

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

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## MEDITATION

### THE GREAT BENEFACTOR

*"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies." Psalm 103:3, 4*

When all is said and done, we are but poor sinners!

That is your name, no matter what kind of reputation you may have for nobility and goodness; no matter how "beautiful you look unto men."

If only we may admit this: how different our lives prove to be!

If only your heart is broken and contrite, and your spirit lowly, how different your life proves to be!

Then the floodgates of God's everlasting love are opened and a veritable flood of goodness of the Lord descends upon you. Then you stand in a rain of blessings.

But that estate of humility is also a gift. And when that gift is received you bow down and fall into the dust. And from thereon your blessings are multiplied.

Such a one was David, the sweet singer of Israel.

Come, let us listen to one of the strains of his sweet singing. He will chant of the Great Benefactor.

\* \* \* \*

Who forgiveth all thine iniquities!

Here we have to do with the guilt of sin.

Because the pollution of sin is mentioned in the next clause where we hear of "diseases." Because the guilt of sin is always stressed in Holy Scripture. Because the singular is used in the original. Because the word "forgiveness" stresses the guilt of sin.

And that, dear reader, brings us to the greatest of our distresses.

Oh, it is miserable to be a sinner. That hurts. But guilt of sin is worse, for then God is against you with His

entire Being. Even the so-called innocent little children are under that guilt of sin, even at birth. Even if you are absolutely holy in your condition, you are nevertheless guilty before God, and that means that you are worthy of eternal doom. When you are guilty you are damned. And you bear that doom always. There is a terrible name which we bear: children of wrath. The wrath of God is your mother.

And all this according to strictest justice.

I know, I know, there are many who bewail this, and say: those poor people who never heard of the Gospel! Alas, alas, those teeming millions in the hinterland of India and China who even now do not know of Jesus!

But, remember, that God is just in His judgment of them. They earn that name of CHILDREN OF WRATH.

Oh, the thought of the Judgment Day is a comforting thought.

You know why? Because then God shall be justified! Think on that.

I spoke of strictest justice, and indeed I might: iniquity means that we make the straight crooked. And that's the burden which oppresses us.

Here we read that *all* our iniquity is forgiven.

So it includes the guilt of Adam, our iniquitous nature, and the things we have thought, spoken and done: the whole burden is forgiven.

\* \* \* \*

Forgiven!

There is an unutterable sweetness in that word!

It means to lift up and to cause to disappear.

And at once the thought arises: how is that possible, for God is just?

And the answer is the beauty of the Gospel. Of course, God is just. But He takes your load of guilt and places it on Himself, that is, on Jesus who is Jehovah Salvation! Listen to Isaiah: "He laid on Him the iniquity of us all!"

And John the Baptist will give you the wonderful, miraculous sequence: He bore our sins away!

It's not long ago that we went through the passion

weeks. Well, that first New Testament Sabbath in Joseph's garden told the wondrous story: Jesus returned from a long (?) journey. The last time we saw Him He hung on the cross with His guilty children in His bosom. He took them to hell, and was cleansed. In Joseph's garden He stands and He still has you in His bosom, but now you are innocent.

What wonders of love and lovingkindness!

\* \* \* \*

Who healeth all thy diseases.

We are diseased, we are sick, and do not think now of natural sicknesses. That would be against the context which speaks of the guilt of sin, of iniquity, of forgiveness, of redemption and of the crowning with the virtues of God.

No, this is a spiritual disease.

Attend again to Isaiah: "And the inhabitant of Zion shall not say, I am sick, for the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." 33:24.

Note also that the healing is the result of the forgiveness of iniquity. Only those that are forgiven their iniquity are healed.

What kind of disease is this? Note the imagery of Isaiah in the first chapter: "wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores." It is the corruption of sin. That word "diseases" spells all the issues of our life. Whatever proceeds from us is corruption. Oh, sometimes that corruption seems so lovely. But it is not. Just look through God's spectacles: and you will loathe yourselves because of all your abominations. Job 42:6 tells a dreadful story. Job looked at himself and likens himself to a running sore. But the translators were fastidious men: they softened that word and made it "abhor myself." But, remember, the Holy Ghost said (Job speaking of himself), "I am like a fetid, stinking, running sore"!

Do you think you need healing?

A good Dutchman wrote a book once, and the title of his production comes to my mind at this instance: "Genade Geneest." That means: "Grace heals."

The grace of God comes toward you, in you, and heals you.

If you would speak dogmatically, you would say: God regenerates, calls, converts, and sanctifies you. He makes you a saint. In your deepest heart.

God does that through the Bible and the Holy Ghost.

And the result is that you look at yourself and you weep.

Really, beloved, the child of God weeps every day. He always weeps in his heart. And he will weep all his life until he goes to heaven. And in heaven God wipes his tears away.

God heals His child.

\* \* \* \*

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction.

Is God not an overflowing Fount of blessings?

Our life: what is it?

Life is that we grasp everyone and everything we have under our dominion and walk singing to the Godhead. That is life.

That life you have is being destroyed from your earliest infancy. You are born dead, but you become deader as you progress in life. Of course I know that this sounds silly. But it is the truth nevertheless. The trouble is that I have to give a name to your present existence on earth in this dispensation of damnation and darkness. And imagine, that existence is called "life." What can I do?

Well, whatever you have when you are born, and with whatever name you allude to it: it is being destroyed from your earliest infancy. Look at a little child in the cradle, and then look, 80 years later, to that godless corrupt human being in your path! What a difference! Of course! That man was being destroyed from day to day.

That is "life."

There is a destroying influence of God upon man. He sins from day to day, and God strikes him and bruises him day after day. And he becomes deader and more corrupt as he goes on. That's the truth!

And the consummation takes place at the judgment day. Then all the wicked souls and bodies, because of their sin and iniquity, shall be further and eternally destroyed in the lake of fire. That is the second death.

But when you are forgiven and healed, that will not happen to you. He redeems you from destruction! That's the Gospel.

And you can tell it day by day.

You are redeemed. That is, you are ransomed, bought, purchased with a price. Jesus was destroyed for you. The great Outcast, roaring between all worlds.

Practically, redemption from destruction means its very opposite. You are not destroyed, but you are edified, built up, restored, quickened, enlivened, brought ever nearer to the loving Bosom of God where you may rest unto all eternity.

It is wonderful to be a Christian! Redeemed, hallelujah!

\* \* \* \*

Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

There are men who chose the most sweetly sounding names in any language. I read a list of such names. The supreme name was "melody." Well, it does sound sweet.

But to me the sweetest sounding word is "lovingkindness."

It is the virtue of God. It tells us that God loves to be kind, that everything in the great God desires to be good to His people whom He loved from before the foundation of the world.

It means that God uses everybody and everything to be good to the elect of God. Even His own Son. He spared Him not.

It means that He rides the heavens to your help and His excellency in the sky. It means that the heavens drop dew upon your weary head. It means that His armies are always fighting for you. Think of the hosts of God around about that city when the prophet's servant was so afraid.

Shall I give you a wonderful example of that sweet virtue of lovingkindness of God? Listen: Peter is cursing and swearing to the soldiers and the maidens. His shrill voice is heard all over the hall: I will be damned if I know Christ, and Jehovah is my witness!

And there comes our lovely Redeemer. And He turns the head and looks at Peter. Peter stares into the depth of that look. Oh, be assured that the look of Jesus was a look of lovingkindness, because at the same moment Jesus said within His heart: Father! do not take faith from Peter!

Now then, that lovingkindness is given to you.

And tender mercies. Tender mercies are the groaning mother as she yearns over the cradle and her sweet child who is burning with fever. That's mercy.

It's compassion in all your agony.

That is given to you. It is worth more than a thousand worlds.

Look at God's children!

They are filled with lovingkindness and tender mercies.

These virtues of God found them and filled them.

O, let our God forever blessed be! 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

### Christian Education In Our Country

In our last issue we discussed some of the principles that are supposed to be the basis of Christian education in the Sunday school as they were adopted by the International Council of Religious Education in 1932.

We did not finish this discussion. There are three more principles. To these we wish to call your attention now.

The fifth principle reads as follows:

"Christian Religious Education seeks to develop in growing persons the ability and disposition to participate in the organized society of Christians, the Church."

We wish to call special attention to the definition that is here given to the Church of Christ: "the organized society of Christians." This definition is, as anyone that has any knowledge of the Church of Christ in the light of Scripture and the Confessions will admit, thoroughly modernistic and Pelagian. A society is a freewill organization established by men, an organization which anyone may and can join, and from which anyone may and can separate himself. But this is not the Church. It is the Body of Christ and is also instituted on earth for the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments. One becomes a member of the Church (of which all the elect are members) not by a freewill act of man, but only by the efficacious grace of God in Christ.

Thus it is expressed in the Westminster Confession, chapter XXV:

"The Catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, and shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Thus, you understand, the Westminster defines the invisible Church. And of the visible Church the same Confession speaks as follows:

"The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as under the law) consists of all those, throughout the world, that profess the true religion, and of their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation."

I could quote more, also from other confessions. But let this suffice.

But the Church is not a society of organized Christians.

The sixth principle reads as follows:

"Christian Religious Education seeks to lead growing persons into a Christian interpretation of life and the universe; the ability to see God's purpose and plan; a life philosophy built on this interpretation."

Of course, the chief question that immediately arises here is: what is the Christian interpretation of life and the universe; is it interpretation of the Bible? And what is the life philosophy based on this interpretation? It is all very vague and general. Those that drew up these principles of education certainly do not mean to adhere to the biblical interpretation of history, of life, and of the universe. That interpretation would be that, according to God's immutable counsel, Christ, the crucified and risen Lord, who received all power in heaven and on earth, stands in the very center of all history. It claims that man sinned and that because of the sin of the first man, Adam, the whole universe is under the curse. It implies that there is redemption and salvation in Christ only. It implies, too, that in the end Christ will come again for the salvation of His own and for the damnation of the wicked, and that, in the day of His coming, He will make all things new.

These things must be definitely taught, not only in the Sunday school, but also in the Church, in the home, and in the school.

But true Christian education cannot be based on such vague and good for nothing principles as the one we just quoted above.

The last of the so-called principles of Christian education reads as follows:

"Christian Religious Education seeks to effect in growing persons the assimilation of the best religious experience of the race, pre-eminently that recorded in the Bible, as effective guidance to present experience."

This is probably the worst of all the seven so-called principles of education.

In the first place, note that also this principle is expressed in very general and vague terms: "assimilation of the best religious experience of the race . . . as effective guidance to present experience." I doubt whether the authors of these seven so-called principles understand themselves what they mean by it and whether they would be able to define their own terms.

What do they mean by religious experience? Do they mean the experience of sin and grace? Do they mean the consciousness of regeneration, the consciousness of faith by which they know that they are in and belong to Christ, that they are justified, that they have the forgiveness of sin and the adoption unto children and heirs of eternal life?

It is evident that they cannot mean this for they also speak of the best experience of the race! And the whole human race certainly does not have the experience of faith in Christ. But what then? I cannot understand the meaning of this so-called principle of education and I doubt very much whether the authors themselves or the Sunday school teacher that is supposed to instruct "growing persons" according to this "principle" can give a clear account of its meaning.

Certain it is, however, that this principle so-called means

to be very general. It speaks of the best religious experience of the race. This means, of course, such religious experience as that of Jew and Gentile: Pharisaism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, etc. Besides, the authors of this seventh principle really place the Bible on a par with the "religious experience" of the heathen writings as may be found in their books. It is true that they claim that the "religious experience" recorded in the Bible is pre-eminent. The Bible is comparatively better than what is found in the books of the heathen authors. Yet, the Sunday school teacher must also attempt to make the pupils assimilate the "religious experience" found in the heathen authors as well as that which is recorded in the Bible. And this also implies the denial of the truth that the Bible is the infallible Word of God.

I pity the Sunday school teacher that must instruct "growing persons" in harmony with this "principle" of religious education.

And I also pity the pupils that must absorb such instruction!

I must still call attention to a few more items as they are mentioned in *Christianity Today*.

One of these items is from the writings of a certain Dr. Mary Alice Jones. We are informed that she "is held in high esteem by her colleagues" and also that she "is director of the Department for Christian Education of Children."

This Dr. Jones wrote a book on the subject "The Faith of our Children." In this book she writes: "The Bible is the Word of God to those who through it hear God speak to them . . . what we are saying is that the text of the Bible as we hold it in our hands may be or may not be the Word of God."

This is pure subjectivism, mysticism, and a denial of the objective written and infallible Word of God.

It is subjectivism for the Bible, according to the view, is not from cover to cover the objective Word of God. Whether it is the Word of God depends entirely on the subject that reads or hears the Bible. If, reading a certain passage of Scripture, the reader hears the Word of God speaking to him, that passage is, to him, the Word of God; if he does not so hear the Word of God in and through that particular passage — well, then it simply is not the Word of God. One may hear the Word of God in Gen. 1 and believe that God created the world in six days; another may not hear the Word of God in this chapter and believe the theory of evolution. One may hear the Word of God when it speaks of the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin; another may not hear this Word of God and deny the virgin-birth. One may hear the Word of God in the Bible when it speaks of the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for our sins; another may not hear this Word of God and maintain that Jesus was the Son of God in the same sense that we all are children of God. It is evident that in this way we have no Word of God in the Bible left.

No wonder that the same Dr. Jones could write: "Let us be careful not to set Jesus off from all other revelations of God . . . he was one in whom sonship of God had been perfected." It is evident that Dr. Jones did not hear the Word of God in the Bible that speaks of His unique sonship.

Again, it is also evident that Dr. Jones never heard the Word of God in the Bible when it speaks of Christ's death as atoning. For, in the same book she writes (I quote from *Christianity Today*):

"With all its goodness and beauty, the life of Jesus ended in the most ignominious death that could be inflicted upon man in his day. He was condemned to be executed, publicly, by crucifixion. How can we interpret this fact to boys and girls? Of course, we shall not tell the little children about the crucifixion of Jesus . . . but after they go to school we could not keep it from them even if we would; so we must be prepared to interpret it to them. The basis of our interpretation must be the fact that people suffer for being good as well as for being bad."

This is supposed to be Christian instruction!

But in reality it is not Christian but heathen!

In all this so-called "Christian Education" there is no mention of sin and guilt and, therefore, no room for atonement. One may just as well adopt the principles of Buddhism instead of such a Christianity. Jesus is a good man. He lived a beautiful life. It is simply a shame that He died such an ignominious death. We are really ashamed to tell little boys and girls about this death of Jesus. If we could, we would avoid it. The children are all so good and innocent. If we explain this death at all we must only instruct them in the moral lesson that men suffer for being good as well as for being bad!

No, Dr. Jones has never heard the Word of God in the Bible that speaks of the atoning death of Christ.

Why not? Certainly not because the Bible does not speak clearly about this central fact. The reason is that she is an unbeliever. But the pity of it is that she is supposed to give leadership in Christian education in the Sunday school.

No wonder she can write as follows about the resurrection of Christ: "We shall be equally unwise, however, if the story of the resurrection is emphasized to the neglect of the simpler phases of the life of Jesus . . . For a life such as his *could not* be ended when his body was broken by sinful men. His life has expressed abiding values, deathless love, and so we may teach our children that Jesus lives today, not because of some isolated wonder-inspiring event, but because there was in his life that quality, that spirit, that is of the very essence of eternity."

Surely, it is evident from this that Dr. Jones never heard in the Bible the Word of God concerning the resurrection of Christ from the dead in spite of the fact that it is so abundantly attested in Holy Writ.

H.H.

## AS TO BOOKS

*The Gospel According to St. John*, by R. V. G. Tasker. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.00.

This volume is one of the series of Tyndale Bible Commentaries. In a preface the author writes that the aim of these commentaries is "to place into the hands of students and serious readers of the New Testament, at a moderate cost, commentaries by a number of scholars who, while they are free to make their own individual contributions, are united in a common desire to promote a truly biblical theology."

As to the general plan of this commentary on the gospel according to St. John, the author has divided the fourth gospel into different sections in order, first, to offer general comments on each section, and this is followed by some exegetical notes on some of the individual texts of the section that is discussed. The book makes very easy reading and the exegesis is on the whole quite sound and biblical. I would have liked a more careful and thorough interpretation of some of the terms of the text. To give just one example of what I mean by this: in the text of John 3:16, "for God so loved the world," I would have expected an explanation of the term "world." For this I looked in vain. The same is true of the same term "world" in John 17:9: "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are thine."

Nevertheless, I am glad to recommend this rather popular commentary to our readers.

H.H.

*The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, by R. P. Matrin. Published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$3.00.

Also this commentary belongs to the Tyndale series mentioned above. After a general introduction in which the author writes about the Church at Philippi, the authorship of the epistle, the time and place of its composition, etc., he offers his commentary of the epistle. This I find rather careful and thorough. I recommend also this volume to our readers.

This does not mean, however, that I agree with all the exegesis that is here offered. Thus, for instance, I must differ with his explanation of chapter 2:12, 13: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The author prefers the interpretation of the term "salvation" in this text as referring, not to the individual salvation of each member, but "to the corporate life of the Philippian church." And "the readers are being encouraged to concentrate upon reforming their church life." This is

far fetched and certainly not in harmony with the Scriptural use of the term "salvation."

But I say this in order to exhort the reader that they must always read critically, even commentaries.

H.H.

*The Epistle to the Romans*, by John Murray. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$5.00.

This is a commentary on the first eight chapters of the epistle to the Romans. It is designed to be a commentary, not only for scholars that are acquainted with the original languages of Scripture, but also for the general reader. Writes the author in a preface: "In accordance with the aim . . . that these commentaries could be freely used by those who are not familiar with the original languages of Scripture, I have consistently refrained from the use of Greek and Hebrew terms in the text of the commentary."

In my opinion, this is the best commentary written in recent times. The style is clear and the exegesis is thorough. I would like to quote a few instances of what I expressed in the preceding sentence. Writing on the well-known section chapter 1:18-32, the author interprets the last clause of vs. 20 as follows: "The concluding clause of vs. 20 may require the rendering given in the version (R.V.H.H.) 'that they may be without excuse,' expressing purpose and not merely result . . . Besides, even if we regard the clause in question as expressing result rather than design, we cannot eliminate from the all-inclusive ordination and providence of God the design which is presupposed in the actual result. If inexcusable-ness is the result, it is the designed result from the aspect of the decretive ordination."

Explaining the much-debated question whether in Rom. 7:14-25 the apostle is speaking of himself as a natural or a regenerate man, the author chooses for the latter interpretation and adduces five reasons or grounds for his explanation and then concludes: "For these reasons we are compelled to conclude that 7:14-25 is the delineation of Paul's experience in the state of grace."

Again, the clause "whom he foreknew" in chapter 8:29 the author rejects the interpretation of those that explain: "God foreknew who would believe; he foreknew them as his *by faith*." Instead he shows from Scripture that the verb *to know* often includes *to love*. And he concludes: "It means 'whom he set regard upon' or 'whom he knew from eternity with distinguishing affection and delight' and is virtually equivalent to 'whom he foreloved.'"

I recommend this commentary to all our readers.

H.H.

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"When the wicked rise men hide themselves; but when they perish the righteous increase." Proverbs 28:28



# OUR DOCTRINE

## THE BOOK OF REVELATION

### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER TWELVE

#### *The Harvest and the Vintage*

#### Revelation 14:14-20

First of all, I would say that our text gives us reason to believe that the elect of God, the church of Christ, will be taken up just before the end. I do not mean from the point of view of time, but rather that of order. There is in our text a reference to a wheat harvest and a vintage, the gathering of grain and the cutting off of the clusters of the vine of the earth. Now there are interpreters who maintain that both these visions refer to the reaping of the wicked, to the worshippers of the beast and his image, and that there is no mention here at all of the removal of God's children from the earth. Naturally, many are forced to adopt this interpretation for the simple reason that they have caused the church to go to heaven at a much earlier period. But these interpreters fail to explain to us why the Lord in that case gives us two visions of such an entirely different nature. The first vision merely speaks of the reaping, but the second leaves immediately the impression of being a harvest of a different nature. In connection with it we read of the altar and of the angel that has power over fire, of the winepress of the wrath of God, and of the blood that reaches up to the horses' bridles. In a word, the first harvest leaves no impression of judgment and vengeance while the second does. Interpreters that refuse to make a distinction fail to explain the fact that we have nevertheless two visions of a different nature. Besides, what we read elsewhere in Scripture gives us reason to maintain that in our text we have reference to the gathering of God's people and of the wicked both. The wheat harvest generally is a symbol that refers to the gathering of God's people. In Luke 3:17 we hear John the Baptist testify of Jesus: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner." True, the figure may be taken as referring to both God's people and the wicked, seeing that there is chaff among the wheat and that the tares have grown up among it. But the purpose of the wheat harvest is nevertheless the gathering of the wheat, not the gathering of the tares or of the chaff. And the gathering of the wheat is a symbol of the removal of God's people from the earth. So also the harvest of the wicked is more than once referred to in the Word of God as the cutting of the grapes and gathering of them in the winepress, to be pressed and trodden. In Joel 3:13 we read: "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow;

for their wickedness is great." And in Isaiah 63:3 we have the vision of the man that cometh from Edom, with blood-stained garments from Bozrah—a passage of Scripture which is so often erroneously quoted as referring to the suffering Servant of Jehovah. There we read: "I have trodden the winepress alone: and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments." Evidently in both these passages we have a picture of the end of the wicked in the symbol of the winepress of the wrath of God. And therefore we may regard it as established that also in our text the distinction is made, and that in the first vision we have a picture of the removal of God's people from the earth, in the second a symbol of the end of the wicked power of Antichrist.

Secondly, we may remark that also this portion teaches us that the people of God shall be removed first. Their removal is mentioned first: the wheat harvest shall be gathered first of all. And although the fact that it is mentioned first in the vision does not at all establish beyond a doubt that thus it shall be in reality, other parts of the Word of God give us the same impression. In chapter 11 of the book of Revelation we found that the two witnesses, representing the church, after their three days of shame and suffering, when they were as outcasts in the world, were called up to heaven and ascended thither. And in Matthew 24:22 the Lord says: "And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." Also this word gives us the same impression. Not history shall be shortened; but for the elect the days shall be shortened. That is, they shall be taken away first of all. Besides, this is practically in the nature of the case. The removal of the wicked shall be a scene of general destruction and upheaval. It shall be a scene in which the people of God may not participate for the simple reason that it is the manifestation of the wrath of God. Hence, they must be removed first. And so the order in which these two visions are given us is supported by other passages of the Word of God. The first harvest is the removal of the people of God. They shall be gathered by the holy angels from the four winds, and they shall leave the scene of their suffering and affliction to enter into glory.

To this may finally be added that also the events that are mentioned in Scripture as being typical of the harvest of the latter days corroborates this view. God sends the flood to destroy the wicked world; but that destruction of the world may not strike His own people. And therefore the destruction does not come till Noah and his people are separated in the ark. God means to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. But again, there are people of God in that city. And the destruction that shall lay the city in ruins may not destroy the people of Jehovah. Hence, the destruction does not begin till Lot is led outside. So it shall be also in the time of the end. Two shall be in bed: the one shall be taken, and the other left. God's people must first be removed; and after

they have been removed, the destruction of the wicked, the harvest of the grapes, may proceed.

We obtain therefore this conception of the future, that there shall be a period — not very long, in fact — but nevertheless a period in which there will be no more people of God in the earth. And it is this period that is utilized to end the existence of the wicked upon the earth. That this is meant to be the vision of the vintage we have already shown. Let us notice in connection with the words of the passage we are now discussing that the reaping of the grapes is symbolic of the gathering of the nations into one place. The clusters of the earth, the various nations and peoples, must be cut, in order that they may be gathered into one place. Notice, in the second place, that the place where they are gathered is the winepress of the wrath of God, a place designated as being outside of the city. And notice, in the third place, that from this juncture the scene changes into one of battle and bloodshed. The grapes are pressed; and as they are pressed blood comes out, so much that it reaches to the bridles of the horses, and that for sixteen hundred stadia, or furlongs. It is, therefore, a tremendous battle that is here pictured. The nations shall finally be gathered for battle, and such a battle as the world has never seen before shall be fought. The winepress of the wrath of God shall be trodden in that place.

But the question is: how can we picture this in reality? You remember our explanation of Jerusalem and the temple in connection with chapter 11. Then we said that the city of Jerusalem at large stood for nominal Christendom in its widest sense, that the outer court stood for the show-church, or the hypocrites in the church, and that only the holy place represented the true people of God. Now what has happened? Jerusalem, as nominal Christianity, still exists. The Christian world is still there, in distinction from heathendom. But it has become the kingdom of Antichrist. Jerusalem is Babylon, the center of the power that opposes the kingdom of God. We must clearly grasp the situation. At the end of time nominal Christianity shall be antichristian. Jerusalem in the outward sense shall be Babylon in character. Still more, the people of God have been removed. The holy place is no more. And therefore, all that is left is outward Christianity, which is in reality the antichristian kingdom. That antichristian power is for a time lording it over all nations. The kingdom of Antichrist is universal. It is also supreme over those other nations that do not belong to the outward Christian world, the nations of heathendom, called Gog and Magog in Scripture. For a time all is well. Gog and Magog, the heathen nations, are ruled over by the outward Christian world, which is in reality antichristian, or outward Jerusalem, which is in reality Babylon. These nations are as yet not aroused, but they never become an integral part of that universal kingdom. They never embrace its cause. They never truly adopt its religion. They remain heathen. And therefore they stand diametrically opposed to the Christian world. For them the kingdom of

Antichrist is still Christianity. And what has already become Babylon is still Jerusalem in the estimation of those nations. That is the situation. There is one universal kingdom. And in that one universal kingdom there is peace for a time, complete peace. But there are two elements in that kingdom nevertheless. In the first place, there is the element of the Christian world, of the civilized nations that have become antichristian. But in the second place, there is also the element of the heathen nations, as, for instance, China and Japan and all that refuse to embrace the cause of Christianity. And they never become an integral part in the kingdom of Antichrist. Now what shall happen in the future? Gog and Magog shall finally be aroused against the Christian nations in the outward sense. You must clearly understand the situation. There are no true Christians any more. No, they have been taken away from the earth. But outward Christianity, outward Jerusalem, still exists for a short time. And that outward Christianity, that nominal Jerusalem, which is in reality Antichrist and Babylon, shall be looked upon by these heathen nations as Christianity itself and as the real Jerusalem. And they shall be aroused. They shall say: "Let us go up to Jerusalem. Let us break loose from the bondage of the Christian nations and destroy them." They think that they strike at the people of Christ, whom they hate. And they shall come against them. And thus the greatest, bloodiest battle of history shall ensue, although, I repeat, all this shall last but a little time in the history of the end. Antichrist shall prepare himself for the battle, shall beat the plowshares again into swords, and shall gather his armies. All the kingdom of Antichrist, all Babylon, shall gather together for the great battle. In their estimation this battle will be the last. It will wipe out heathendom. And the nations of heathendom will do the same. They shall gather their armies and prepare for the battle. And the place where they shall meet will be the winepress of the wrath of the Most High. It will be outside of the city, outside of nominal Jerusalem, outside of Babylon, outside of the Christian world, perhaps in the literal sense of the word. Terrible will be the bloodshed in that battle. In fact, the nations shall destroy one another, and the wrath of God shall tread upon them till they are destroyed completely. For the blood shall form a stream which denotes the completeness of their destruction. It will reach to the horses' bridles and will be sixteen hundred furlongs in length. Sixteen hundred evidently denotes the lifeblood of the world in its completeness. Four is the number of the world. Ten is the number of completeness. Sixteen hundred is forty times forty, and therefore denotes the lifeblood of the whole world. At the same time, the scene already pictured in the sixth trumpet shall be realized. It shall be a day of thick darkness. The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall be changed into blood. Earthquakes and thunder shall add horror, till the entire power of Antichrist and Gog and Magog is actually destroyed.

Let me call your attention to the fact that this is in



harmony with the Word of God in general. Isaiah pictures to us the same scene in chapter 34 of his prophecy. There we read: "Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. For the indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea. And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness." Or a still more vivid picture and graphic description of the last great battle is given in Joel 3:9-17: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more."

Such shall be the order of events. When shall all these things be? Of course, no one knows the day and the hour. But nevertheless it may be said that the picture of the harvest is significant in this respect: it tells us that the harvest must be ripe and that all history must pass through its own necessary process before these things shall be. The church must have been completed. The gospel must have been preached to all men. And the wickedness of the wicked must be full. History must finish its course. And therefore it teaches us that we must not look out of the window in the expectation

that these things shall come tomorrow, or even today. They shall not. First must be the man of sin. The antichristian kingdom must come to complete manifestation. Then must the people of God be oppressed and pushed to the wall, and live as outcasts upon the earth. Then must Gog and Magog be aroused from its sleep and contemplate the great war against the power of Antichrist. And then all things shall come as we are told in Scripture. Christ shall remove His people. He shall stir up the nations against one another. It shall be an awful day. But the people of God shall then be on earth no more. But once more: these things shall not happen tomorrow. They may happen quickly. We are making history fast. Let, then, our eye be fixed on the promise. And let us not be afraid. Christ is our King, and He rules now and forever. And He that sits in the heavens shall laugh. At the last battle of Jehovah He shall gather them all together and tread them in the great winepress of His wrath. Let no one then take our crown; but may we be found faithful even unto the end.

H.H.

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#### ANNIVERSARY

On May 1, 1960, our dear parents,

MR. and MRS. JOHN C. LUBBERS

hope to commemorate their twenty-fifth anniversary.

We give thanks to our heavenly Father, who has spared them for us and each other these many years. Our earnest prayer is that He may further bless them in the way which lies ahead.

Their grateful children:

Mr. and Mrs. Richard VanBalen  
 Mr. and Mrs. Edward Miedema  
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald VanOverloop  
 PFC Gary L. Lubbers  
 Joan Kay Lubbers  
 and 4 grandchildren

Hudsonville, Michigan

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#### IN MEMORIAM

The Mr. and Mrs. Society desire to express their sympathy with our fellow members in the loss of their little daughter

JANICE MARIE

The Lord Jesus heal the deep wound that is made in your hearts, and may you rejoice in the thought that Janice sang His praises so often. May the God of our salvation drop His balm in your sorrowful hearts!

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

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### The Ten Brothers With Benjamin Before Joseph

*And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph. — GENESIS 43:15*

The extended stay of Joseph's brothers in Canaan before returning for more grain to Egypt was not without effect upon them. The longer they stayed the more they thought upon the things that had happened, and the more the conviction grew within them that God was punishing them for the sin that they had committed, especially against their younger brother. Thus, when finally Jacob had granted permission and once again they set out for Egypt, it was with heavy hearts, and their consciences pricked them deeply. They trembled before the hand of God and feared lest their chastisement might become even greater. The purpose of Joseph to lead his brothers in the way of repentance was having its desired effect.

Meanwhile Joseph in Egypt was impatiently waiting their return. It had been hard to send them away without having made himself known. How he would have liked to talk to them as a brother, learning from them all that had happened in his father's house during the years of his absence. Once the brothers had departed, doubts began to assail him even more strongly. Only through constant prayer and supplication could he be maintained in the faith that the way he was treating them was right. Eagerly he counted the days that it would have taken them to travel to Canaan and return, and then he began to scan the market place once again for their faces. His efforts were to no avail, for they did not appear. Almost unconsciously he began to calculate how long their grain supply could have lasted, and again began daily to look for their return. But still they did not appear. Countless days seemed to pass until at last Joseph's courage began to fail. Had he been too severe with them so that they dared not return to his presence? Were they still such untrustworthy men that they would leave Simeon to perish in prison without trying to redeem him? Would his father Jacob rather starve without grain than entrust Benjamin to the care of his brothers? Beset by these questions, Joseph hardly dared any longer to look for their coming, or to hope. Not knowing what he should do, he committed his way unto the Lord, trusting that He would make it right. Finally one day he lifted his eyes and saw them, the nine brothers with another whom he did not recognize, but whom nonetheless he knew. They had come, and Benjamin was with them.

Joseph, not trusting his own self-control, gave directions to the steward of his house to bring the brothers to his home.

Obediently and filled with fear they followed him. Why were they separated so swiftly from the other buyers in the marketplace? Were they to be accused of nonpayment for the grain they had gotten before? Would they be thrown into prison once again? What would happen to their father if they did not soon return? Hastily they began to make explanation. "O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: and it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight, and we have brought it again in our hand. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks." In a quiet, reassuring manner the steward gave answer to them. "Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money."

There are several things in the answer of this steward that are worthy of special note. In the first place, the steward had evidently been taken into the complete confidence of Joseph. Joseph could not have anticipated this concern of his brothers for the money which had been returned and instructed the steward what to reply to their explanation. Nonetheless, the steward by himself was fully capable of presenting them with a wise and discreet answer. In the second place, the steward was evidently a believing child of God. The reference to God, especially as the God of their fathers, implying a recognition of the covenant, rings genuine and sincere. Finally, the answer was well adapted to serve the plan of Joseph. It was a truthful answer, for the steward had had their money; it was he that restored it to their sacks. Nevertheless, the answer did not expose the plan of Joseph. Rather it pointed them again to the all important fact that they were in the hand of God. This they might not be allowed to forget.

Much to the amazement of the brothers, Simeon was immediately brought forth out of prison. They were taken into the house of Joseph, and they were told to prepare themselves to share in his midday meal. Such kindness they could not understand. They had come expecting to be treated harshly again. Instead they were received as the guests of royalty. They were given water to wash their feet, and provender was provided for their asses. When Joseph finally appeared they presented him the presents which they had brought from Canaan and prostrated themselves at his feet, once again fulfilling the dreams of his youth.

For Joseph it was becoming ever more difficult to contain himself. He longed to be able to talk with his brothers openly about their own. Unable to restrain himself, the questions began to pour forth. "Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?" Had the brothers been at ease and alert, they might have questioned the reason for his extreme interest in their father. As it was, they were too confused to do anything but meekly provide the answer. "Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive."

But still Joseph's interest was not satisfied. Turning to Benjamin, he asked, "Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?" But the question needed no answer. Although he had not seen him since he was a very small child, he knew instinctively that this was his brother. His heart went out to Benjamin, his only full brother, and with strained feelings he said, "God be gracious unto thee, my son."

Once more the tension of the moment became too great for Joseph to bear. Turning from his brothers he fled into his chamber and wept. His heart yearned to be able to talk with them in a more natural manner. Only his firm resolve to care for their spiritual lives first, kept him from yielding.

Only after he had once more gained control over his feelings could Joseph return to his brothers. Washing his face to remove all traces of his tears, Joseph commanded that the meal should be served, and returned to the dining hall. Three different tables were set, one for the Egyptians who customarily did not eat with foreigners, one for himself by reason of his rank, and one for the brothers. It was necessary for Joseph to maintain this distance toward his brothers lest the relations should become more intimate than he could bear. One by one he assigned the brothers their place in order of their age from the oldest to the youngest. To the brothers this was amazing for they were all grown men and their differences of age were not very apparent. It only increased the feeling among the brothers that their lives were being controlled by a hand much greater than they could understand. At last Joseph was ready to begin the test he had planned from the beginning, feeling that it was so very important. As the meal was being served he had a portion five times as great as that of the others placed before Benjamin. It was a common sign in that day of special favor. It mattered not whether the person could eat it or not; it singled him out for special distinction. Anxiously he watched the faces of the others. Was there any sign of displeasure? of jealousy or envy? Joseph could detect none. Rather the brothers seemed pleased that Benjamin was received with such favor. The ten brothers ate and drank; their merriment appeared sincere. With relief in his soul Joseph felt more confident than he had for many a day. He was taken up into the merriment of his brothers.

Still Joseph was determined not to be overly hasty in his conclusion. He would prepare one more test, the most difficult of all. It would be the final test, after which his own identity would have to be made known. He called his steward to him and told him to give the men as much grain as they could carry and again restore their money to the mouth of their sacks, for Joseph would not take money from his brothers. In addition he was to place Joseph's silver drinking cup in Benjamin's sack and send the brothers on their way.

Cheerfully the brothers set out on their journey home. Their conversation was more gay and lively than it had been for many a month. The reason for the sudden change of

events they did not know, but they appreciated it just the same. It seemed as if the hand of God's judgment had been lifted from off their souls. However, they had barely left the city when they heard loud shouts coming from behind them. Turning they saw the steward approaching very rapidly. Anger was written across his face as he spoke. "Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing."

Once again a cloud of confusion settled upon the brothers. The dark face of the steward sent quivers of fear into their souls; but they knew not of what he spoke. "Wherefore saith my lord these words?" they answered. "God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing." Had not they proved their honesty? "Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?" As they spoke, confidence returned, and almost rash was their promise. "With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bondsmen." Speedily they alighted from their asses to help the steward in his search.

The steward yielded to their suggestion: "Now also let it be according unto your words." But first there was one qualification which he had to make: "He with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless." Thereupon he began his search. Starting at the oldest he proceeded toward the youngest.

One by one the baggage of each man was opened. Money was found in each one; but the steward had no interest in that. He had eyes only for the silver cup. Gradually the confidence of the brothers grew as the search of each man's belongings in turn failed to produce the cup. Finally only Benjamin's sacks remained, and they were almost gay again. He would be the least likely of them all to perpetrate such a petty theft. But alas when his sacks were opened, there lay the silver cup.

Years or even months before there would have been little question among the brothers as to what to do; they would have left the one against whom the evidence pointed to make his way alone. But now things were quite different. Each man in turn had just passed through a strenuous search of his own soul. Each one felt himself to be the greatest among sinners and not nearly so ready to point his finger at another. They could not believe that this was something that Benjamin had done. Rather, it was the judgment of God resting upon them all.

Rending their clothes in grief, they mounted again their asses and turned back to the city with common consent. As silently they rode together, there went up from each man's soul a prayer that God would forgive, each man his own sin, that the family of Israel be not destroyed.

B.W.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 15

#### V.

(I Corinthians 15:29-34)

#### a.

It is not too easy to determine the exact connection of these verses with the foregoing from the pen of Paul.

There are, in the main, two views concerning this relationship of these verses to the foregoing. There are those who hold that the phrase "else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead" refers to Paul's argument in the verses 20-28, namely, that if Christ is not the first-fruits of them that fell asleep, what shall they do who are baptized for the dead. Others seek the connection between these verses and the foregoing in the general argument of Paul against those who deny that resurrection from the dead.

To our mind it really does not make any essential difference which of these interpretations one chooses. The argument of Paul is not changed in either case. For his argument is clear and lucid. It is an argument with those in the church at Corinth who say that there is no resurrection of the dead. Paul asserts the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the first-fruits and, therefore, he posits the resurrection of those who fell asleep in Jesus.

Had he not shown in the verses 1-11 that he had preached that Christ died according to the Scriptures for our sins, and that he rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures? That thus all the apostles had preached together with Paul, and thus they had believed? And does Paul not thus take his apologetical stand foursquare in the blessed gospel of Christ? Thus the *status quo*, the point of departure of Paul's argument is established.

And in the verses 12-19 Paul had shown the serious consequences of a denial of the resurrection. These were serious consequences for the content of the gospel itself. It would mean that the preaching would be empty, be void of content. If Christ is not raised then faith is empty and we would still be in our sins. It would have the serious consequence that the preachers of the gospel are false-witnesses. They would then, as eye-witnesses, simply be bold pretenders. They would claim to have seen what they never did see, if Christ is not raised. And it would, thirdly, have the very serious consequence that we are still in our sins. Then those who died in Christ have perished. And we are of all men most miserable.

In the verses 20-28 Paul has shown positively from the Scriptures the grand implication and significance of the resurrection for the unfolding of the counsel of God, in which resurrection all things become subjected or subdued to God, and God is all in all!

Now one may argue that the phrase "otherwise what shall they do who are baptized for the dead" is a continuation of the thought in the verses 20-28 or that it is a picking up of the thread in the verses 12-19. In either case it is difficult to show the logical connection. According to Dr. Kling in Lange's *Commentary* on I Corinthians, Stanley remarks that we have here "... one of the most abrupt (transitions) to be found in Paul's Epistles."

It would seem that this very sudden transition of thought from verse 28 to verse 29 is not a logical one. We hold that this is a *psychological* transition. Paul suddenly reverts to the main argument in this entire chapter from verses 1-34. It is the *that* of the resurrection. Not the manner of the resurrection is at issue. That follows on the part of scoffers. But the very fact of the resurrection.

The point of departure of Paul here is therefore against the background of the assertion of the scoffers that there is *wholly* no resurrection of the dead. The dead rise not *at all*, so the unbelievers contend. Such were the evil communications that corrupt good manners, sound Biblical ethics.

Against these is Paul's apologetic!

And he does it masterfully in verse 29, where we read: "Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead rise wholly not, why are they baptized in behalf of them?"

There are various attempted interpretations concerning the phrase, "those who are baptized for the dead." We shall here present a few of them. We should bear in mind that according to A. T. Robertson in his *Word Pictures In The New Testament* this phrase "remains a puzzle." He tells us that Stanley gives thirteen interpretations of this passage, and that over thirty have been suggested. Obviously all cannot be what Paul had in mind in this phrase under consideration. Neither do we intend to give them all. We shall only give the more representative views of this phrase.

We believe that the first interpretation meriting our attention is the one given by Dr. Kling. Writes he: "The simplest explanation of the act here spoken of, is the suffering of one's self to be baptized for the benefit of deceased persons, or in their stead, so as to redound to their advantage, i.e., that the salvation mediated by baptism, might fall to their lot, so that those who themselves died unbaptized, might pass for baptized, and thus have part in the resurrection and in the kingdom of Christ." And he adds: "A custom of this sort is discoverable in subsequent times; yet, however, only among heretical sects, such as the Cerinthians and the Marcionites."

Niander writes: "We might imagine that many, having come to the exercise of faith, resolved to receive baptism, but died ere the rite could be performed. This was so much the more likely, inasmuch, as according to chapter 11:30 there was an epidemic prevalent. If, then, a relative had suffered himself to be baptized in the conviction that he was only

doing what the deceased would have done had he survived, the proceeding would not be quite so superstitious."

There is really none who hold that Paul in citing this rite, which was evidently known to the Corinthians (otherwise the argument here would have not force) thereby also validates it as a custom in the church. It is interesting to note that such interpreters as Meyer, Alford and others, point to the fact that Paul uses the third person plural in the text. Otherwise what shall *they* do who are baptized for the dead. Dr. Bisping considers the "third person" in what shall "*they* do" as an indirect intimation of disapproval. Thus also Meyer.

There is also yet the view of Lightfoot to consider. With him agrees the view of Rosenmüller, and Robinson follows the view of Lightfoot in his N. T. Greek Lexicon. This view takes "those who are baptized" (baptizomenoi) in the sense of "being immersed in sufferings" as parallel to "being in jeopardy" in the next clause in verse 30. It then refers to all the saints as they are overwhelmed with calamities, trials and sufferings in the hope of the resurrection, or with the expectation that the dead shall rise. (See Lange *Series Commentary*.)

There are other interpretations which are not essentially different from these which we have caused to pass in review. Thus there is the explanation of Barnes who follows the Greek Fathers, which takes the baptism here alluded to as that which is applied to all the believers, who, in receiving the rite, witness to their faith in the resurrection. Thus we could paraphrase the phrase, "those baptized in behalf of the dead," by "those who are baptized in behalf of their faith *in the resurrection* of the dead."

It is our considered opinion that most of the explanations attempt to not allow the apostle to say what he actually says.

In the first place it should be noticed that Paul literally speaks of those "who are baptized for the dead." The force of the preposition in Greek (*huper*) means in behalf of, in stead of. And the fact that Paul does not say what shall "*we* do" but rather what shall "*they*" do who are baptized for the dead rather indicates that Paul has definite people in mind who have done this for definite dead. And that Paul asks the question of these Corinthians tacitly assumes that this rite was well known to them.

In the second place it seems to be the natural sense of the words that this baptism was for those who had already died, but were now no longer living. Those interpretations which seek to insert for "the resurrection of the dead" really do so contrary to the plain meaning of the term. There is really nothing in the context to suggest it.

It is for these reasons that we hold with the interpretation of Dr. Kling and Niander. (See above.)

The meaning of Paul then is quite clear. He is answering the contention of those who hold that the "dead rise wholly not." And that would imply that death as our "enemy" would

never be destroyed. Death would have a complete and total victory. All would go to the grave, Christ included. None would ever come forth. The gospel is empty, the preaching is vain, the apostles are false witnesses of God and we are still in our sins. All that fell asleep in Jesus are perished. There is no hope. We are all without God in the world. We simply go down into death and hell.

Such is the position of the deniers of the resurrection.

Now Paul will elicit a very strong argument from the facts of life, from the hope of those who actually live in it. Let it be true that this ritual of being baptized in behalf of the dead had in it the elements of superstition and that it was not founded upon an ordinance and institution of Christ. It is a rite with which the Corinthians are acquainted. And he asks them in effect: How do you account for it? What is its meaning? That too is then vain, even in this form. But since Christ is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep, even this rite proves that in the mind of these who have themselves baptized for the dead, it is the clear understanding that these dead shall rise. Otherwise why would they have themselves baptized for them?!

This form of argumentation is an argumentation from pointing to resurrection hope in action.

There is a reason, a rationale in this.

Paul does not hold it forth as something which must be emulated by the skeptics. Nowhere in Scripture is such a rite advocated or taught. Paul only brings it forward as an evidence of resurrection faith. That is the truth even in this wrong custom and rite.

And as such it is an argument that has weight. It proves that these people believe the resurrection, and live in the silent hope of seeing their dear ones in the resurrection morning. Ultimately not even the skeptic can rid himself of the fact that he will not cease to exist. The entire world somehow betrays the fact that God has made man originally after his image, and that for man the grave is not the end. The dead will rise.

Only here Paul is speaking of the blessed resurrection.

Life has not any meaning and has no end without the hope of resurrection. The denial of the resurrection is the death-blow to all Christian heroism and all Christian ethics and striving for perfection.

The slogan "let us eat, let us drink and be merry" is the only other alternative if we deny the resurrection.

But such have not the knowledge of God.

G.L.

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"For to the man that pleaseth him God giveth good wisdom, and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and heap up, that he may give to him that pleaseth God." Ecclesiastes 2:26.

## IN HIS FEAR

### And What About The Children?

(2)

"We propose that our Synod send a letter . . . which contains, among other things, the following: 1. A request that our two denominations be reunited only upon the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity . . ."

"We do urge Synod . . . To propose . . . that . . . the three points should not be made a binding document and a standard for church unity; but that contact be sought on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity alone . . ."

"The Consistory . . . comes to your gathering with the earnest plea . . . That our two denominations be reunited on the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity . . ."

What do such statements mean?

It is quite evident what the statements as such mean. The Church of God must be united on the basis of the Word of God and of the Three Forms of Unity, the Heidelberg Catechism, The Netherlands Confession and the Canons of Dordrecht. The Word of God is and must be the rule of our life and the basis for our church affiliation. But there are hundreds upon hundreds of ways in which the Infallible Word of God is interpreted. And we believe that the only correct and Divinely approved interpretation is the one you will find in the Three Forms of Unity. To adopt anything more than that is to adopt the lie. To deny any part of that is to deny a part of the truth. And churches that agree that these Three Forms of Unity are the pure and unadulterated interpretation of the Word of God not only may but by all means must join together as one denomination. We find no fault therefore with the statements above as far as their literal expression is concerned. Would to God that our denomination could and would join with this same denomination referred to above, the Christian Reformed Church, upon the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity. The angels in heaven would rejoice in that, and we would with them.

But when we ask the question, What does that mean? we are speaking in the full consciousness that something new has been added which is not simply an additional interpretation of some unexplained or partially explained phase of the truth of Scripture not sufficiently covered by the Three Forms of Unity, but as something that conflicts with the doctrine of those Three Forms and means a denial of it and of the Scriptures upon which they are based.

That is the sad yet very real state of affairs.

What can it mean then, in light of this fact, that reunion is sought upon the basis of the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity? In itself it could mean a demand that the three points be retracted and declared to be the lie and on that basis reunion could be realized upon the basis of the

Word of God and the Confessions. However this is not the case at all. Those who left us have no doubt in their minds that this will not be accomplished. The Contact Committee gained absolutely nothing in that respect at all. But instead concern has been expressed and published that the committee yielded and embraced that lie, at least in part. Which indeed is the case. When upon that background the statements are made and advice to the classis and synod is submitted that a reunion be realized upon nothing more than the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity, then that becomes a very big question to ask, What does that mean?

Does it mean, You let us in without signing those three points and we promise not to agitate against them? You demand nothing more of us than that we declare that we believe the Word of God, as interpreted in the Three Forms of Unity, to be the true and perfect doctrine unto salvation, and we promise not to argue about your three points? We will let you believe what you wish about the grace of God if only you let us also believe what we wish about that grace. We can still be united on all the rest. And we will bring our children to you to be taught, and we will not contradict what you teach them. We promise not to interfere with your work amongst our children and grandchildren, if only you let us have your church roof over us. What is under that roof, we do not agree with, surely not wholeheartedly; but to be under your roof we desire, and our children better look out for themselves. If they can harmonize the three points with the Three Forms of Unity and Scripture, we will not argue with them either. We promise you, you please promise us.

Is there any possibility that this plea will be heeded?

Time alone will tell. No one at present is in a position to say whether such a door is to be made through the "three-points-wall" or not. It surely is in the realm of the probable. There may be an assist from another faction in the denomination, one that seeks the same thing from a different angle and for a different reason.

But reunion on that basis is impossible.

In the abstract such a reunion can be made. Tolerance of divergent views can be practiced. An undenominational attitude can be practiced even in a denomination. People with fiercely opposing views can be very democratic in their church life and respect the other fellow's opinion without believing a part of it. The spirit of "live and let live" even seems quite the teaching of Jesus Himself.

But before God such a reunion may not be accomplished. In His fear there is union only on the truth. And those who believe the three points to be the truth of the Word of God must before God's face and for conscience' sake demand it of every single member who comes to reside under the roof of that church. And those who before God are convinced that this is the lie may not be silent about it, may not—as we said last time—subject their children to it and support it with their contributions and presence. The very desire to keep silence, and the promise of either side to keep silence



and to tolerate the other view is to militate against these very Three Forms of Unity and the Word of God. Articles XXVII through XXIX of the Netherlands Confession have something very definite to say about this matter of reunion and ought to be read thoughtfully and carefully by all who fear that reunion and rebel in their souls at the very thought.

Besides, there is a denomination that subscribes to the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity that does not have the three points and will never demand signing them of you. In fact they will ask you to repudiate them instead of confess them. And you need not raise that argument that they have the Declaration of Principles. This they do have but not as a fourth form, and not as something that contradicts and denies the Scriptures of the Three Forms of Unity. And its strong stand in regard to these three points of "common grace" ought to please you highly and assure you that in these churches the desire to preach and maintain the truth of God's Word still, by His grace, is to be found. We suggest that you read once again that document, and we assure you that you will not need to sign it to be a member in our denomination. But it will reveal to you what is being taught in our churches. And it will give you an idea of what your children and grandchildren will be taught in these churches.

In His fear, before God's face is there any acceptable reason why you should not seek for a church roof those churches that still repudiate the three points and all the practices which have sprung forth by their adoption, defense and acceptance as the rule of life?

What of the future? Let us assume that congregations are taken into the Christian Reformed denomination intact, but the congregation has no minister. She calls one from the greater denomination. But on what basis? Remember that entering in through the gate of not being bound by the three points, no agitation against this theory may be voiced or practiced. You have not signed, but your new minister has, and he is full of that doctrine. Will you really find a reunion or a resumption of the old battle? And the individual who enters through that door, if he does not find a resumption of the battle will find that it is due only to the fact that he has changed and that he was more concerned with a church roof than the truth after all. And the ministers . . . ?? To be accepted and to be welcomed, will they be able to be positive or evasive? Will they have a message or struggle for forty-five minutes to avoid a message, to please man or to please God? Dr. Peter Y. De Jong, in the *Torch and Trumpet* of April, 1960, writes on page four, "As long as the substance of the decisions of 1924 is regarded as suspect by the Protestant Reformed brethren, serious consideration on their part to reunion with the Christian Reformed Church appears very unlikely. Should unanimity of 'emphasis' be required, all hope of reunion will vanish like summer morning mist." Will these ministers agree with Dr. De Jong that this matter of "common grace" is not an essential but a difference of emphasis? Then it has not been a reunion on the basis of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity but on

the basis of accepting the Arminian emphasis of the three points. We say again, Reunion on the basis of the Word of God and the Confessions is impossible between a group that denies the theory of "common grace" because it is contrary to the Scripture and Confessions and a group that holds to these three points as the proper interpretation of Scripture and the Confessions.

Or does it mean that once inside the Christian Reformed Church through the door of non-binding-three points it is yet your intent to oppose that theory of "common grace" and to continue to warn your children against it? To ask to be allowed to come in without signing the three points is one thing, to deny those in their own church the right to maintain and propagate their view is quite another thing. In His fear we advise you to be honest with the Christian Reformed brethren. They have a right to know and to ask you before you join what you are going to do and promise to do in regard to the instruction they will give to your children. Entering in by their good graces without agreeing to anything more than the statement that you subscribe wholeheartedly to the truth of Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity, you will have to concede their right to their own interpretation of that Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity. And you know that their interpretation is expressed in their three points. To substantiate those three points they quote from the Scripture and the Confessions. You may not deny them the right to teach in their own sphere what they believe to be the truth. And you do not simply *come in* without signing. Consider that those three points are not simply a wall through which you must enter and having entered you are through with them. They are the whole city behind that wall. All within the city is characterized by those three points. We say again, Be honest with the Christian Reformed brethren. You want to be in the city, under the whole roof and not simply get through a wall. Be sure for God's sake that you enter for the good of His Church. Be sure for your own sake that you enter for your spiritual well-being and growth in faith and righteousness. Be sure for your children's sake and their faith and covenant joy. Be sure for the Christian Reformed brethren's sake so that you deal honestly with them and seek their good and peace and prosperity.

If in His fear, if before God's face you cannot and may not repudiate the statements that separate us since 1953 and confess that you have been deceived, then be sure that you belong in that city built upon the three points and consider that this theory of "common grace" is more than a wall. It is the whole city. If you belong in that city, seek to get in as soon as possible. Only go through the gate in broad daylight and only because you believe that there and there alone will you live and thrive to the praise of the glory of God's grace. Only because there and there only your children will grow up in His fear and thrive as covenant seed. Do not deceive yourselves, and do not try to deceive the Christian

(Continued on page 355)

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

#### VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

#### FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

It is indeed an historical fact that the Scriptures have been made of no account wherever the authority of tradition has been admitted. As soon as tradition and decrees of churches are viewed as having equal value and authority with the Word of God, or as soon as people simply accept the decrees and decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies, the inevitable result will be that the masses will become increasingly ignorant of the Word of God. It is true that we, too, have our Confessions. However, our Confessions must never be regarded as having equal authority with the Bible. Our Confessions must never serve any other purpose than to lead us to the Scriptures. They must never be received and venerated apart from them. They must never stand next to the Word of God, but are always to be approached as the expression of the faith of the Church of God in the truths of that Word, and must therefore always be interpreted in the light of Scripture.

Finally, we have the following observations. Why does Rome insist on its doctrine of Tradition? Rome surely does not maintain the authority of traditions because it would maintain the truths of the Word of God. On the one hand, it is surely a fact that the Romish Church corrupts and distorts the fundamental truths of the Word of God. And, on the other hand, Tradition is not necessary to maintain the Scriptures. Rome needs traditions exactly because it would maintain and teaches doctrines which are not taught in the Word of God. We do not need traditions to maintain doctrines such as: the Divine creation of all things as by the Word of His power and by the breath of His mouth, the advent of sin into the world and the depravity of the sinner, the coming of Christ and His atoning suffering and death, His resurrection and ascension, the Divine institution of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, the power and efficacy of Divine grace, the return of Christ upon the clouds of heaven, etc. Rome needs traditions exactly because it would maintain doctrines such as: the infallibility of the pope, the pope as the successor of Peter, the worship of Mary, the seven sacraments, the Popish mass, justification not solely by faith but also by works, etc. Rome must have its traditions, not because it would maintain the Word of God but because it defends teachings that are foreign to the Word of God.

And, Rome's conception of traditions is surely contrary to the Word of God. Never does our Lord Jesus Christ quote anything except from the Old Testament Canon, and completely exclusive of the Apocryphal books. And in the Scriptures Rome's doctrine of Tradition is clearly denied by such passages as Matt. 15:3, 9, I Cor. 4:6, Isaiah 29:13, and Rev. 22:18-19. Permit us to quote the first and last of these passages. We read in Matt. 15:3, 9: "But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God by your tradition? But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men." And in Rev. 22:18-19 we read: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

We conclude our discussion of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Tradition with one more observation: we can speak of traditions in a good sense of the word. Rome, we know, interprets Tradition as a doctrine which has been handed down by the apostles and preserved and definitely confirmed by the bishops and especially by the pope. This conception, we have noted, is untenable. However, we do well to remember that also the Bible is a book that has been written in past ages and under various historical circumstances. The different books of the Word of God bear the character of the times in which they were written. How plain the Word of God may be as far as the doctrine of salvation is concerned, and how true it may be that the Bible is and remains the Word of the living God, the various historical and geographical features of the different times should always be borne in mind. Tradition, in the good sense of the word, is the interpretation of the eternal truths in the language and life of a present generation.

#### THE RIGHT AND POWER TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE.

We will recall that the two main principles of the Reformation of the sixteenth century are the formal and the material principles. The formal principle implies that the Reformers acknowledged but one source of authority: the Holy Scriptures. With this principle they stood opposed to Roman Catholicism, False Mysticism, and to Rationalism. Over against the Roman Catholic Church the Reformers rejected everything as having authority except the Word of God, whereas Roman Catholicism also acknowledged Tradition as a source of authority. To this we have now called attention. Another point of difference between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism was that the Roman Catholic Church claimed that the right and power to interpret the Bible belonged to the Church, i.e., the clergy, whereas the

Reformers maintained the principle that every Christian is able and has the right to interpret the Word of God.

Protestantism, of course, sets forth the principle that the Holy Scriptures, consisting of the Old and New Testaments, and exclusive of the Apocryphal Books, are in themselves the one and only rule of faith and of life. In the Formula of Concord, a Lutheran confession, adopted toward the close of the sixteenth century, we read in Article 1 the following: "We believe, confess, and teach that the only rule and norm, according to which all dogmas and all doctors ought to be esteemed and judged, is no other whatever than the prophetic and apostolic writings both of the Old and of the New Testaments, as it is written (Psalm 119:105): 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.' And St. Paul saith (Gal. 1:8): 'Though an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed.' But other writings, whether of the fathers or of the moderns, with whatever name they come, are in nowise to be equalled to the Holy Scriptures, but are all to be esteemed inferior to them, so that they be not otherwise received than in the rank of witnesses, to show what doctrine was taught after the Apostles' times also, and in what parts of the world that more sound doctrine of the Prophets and Apostles has been preserved." — end of quote.

Also the Westminster Confession of Faith, the English Protestant Confession and adopted in 1647, expresses itself on this subject, as in Articles 1-7, 9-10, and we quote: "Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation; therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; which maketh the holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased . . . Under the name of holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testament, which are these, etc. All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life . . . The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon of the Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings . . . The authority of the holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the Author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God . . . We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem

of the holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts . . . The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word; and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed . . . All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear to all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them . . . The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly . . . The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." — end of quote from the Westminster Confession of Faith. We should note that this Westminster Confession of Faith declares in Art. 7 that "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, *that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them* (italics ours). And in Art. 9 we read that the Scriptures must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly. And the idea, of course, is that the Scriptures must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly by all the people of God and not only by the learned. The Lord willing, we will continue with this in our following article.

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. Who teach: That without a special revelation we can have no certainty of future perseverance in this life. For by this doctrine the sure comfort of the true believers is taken away in this life, and the doubts of the papist are again introduced into the church, while the Holy Scriptures constantly deduce this assurance, not from a special and extraordinary revelation, but from the marks proper to the children of God and from the constant promises of God. So especially the Apostle Paul: "No creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. 8:39. And John declares: "And he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he gave us." I John 3:24.

We have no significant corrections to make in the above rendering of this article. However, apart from our usual remark that the Scriptural quotations should consistently follow the Authorized Version, we have a few minor corrections which may at the same time serve to make the article a bit clearer and more emphatic. 1) The first sentence is more emphatic in the original: "That no certainty of future perseverance can be had in this life without a special revelation." 2) The second sentence is: "For by this doctrine the solid comfort of the true believers in this life is taken away, and the doubt of the papists (literally: those adhering to, or pertaining to the pontificate) is reintroduced in the Church." 3) The third sentence is more literally: "Indeed the Holy Scriptures throughout derive this assurance, not from a special and extraordinary revelation, but from the proper marks of the sons of God and from the most faithful promises of God." In connection with the last phrase we may remark that the Dutch translates by "*de zeer standvastige beloften Gods*." The original Latin has: "*constantissimis Dei promissionibus*." The idea is not that of constant in the sense of "repeatedly given," but constant in the sense of "unchanging, steadfast, immovable, faithful." And this is emphasized: these promises are "most faithful."

This is a very peculiar article, or rather, the article speaks of an error which is very peculiar and strange in the mouth of the Arminians. But perhaps it is not so strange that heretics would use one error, or even to a certain extent make an appeal to one truth, in order to defend and cover up

their fundamental error. For this is what they do in the present instance by their statement that no certainty of future perseverance can be had in this life without a special revelation. Let me attempt to make this plain.

In order to do this, I must point out, first of all, that it is certainly not the intent of the Arminians to maintain that the certainty of future perseverance is possible as a general rule, that is, for all believers. They would perhaps maintain that there were a few believers who attained this certainty, and who did so by means of a direct and personal revelation from God. They almost had to maintain this, that is, that there were at least some of the saints in the past who had this assurance, in the light of Scripture. For there surely were saints who were told that they were saved and that they would be saved, and who through God's direct Word to them had this assurance. They also spoke of this assurance. Nevertheless the Arminian would maintain that this is the rare exception. And his general tenet is that the certainty of future perseverance is impossible, that it is by no means everyone who can say with the apostle Paul, "I am persuaded that . . . no creature shall be able to separate me (us) from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The general purpose of the Arminian is to teach that perseverance is not certain, but conditional and uncertain, and that therefore the certainty of future perseverance is impossible. Yet consider now that in the article under discussion he nevertheless posits the possibility of such assurance of future perseverance, concedes it at least by implication, though he hastens to add that it is possible only by special revelation. And he does this all with the intent of destroying the general truth. That is a very wicked and corrupt business, a playing around with the truth!

Consider, in the second place, that the Arminian very piously makes an appeal to the idea of special revelation here. Of course, even this he corrupts, as we shall see presently; but nevertheless he attempts to make such an appeal. He means, of course, to say that no one could possibly know and be assured of the fact that he will persevere to the end unless God Himself directly and personally told him so. Again, I remind you in the meantime that the Arminian does not want to teach that God as a rule thus assures His people. The very opposite is the case, according to him. Nevertheless this is a piece of hypocritical piety. For by implication he presents matters as if perseverance and the assurance of perseverance are after all God's doing, and as if after all only God therefore can supply such certainty of future perseverance. The Arminian does this and is compelled to do this because the Scriptures plainly teach that there were saints who had such assurance and who indeed received that assurance from God Himself, just as His people always do. But mark you well, that is not the Arminian doctrine at all. The Arminian does not teach that God is the author of our perseverance and of the assurance thereof. The very opposite is true. Perseverance, according to him, is dependent upon the will of man; and man is the real author

of his own perseverance. Hence, also, according to the Remonstrant, the only assurance of perseverance there is that which depends on a changeable and uncertain condition. That is the Arminian position as to the assurance of election, and it is also his fundamental position as to the assurance of perseverance. Perseverance the work of God? God the author of assurance of future perseverance? The Arminian wants nothing of it! Special revelation, whose author is divine? The Arminian does not acknowledge it or its authority. That, by the way, is quite basically characteristic of Arminianism also today—I mean not only in regard to this particular error in Article 5, but generally in regard to the truth of the Word of God. After all, the most basic fault of Arminianism is that it will not bow before the Word of God, will not acknowledge its authority. If it did, to put it somewhat paradoxically, Arminianism would become Reformed. The Arminian would then acknowledge the same truth we do: for the authority of that truth is the Word of God, God Himself. And so the peculiar thing comes to pass that you find so many so-called fundamentalists, who as a general rule are Arminian, who wage a continual warfare against modernism's denial of the infallible authority of the Scriptures, but who themselves—when it comes to the content and teaching of those Scriptures—refuse to bow before its authority. It reminds one somewhat of what the Lord Jesus said of the scribes and Pharisees that “sit in Moses’ seat.” He warned: “All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.” They attempt to lay upon the shoulders of the modernist the burden of acknowledging the authority of Holy Writ; but they themselves will not move that burden with one of their fingers! To put it otherwise, when Arminian fundamentalism accuses modernism of denying the authority of the Scriptures, it is truly a case of the pot calling the kettle black. Let Reformed people beware of those who like to say, “The Bible says . . .,” and, “Jesus says . . .,” but who after all deny the teachings of Scripture. They are deceitfully dangerous!

But, in the third place, the Arminian, by implication at least, propounds a false idea of special revelation here. He makes the false mystic his theological bed-fellow. The false mystic is characterized by a belief in so-called special revelations rather than in the only “special revelation” of the Word of God, of which Holy Scripture is the written record. He believes that God speaks, apart from the Scriptures as such, by inner whisperings of the Spirit and by dreams and visions and special signs and heavenly interventions. And he can sometimes concoct the most weird “revelations” imaginable. But this is not the peculiar trait of Arminianism at all. Arminianism is rationalistic: its position is arrived at in the way of mere human reason, and it exalts human reason above the Word of God. Mysticism lives by feeling, inward enlightenment, special revelations. And yet it is

again not so strange that Arminian rationalism and false mysticism go to bed together. For they are fundamentally agreed in their denial of the authority of the only “special revelation” of Holy Scripture. And so it is not unusual either, practically speaking, to find a tendency toward such false mysticism in many Arminian circles.

We could not refrain from the above observations in connection with the underlying tone of the error treated in this article. Now, however, let us return more directly to the matter at hand.

The error that is rejected here we have already treated in the remarks made above. We need not say more on that score.

We must, however, still give our attention to the answer of the fathers.

First of all, they point to the very serious, practical, spiritual consequence of this view. For they say: “For by this doctrine the solid comfort of the true believers is taken away, and the doubt of the papists is again introduced into the church.” This is not difficult to understand. The Arminians set a standard of assurance which it was impossible to attain: a special revelation was made necessary. But even according to the Arminians it was only a specially privileged few who ever received such a special revelation. They were the exception, not the rule. The vast majority of believers never received and never would receive such a special revelation. Hence, if it be true that assurance of future perseverance is possible only by a special revelation, and if it be true that the believer must look for such assurance in the way of such a special revelation, then the vast majority of believers, even according to the Arminian position, can never attain the solid comfort of such assurance. But the fathers go a step farther. They maintain that then no one of the true believers can ever have the solid comfort of this assurance: it is taken away. In other words, if one must look all his lifetime for such a special revelation of the certainty of his future perseverance, he will look absolutely in vain, and therefore he will never have the solid comfort of that assurance. The Arminian position in itself takes away that solid comfort. And the Arminian argument that such assurance is possible only by special revelation takes away that solid comfort. The believer is adrift in the sea of doubt, with no anchor for his faith and hope.

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

### In His Fear

(Continued from page 351)

Reformed Church. No good can come from that. Unite on their basis or continue a separate existence. But better still, reunite with us in the repudiation of all well meaning offers of salvation to all who hear the preaching of the gospel and all conditional promises to all who hear that preaching of the gospel. In His fear what other course is open to you? May God grant the grace and courage and the joy of such a reunion.

J.A.H.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Precedents Considered

*"Instructions concerning matters to be considered in major assemblies shall not be written until the decisions of previous synods touching these matters have been read, in order that what was once decided be not again proposed, unless a revision be deemed necessary."*

— Article 46, D. K. O.

It would seem that the reason for the ruling expressed in the above article of the Church Order must be found in the principle expressed in the thirty-first article of this same body of rules. There it is stated that "whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding unless . . . etc." What is once decided stands. Decisions of ecclesiastical bodies are not made to be changed although revision of these decisions is neither impossible nor improper. The underlying idea, however, is that after serious and prayerful deliberation and decision concerning a given matter, that particular matter, if brought up again at a later time, ought not to be decided otherwise unless there are very cogent reasons for doing so.

The main purpose of Article 46, however, is not to express the "binding" character of ecclesiastical decisions. This was expressed with sufficient clarity in Article 31 and it would be quite needless to repeat that here. Rather, the idea is exactly to avoid needless repetition in the ecclesiastical assemblies that the rule of Article 46 is introduced in our Church Order. This is a good rule. If a certain matter has once been decided, it can serve no good purpose to have that same thing brought up again and again to consume valuable time in discussion and debate at the major assemblies of the churches. Before such a matter then may reappear on the agenda, the past decisions regarding the point in question must first be read and then, unless it is evident that there is a good reason that the matter should be reconsidered, the matter is to be dropped. Such is the meaning of Article 46 today.

Originally, this article of our Church Order had a different intent. Like the preceding article, it arose at a time when copies of the decisions of the Synods were not very plentiful. The Acts of Synod were not printed and made available at a nominal cost to any interested member of the church. Even all the Consistories did not have in their possession a copy of the decisions of the Synods. It is said that it was customary for the clerk of the Synod to read the decisions of the assembly and the delegates would copy them and take them home with them. As a result of this it would frequently happen that a Consistory would unknowingly bring a matter to the Classis which had already been acted upon by a former Synod. If the Classis did not happen to

be aware of this, it would proceed to treat the matter and it would then go through to the Synod and thus result in endless duplication of effort. To avoid this the rule was adopted that before matters were placed on the Synodical Agenda by the Classes, the minutes of the previous Synods had to be read. At first this was not too difficult to do because, as a rule, the minutes were not involved and there were not too many of them. However, as time moved on this became more and more of a practical impossibility and so the rule was modified to read that only those decisions "touching upon the matter" had to be read. Today this is no longer because every consistory member receives a copy of the Acts of Synod and can and should consult the previous decisions before sending any matter to Classis and Synod. Our major assemblies need not be burdened with the lengthy reading of Synodical decisions. This is time consuming and entirely unnecessary. The principle underlying this rule, however, remains and that is that former decisions by ecclesiastical bodies may not be ignored when new decisions are made with regard to the same matter. Precedent decisions have weight. A decision once made is of significance not only for the church of today but for the future as well. The decisions of the church are not made to be buried in oblivion or to be contradicted and overthrown at random by later assemblies but rather to be enforced and maintained.

All of this does not mean that matters may not be reconsidered or that decisions may never be reversed. That would be the case only if and when it could be established that Synods or Classes are infallible. This, however, is not the case. When mistakes then are made by the assemblies of the church, it is always in the best interests of the churches that these be corrected as soon as possible. This must be done in an orderly manner so that confusion and disrespect of the ecclesiastical bodies may be carefully avoided.

Quite correctly the 51st Article of the Christian Reformed proposed revision of the Church Order expresses the intent of Article 46 for our present day when it states: "Matters once decided upon by major assemblies shall not be resubmitted for consideration and action unless a revision is requested. For such suggested revisions grounds must be given."

### The Synod

*"(Every year (or if need be oftener) four or five or more neighboring classes shall meet as a particular synod, to which each classis shall delegate two ministers and two elders. At the close of both the particular and the general synod, some church shall be empowered to determine with advice of classis, the time and place of the next synod.)"*

— Article 47, D. K. O.

One may wonder somewhat why this article and the two following appear in our Church Order in parentheses. The reason for this is obviously that they deal with a matter that



is non-existent in our churches, namely, the matter of particular synods. We have only a general synod. Particular synods have not been introduced and it is not until Article 50 that the Church Order speaks of the general synod. Consequently, the content of Articles 47-49 inclusive does not really concern us and we will, therefore, but briefly comment upon their content.

As the names themselves indicate, the difference between a Particular and General Synod is that one is broader in scope than the other. The Particular Synod receives delegates from a limited number of Classes while all of the Classes of the denomination are represented in the General Synod. When a denomination of churches becomes very large, particular synods may be instituted although this is not absolutely necessary. The ecclesiastical structure is really complete with consistories, classes and synod.

As to the origin of Particular Synods, we may state that they began already as early as 1568 in the Netherlands. At least the Convention of Wezel in that year advised the institution of these synods and three years later the Synod of Emden decided that there should be three such particular synods. These were to be located, one in Holland, one in Germany and one in England and the reason for this selection was that refugees from the Reformed Churches had been dispersed mainly in these three countries. Later, however, when the persecutions subsided and the churches became more settled, it was decided to limit each particular synod to four or five classes. In 1905 an added stipulation was made that the particular synods, with minor exceptions, should coincide in scope with the confines of the various geographical provinces. This provision, however, was never adopted in this country and, should the time come that particular synods are instituted here, the whole matter would likely undergo revision depending upon local needs and circumstances.

The article itself mentions three matters that are noteworthy. First, it designates an *annual* meeting of the particular synod and allows for even more frequent meetings if necessary. Secondly, it specifies two ministers and two elders as delegates from each classis which is to be represented. Undoubtedly the number of delegates is not an unchangeable rule. The above arrangement with five classes represented at the Synod would make a delegate body of twenty men which is reasonable. If, however, each of these classes were very large classes, the delegation could be raised to three ministers and three elders, making an aggregate of thirty men. The size of the particular synod should be reasonably proportionate to the size of the classes represented in it. Finally, the Church Order makes provision whereby the Synod empowers a particular *church* to determine the time and place of the next synod. This must be done with the advice of the classis in which that church resides. It is interesting to note that this provision applies to the General Synod as well as to the Particular Synod. In

our case the time of each Synod is determined by a standing rule and the place is determined by each Synod in the appointment of a calling church. However, it appears rather plain that the Church Order does not empower any *individual* (i.e. the Stated Clerk) to determine these things but gives this authority to the calling church in consultation with the classis. If this principle had been observed by the Michigan Supreme Court in the case of the Second Church, they would never have arrived at the foolish conclusions they did in regard to the "legality of the March, 1954, Synod."

G.V.d.B.

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"Conversion consists in that activity of the regenerated man, whereby he learns to see sin in its true nature, to hate the same and to flee from it; to return to God as Father in Christ, and to walk in his ways with joy and gladness."

H. Bavinck, *Geref. Dogmatiek*, Vol. IV

#### Church News:

Bulletin quote (Rev. R. C. Harbach's): The natural man delights to tickle his fancy with "another gospel" which "invites" absolutely all men to Christ, which comes with overtures of peace to "accept Christ as Savior," which *offers* saving grace to all who hear, which bestows "non-saving(?) grace" on even those who never hear, and makes the humanistic claim that the totally depraved can do a certain "natural" good outside of Christ. Modernism has always spread this "gospel."

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#### IN MEMORIAM

It pleased our Heavenly Father to take unto Himself our beloved daughter

#### JANICE MARIE

Our only comfort in this sorrowful experience is that His covenant promises are sure. We wait for the glorious resurrection! Matt. 21:16.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Zwak  
Thea Gail  
Robert Alan  
Beverly Jo

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Hudsonville Sunday School teachers hereby wish to express their sympathy with their fellow teacher and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Zwak in the loss of their daughter

#### JANICE MARIE

aged 7 years and 8 months.

The God of all comfort give grace to them to bear this heavy loss, knowing that all His ways are majesty.

The Hudsonville Sunday School  
Mr. Harry Zwak, Superintendent  
Mrs. Henry Boer, Secretary

## ALL AROUND US

### *The Churches of the Dakotas.*

We depart from the usual format of this rubric and make this article to appear in the form of a report to our readers of some of the activities and experiences of the undersigned in the land of the Dakotas. While we write these notes we are a little more than a thousand miles from the privacy and the materials of our own study-room in the manse of the Southwest Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Usually there we are surrounded with church periodicals and other material from which we choose the things we ordinarily comment on. But here we have none of this equipment to help us in the preparation of an article. We thought therefore that our readers would not mind this little departure, and perhaps relish a bit of news concerning the land and the churches of the Dakotas in which we have been working for the last three weeks in April.

Rev. George Lubbers, our missionary, has labored faithfully in this area for the space of about two years and in earlier issues of *The Standard Bearer* he has given brief reports of his labors. To him, therefore, what we write will not be news. Nor will this article prove to be news to our Mission Committee which has been rather thoroughly informed concerning the possibilities this area has to offer. Nor will what we write be news to those ministers who have served the Dakota churches by appointment of the Mission Committee since the Synod of 1959. All of them must have had the same experiences, performed the same labors, and gained the same impressions the undersigned has had. Our prime purpose in this article is to inform those of our ministers and people who have not had the privilege to observe first hand what one experiences when he meets and visits with those who at present are outside of our churches, but who to all intents and purposes belong with us.

Most of our readers know, of course, that at the next synod it must be decided whether or not the Protestant Reformed Churches will take into their bosom the Churches of Isabel and Forbes who have asked to be accepted. The Synod of 1959 decided to postpone any action for one year in order that the Mission Committee might make a more thorough survey of this area and the Synod of 1960 could thus be in a better position to judge of the matter. Our advice to the synod of 1960 we will reserve for the conclusion of this article. First, allow us to say a few things about the churches and people of this area, and then a little about our work here.

The Church of Forbes is composed of six families and one individual and is located about 41 miles to the north and west of Aberdeen, South Dakota. This is about 941 miles from Grand Rapids, about 600 miles from the Church of

Loveland, and about 300 miles from the nearest of our churches which is the church in Edgerton, Minnesota. Two of the families live in Aberdeen, one family lives in Leola about 20 miles from the church, and three of the families and one individual live in rather close proximity to the church. This church carries the hope of internal growth since most of the families are young married people with small children. Undersigned is of the belief that if a minister were stationed here permanently extension work could be carried out in the Leola and Aberdeen area with people of the same background as the members of this church.

The Church of Isabel is composed of seven families and one individual and is located about 160 miles from Aberdeen to the south and west. The two churches are approximately 180 miles apart. All of the members of this church live in close proximity to the church.

The country in these parts is typical western prairie, with rolling landscape and is quite suitable for ranching. Most of the people here are farmers who graze sheep and cattle. They raise enough grain to feed their stock which seems to be their main industry. The people are all of German heritage. Most of them are of Reformed background, but a few of them have come into the church through marriage from different religious backgrounds, some from the Lutherans and others from the Baptists. That they are of German stock is no hindrance to our being conversant with them since most of them understand the American language better than the German. Especially is this true of the younger generation.

What immediately intrigues one who comes to these parts to preach to and instruct these people in the doctrines of the Reformed faith is the keen interest they show and the response they give. It is refreshing, indeed, to witness how these people lean on every word you say and how easily they grasp the truths you expound to them. There was a time in the history of this people when this was not so. Earlier in their experience they resided in churches where doctrinal distinctions were not so pronounced, and where instruction was rather superficial, and church services were a mere formality. About the only confession they knew was the Heidelberg Catechism, and this they learned in a rather superficial and formal manner. When Mr. Herman Mensch, a graduate of our Protestant Reformed seminary, became their pastor, for the first time their eyes began to open not only to the truths of God's Word, but also to the errors in their churches. And when Rev. G. Lubbers came to labor in their midst the love of the truth began to grow in them. These people, no matter into which home you go, are full of thanksgiving to God that these men were providentially directed to them. And now they tell me that no matter who of our ministers comes to preach to them, they all speak the same truths though with each his own presentation.

To give our readers a little idea of the work we are doing here in our three-week assignment, allow us to present

a brief schedule of operation. We arrived in Aberdeen on Saturday, April 9th, and stayed over night and enjoyed the warm hospitality of the family of Enock Hauck. Sunday morning we traveled the 41 miles to the Church of Forbes. After conducting the Sunday School which all the members attend and in the discussion of which all participate, we conducted the morning worship service. For two and a half solid hours we were busy handling the Word of God. After this we enjoyed a German meal in the home of one of the members and then began our trek to Isabel. On the way of this more than three-hour drive, we tuned in the broadcast of the Reformed Witness Hour which is sent out from the Jamestown, North Dakota station. Coincidentally on this program Mr. Edward Ophoff sang the anthem "Beside the Still Waters." As he was singing and telling us in song about the Still Waters by which the Shepherd was feeding His sheep, we were driving past a small lake by which a rather large herd of sheep were grazing. We beheld the physical picture of the spiritual truths of which he sang. Then followed the passion sermon of Rev. H. Hoeksema. This spiritual refreshment helped to pass the time it took to reach our destination.

Arriving at Isabel and the home of Mr. Jacob Reichert, whose hospitality is typical of all the people in this area, we found a few moments to rest and enjoy an evening meal. Soon it was time for the evening service, and we preached to a little congregation of spiritually hungry people. After the service all of the members, except one family, retired to the home of another of the members where we visited, talking about the sermon and other doctrinal truths until the late hours of the night. During the next two days we were busy visiting, observing the annual sheep-shearing, and preparing ourself for the Catechism Class. On Monday evening the entire congregation came up for Catechism which is conducted in the church. Only those who have been here can understand me when I say this was the most refreshing experience. Even the children of 12 years and older participate in the discussion in which one of the Lord's Days of the Heidelberg Catechism was treated. On Wednesday we also had the privilege of calling on a man who is not a member of the church. This man had recently lost a son and found comfort in the Word of consolation we presented to him from the Scriptures.

On Thursday, we traveled back to Leola, where we had supper in the home of Mr. R. De Wald. After enjoying another delicious German meal and visiting for a few hours, we proceeded to the Church of Forbes where we led the Catechism Class. Again the entire congregation made its appearance. Even the young mothers attend, holding their babies on their laps. What a rewarding experience it was to hear the questions they asked and the answers they gave to our questions. On Friday evening almost the entire congregation came up for the Good Friday services.

On Saturday we returned to Isabel, and on Sunday con-

ducted the Sunday School and the two worship services. This being Resurrection Day, both sermons were devoted to the truth concerning the resurrection. After the evening service we all retired to the home of another member of the congregation for an evening of Christian fellowship. Incidentally, the man of whom we spoke earlier whom we had visited but who was not a member of this church, was in attendance at both the Sunday School and the morning service.

It is now Monday morning as I write these lines. Tonight we will conduct Catechism for the final time in Isabel and on Tuesday night deliver a lecture. On Wednesday we will take our leave to return once more to Forbes. There on Thursday night we plan to conduct the Catechism Class and on Friday and Saturday visit in the homes of our people there. On Sunday, we plan to lead the Sunday School once more and preach twice. On Monday we again leave for home. To me these three weeks were a pleasant vacation and change from the rather strenuous routine we follow at home. We enjoyed every minute of it. And anyone coming to these environs who loves to speak the truth will have the same treatment.

Now what shall we say about the matter of receiving these people into our churches? Let me say, first of all, that at the last synod undersigned served on the committee of pre-advice which proposed that our synod should not accept these churches. On the basis of this advice the synod was reluctant to accept them also, but decided to give the whole matter more thorough examination.

Some of the objections presented by the committee of pre-advice are still valid in our opinion. The objection that the distance between these two groups is too great for one man to serve both churches efficiently still obtains. And the very serious objection that there is no Christian school in this area and no hope for one for a long time to come is still a very serious objection.

On the other hand, we have talked with most of the people here about the possibility of consolidating into one church. This is easier said than done, yet the people in Isabel do not conceive of this as an impossibility. If this could be done, the situation in the Dakotas would be very hopeful. Moreover, I am now convinced that our churches may not neglect to take these people into our bosom. They are Protestant Reformed people who are eager to become more thoroughly indoctrinated. In this we may not fail them. Again, I believe there is room for expansion and growth not only from within, but also from without, especially in the neighborhood of Forbes and Aberdeen. A minister coming into this area and remaining here for some time has a large field in which to labor.

We therefore recommend that the synod of 1960 follow the advice of the Mission Committee in their annual report, and accept these churches immediately.

M.S.

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

April 20, 1960

Oak Lawn's pastor, Rev. G. Vanden Berg, declined the call from Randolph. The congregation at Hull extended a call to Rev. M. Schipper of Southwest Church, Grand Rapids.

### *Report of Classis East*

April 6, 1960, Hope Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Rev. C. Hanko, chairman of the January Classis, led in devotions. All the churches of Classis East were represented by two delegates each. Three delegates appearing on the meeting for the first time. Rev. B. Woudenberg, who had transferred to Classis West since our last meeting, was noticeably absent.

Rev. H. Hanko, pastor of the host church, presided efficiently at this meeting, while his father, Rev. C. Hanko transcribed the minutes. This meeting of Classis was very brief. We were finished with our work by noontime. We breathed in a very brotherly atmosphere throughout this session of Classis.

Much of the work was routine: reading and adoption of minutes, reports of the Stated Clerk and Classical Committee, appointment of committees of finance and classical appointments, etc.

Classis honored the request of Classis West in regard to classical appointments for Randolph, as well as requests from Creston and Grand Haven. The following schedule was adopted: *Grand Haven*: April 24 — A. Mulder, May 15 — G. Lanting, May 29 — G. Vos, June 19 — C. Hanko, July 3 — H. Hanko, July 10 — R. Veldman. *Creston*: April 24 — G. Lanting, May 1 — G. Vos, May 8 — R. Veldman, May 22 — C. Hanko, May 29 — A. Mulder, June 12 — M. Schipper. *Randolph*: April 24 — H. Hanko, May 1 — C. Hanko, May 15 — G. Vos, June 12 — R. Veldman, June 19 — A. Mulder, June 26 — G. Lanting, July 10 — M. Schipper.

The Revs. H. Hanko and M. Schipper were given only two appointments because of their service in Isabel-Forbes for three Sundays each.

Classis voted for Church Visitors and elected the following: Revs. C. Hanko and G. Vos. Rev. R. Veldman is alternate for both.

Two churches asked Classis to forward to Synod amendments and corrections in their subsidy requests. This was granted.

Another church presented an overture for Synod which was returned to that church on the grounds of Article 30 of the Church Order.

Rev. A. Mulder thanked the ladies of Hope Church for their excellent catering services.

Classis decided to meet next time on July 6th in Southwest Church.

Questions of Article 41 of the Church Order were asked and answered satisfactorily.

After a few closing remarks by the chairman in which our churches were committed to the blessing of God, Elder J. M. Faber closed the meeting with thanksgiving.

M. Schipper, Stated Clerk

The installation of Rev. B. Woudenberg took place in Edgerton on the evening of March 25. Rev. H. Veldman preached the sermon and Rev. G. Vanden Berg read the form. After the service a short welcome program was given by the congregation. While refreshments were being served opportunity was given for the new pastor and his wife to become acquainted with the members of the congregation. There was a goodly number of visitors from the congregations of Doon and Hull, Iowa. The evening was a very pleasant experience for all.

The Prot. Ref. Men's Chorus gave a Lenten program in Hudsonville Church after the evening service, April 10. The newly enlarged auditorium was filled down to the front row, with chairs set up in the aisles. The Chorus served God with songs of praise-worship with their usual high class selections of male chorus arrangements, including one by their director, Mr. Roland Petersen. The men were supplemented by a vocal quartet of ladies from the Hudsonville congregation. Two of the same ladies also rendered a piano-organ duet, completing an evening of spiritual enjoyment for the entire audience, and, we believe, one of sweet smelling savor to the God of our salvation Who loves to hear His singing militant Church. The program was sponsored by the Mothers' Club of the Hope Prot. Ref. Christian School.

*Correction*: Revs. J. Heys and H. H. Kuiper have been appointed Church Visitors in Classis West.

*Did you know*: That through correspondence upon receipt of a Christmas greeting it was discovered that Rev. Yosiyi Morii of Kyoto, Japan, has Rev. H. Hoeksema's exposition on The Heidelberg Catechism in his personal library; that, the book committee of the Radio Committee has since supplied that Japanese minister with the remainder of "Dominee's" published books to add to his library; that, you, too, may obtain any or all of these books by ordering them from the Reformed Witness Hour, P.O. Box 8, Grand Rapids 1, Mich. *And*, that Rev. G. Lubbers was scheduled to lecture in Hull, April 19, on the subject, "The Serious Confrontation in the Preaching of the Gospel"; *and*, that the Doon Ladies' Society sponsored a hymn sing, April 10, proceeds to go for a new tile floor in the church basement?

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.