

b.

We shall follow Paul as he continues his polemic (battle) against the evil communications that corrupt the good manners, the pious walk of the godly, which is only possible and real in the hope of the resurrection.

A little leaven leaveneth the entire lump. It doth eat like the cancer. Soon the entire walk of godliness, a walk of sanctification will be gone. The believers will be lulled to sleep. For evil communications corrupt good, Christian ethics.

Paul is acutely aware that a denial of the resurrection sounds the death-knell for all Christian heroism. Had Abraham, Isaac and Jacob not in hope sought a better and an enduring substance they would surely have returned to the country of their fathers. But now they declare plainly that they seek a better country, that is, an heavenly. God is not ashamed to be called their God for he hath prepared for them a city. Heb. 11.

And such is Paul's striving too. It is the key to understand Paul's dangerous mode of life as an ambassador of Christ. If the dead rise not then surely Paul is a fool than which there is none greater. Among all those who are the most pitiable of all men, Paul may then safely be ranked as surpassing them all in being an object of pity. Does he not labor more abundantly alone than all the rest of the apostles together?!

Paul does a little self-analysis here in the text, and formulates it into an argument in favor of the hope of the resurrection. It is evidence of the hope of the resurrection. He is an example of all the longsuffering of God to sinners. However, he is also an example for all to emulate. I Tim. 1:15, 16; Phil. 3:17. This is particularly true of his walk in hope.

Wherefore he writes: *"And why stand we in jeopardy every hour. I protest by our rejoicing which we have in Christ Jesus, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this unto your shame."*

We would call attention to the following here.

In the first place we should take notice of Paul's danger-

ous life as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Says he: "We are in jeopardy every hour." This is somewhat like Romans 8:36 where Paul writes: "Even as it is written, For thy sake are we killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Psalm 44:22. Evidently Paul, when speaking here in the plural "we," includes also the other apostles and all who walk godly in this world. II Tim. 3:12. But it is particularly to himself that he has reference. Was not that which was lacking in the sufferings of Christ filled up in a goodly measure in his life (Col. 1:24), and that, too, for the church?

The record is in the Scriptures concerning this life of Paul in jeopardy every hour. Paul writes in II Corinthians 11:23-33, which we here quote in part: "Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" Dear reader, does not the record here speak for itself. Yes, Paul lives in jeopardy every hour. And this *began* as soon as he became a minister of Christ. Does he not relate here the incident also recorded in Acts 9:23-25 of his being let down by the wall in a basket. That was the beginning when "the Jews took counsel to kill him." That moment stands out so very clearly in Paul's mind as the beginning of this life of "jeopardy every hour."

And why does Paul relate this?

Why does Paul call attention to his hovering on the brink of death each day? Was it to gain some sympathy from these Corinthians? Not at all. Is it that Paul was seeking martyrdom? That cannot be for when danger is near Paul repeatedly flees. He thinks of this dangerous living not as an end in itself. It is far from pleasant. It is dying daily!

Think of what Paul writes in I Corinthians 4:9-13, where we read: "For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed unto death: For we are made a spectacle (theatre) unto the world, and to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake but ye are wise in Christ . . . even unto this very hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace . . . We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."

Why does he write this? He would excite them to a life of Christian hope. He would stop the mouth of those who say that the "dead rise wholly not."

Hence, he adds even an *oath* in this connection. Writes he: "I protest by the boasting which I have concerning you,

brethren." Paul could boast of this congregation that even if they had "ten thousand instructors in Christ," yet had they not many fathers. Had Paul not begotten them in Christ by the Gospel, preaching the gospel where others had not preached before him? See I Cor. 4:15, 16, and Romans 15:20, 21 (Is. 52:15). He therefore adjured them by God that what he says about his life being in jeopardy every hour is truth. He dies daily. It is as stated very succinctly by Calvin, "an oath by which he wished to arouse the Corinthians to a more attentive listening to him as to the matter at hand, in effect saying, brethren, I am not some philosopher prattling in the shade! As I expose myself every day to death, it is necessary that I should think in good earnest of this heavenly life." Truly, by thus swearing Paul reminds these Corinthians that he expects them to keep this faith and hope in constancy.

To drive this point home he asks them the rhetorical question, "If after the manner of men I have fought with the beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not?"

If the dead rise wholly not, what is the advantage of a life of suffering and deprivation, of hunger, thirst, peril, nakedness and sword. If there is no resurrection, then there certainly is no reward. Then the point of living is in *this moment* and not for a distant and better hope.

It must have been exceptionally trying what Paul experienced when he fought with the beasts at Ephesus. That is why Paul cites this case here. Just what Paul has definitely in mind as an incident he does not say. It may very well refer to a rather long period, calling for exceptionally much patience and fortitude.

There are two explanations of this phrase, "fought with beasts at Ephesus."

There is first of all the literal interpretation. This holds that Paul had been thrown into the arena in Ephesus, and had to fight with the lions or other wild beast, and had there been doomed to die. However, the Lord then delivered him. What is cited against this interpretation is that the uproar in Ephesus occurred after Paul wrote this first epistle to the Corinthians. Besides, it is urged that in the catalogue of sufferings as given in II Cor. 11:23ff (see above) no mention is made by Paul of his literally having been in peril of lions, etc.

The interpretation which holds that the phrase "fought with the wild beasts" must be understood figuratively of evil men, to our mind, is the correct one. The wild beasts then refers to cruel men, who opposed the gospel, and would stop at nothing to tear Paul in pieces. They made life well-nigh unendurable for Paul. This interpretation is backed by the fact that unbelievers and enemies of the Cross are often compared to beasts. Just to cite a few instances we call attention, first of all, to the warning of Jesus to his disciples in Matt. 10:16: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the

midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." And warning against false prophets he says: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, BUT INWARDLY THEY ARE RAVENING WOLVES." Matt. 7:15. And did not Paul warn the elders in Ephesus saying: "For this is known that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Acts 20:29. (Incidentally that was what I preached on in Jan., 1944, when I preached a sermon for installation of office-bearers. It was on the last Sunday of my ministry in Pella, Iowa.)

From this it is evident that "wild beasts of Ephesus" refers to evil men in their fierce opposition to the Gospel and the hope of the resurrection in Jesus Christ.

But why all this suffering and defense of the Gospel if the dead rise not? Could Paul not have lived another life than this having his "life poured out as a drink-offering"? It were far better then to live the reckless life of Israel of old when the Assyrians came into the land. Rather than mourn they said: "let's eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Merrily they go to destruction. They cast all restraint to the wind.

That is the far better alternative too "if the dead rise not." But the dead do rise. Christ arose! He is the first-fruits. And the full harvest shall surely come in the resurrection morn!

Therefore, all this talk of there being no resurrection is very deceptive and dangerous. It corrupts Christian ethics. For only they who have the hope of seeing God purify themselves as he is pure. I John 3:3. And, these who deny the resurrection, do so because as the Sadducees they know not God nor the power of the God in the resurrection. They have not a saving knowledge of faith in God.

It is really a shame that Paul must tell these Corinthians all this. They cannot blame the teaching of Paul for it. There is one reason and one only. It is *sin* in them. They are not spiritually *sober*. They do not have the loins of their mind girt up, and hope perfectly for the revelation of Jesus Christ in that day.

Those who are roused from their indolence and stupor are to distance themselves from such evil speakers.

They must remember that it was preached to them that Christ died for their sins according to the Scriptures and that He arose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

But Paul will presently say: I have kept the faith, I have run the race, and presently there is laid away for me a crown of life; and not for me only but for all who love his appearance.

Thus we have preached and thus ye have believed.

Stand, therefore, in that faith looking for the hope of glory.

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

And What About The Children?

(3)

"Thirdly. Whether you promise and intend to see these children, when come to the years of discretion (whereof you are either parent or witness), instructed and brought up in the aforesaid doctrine, or help or cause them to be instructed therein, to the utmost of your power?"

This question is one which is known to all our readers.

And it must be interpreted in the light of the one which precedes it. For when this question speaks of the "aforesaid doctrine" it means "the doctrine which is contained in the Old and New Testaments, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and which is taught here in this Christian Church" as the perfect and true doctrine of salvation.

Thus those parents who present their children for baptism promise before God that they will do all in their power to have their children instructed and brought up in the doctrine of the Christian Church where they have their children baptized. What is more all those who belong to that particular Christian Church demand of the parents who present their children for baptism that they bring up and instruct their children in that doctrine to the utmost of their power.

There are two things therefore that we would emphasize at the moment. First of all, this promise is made unto God. It is not the man who asks the question in God's name that counts. It is not the consistory before which one must appear for a baptismal blank and request. It is to God that the promise is given. For baptism is an holy ordinance of God. It is His sign and His seal of incorporation into His covenant. And "it must be used for that end, and not out of custom or superstition." Let the parents remember then the seriousness of the matter when they present their children for this sign and seal of God's covenant upon the foreheads of their children. You promise before God and you give promise unto God that by His grace you will and are at the moment of the intent to bring them up and instruct them in this doctrine to the utmost of your power.

How important it is then that one be convinced that he is in the church that has a doctrine which is the true and perfect doctrine of salvation. With these things one cannot meddle. Church membership is a matter before God and a matter that calls for the most serious consideration on our part. We may be ever so cautious about the selection of other things. We may be so careful about the food we eat, the doctor to whom we go with our physical disabilities and ailments, the dentist and oculist. We may search for the specialist in his field to take care of us when things are not well in our physical frames. We may attach great value

to our eyesight and spend large sums of money to get the best of care for our failing eyesight. It may be that only after great deliberation and thorough investigation that we invest our money, select an insurance company, buy an automobile with all the claims and counterclaims in regard to it. But let us be sure that the church roof which we seek is one under which the doctrine taught is indeed the true and perfect doctrine of salvation. Let us be sure of that for ourselves. Let us be sure of that for our children.

If then, we are in a church whose doctrine we know is corrupted by philosophies of men and whose discipline is therefore wanting on many glaring points, let us ask ourselves how before God we can promise to have our children instructed and brought up in that doctrine to the utmost of our power. We simply do not mean it when we say that we will. We do not "answer sincerely to these questions."

What is more, having given that promise, we must keep it. We repeat what we said last time: Let us be honest. If we are seeking a door through which to enter into a sphere where we know ahead of time that the doctrine taught there is not the true and perfect doctrine of salvation, let us remember that we will indeed be placed before that serious situation that we will have to give promise of that which we do not intend to do. That is not honest before men; and it is not honest before God.

That it is not honest before men is indeed sin. It may be that men are not too much concerned about that. If one is simply interested in numerical growth and rejoices in numbers, it may be that one would receive you even knowing that you do not intend to be honest about this baptismal vow. He may even reason—and correctly so—that time will heal this also and sooner or later you will lose your sensitivity and answer more honestly. One who willfully goes to a field where he knows that he does not belong and cuts himself off from the very truth whereby God strengthens his people must not be surprised to find this dulling of the senses to be his lot. Scripture shows that time and again. Lot, though he was an elect, believing child of God who vexed his righteous soul had to be pulled out of the cities by the angel of the Lord. Elimelech and Naomi went only to sojourn in Moab; but once there they were very reluctant to go back and got themselves deeper and deeper into separation from God and His promises. He had to come with terrible blows before Naomi returns.

And let no man reason within himself that since his children are all baptized and since he can no longer expect to stand and answer these questions with an infant in his arms that this does not apply to him. The second thing we wish to point out in regard to this baptismal vow is that it is asked by the whole congregation. One man utters the words with his lips. One man in the office is the spokesman. Indeed, but he speaks it for the whole congregation. And he speaks it in the hearing of the whole church. Let that man who does not agree with the questions asked then

protest against it. Let him join the congregation honestly and inform the consistory that he will protest and does object to that question being asked of the parents because he does not believe that the doctrine taught in that church is the true and perfect doctrine of salvation. And in connection with the matter which is the occasion for these thoughts under the title "And What About The Children" let us repeat: The three points of "common grace" are not simply a door that bars the way to a city where there can be union upon the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity. Those three points will be found on every street, in every house and in all the regions of that city. And you as a citizen in that city will have to ask and demand of all the parents that they instruct their children and bring them up in the doctrine of that city. If before God's face you can do that, by all means do it and sin not against your own conscience. But if you still love the Protestant Reformed truth and are still convinced that it is the true and perfect doctrine of salvation, do not sin against your conscience and against God by demanding of parents that they instruct and bring up their children in a doctrine to which you cannot agree.

Do not be deceived any longer. Wild rumors are still being spread as to what is demanded of you in order to return to us. It would be amusing were it not so serious a matter that those who formerly were one with us and leaders in our churches, who pleaded that the denominational walls would not be made so high, now themselves try to build such a high wall around our denomination because they do not want you to go back.

If you were deceived by them in the past, confess it and rejoice with us in the true and perfect doctrine of salvation which God gave both you and us in times past. If you were not deceived, by all means do not confess that you were. If you actually embraced those heretical statements and believe that they are part of the true and perfect doctrine of salvation and defended them as such a part of that doctrine, do not return to us under the guise of having been deceived. You may still return to us. The gate is open for that. And we would also rejoice in that. But the gate for such an entrance is confession of having embraced the lie and not of being deceived. We cannot escape the conviction, however, that there are many of you who have been deceived. To some of you we even expressed repeatedly that we had only pity for you because of this deception and would rejoice in the day when your eyes would be opened. Yea, even some of you who sought to "rebuke" us and to show us our "error" that spiritual pity is still there and partially the reason for these three articles on this matter. As we wrote at the beginning, we would be helpful. And in all sincerity we mean that.

It is in that spirit then that we would remind you that the only denomination that you can join on the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity is our denomination. If it is your desire to find such a church roof and to be

affiliated with such like-minded believers, it is plain that your calling is to return to us. Be not deceived. Protestant Reformed is not extra-confessional. All else is extra-confessional because all else is contra-confessional. The "Three Points" are not only extra-confessional, something added to the confessions of the church, but they are positively something that contradicts the very Word of God and the Confessions. We do not need to take the time to prove that. You know that, and it is because of that fact that you are disturbed about a going back. And disturbed you must be. Those who can be blind leaders of the blind and actually believe that there will be and can be a union on the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity in a church whose preaching is constantly colored by the theory of "common grace" are in for a rude awakening. Unless, indeed, they already love that lie, and their defense of the heretical statements condemned by our Classis and Synod and upheld by their Classis and Synod is due to that fact. Have these blind leaders ever seen the truth? In the past they did all in their power to lead you away from the Christian Reformed Church. Now they do their utmost to lead you back. When were they blind and when did they see the light? Are they themselves sure they see the light this time?

And all the slander and personalities that they dragged into the issue in order to cover up their attempt and intent to do exactly what today they openly do and advocate, are you sure that all these lies and slander and distortion are true? Have they been honest with you about the doctrine? Are they now honest with you about what you ought to do today? Is it not your calling in His fear to do some renewed investigation, to contact us, to seek to find the light and the truth of all this tragic past?

If you still love the God-glorifying Protestant Reformed truth, the true and perfect doctrine unto salvation, it should not be hard to declare unto us that you have been misled and deceived but always loved this truth. You should not find it hard to inform us that you are sorry that in the way of this deception you supported financially and morally those who are schismatics. You should find joy in informing us — and we can assure that the joy would be mutual — that you hate the heresy of conditional promises which place man and his work before God and His covenant faithfulness. May God grant you the courage of your convictions, and may He heal this breach and unite us again on the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity.

And what about the children?

Then you can commit them to His care and pray for a blessing upon the instruction given to them.

J.A.H.

"They that forsake the law praise the wicked; but such as keep the law contend with them." Proverbs 28:4

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

In our preceding article we noted that Protestantism sets forth the principle that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, are in themselves the one and only rule of faith and life. And we quoted from the Formula of Concord, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and also Article 7 of our own Confession of Faith. This same principle is also set forth in Art. 5 of our Confession of Faith, which reads: "We receive all these books, and these only, as holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith; believing without any doubt, all things contained in them, not so much because the Church receives and approves them as such, but more especially because the Holy Ghost witnesseth in our hearts, that they are from God, whereof they carry the evidence in themselves. For the very blind are able to perceive that the things foretold in them are fulfilling." Now it is true that also Art. 2 of this same confession speaks of the means by which God is made known to us, and this article speaks of two such means. We read in this article: "We know Him by two means: first, by the creation, preservation and government of the universe; which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many characters leading us to contemplate the invisible things of God, namely, His power and divinity, as the apostle Paul saith, Rom. 1:20. All which things are sufficient to convince men, and leave them without excuse. Secondly, he makes himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, to His glory and our salvation." However, this does not mean that these two means by which we know God are of equal significance. The reader will notice that, according to this article, the Lord makes Himself more clearly and fully known by His Word. And the reason why the Lord is more clearly and fully known by His Word is because that Word reveals Him unto us as the God of our salvation; in that Word we learn to know the things that are necessary unto our salvation. And that these two means are not of equal significance is also stated by Calvin when he, in his Institutes of the Christian Religion, I, 6, 1, declares that the Bible is like unto spectacles through which we must behold and understand God's book of creation. We can surely understand and read the Word of God without understanding

God's book of creation. but we can never read and understand the book of creation without the Word of God. It is true, of course, that also God's revelation of Himself in all the works of His hands speaks of the Lord as the God of our salvation. God created this earth as a symbol of the heavenly and the kingdom of Heaven takes place through parables. Everything is symbolic. This applies to the heavens and all the heavenly bodies, the world of animals and plants, of numbers and colours, the bread we eat and the water we drink, of the dying and living of seed, etc. However, we can never attain unto this knowledge of the Lord as the God of our salvation merely by looking into this mirror of the earthly creation. We must read this "elegant book," as stated in Art. 2 of our Confession of Faith, in the light of the Word of God.

What is the conception of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the right and power to interpret the Bible? In its decree concerning the edition and use of the sacred books, the Romish Council of Trent expresses itself as follows: "Moreover, the same sacred and holy Synod — considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions, now in circulation, of the sacred books, is to be held as authentic — ordains and declares, that the said old and vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many ages, has been approved of in the Church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, held as authentic; and that no one is to dare, or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever. Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, it decrees, that no one, relying on his own skill, shall — in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine — wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church — whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures — hath held and doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers: even though such interpretations were never (intended) to be at any time published. Contraveners shall be made known by their Ordinaries, and be punished with the penalties by law established." The reader will notice that this decree declares that no one may presume to interpret the sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which the holy mother Church held and does hold, and also that only the mother Church may judge what is the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures. And, mind you, this rule even applies when it was never the intention of such a person to make public such findings and interpretations of the Word of God. This means that no one may even think anything which is contrary to the interpretations of the Word of God by mother Church. And this refers ultimately to the pope.

In the Romish Profession of the Tridentine Faith, 1564, we read in Articles 2 and 3 the following: "I most steadfastly admit and embrace apostolic and ecclesiastic traditions, and all other observances and constitutions of the same Church . . .

I also admit the holy Scriptures, according to that sense which our holy mother Church has held and does hold, to which it belongs to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures; neither will I ever take and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." Notice, please, that again in these articles it is stated that the Church alone has the right to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Word of God, and that the members of the Romish Church will never take and interpret those Scriptures otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers. This is folly. Please bear in mind in this connection the implication of the word "unanimous" in this article. Do the Romish people believe the *unanimous* opinion of all the Fathers? We must not forget that it is the Pope alone who has the right and the ability to understand and interpret this *unanimous* opinion of the Fathers, and, mind you, of *all* the Fathers.

Finally, Rome has also expressed itself on these matters in the Dogmatic Decrees of the Vatican Council Concerning the Catholic Faith and the Church of Christ, adopted in 1870, in chapters 2-4 of the fourth session of this holy Oecumenical Council of the Vatican. We wish to quote these articles. Incidentally, also the following statement appears in these dogmatic decrees: "We, therefore, following the footsteps of our predecessors, have never ceased, as becomes our supreme Apostolic office, from teaching and defending Catholic truth, and condemning doctrines of error. And now, with the Bishops of the whole world assembled round us, and judging with us, congregated by our authority, and in the Holy Spirit, in this oecumenical Council, we, supported by the Word of God written and handed down as we received it from the Catholic Church, preserved with sacredness and set forth according to truth, have determined to profess and declare the salutary teaching of Christ from this Chair of Peter, and in sight of all, proscribing and condemning, by the power given to us of God, all errors contrary thereto." Here the Pope declares that he has the power to preserve and set forth all the teachings of Christ and to condemn all errors contrary to these teachings of Christ. We have already shown in previous articles that this is simply not true. We have shown that popes in the past have defended error. However, let us quote the articles mentioned above in this paragraph. Art. 2 reads as follows (this is a chapter on the perpetuity of the primacy of blessed Peter in the Roman pontiffs): "That which the Prince of Shepherds and great Shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ our Lord, established in the person of the blessed Apostle Peter to secure the perpetual welfare and lasting good of the Church, must, by the same institution, necessarily remain unceasingly in the Church; which, being founded upon the Rock, will stand firm to the end of the world. For none can doubt, and it is known to all ages, that the holy and blessed Peter, the Prince and Chief of the Apostles, the pillar of the faith and foundation of the Catholic Church, received the

keys of the kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind, and lives, presides, and judges, to this day and always, in his successors the Bishops of the Holy See of Rome, which was founded by him, and consecrated by his blood. Whence, whosoever succeeds to Peter in this See, does by the institution of Christ himself obtain the Primacy of Peter over the whole Church. The disposition made by Incarnate Truth therefore remains, and blessed Peter, abiding through the strength of the Rock in the power that he received, has not abandoned the direction of the Church. Wherefore it has at all times been necessary that every particular Church—that is to say, the faithful throughout the world—should agree with the Roman Church, on account of the greater authority of the principality which this has received; that all being associated in the unity of that See whence the rights of communion spread to all, might grow together as members of one Head in the compact unity of the body. If, then, any should deny that it is by the institution of Christ the Lord, or by divine right, that blessed Peter should have a perpetual line of successors in the Primacy over the universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter in this primacy: let him be anathema."

Article or Chapter 3, which deals with the power and nature of the primacy of the Roman pontiff, reads as follows: "Wherefore, resting on plain testimonies of the Sacred Writings, and adhering to the plain and express decrees both of our predecessors, the Roman Pontiffs, and of the General Councils, we renew the definition of the oecumenical Council of Florence, in virtue of which all the faithful of Christ must believe that the holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff possesses the primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff is the successor of blessed Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and is true vicar of Christ, and head of the whole Church, and father and teacher of all Christians; and that full power was given to him in blessed Peter to rule, feed, and govern the universal Church by Jesus Christ our Lord; as is also contained in the acts of the General Councils and in the sacred Canons." We will conclude this quotation of Chapter 3 on these decrees of the Vatican Council at this time. The Lord willing, we will continue this quotation in our following article. Only, we wish to call attention to the fact that this chapter states that the Roman pontiff possesses the primacy over the whole world. Rome does not only maintain that the Pope is the sole ruler of the Church in the midst of the world, but also that he is the sole temporal ruler over the whole world. Politicians may "softpedal" this fact in our political campaigns, and this is also being done in our own country in this year of a presidential election, but we must never forget that this is surely the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. And when candidates deny this, they are either ignorant of this truth (and this I do not believe) or they are deliberately hiding and camouflaging the issue.

H.V.

The Voice of Our Fathers

The Canons of Dordrecht

PART TWO

EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

FIFTH HEAD OF DOCTRINE

OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

REJECTION OF ERRORS

Article 5 (continued)

We may notice in this connection that our fathers accuse the Arminians of reintroducing “the doubts of the papist” into the church. This is a rather strange expression, and perhaps in our day it has become rather meaningless. Undoubtedly in that day, which was not yet so far removed from the Reformation, the expression was more significant. By this term the fathers do not refer to the Pelagianism or Semi-Pelagianism of the Romish Church as such. But as the term “papist” or, literally, “adherent to the pontificate” indicates, they refer to the Romish belief in the pope (and in connection with the pope, the entire priesthood) as being able to grant the assurance of salvation, and that too, on all kinds of false grounds. The Romish Church held that the certainty of salvation could be granted by the church (the pope) on the condition that one fulfilled certain demands laid down by the pope. The pope held the power of the forgiveness of sins and life eternal. If one received from him the assurance of salvation, then such a person could rest secure, regardless now of the spiritual condition of his heart and his life. This special pledge in the name of the pope was a sufficient guarantee of salvation. But without this specific guarantee of the church, namely, the pontificate, the assurance of salvation was impossible. And here lies the point of comparison between the Arminian heresy and the Romish error to which the fathers refer here. In order to oppose the Scriptural doctrine of the perseverance of the saints the Arminians sought refuge in a view that was essentially the same as this Romish error. They taught the necessity of a special revelation or pledge of the certainty of one’s final salvation likewise. They also maintained, like the papist, that without that special revelation one was uncertain of his own perseverance and of his final salvation. And just as the papist must live in anxiety and doubt as long as he does not through the priest receive in the name of the pope the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and of his salvation, so the Arminian must live in anxiety and doubt unless and until he receives such a special pledge of his perseverance and final salvation. Thus the doubtings of the papist are again introduced into the church by the Arminian.

Over against this error the fathers re-emphasize the Scriptural way of assurance. We need not in this connection enter into a lengthy exposition of this truth again. For the *Canons* have treated this doctrine of assurance at length in the positive section of this Fifth Head, Articles 9-14. Let it suffice to observe, in the first place, that the fathers remind us that the Holy Scriptures nowhere teach that the assurance of perseverance is to be gained through a special and extraordinary revelation. In the second place, the Holy Scriptures deduce this assurance from the marks proper to the sons of God, the marks of a Christian, those marks, namely, that are pointed out in the Word of God. This, you will remember from our previous discussions of this subject of assurance, does not refer to a sickly search for these marks of grace and to a cold process of logical conclusion that because these and these marks are present, therefore we are children of God. But it refers to the spontaneous assurance of faith, wrought by the Holy Spirit, in the way of godliness and sanctification. It is for this reason that the *Canons* mention here the most faithful promises of God. This, after all, is the solid foundation of all assurance, the speech of God Himself, by His Spirit, through the Word of the gospel, and, always in connection with the marks of the sons of God in the saint, that is, always in connection with the work of His own grace in us. Hence, he that has the marks of the sons of God may without doubt lay claim, and will lay claim by faith to the promise of God, unfailingly faithful, that no one shall ever pluck him out of Christ’s hand.

As usual, the fathers appeal to the Holy Scriptures themselves in order to prove their position. And a happier choice of Scripture passages they could hardly make. First of all, they cite Romans 8:39 in part, where the apostle Paul declares: “No creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Concerning this passage we may note that it is fitting proof because: 1) It expresses certainty, and that too most emphatically. *No creature*, nothing, shall be able to separate us . . . *No creature shall be able* . . . There is not even the possibility of separation from the love of God. The passage therefore is indeed to the point. It speaks of perseverance in the most certain terms. 2) The very essence of that certainty is in the faithful promises of God. For it is the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, that is the power from which no creature can separate us. 3) In the context the text not only expresses objective certainty but also subjective assurance: “I am persuaded that . . . no creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God.” 4) Taken in the broader context of the entire beautiful chapter, the text is also proof of an assurance that is not derived from any special or extraordinary revelation, but of an assurance that is reached in the way of the marks proper to the sons of God, who are not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and who through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body. 5) The text is at the same time proof that this assurance is not the rare exception

for the children of God, but is spiritually normal. For the apostle includes not merely himself, but, speaking in the communion of saints, he declares that no creature shall be able to separate *us* from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the second place, they cite I John 3:24: "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." This passage is chosen especially to prove the fathers' contention that this assurance, according to Scripture, is derived from the marks proper to the children of God. Those marks proper to the sons of God are in this text denoted by the keeping of His commandments. He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Christ and in God, and God in Christ abideth in the one that keepeth His commandments through His Spirit. Hence, out of the keeping of His commandments—because that keeping of His commandments is the fruit of the indwelling Spirit of Christ—and out of the possession of that indwelling Spirit, Who makes His presence known by causing us to keep His commandments, we know, that is, we are assured, that we abide in Him and He in us.

Let the believer beware, therefore, that he is not led astray from the only Scriptural way of assurance into the path of sickly mysticism, which is also the way of doubt and uncertainty.

* * * *

Article 6. Who teach: That the doctrine of the certainty of perseverance and of salvation from its own character and nature is a cause of indolence and is injurious to godliness, good morals, prayers and other holy exercises, but that on the contrary it is praiseworthy to doubt. For these show that they do not know the power of divine grace and the working of the indwelling Holy Spirit. And they contradict the Apostle John, who teaches the opposite with express words in his first epistle: "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure," I John 3:2, 3. Furthermore, these are contradicted by the example of the saints, both of the Old and the New Testament, who though they were assured of their perseverance and salvation, were nevertheless constant in prayers and other exercises of godliness.

The translators of this article were evidently at a loss as to how to translate especially one phrase of this article into idiomatic English. And I must confess that it is rather difficult to preserve the figure of the original in good English. But those who know our *Canons* in the Dutch will know that the English "a cause of indolence" is a rather staid and prosaic and colorless rendering of "*een oorkussen des vleesch*es." But surely this Dutch expression comes much

closer to the Latin "*carnis pulvinar*," which is literally "a stately couch, or cushion, for the flesh." The Dutch is: a pillow for the flesh. Our English "a cause of indolence" is not nearly so expressive. This was one of those ear-catching phrases that the Arminians used to discredit the Reformed truth in the popular mind. Over against the Reformed doctrine of assurance the Arminians exclaimed: "A cushion for the flesh!" And you can imagine that the inexperienced and unpracticed would be attracted by such an argument. The idea was that the truth of the assurance of perseverance and salvation would provide a soft and easy place for the flesh to recline, unbothered and unconcerned about any need for morality and godliness. Perhaps after all it would be better, even though this is hardly an accepted English figure, to preserve the figure in our translation, "a cushion for the flesh." Our second remark about the translation is rather minor. Both the English and the Dutch fail to translate the Latin *de ea*, "concerning these," in the clause: "but that on the contrary it is praiseworthy to doubt." The reference is, of course, to the perseverance and salvation mentioned in the first part of the sentence. The idea is not that it is praiseworthy to doubt in general, but specifically that it is praiseworthy to doubt concerning our perseverance and final salvation. For the rest, the translation is quite accurate.

This article also deals with an error that has been carefully contradicted in the positive part of this chapter, Articles 11-13 especially. Besides, the error here rejected is essentially the same as that rejected in previous chapters. It is the old, old objection: this doctrine makes men careless and profane. That is the favorite and supposedly death-dealing argument of free-willism against every phase of the Reformed truth concerning salvation. They raise this argument already against sovereign predestination; and they raise it against the doctrine of perseverance as well. We need not spend much time on the nature of the argument as such. Let us briefly remind ourselves, in the first place, that it is not a Scriptural argument, but a rationalistic objection. When the Arminian cannot contradict the Reformed faith successfully with Scripture, he comes with this argument from his own sinful reason. And in the second place, let us remember that by the same token, according to Scripture, he places himself in the horrid class of those who object against the Word of God itself. For more than once this same objection occurs in the mouth of the opponents of the truth in Holy Writ, and is answered and exposed by the Scriptures.

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

Thy creatures all look to Thee for their food;
Thy hand opens wide, they gather the good;
Thy face Thou concealest, in anguish they yearn;
Their breath Thou withholdest, to dust they return.

DECENCY and ORDER

Inter-Synodical Correspondence

(Each synod shall be at liberty to solicit and hold correspondence with its neighboring synod or synods in such manner as they shall judge most conducive to general edification.) — D.K.O. Article 48

The parentheses surrounding the above article indicate that it, like the preceding article, applies to particular synods and, therefore, the matter with which it deals is of no direct concern to us since we have only a General Synod.

The subject of inter-synodical correspondence has no connection with the work of our Synod that is carried out through the appointment of a standing committee of Correspondence with Foreign Churches. The latter is a committee that is mandated by the Synod to seek to establish contact with other churches of Reformed persuasion and to carry out fraternal correspondence with them. Such correspondence is indeed inter-synodical but it is also inter-denominational. The article of the Church Order that we are presently considering, however, deals with the matter of correspondence between various particular synods within the same denomination of churches.

Another difference between these two forms of correspondence lies in the manner in which they are to be carried out. The contact between a committee of the General Synod and the Synods of other churches is to a very large extent made and perpetuated through letters and written communications. It is possible, of course, that where favorable contact has been made, this bond is further strengthened through personal representatives of the Synod but even then these representatives would not be sent every year unless a *fraternal relationship* was officially established between the two churches.

With respect to the matter of Article 48, however, the term "*to hold correspondence*" is a literal translation of the Dutch "*correspondentie te houden*" and the idea of this latter expression is not that letters be written from one particular synod to another but that these synods would appoint representatives who were charged to attend the meetings of the neighboring particular synods in person. The article states that "*each synod shall be at liberty . . .*" meaning that this matter was not one of compulsion but of free choice. It also adds that "*this correspondence shall be carried out in such a manner as they shall judge most conducive to general edification*" which indicates that there could be no hard and fast compelling manner in which this had to be done but it was and, we believe is, generally agreed that the most effective way to carry out such work is by personal contact.

The origin of this correspondence must be traced to the fact that after 1586 the General Synod of the Reformed

Churches did not meet regularly. This was due to the interference of the Government which, because it feared the influence and power of the church, refused to authorize the gatherings of the General Synods. This situation prevented the churches from conferring with one another on various questions and united action was not always taken on vital issues. There was a danger that without the periodic meetings of the Synod the churches would begin to drift apart and fall into a sort of independentism. To avoid this and to somewhat meet the need that arose out of this undesirable condition, the particular synods began to send representatives to each other's meetings. This was first done by the Particular Synod of South Holland which sent two ministers to the Particular Synod of North Holland in 1593. The practice soon became wide-spread. Only in the provinces of Drenthe and Zeeland was it lacking and, in the latter case at least, this was because it was forbidden by the civil authorities. When, however, the Synod of 1618-19 was finally called because of the Arminian difficulties that plagued the churches, this Synod also authorized the practice of "*correspondence between particular synods*," and wrote the present article into the Church Order.

Although, as was stated, this practice is of no direct concern to us because we have not instituted particular synods, the idea of this practice is nevertheless of interest and might conceivably be applied on the level of our classes. There would be no principle objection to the practice of our two classes sending fraternal delegates to each other's meetings. The provision of the Church Order regarding this matter as pertaining to particular synods would seemingly justify such a practice. Against it may be argued that it is not necessary since our General Synod meets annually and, further, whereas considerable distance is involved the expenses that this would incur would not be justified. There undoubtedly is some truth in these arguments but when consideration is given to some of the things that went on in the classis during and before the schism of '53, it might have been a very good thing to have had some representatives of the other classis present at these meetings. Perhaps it would not be necessary to have such a delegation at every meeting of the Classis but on occasion it could be a good thing to establish and maintain a closer contact and unity between the two classes of our churches.

Synodical Committees

(Each synod shall delegate some to execute everything ordained by the synod both as to what pertains to the government and to the respective classes, resorting under it, and likewise to supervise together or in smaller number all examinations of future ministers. And, moreover, in all other eventual difficulties they shall extend help to the classes in order that proper unity, order and soundness of doctrine may be maintained and established. Also they shall keep proper record of all their actions to report thereof to synod,

and if it be demanded, give reasons. They shall also not be discharged from their service before and until synod itself discharges them.)" — D.K.O. Article 49

This article, like the two preceding, also applies to the Particular Synods although the ruling regarding the appointment of synodical committees is in practice also applied to the General Synod. We believe it should be for otherwise there is nothing in the Church Order concerning this matter as pertaining to the General Synod and there should be because of the very general practice of the synod to appoint special study committees as well as its regular standing committees.

The proposed revision of the Church Order by the Christian Reformed Church is in this regard an improvement. In this revision we find just one article pertaining to Particular Synods, one article governing the General Synod, and then a series of several articles under the heading of "*General Provisions*." We take it that these general provisions apply to both the Particular and General Synod and see no reason why they should not. With regard to the matter at hand then, namely, the appointment of committees, we find in Article 47 of the proposed revision this ruling:

"Synod may delegate to committees the execution of its decisions or the preparation of reports for future considerations. Synod shall give every committee a well-defined mandate, and shall require of these committees regular and complete reports of their work. However, synod shall never transfer its authority to them, since they are not ecclesiastical assemblies, and all church governmental authority resides in the church assemblies only."

In the churches of the Netherlands a revision of this 49th article has also been enacted. Originally the churches did not feel it necessary that Synodical Committees be appointed by the General Synod. Hence, the article (as we now have it) applied only to Particular Synods. In 1905 this was changed and the article was so revised that it applies now to both the General and the Particular Synod. This revision, however, was never adopted in our country, and consequently, we still have it in the original form. The reader will notice that in the revision the phrase "*everything . . . both as to what pertains to the government and to the respective classes resorting under it*" has been elided. Further, the original redaction specifies just one committee which is charged to do many and various things in behalf of synod while the revision provides for the appointment of separate synodical committees for the different matters or functions that demand attention. These changes are improvements for it makes for a broader distribution of the work and it is also a deterrent to the danger of hierarchism which is present when too much power is placed in the hands of a few. The rendering of 1905 then reads:

"Each synod shall deputize some to execute everything ordained by Synod and to offer their assistance to the classes in eventual difficulties, as much as possible separate groups

of delegates shall be appointed for the various interests. At least two or three deputies shall supervise the peremptory (decisive and final) examination of future ministers. All these deputies shall keep a good record of all their activities in order to report to Synod and in order to give reasons for their actions, if such be demanded. They shall also not be discharged from their service before and until Synod itself discharges them."

The appointment and work of the committees of synod is a very important function. Our synod which will convene, D.V., in June will hear and treat reports of twenty different committees this year. Of these six are standing or permanent committees of synod and the remaining fourteen are committees that were assigned special tasks or special problems for study. Of course there is always a danger that Synod misuses the provision to appoint committees. That danger is that instead of solving the difficulties that confront her, the synod simply prolongs the problem by referring it to committee. This must be avoided and wherever possible the Synod should reach a decision on all matters presented to it. The advantage of this ruling, however, is that it avoids hasty decisions. By referring a weighty question to a committee, the churches have a year's time to give thought, study and consideration to it before rushing into an "on the spur of the moment" decision that might have regrettable consequences later.

G.V.d.B.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On Tuesday, May 17, 1960, our dear parents,

MR. and MRS. ISAAC KORHORN

hope to commemorate their fifty-fifth wedding anniversary. With grateful hearts we thank our heavenly Father for His loving kindness in sparing them these many years for us and for each other. Our prayer is that they may continue to experience the Lord's richest blessings.

Mr. and Mrs. Maynard Veenstra
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Korhorn
Mr. and Mrs. Bert Korhorn
Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Kuiper
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Velthouse
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Bloem
32 grandchildren
10 great-grandchildren

Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN MEMORIAM

The Board of the Free Christian School Society of Edgerton, Minnesota wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy to one of its fellow Board members, Mr. Henry Miersma, in the recent death of his father,

MR. HARRY MIERSMA

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

The Board of the Free Christian School Society
Wm. Buys, President

ALL AROUND US

"The True Church"

A few weeks ago we were given a tract which developed the theme expressed in the above title. The little tract was written by the Rt. Rev. J. C. Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool. The cover page was subscribed with the following: "A searching message for every heart." We will quote most of the message, and the reader will judge whether this is true or not.

"The one true Church is composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus. It is made up of all God's elect — of all converted men and women — of all true Christians. In whomsoever we can discern the election of God the Father, the sprinkling of the blood of God the Son, the sanctifying work of God the Spirit, in that person we see a member of Christ's true Church.

"It is a Church of which all the members have the same marks. They are all born again of the Spirit. They all possess 'repentance towards God, faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,' and holiness of life and conversation. They all hate sin, and they all love Christ. They worship differently, and after various fashions. Some worship with a form of prayer, and some with none. Some worship kneeling, and some standing. But they all worship with one heart. They are all led by one Spirit. They all build upon one foundation. They all draw their religion from one single book — that is the Bible. They are all joined to one great center — that is Jesus Christ. They all, even now, can say with one heart, 'Hallelujah'; and they all can respond with one heart and voice, 'Amen and amen.'

CHRIST THE ONE SHEPHERD

"It is a Church which is dependent upon no ministers upon earth, however much it values those who preach the gospel to its members. The life of its members does not hang upon church membership, and baptism, and the Lord's supper, although they highly value these things when they are to be had. But it has only one great Head, one Shepherd, one chief Bishop — and that is Jesus Christ. He alone, by His Spirit, admits the members of this Church, though ministers may show the door. Till He opens the door, no man on earth can open it — neither bishops, nor presbyters, nor convocations, nor synods. Once let a man repent and believe the gospel, and that moment he becomes a member of this Church. Like the penitent thief, he may have no opportunity of being baptized. But he has that which is far better than any water baptism — the baptism of the spirit. He may not be able to receive the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, but he eats Christ's body and drinks Christ's blood by faith every day he lives, and no minister on earth can prevent him. He may be excommunicated by ordained men, and cut off from the outward ordinances of the professing church,

but all the ordained men in the world cannot shut him out of the true Church.

"It is the Church whose existence does not depend on forms, ceremonies, cathedrals, churches, chapels, pulpits, fonts, vestments, organs, endowments, money, kings, governments, magistrates, or any act of favor whatsoever from the hand of man. It has often lived on and continued when all these things have been taken from it. It has often been driven into the wilderness, or into dens and caves of the earth, by those who ought to have been its friends. Its existence depends on nothing but the presence of Christ and His Spirit, and they being ever with it, the Church cannot die.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

"This is the Church to which the scriptural titles of present honor and privilege, and the promises of future glory, specially belong. This is the body of Christ. This is the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. This is the flock of Christ, the household of faith and the family of God, God's building, God's foundation, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. This is the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. This is the royal priesthood, the chosen generation, the peculiar people, the purchased possession, the habitation of God, the light of the world, the salt and the wheat of the earth. This is the 'Holy Catholic Church' of the Apostles' Creed, the 'One Catholic and Apostolic Church' of the Nicene Creed. This is that Church to which the Lord Jesus promises that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,' and to which He says, 'I am with you always even unto the end of the world.' (Matthew 16:18; 28:20).

"This is the only Church which possesses true unity. Its members are entirely agreed on all the weightier matters of religion, for they are all taught by one Spirit. About God and Christ, and the Spirit, and sin, and their own hearts, and faith, and repentance, and the necessity of holiness, and the value of the Bible, and the importance of prayer, and the resurrection, and judgment to come — about all these points they are of one mind. Take three or four of them, strangers to one another, from the remotest corners of the earth. Examine them separately on these points. You will find them all of one judgment.

ALL ITS MEMBERS HOLY

"This is the one Church which possesses true sanctity. Its members are all holy. They are not merely holy by profession, holy in name, and holy in the judgment of charity. They are all holy in act, and deed, and reality, and life, and truth. They are all more or less conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. No unholy man belongs to this Church.

"This is the only Church which is truly catholic. It is not the church of any one nation or people. Its members are to be found in every part of the world where the gospel is received and believed. It is not confined within the limits of any one country, nor pent up within the pale of any particular forms or outward government. In it there is no

difference between Jew and Greek, black man and white, Episcopalian and Presbyterian — but faith in Christ is all. Its members will be gathered from north, and south, and east, and west, in the last day, and will be of every name and tongue — but all one in Christ Jesus.

APOSTOLIC FAITH AND PRACTICE

“This is the only Church which is truly apostolic. It is built on the foundation laid by the apostles, and holds the doctrines which they preached. The two grand objects at which its members aim are apostolic faith and apostolic practice; and they consider the man who talks of following the apostles, without possessing these two things, to be no better than sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

“This is the only Church which is certain to endure unto the end. Nothing can altogether overthrow and destroy it. Its members may be persecuted, oppressed, imprisoned, beaten, beheaded, burned, but the true Church is never altogether extinguished. It rises again from its afflictions. It lives on through fire and water. When crushed in one land, it springs up in another. The Pharaohs, the Herods, the Neros, the bloody Marys, have labored in vain to put down this Church. They slay their thousands, and then pass away and go to their own place. The true Church outlives them all, and sees them buried each in his turn. It is an anvil that has broken many a hammer in this world, and will break many a hammer still. It is a bush which is often burning, and yet it is not consumed.

“This is the only Church of which no one member can perish. Once enrolled in the lists of this Church, sinners are safe for eternity. They are never cast away. The election of God the Father, the continual intercession of God the Son, the daily renewing and sanctifying power of God the Holy Spirit, surround and fence them in like a garden enclosed. Not one bone of Christ’s mystical body shall ever be broken. Not one lamb of Christ’s flock shall ever be plucked out of His hand.

SMALL BUT VITAL

“This is the Church which does the work of Christ upon earth. Its members are a little flock, and few in number, compared with the children of the world: one or two here, and two or three there, a few in this parish, and a few in that. But these are they who shake the universe, who change the fortunes of kingdoms by their prayers. These are they who are the active workers for spreading the knowledge of pure religion and undefiled. These are the lifeblood of a country — the shield, the defense, the stay, and the support of any nation to which they belong.

“This is the Church which shall be truly glorious at the end. When all earthly glory is passed away, then shall this Church be presented without spot before God the Father’s throne. Thrones, principalities and powers upon earth shall come to nothing. Dignities, and offices, and endowments, shall all pass away. But the Church of the first-born shall shine as the stars at the last, and be presented with joy be-

fore the Father’s throne, in the day of Christ’s appearing. When the Lord’s jewels are made up, and the manifestation of the sons of God takes place, Episcopacy, and Presbyterianism, and Congregationalism, will not be mentioned. One Church only will be named, and that is the Church of the elect.

“Reader, this is the true Church to which a man must belong, if he would be saved. Till you belong to this, you are nothing better than a lost soul. You may have the form, the husk, the skin, and the shell of religion, but you have not the substance and the life. What ignorance prevails on this point! Men fancy that if they join this church or that church, and become communicants, and go through certain forms, that all must be right with their souls. It is an utter delusion. You may be a staunch Episcopalian, or Presbyterian, or Independent, or Baptist, or Wesleyan, or Plymouth Brother, and yet not belong to the true Church. And if you do not, it will be better at last if you had never been born.”

We wish to make only two or three observations. In the first place, very noticeably the author makes no attempt in this message to gain members to his or any other particular manifestation of the church. The tract, therefore, in distinction from the general run of tracts, is quite unique. The author, it appears, has no particular axe to grind, but is intent on simply setting forth the truth concerning the Holy Catholic Church.

Secondly, very noticeably the author aptly sets forth the truth that the church is not the product of man in any sense of the word. The church is entirely a work of God, of His conception, of His saving power, of His sovereign grace. That, too, is most refreshing when you consider how many today conceive of the church as a product of man’s ingenuity and power exclusively, or at best, a work of God with the cooperation of man.

And thirdly, as far as we are able to judge, we can agree with the entire substance of this tract. There is, however, one point we thought was missing. When we compare the tract with what our fathers set forth in Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession concerning the “Catholic Christian Church,” we notice that the fathers believe and express that the one catholic, or universal church can be observed and distinguished in the world. The church accordingly is not only viewed idealistically but really existing and to be distinguished by certain distinguishing marks that set her off from the false church. When the fathers say in Article 28: “And that this may be the more effectually observed, it is the duty of all believers, according to the word of God, to separate themselves from all those who do not belong to the church, and to join themselves to this congregation; where-soever God hath established it,” it is plain that there is a visible and local manifestation of the church. Again, “hereby the true church may certainly be known, from which no man has a right to separate himself . . . These two churches (true and false — M.S.) are easily known and distinguished from each other,” this certainly implies that there is a true church

of Christ in the world which manifests the three distinguishing ear-marks. "The marks, by which the true church is known, are these: if the pure doctrine of the gospel is preached therein; if she maintains the pure administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ; if church discipline is exercised in punishing sin . . ." In short, there is a purer and less pure manifestation of the church in the world. It is our conviction, as well as of our Reformed fathers, that it is our duty to be joined to the purest manifestation of the church in the world. This, the tract failed to bring out.

M.S.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Report of Eastern Ladies' League

On the evening of April 21, 1960, our spring meeting of the Ladies' League of Protestant Reformed Churches was held at South West Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Our meeting was opened by singing Psalter number 368 and Dutch Psalm 89 verse 1. In the absence of our President, Mrs. M. Schipper, our Vice-President, Mrs. C. Hanko read from Hebrews 4. She then introduced our speaker, Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, who also opened the meeting with prayer.

Prof. Hoeksema spoke on the theme: "The Sabbath and Our Covenant Children." Our speaker divided his speech under three points: I. The Idea of the Sabbath. II. The Proper Keeping of the Sabbath. III. Our Covenant Children and the Sabbath.

I. Sabbath means rest as read in Hebrews 4. It means to cease from our labors. We must not confuse Sabbath rest with idleness. We must not be idle. Idleness is devil's work kitchen and it isn't good for children to be idle. We must positively refrain from labor on the Sabbath as a means to the end. We must fill our whole life spiritually with rest. God is a God of rest. God provided rest in the covenant to serve Him. He is our God and we are His people and He blesses us and takes us up in Covenant Life.

II. Our whole life must be a Keeping of the Sabbath. In every sphere of life we must manifest ourselves in the world that we are people of the living God. That we live as Children of light from the Principle of Regeneration, also as we have it in the fourth commandment from the catechism that all the days of our life we cease from evil works. God provides one day of the week to rest from our labors. Together with God's people to hear His Word and testimony and concentrate our thoughts on things above.

III. Our covenant children have a principle of the Sabbath in their young hearts. If they didn't have, you couldn't train them. The child must develop that principle of the Sabbath, trained and guided and under regulation of the parents. This teaching must begin at home. If the parents find the Sabbath a joy the child will have the same

attitude. We must teach them early to set that day apart. We must take them early by the hand to God's house regularly and diligently and urge them to take some of the sermon home with them.

On the Sabbath day, we should teach them their Catechism, Sunday School, Bible memory work, and proper reading of our Church papers. If we do these things on the Sabbath and teach our children these things, our lives will be abundantly fruitful. We will have rest along the way, and our hope will be strengthened. A rest remains, therefore, for the people of God. Let us celebrate the Sabbath until presently we enter into the Eternal Rest.

After this inspiring speech, we were favored by a trio from Southeast Church.

During the singing of Psalter Number 71, a collection was taken for *The Standard Bearer* and *Beacon Lights*. Mrs. N. Kunz from Creston Church gave a report of the activities of their society.

A short business meeting followed which consisted of reading of the minutes by our secretary, Mrs. J. Kuiper. Roll call revealed all our churches were represented and one visitor from Kalamazoo. Mrs. E. Kooienga gave a treasurer's report.

The trio again sang another number. Mrs. C. Hanko thanked all those who took part in the program and the hostesses, the Southwest and Holland Ladies' Societies. We sang our theme song, Psalter Number 374. Mrs. D. Jonker closed our meeting with prayer. Refreshments were served in the basement.

Mrs. Bernard Windemuller, *Reporter*

A FAITHFUL CREATOR

He waters the hills with rain from the skies,
And plentiful grass and herbs He supplies,
Supplying the cattle, and blessing man's toil
With bread in abundance, with wine and with oil.

The trees which the Lord has planted are fed,
And over the earth their branches are spread;
They keep in their shelter the birds of the air,
The life of each creature the Lord makes His care.

The seasons are fixed by wisdom divine,
The slow changing moon shows forth God's design;
The sun in his circuit his Maker obeys,
And running his journey hastes not nor delays.

The Lord makes the night, when, leaving their lair,
The lions creep forth, God's bounty to share;
The Lord makes the morning, when beasts steal away
And men are beginning the work of the day.

Psalm 104

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

May 5, 1960

Rev. H. H. Kuiper, of Loveland, suffered a recurrence of a stomach ailment and its attendant loss of blood due to hemorrhage. The attack occurred in the church parlors during a social gathering following a lecture by Rev. Heys of South Holland. Another attack, two days later in the hospital, left Rev. Kuiper in a critical condition, but ten days and five transfusions later found him in a much improved condition. At this writing he is reported to be still in the hospital in Loveland.

The Mr. and Mrs. League met April 22 in the Adams St. School gym, Southeast Church being the host. Prof. H. C. Hoeksema, chairman of the League, led in opening devotions and introduced the speaker, Rev. A. Mulder, of Kalamazoo. The topic of Rev. Mulder's speech was, "The Protestant Reformed Home." First Church's Sr. Society furnished the music on the program with a ladies' vocal trio consisting of Mrs. K. Bylsma, Mrs. C. Kregel and Mrs. C. Jonker. Old acquaintances were renewed while the refreshments were being enjoyed.

The Eastern Ladies' League met in Southwest Church, April 21. Prof. H. C. Hoeksema gave the address which was entitled, "The Sabbath and Our Covenant Children."

"The Signs of Christ's Return as Seen in Our Day" was the topic of the lecture given by Rev. C. Hanko, of First Church, April 28, in Oak Lawn. The next day Rev. Hanko conducted a funeral service in his own congregation, and Saturday he and his wife trekked to Randolph to fill a classical appointment on Sunday. In Rev. Hanko's absence Rev. H. Hoeksema conducted two services, May 1.

Radio News: Did you know that the Printing and Mailing committee of The Reformed Witness Hour furnishes printed sermons to about 400 of their listeners? Our Radio Program is not only broadcasted through these United States, but from New York to California and from Florida to the State of Washington the radio sermons are read by persons requesting this free service. A postcard with your name and address is all that is required of you to place your name on the permanent mailing list. Write to: The Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Mich.

The Hope Choral Society presented the beautiful cantata, "Life Eternal" after the service Sunday evening, May 1. The proceeds were earmarked for our own high school society.

Lynden's adult Bible class did not meet April 27 because the consistory met in special session to receive the Classis West Church Visitors.

Did you know that Rev. Vos, of Hudsonville, mails the weekly bulletin and a specially written open letter to the

ten servicemen of his flock? Rev. Vos writes that he is still hoping to receive ten answers in any given week.

The Young People's Spring Mass Meeting was held in Hope Church, April 26, with Prof. H. C. Hoeksema as the speaker for the evening. The speaker bemoaned the fact that a new generation had sprung up which was yet struggling with the question of the drama. The Professor, speaking on that theme, posited the Prot. Ref. viewpoint of the evil of impersonating the life and emotions of another by amateur or professional actors. The observation was made that the evil was most prominent in the worldly movies, but to a great extent has found an outlet in our living rooms via the television set. The Reverend stated that whenever recreation is sought by our young people it must never be found in the presentation of the drama, whatever the media used, be it the high school play, T.V. fare, or movies. After recess Dale Vander Kooy, of Hudsonville, and Bob Decker, of First Church, aired their opinions of the question whether or not the church should appoint young people to certain Kingdom work, such as sponsoring lectures, writing and distributing pamphlets, etc. Was it a coincidence that the young people of Oak Lawn, in their Sunday evening meeting two days before the Mass Meeting mentioned above, debated the question, "Drama — should we use it"?

The Adams St. School Athletic Ass'n invited our people to a Barbecue and Sandwich Supper Saturday evening, April 23. This type of supper was an innovation in our circles, and should this event be repeated in the Fall many more diners will take advantage of it because of the good reports heard from all the "first nighters."

The Ladies' Aid Society of First Church ended the season's activities with their annual luncheon April 27. The five "birthday groups" of the society turned in the monies raised during the year by each group, and found it totaled \$383.50. This fund will be divided between various charity causes. After recess a film was shown by Rev. Heynen, of Pine Rest, and the offering taken was donated to that worthy cause.

Because of the shortage of ministers at present many of our churches must be supplied by others, changing the time of services, or having reading services.

Hope's consistory has decided that the congregation shall sing the "amen" after the first doxology which is, "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow."

Hudsonville's Sunday School has again opened its doors for the summer season beginning May 1st.

Redlands has decided to use commercially printed bulletins, but this move awaits the return of Rev. H. Veldman who is away on a classical appointment in Hull for three weeks.

Do you agree that — "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?" Prov. 20:24.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.