

# THE STANDARD

*Bearer*

A REFORMED SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE

VOLUME XXXVI

MARCH 15, 1960 — GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

NUMBER 12

## MEDITATION

### THE SUFFERING WORSHIPPER

*"O my God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent."*

PSALM 22:2

This psalm is called by the Holy Ghost: "Aijelet Shaha," which means, the morning hart.

And the Subject is without doubt: our Savior Jesus Christ, both in His humiliation and His exaltation.

Yes, He is the Morning Hart. He is that kindly, meek, and beautiful hart, startled at the very morning when the first huntsman, Herod, came to kill Him. And ever since that morning, they hunted Him, until He hung on the accursed tree, lamenting to His God: Why, O why hast Thou forsaken me?

And yet, it is David who speaks here.

And we sing the psalm so much later, and it is our confession too.

I hesitate, and tremble when I set myself to write on this psalm. There is so much I do not understand here. There is a depth of suffering which I cannot fathom. There is an agony here which by far surpasses anything I ever suffered. This psalm tells us of the suffering which began in Bethlehem, and which ended when He said: "It is finished!"

Exegetically: how shall I explain the parting of David's garments, and the casting of lots upon David's vesture? And so much more.

Yes, I will speak of this psalm, and write a little on this one verse. But I know, and you know, that we did not explain fully. There are shadows and depths here which defy understanding.

I am persuaded that even unto all eternity we shall never be able to exhaust psalm 22. How should we be able to *explain* eternal death?

But I will speak of the suffering worshipper.

\* \* \* \*

First, it is David who laments here.

What period of his life does he speak of? I do not know. It is not revealed. It may be when he was surrounded by wicked Saul and his hosts, as recorded in I Sam. 23:25ff. But I do not know.

At any rate, it was a terrible experience. It must have been the worst experience of David's life. Nowhere else does David cry as he does here.

David and his history was pre-ordained. It lent itself excellently to be a shadow of the life and death, and glorification of the Christ of God. Look at the sharp contrasts in his life. He was deeply humbled, but also greatly exalted; a vile sinner but also a man after God's own heart. Look at his name: David, the Beloved. Steeped in depths of suffering, but also on the heights of faith and courage. He raves at Achis, but is a hero in many battles. In psalm 22 he is terribly forsaken, but in psalm 23 everything is still and quiet.

Particularly, in this psalm we see David hunted by the enemies of God, under the wrath of God, in shadows of deep darkness, without the happy light of God's countenance, uttering cry upon cry.

I cry! O my God, I cry!

Attend to this, beloved reader, you do not cry so easily. It must be awful before you cry. When the sun shines, and things have their ordinary course, you may suffer a little, but you do not cry to God. And if troubles gather around your head, you labor, wrestle and fight to get out from under, but you do not cry.

No, but when all your power and ingenuity ran short, when you have no more power to fight, when you are being overwhelmed, when the miry pit seems to have no bottom, and you are ready to perish: then you cry.

You cry to God when the pressure without and within exceeds your powers of resistance. When things become fearful and there is no helper anymore.

And this terror was not for just a moment or two. O no, but it continued with unabated force. David was in trouble all the day. And the word which is used signifies that it was a rather long period. We read here "joman," and that means day after day. And also in the night season. There was no relief.

\* \* \* \*

And what made his agony so terrible is this: God did not answer.

During the awful days David cried to God, but there was no answer. And at night he multiplied his supplication, but God seemed deaf, for there was silence.

And yet, David was not without faith. Listen to him: My God!

When the night is dark, and thousands of dangers threaten; when the heavens are like copper, and no prayer can get through to God; when the eternal God is still and answers not; when thunders roar and lightning flashes in the dark clouds around your soul, and God hides His blessed face, and you can still say: My God! then you have faith.

David never let go of God.

And why?

Because God never let go of David.

And thus David prays, continues his prayer in supplication and crying, and never lets go of his God.

That, my friends, is the victory of faith.

\* \* \* \*

But is this all?

David cried to God in the midst of his awful darkness and suffering. God did hear, and delivered him out of all his troubles. At this moment he is in the arms of God: all his tears are wiped away.

Can we now rest, and say: we have heard the Word of God. Let us live like David, and always trust in God, for we know that ultimately He will come and save us to the uttermost?

O no.

Please, take your Bible and read I Peter 1:10, 11. Here it is: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

Here is the answer. David was one of those searching prophets who testified of the sufferings of Christ and of His glory that should follow. Sometimes the words which he spoke and the experiences he underwent are simply ascribed

to Jesus. Attend, for instance, to the sermon of Peter on the first New Testament Pentecost Day.

David suffered before the sufferings of Christ. And here in psalm 22 is one instance, and what an instance!

Attend to the first cry of David in this psalm: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

The whole psalm is Messianic. Most of the psalms are Messianic. (That's why I love those psalms so much.)

The psalms of David are as a shadow which is cast ahead of the coming Christ.

Psalm 22 pictures to us the sufferings of the Lamb of God.

So also in my text. The text finds its fulfillment in Jesus our Lord.

Look at the text again: "My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent."

This cry opens up the suffering heart of Jesus. Often we have read in the Gospels that Jesus, while it was still dark, would leave His bed and silently wend His way to the desert places. And there He would fall down in the dust and cry to His God. Sometimes He would spend an entire night in prayers to God. Have we not the terrible testimony of Hebrews 5? "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death . . .?"

What shall I say of the crying of Jesus? How shall I give a commentary on the days and the nights of anguished weeping to God? How shall I paint to you of the bulls of Bashan and the unicorns which beset Him day and night?

In the daytime and in the night season?

Have you ever prayed the whole night through? And in the morning there was no answer? Sometimes we sing: "No answer yet has found relief!" Do you know what that means?

Oh, how inexpressibly horrible must have been the days and nights of the Lamb of God.

God was silent and answered not.

And so there was a troubled heart, and the blood drops in the night season of Gethsemane.

And when the spikes were driven through His holy hands and feet, He roared to God.

And when darkness was added to the laughing and joking and derision of the multitude, He screamed that great and terrible cry: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?!

Jesus cried to God from out of a hell which is ever greater than any hell of man or spirit.

First, He suffered an eternity of hell in a short space of time: what concentration!

Second, He suffered an agony which otherwise millions

would have shared: but He suffered it all ALONE! What concentration!

Third, if I would go to hell, I would say eternally: it fits! I belong here. It answers to strictest justice. I fit the abomination of hell. But Jesus is the Holy One of Israel. He fits in heaven. But He *must* be in hell.

Why?

Because He suffered all this hell for His people.

Because He had to make us all perfect, fitting in the new heaven and the new earth.

Therefore Jesus said, nay, cried: O my God, I cry in the daytime and Thou answerest not; in the night season and I have no silence!

\* \* \* \*

Beloved brother and sister, you will have your nights of horror, and your days of misery. Who knows, some of you may have to die on the stake, and be burned.

You may have to sing psalm 22 in great agony and anguish.

God scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. We have our crosses.

But continue to say: My God!

Know that behind the dark clouds of your sufferings dwells our Father, our Father for Jesus' sake.

The day and the hour will come when He shall take you in His arms, and then He will wipe away all your tears.

Jesus, weeping in the night of eternity, merited such loveliness!

G.V.

### Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, the Lord willing, at 9:00 A. M. on April 6th in the Hope Protestant Reformed Church located on the West Beltline of Grand Rapids. Consistories in the appointment of their delegates will please take note.

REV. M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

### Notice

Bulletin notices for *Creston Protestant Reformed Church* will please be sent to MISS A. LUBBERS, 1125 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich., until further notice.

About Mount Zion go,  
Her towers and ramparts tell;  
That ye her strength may know,  
Mark her defenses well;  
Her royal palaces behold  
That ye her glories may unfold.

### THE STANDARD BEARER

*Semi-monthly, except monthly during June, July and August*

Published by the REFORMED FREE PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION  
P. O. Box 881, Madison Square Station, Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

Communications relative to contents should be addressed to  
Rev. H. Hoeksema, 1139 Franklin St., S. E.,  
Grand Rapids 7, Mich.

All matters relative to subscriptions should be addressed to Mr.  
James Dykstra, 1326 W. Butler Ave., S. E.  
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan

Announcements and Obituaries must be mailed to the above  
address and will be published at a fee of \$2.00 for each notice.

RENEWAL: Unless a definite request for discontinuance is received it is assumed that the subscriber wishes the subscription to continue without the formality of a renewal order.

Subscription price: \$5.00 per year

*Entered as Second Class matter at Grand Rapids, Michigan*

### CONTENTS

#### MEDITATION —

- The Suffering Worshipper.....265  
Rev. G. Vos

#### EDITORIALS —

- As To Being Protestant Reformed.....268  
Bad Conditions.....269  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

#### AS TO BOOKS —

- Christianity and Liberalism.....270  
Tempest Over Scotland.....270  
Christelijke Encyclopedie.....271  
Abraham Kuyper.....271  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

#### OUR DOCTRINE —

- The Book of Revelation.....271  
Rev. H. Hoeksema

#### A CLOUD OF WITNESSES —

- Joseph Ruler of Egypt.....274  
Rev. B. Woudenberg

#### FROM HOLY WRIT —

- Exposition of I Corinthians 15 (2).....276  
Rev. G. Lubbers

#### IN HIS FEAR —

- Punishment or Praise (4).....278  
Rev. J. A. Heys

#### CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

- The Church and the Sacraments.....280  
Rev. H. Veldman

#### THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

- The Canons of Dordrecht.....282  
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

#### DECENCY AND ORDER —

- Church Visitation.....284  
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

#### ALL AROUND US —

- Roman Catholics Becoming More Tolerant?.....286  
"Air Force Training Manual Draws N.C.C. Fire".....286  
"Are Officebearers Bound In Their Beliefs?".....287  
Rev. M. Schipper

- NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES.....288  
Mr. J. M. Faber

## EDITORIALS

### As To Being Protestant Reformed

The last time that we wrote an article under the above heading we discussed the idea of the promise and that, too, in distinction from the so-called "well-meant offer of grace."

This time we must elaborate a little more on the distinctively Reformed truth of the covenant.

First of all, I wish to point out that the deepest ground of the covenant relationship is in God Himself. This is true, of course, of all the works of God, whether in creation or salvation. But this is especially true of the covenant. We may say that God is a covenant God even apart from any relation to the creature. The covenant as a relation of perfect friendship and fellowship rests in God. This is true because the Scriptures reveal Him to us as the Triune. He is one in being. All the divine virtues such as eternity, infinity, unchangeableness, self-existence, omnipotence, love, grace, mercy and others belong to the divine essence. But He is three in persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. All three persons are one in mind and will, one in being and in all the divine attributes, but they differ in personal attributes. The Father is always and eternally Father: He eternally begets the Son and breathes out the Holy Ghost. The Son is eternally Son, eternally begotten of the Father and breathing out the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is eternally the Spirit, breathed out by the Father and the Son. And yet, these three are one. And because they are one, they enter into one-another's nature, their mind and will and life. There are no secrets for them. They know one-another perfectly, each one knows the others as He is known. Besides, these three persons in the one divine essence constitute a completeness. They are a perfect whole. No other person could possibly be conceived as entering into this perfect union. They are sufficient in themselves.

Such is the truth concerning the triune God which has always been confessed by the Church.

And it is on the basis of this truth that we say that God is, in Himself, a covenant God, even apart from any relation to the creature.

For the Father knows and loves the Son in and through the Spirit; the Son knows and loves the Father in and through the Spirit; the Holy Ghost knows and loves the Father and the Son in Himself.

It is because of this absolute equality in essence while the three persons are personally distinct that God is a covenant God. For they eternally live in the most absolute covenant fellowship with one-another. And, therefore, we say that the covenant life of God is the deepest ground for the covenant relationship between God and the creature.

For the covenant relation is essentially a bond of friendship between God and man. Thus we would define the covenant relation. It is a bond of friendship. By friendship

we mean such a bond of fellowship and love as can only exist between persons that are in the highest degree equal and yet are personally distinct. Friends have communion with one-another; they have no secrets from one-another. On the other hand, if there is to be fellowship with one-another on the basis of equality in being, it is also necessary that they differ in respect to personal properties, for otherwise one might as well be said to have fellowship with himself, and this is absurd. And on this basis we say that the covenant is a bond of friendship between God and man: it is essentially a bond of fellowship. In that covenant God is the Friend-Sovereign. As the Baptism-Form has it: "God the Father establishes His eternal covenant of grace with us." He it is who reveals Himself to us and leads us into the secrets of His counsel. He opens His heart to us so that we may taste His goodness and the abundance of His goodness and grace. It is He that talks with us as a friend with His friends. And we are His friend-servants. As His friend-servants we dwell in His house. We walk with Him and talk with Him. We love Him and consecrate ourselves to Him with all that we have and are. We sing His praises and glorify His name.

Such is the Protestant Reformed idea of the covenant.

And this idea of the covenant is based on Holy Writ.

This is already from the revelation of God to Adam before the fall, in the state of righteousness. God had created him as His friend-servant. For He formed man in His own image in true knowledge of God, righteousness and holiness. He was made like God in a creaturely sense for the very purpose that he might be the friend of God. This has nothing to do, you understand with the so-called covenant of works and which is supposed to consist in condition, a promise and a penalty. The condition then is perfect obedience, the promise is eternal life, and the penalty is death.

The Protestant Reformed Churches reject this entire notion of the covenant of works. They do so for the following reasons:

1. It is neither Scriptural nor confessional.
2. Such a covenant God is supposed to have established with Adam after he was created. We believe that Adam stood in a covenant relation to God from the very moment he was created in virtue of his being created after the image of God.
3. There could be no special covenant-demand of God that Adam had to obey Him. From the moment Adam was created he was obliged to obey and to love the Lord his God with all his soul, with all his mind and with his whole heart. It is true that God tested his obedience by the command that he might not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but this negative command was not an element in the covenant: Adam stood in covenant-relation to God in the first paradise by dint of his being created in the image of God and as such he was called to obey and to consecrate himself to God with all that he had and with his whole being.

4. There is not an item of proof, either in Genesis II, III, or in all the rest of Scripture that Adam could have attained to the goal of eternal life in the way of obedience. He might have remained in paradise had he refrained from eating of the forbidden fruit. He might have kept the life with which God had endowed him when he was created. He might have lived that life everlastingly, — though all this is pure speculation. But he surely could not have attained to eternal life. For this is only in Jesus Christ our Lord, the Son of God in the flesh, Who died and rose again. Eternal life is resurrection life, life from death.

For all these reasons we reject the idea of the covenant of works.

More about this next time, D.V.

H.H.

### Bad Conditions

I received another copy of the "Presbyterian Laymen," issued by a group of orthodox members of the Southern Presbyterian Church and describing the bad conditions in that denomination.

By the way, brethren, my address is not RANKLIF ST., as you had it, but FRANKLIN ST. Please correct.

Also in this issue the main topic of discussion is the heretical position assumed by Dr. Thompson against whom elder Glasgow protested without avail.

But in the present issue it is not so much the heresies of Dr. Thompson personally, but the effects of his instruction in the seminary that are described.

Concerning Dr. Thompson's influence in the churches, the paper quotes the following from an address to the last General Assembly by a certain Dr. Frye. We quote a part of it:

"Indeed, it is probably true that in numbers alone he has taught more ministers than any other professor now active in our seminaries as well as almost all the graduates of the assembly's training school. A recent count indicates that there are approximately 2200 living clergymen who studied at Union Seminary under Dr. Thompson. When we recall that there are some 3500 ministers in our church, then the figure of 2200 assumes great significance.

"And Dr. Thompson has not only taught these ministers of the church, but has exerted a profound personal influence upon them . . . His influence has been not only on the minds but also on the total personality and character of those who have learned from him."

It is evident that Dr. Thompson is a very capable teacher and, therefore, has had a deep influence, not only upon his students, but also in the churches in general. But the question is: what kind of influence did he exert? Of this the "Presbyterian Laymen" quotes some examples one of which is that of Rev. Charles M. Jones, minister of Chapel Hill,

North Carolina. Many complaints were raised against the teachings of the Rev. Jones. As a result a Judicial Committee was appointed by Orange Presbytery to investigate matters and conditions of the church in Chapel Hill. Their findings were, indeed, amazing and they also came by way of appeal, to the General Assembly. Some of these findings, published by the "Presbyterian Laymen" we briefly report here:

1. Persons that were never baptized made confession of faith without first being baptized. What is worse, some of the officers of the church did not know that the sacrament of baptism was being omitted, while others were aware of it, but considered it unimportant. Some of the elders were of the opinion that the sacrament of baptism should be administered only upon the request of those that made confession of faith, otherwise it should be omitted.

2. The questions that are asked of those that make confession of faith are quite arbitrary and not in accord with those required by the Church Order. Sometimes the question is asked whether they accept Jesus as their personal guide! The Church Order specifies the questions that are to be asked when persons make public confession of their faith. They include such questions as to whether the persons that make confession are conscious of their sins and of the need of a personal Savior, and whether they believe that Christ is the only Savior of men. But the session (consistory) ignored all this and substituted their own arbitrary questions.

3. Some of the consistory members have never been ordained or properly installed.

4. There is, according to report of the committee a general feeling that it is unimportant to be strictly Presbyterian. The committee, on the other hand, believes that Presbyterianism is taken from the Scriptures and, therefore, is based on the Word of God.

5. Most of the officebearers are not aware of the theological position of their church. Most of them could not even speak "of their religious convictions in such fashion as to include the concept of men as needing a savior, and of Christ as being a necessary Savior. A relatively large percentage, for instance, affirmed that they could not subscribe to the Apostles' Creed, implied in our Confession of faith."

6. Several of the officebearers declared that they did not see the necessity of administering the sacraments. Sometimes, indeed, upon request, the sacrament was administered, but then it was done, not in the public gathering of the congregation, but privately, in the gathering of the Session or Consistory.

7. For only a few of the officebearers Christ is the One that is expressed in the Confession of Faith. Some ascribe some measure of divinity to Him, but for some Christ is divine only in the sense that all men are divine. For only one or two was Christ the Son of God in the essential sense of the word. For many the resurrection from the dead had no significance. One declared that a good Confucianist or

Hindu might be a better Christian than most professing Christians.

8. For most of the officebearers the Bible was an unusual book but not the inspired Word of God. For some it was the record of man's evolution in his search for God.

9. The very idea of the sacrifice of Christ was disturbing and repelling to some of them. One declared that he could not feel at home in an atmosphere that included the necessity of sacrifice, death, and the shedding of blood in relation to salvation.

10. One of the officebearers even denied the existence of a personal God.

What was the outcome of it all?

The Judicial Committee with approval of Orange Presbytery decided that the Rev. Jones and all the Church officers should be removed from office.

The case was appealed to the Synod of North Carolina. This Synod decided that the case should be reviewed by the Orange Presbytery. The latter decided that there was no sense in reviewing the case once more since they had already thoroughly. Hence, they appealed to the General Assembly. This Assembly appointed a committee to settle the case. Of this Judicial Committee Dr. Thompson was chairman! The committee met. The chairman, Dr. Thompson, was very fair in conducting the meeting. Every member was given five minutes to express his opinion. But after all had spoken the chairman was given the privilege to speak as long as he wanted, and he spoke in favor of his former student, the Rev. Jones. He almost succeeded to justify the Rev. Jones but not quite. When the vote was taken the majority of the committee sustained the Presbytery of Orange in their decision to remove the Rev. Jones and all his officebearers from their office. But this was decided by the majority of only one vote.

This, to my mind, shows that the liberal element in the Southern Presbyterian Church is very strong.

As to the Rev. Jones, he left the Southern Presbyterian Church and established a Community Church in which they welcome those of all faiths and creeds.

Do you not agree with what I wrote above this article: "Bad Conditions"?

And again I maintain: 1. That such conditions could not possibly arise if proper discipline had been maintained and 2. That the only way for the faithful members of the Southern Presbyterian Church is to separate. They will never be able to oust the liberal element in the Church.

H.H.

## AS TO BOOKS

*Christianity and Liberalism*, by J. Gresham Machen. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.

This is a very good book. And although, in our churches, we have, by the grace of God, no liberal element, I heartily recommend it to all our readers. Dr. Machen criticizes modern liberalism and clearly shows that it is un-Christian. The book, after a rather lengthy introduction, starts with a chapter on doctrine of which liberalism must have nothing. According to the liberalist we must have, not doctrine, but life. Over against this idea, the author shows from Scripture as well as from the history of Christianity that doctrine is essential and is the basis of a Christian life. This is followed by chapters on God and Man, the Bible, Christ, Salvation, and the Church.

On pp. 48-53 the author discusses several points of difference in doctrine among believers. He introduces this by saying: "we do not mean . . . that all points of doctrine are equally important." And then he continues to discuss several points of difference such as premillennialism, the Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper, various views of the ministry, the difference between the Reformed and the Arminian view of predestination, and he even speaks of the difference between Protestants and Roman Catholics who, in spite of the differences between them, have much in common. It is not my purpose to criticize this part of the book, although I cannot agree with all of it. But my purpose is to point out that this hardly is an integral part of the book.

It stands to reason that I do not agree with the brief mention of "common grace" on p. 138.

But the book I, nevertheless, recommend to all our readers.

H.H.

*Tempest Over Scotland*, by Norman E. Nygaard. Published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$2.50.

This book is an account of part of the life of John Knox, the well-known contemporary of Calvin. It is very interestingly written in the form of a story. Our readers ought to read it for themselves and also give it to their children to read. I have two remarks:

1. I hardly think that John Knox would have made the remark that the author records him to have made, in a conversation with Marjory, his future wife: "God has not fore-ordained anyone to perdition, Marjory," Knox replied. "True, He has given us the choice between good and evil and there are some that deliberately choose evil but God, from the beginning of time, before ever you or I were born, did not decide that either one of us should be damned eternally." I cannot believe that Knox thus denied the truth of reprobation and taught freewill.

2. The story is not finished. It stops right in the middle. It ends with a conversation Knox had with queen Mary. When the reader looks for a few more chapters, he is disappointed.

H.H.



*Christelijke Encyclopedie*, Vol. 4; redactors Dr. F. W. Grosheide and Dr. G. P. Van Itterzon. Published by J. H. Kok, Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 29.50.

Also this work I recommend to all of our readers who can still read Dutch. It stands to reason that no one expects to read a volume of this kind thoroughly, from beginning to end. Nevertheless, I perused it sufficiently to be able to recommend it to our readers. It is very clearly written and represents the Reformed view. Thus it is, for instance, with the article on Infant Baptism, written by Dr. J. Van Genderen, which gives the grounds for infant baptism over against the Baptists. Besides, the reader will also find many interesting pictures in this book.

Once more, to all who are able to read the Holland language I heartily recommend this encyclopedia.

It contains a wealth of information.

H.H.

*Abraham Kuyper*, Frank Vanden Berg; 306 pages, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Price: \$4.00.

This book fills a need for some English language material on the great Dr. A. Kuyper Sr. It is, of course, a biography; and as such it left the impression on this reviewer of being rather complete and accurate in its information. Because of the position which Dr. Kuyper occupied, the book at once serves the purpose of furnishing a good deal of information on the history of the reformation of 1886, the Doleantie, and also gives much of the history of the Free University of Amsterdam and of Dutch national politics, specifically of the Antirevolutionary Party. Those who are interested in these matters, — and who of Dutch and Reformed ancestry should not be? — will do well to read this volume.

The book is rather interestingly written too, although not above criticism from this point of view. The style is a bit stiff at times; nor is it free from clichés and Dutchisms. Besides, although the author is perhaps limited by his material in this respect, one tends to get lost occasionally in the details and intricacies of the Antirevolutionary Party's politics. All in all, one's own interest in that particular period of history must sometimes carry the reader through some rather dry passages.

As far as the content is concerned, my main criticism is the author's obvious bias in favor of Dr. Kuyper, which, in my opinion, prevents him from making any important negative criticism of the great Kuyper and results in a tendency to justify somewhat almost all of Kuyper's views and actions. Mr. Vanden Berg seems to be a rabid admirer of Kuyper.

The book is enhanced by some photographs of Dr. Kuyper and also by the famous cartoon, "Abraham de Geweldige." These add interest.

We recommend the book with the above reservations.

H.C.H.

## OUR DOCTRINE

### THE BOOK OF REVELATION

#### PART TWO

#### CHAPTER TWELVE

#### *The Lamb On Mount Zion*

#### Revelation 14:1-5

It might perhaps be expected that some of God's people would be missing, that some would have abandoned the attempt to follow the Lamb. The times were hard, the suffering for Christ's sake was very severe. They could not buy or sell. They had no place left on the earth. They were hated of all nations. Perhaps some of them yielded to the demand of Antichrist, forsook the Lamb and bowed before the beast. But no. All the one hundred and forty-four thousand are still with the Lamb. Not one is lacking. All God's people are saved through the power of the Lamb, in spite of the raging fury of Antichrist.

In what respect have they remained untouched? Have they been protected by the power of the Lamb in the physical sense of the word? Have they not been in prison? Have they not been in suffering and death? We know better. They have suffered hunger and nakedness because of their faithful refusal to worship the beast. They were killed all the day long. But this does not hurt them. They have a spiritual existence and life. The question is not whether they were hurt physically but whether they had any spiritual want. The great question for the people of God in the world is not whether or not they must suffer the suffering for Christ's sake because of their faithfulness, but rather whether they shall remain faithful in the midst of tribulation. And, behold, that is the case with these one hundred and forty-four thousand. All have remained with the Lamb. All have chosen His side. All have faithfully followed Him even in tribulation and distress. Still more. They remained pure. The text says: "They are not defiled with women, for they are virgins." You understand, of course, that these words must not be taken in the literal sense any more than the rest of the text, as if celibacy were advocated here and as if the unmarried state were given preference above the married. This certainly is not the case. But we must remember that fornication in Scripture is the symbol of spiritual fornication. In that sense Esau was a fornicator because he despised God's covenant. In that sense Israel of the old dispensation is very often pictured in the Old Testament as an adulterous woman, whoring after other gods and departing from the ways of Jehovah their covenant God. And, therefore, being defiled in the physical sense of the word is symbolic of the violation of the covenant of Jehovah. In this sense, then, these one hundred and forty-four thousand have not become defiled. All the world was committing fornication in the spiritual sense. All

whored after the beast. And all the evil world demanded of these one hundred and forty-four thousand to commit fornication as they did. They had threatened them with expulsion from the world if they would not worship the beast. But these had not heeded this call and had ignored the threat of the beast. They had remained faithful to their covenant God. The same is expressed in the words, "they are without blemish." They have not been stained by the defilement of the world. Yea, still more clearly: in their mouth was found no lie. All the kingdom of Antichrist was filled with, was based upon, the lie that the beast must be worshipped and that the dragon was king. But they had adhered to the truth and had maintained boldly and without fear: Christ is King, and the Almighty God is sovereign of heaven and earth. Thus they had remained faithful all through the reign of Antichrist. The people of God need not fear. For when that terrible time shall come, they shall remain with the powerful Lamb on Mount Zion and follow Him whithersoever He goeth.

But why do the people of God remain faithful even in the midst of most terrible suffering and persecution for Christ's sake? Is it in their own strength? Is it because of their own natural faithful character perhaps? By no means! In the first place, let us call your attention to the sign they bear on their forehead. Even as the wicked have the sign of the beast, so these have the name of the Lamb and of the Father. What does that mean? It simply implies in this connection that the Father and the Lamb have marked them as their own. And therefore, by this name of the Lamb and of the Father we are reminded of God's eternal counsel. From all eternity God Almighty has chosen them and graven them in the palms of His hands. And in all eternity the Father has given His people to His Son, that he might redeem them to the full. No one, therefore, is able to pluck them out of the Lamb's and out of the Father's hand. The Lamb had purchased them with His own blood from the world and from among men; and they belong to Him with body and soul, for time and eternity. Shall Antichrist then prevail against them? Shall he persuade them to worship the beast? No, never! The counsel of Almighty God must first be broken, and it must first be evident that the precious blood of the Lamb was shed in vain, before this can ever happen. And that, of course, is absolutely impossible. Standing therefore in the power of the Almighty, conscious of this power by faith, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, they cannot perish; and Antichrist has nothing in them. Firstfruits they must be unto God and the Lamb. And no more than God will give His glory to another, no more could these one hundred forty-four thousand of the Lamb be lost, whom the Almighty has formed for Himself that they should show forth His praise.

And finally, let us also notice that this power of God and of the Lamb enabled them to sing even in the midst of the battle, and sing of joy and victory. From heaven swells a song, strong as the voice of many waters, rolling through the air and through heaven like the voice

of mighty thunder, yet carried along on the breeze in the sweet melody of harpers harping on their harps. What is this song? It is the song of the church triumphant in heaven, the song of the saints that have been in tribulation who have been redeemed — the song of Abel and Enoch and Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Moses and Elijah and all the prophets and witnesses of the old dispensation. It is the song of the apostles and the martyrs, of the cloud of witnesses. This song swells the breeze till it reaches the ears of these suffering one hundred forty-four thousand that are still in the heat of their spiritual battle. It is the song of the innumerable multitude that has gone in before them, that already are apparelled in their white robes and wear the palm branches. They hunger no more, neither do they thirst any more, neither doth the sun strike upon them, nor any heat. The Lamb is their shepherd, and God is their guide and wipes away all tears from their eyes. And this glorified throng, this church triumphant, sings in forceful melody: "Salvation belongeth unto our God, and unto the Lamb." It is the song of joy and victory. Behold, it reaches the ears of these one hundred forty-four thousand that are still in tribulation but with the Lamb on Mount Zion. And what happens? Does it fill their hearts with sorrow because they are still in trouble and distress? Does it cause them to despair of their own glory? Does it sound like sarcasm in their ears perhaps? Ah, no: they understand it. They can realize already that this song is theirs. They can apply it to themselves. Surely, they are still in trouble and tribulation, and their suffering is severe. They still hunger and thirst, and the heat of the sun strikes them day by day. But conscious of the fact that they stand on the side of the powerful Lamb, conscious of the fact that they bear the name of the Father and of the Lamb on their foreheads, conscious of the fact that they have been purchased to be first fruits unto the Father and unto the Lamb, they are sure of victory. Antichrist may rage and make life extremely hard for them. His time is but short. Christ shall have the victory. And they know it. And in that consciousness they can learn this song of victory. In the midst of tribulation they too can sing it. And in the joy of heart and to the amazement of the world, that cannot understand this song and that can never learn it, they chime in with the song of the glorified saints in heaven: "Salvation belongeth unto our God and to the Lamb forever."

Such is the truth of the passage we just discussed. Shall the saints endure tribulation? They surely shall. Shall they not worship the beast and fall for the power of Antichrist? They surely shall not. On the contrary, they shall glorify God and His power, so that the world shall stand amazed. And in the midst of apparent defeat they shall sing the song of victory. How glorious to be of God's party in the world! But, on the other hand, how terrible to stand on the side of the beast! For his kingdom is doomed to destruction. May God ever give us abundant grace to stand on the side of the Lamb on Mount Zion. For there, and there alone, is victory and life.



*The Angels and the Voice*

## Revelation 14:6-13

6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

We must continually bear in mind that chapters 13 and 14 of the book of Revelation belong together. And we said in connection with the passage we discussed in the preceding chapter, we shall never obtain a complete and true picture of the kingdom of Antichrist from the thirteenth chapter only. Our chapter must be taken in connection with it. In the thirteenth chapter we found indeed that the whole kingdom and reign of Antichrist was pictured to us both from its political and from its religious point of view. It was a kingdom in which all the works of God were developed to the full, but in the which they were all devoted to the devil and the glory of the beast. It was a kingdom in which only they that worshipped the beast could participate in the blessings of the kingdom, and in which the faithful in Christ Jesus were pushed to the wall, so that they could neither buy nor sell. And therefore it seemed rather hopeless for the people of God, who put their trust in Christ Jesus their Lord. But for that very reason it will not do to consider chapter 13 as a complete picture of the kingdom of Antichrist. No, chapter 14 belongs with it. And if in chapter

13 we found the picture of the antichristian power and kingdom from its own point of view, apparently victorious, from the point of view of things visible, here, in chapter 14, we find a picture of that same kingdom from the point of view of God Almighty. And hence, we find it as being doomed to destruction. If in chapter 13 we found the people of Jesus apparently lost and without hope, in this chapter we find that they enter into glory and that the people of the beast shall be drunken with the wrath of God forever and ever.

The Lamb, so we found in the preceding passage of this chapter, was standing on Mount Zion. There was no difference of opinion about the identity of the Lamb, representing, of course, Christ Jesus as the servant of God, having fulfilled all things. And as to the figure of Mount Zion, we explained that it must be taken as a whole, and that the expression, "the Lamb on mount Zion," denotes just one, single idea. Explaining it in connection with Psalm 2, we found that it denotes how God in heaven laughs about the output and power of Antichrist because He has anointed His Son and given to Him the kingdoms of the world. Because of that fact Antichrist must suffer defeat, and the kingdom of Christ must be victorious.

In the same light we also viewed the one hundred forty-four thousand that were standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion. As to the meaning of the one hundred forty-four thousand, we said that they represented God's people, the complete number of God's elect on earth during the time of the antichristian reign. And the great significance of this number in this connection, we found, was that they were all there and that not one is lacking. In the power of the Lamb they all stand, and they remain faithful to the end, even in the midst of the suffering and tribulations of the last times. We found that they remained pure and free from the defilement of the antichristian kingdom and that they did not worship the beast; but following the Lamb whithersoever He leadeth them, they remain faithful even unto the end. We found that the secret of their faithfulness must be sought in the name they bear on their foreheads, denoting that they belong to the Father and to the Lamb and that they have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ Jesus. And we found, finally, that because they were conscious of their being loved from eternity and of their being redeemed by the Lamb, they could learn the song of victory, in the midst of tribulation and could chime in with the church triumphant in heaven, "Salvation belongeth unto our God and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

The relation between that first portion of the chapter and the passage we are now discussing is evident. Also in the present passage the light of heaven is shed upon the established kingdom of the beast. In the first part of the chapter we are told that God maintained His power and that He has anointed His king over Zion forever. In this portion, however, we have an indication of the manner in which that Lamb will maintain His authority and power over the kingdom of darkness.

H.H.

## A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

### Joseph, Ruler of Egypt

*And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?*

*And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art:*

*Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.*

Genesis 41:38-40

Through the means of a revelation from God Joseph had made known unto Pharaoh a dire problem which would face him and his country in the near future: there was to be for them seven years of great bounty in their crops followed by seven more years of most severe famine. But in almost the same breath he gave to them an answer as to how they might meet this problem. In greatest humility he gave this answer with hardly a thought that he might gain from it personally. He felt sincerely that credit for the revelation and advice was due not to himself but to God from whom they came. At most he hoped to gain for himself only a release from prison and freedom to return to his father's home, and that, not as a payment for the revelation which came from God, but because now he might gain an opportunity to plead his innocence before the king. In that spirit of meekness he set before Pharaoh the four-point program that God had revealed to him. 1. Pharaoh should find a man who was discreet and wise to administer the affairs of the Egyptian economy in the problem years ahead. 2. Subordinate officers should be appointed to execute the orders which this man would set forth. 3. During the seven years of plenty a fifth part of all of the crops should be taken in as a taxation from the people. 4. The goods so gathered should be stored in cities and guarded to be used when the years of famine had come.

Perhaps no one was more surprised at the reaction of Pharaoh than was Joseph. Not only did he give his immediate assent to Joseph's plan but he also appointed Joseph to be the administrator. Pharaoh discerned in Joseph the Spirit of God which provided him with just such wisdom and discretion as was needed for this difficult task. Placing absolute confidence in the Spirit of God which rested upon Joseph, Pharaoh gave to Joseph all that was necessary for him to function in his newly acquired office. First, and of foremost importance, Pharaoh took his own ring from his finger and placed it upon the finger of Joseph. This was a signet ring which bore the seal of royal authority. The signet could be impressed in soft wax or clay and it would affix the authority of Pharaoh's throne to any order that Joseph would give. The fact that Pharaoh gave his ring into Joseph's care marks

the complete trust which Pharaoh immediately placed in him. Secondly, Joseph was provided with new clothing of the finest linen such as only the Egyptians of that day could make. This rich clothing served to distinguish him in the sight of all as a ruler of the people and a member of the royal court. Thirdly, a gold chain was placed about Joseph's neck. In Egypt a gold chain of this kind was a symbol of greatest authority and power. Fourthly, a royal chariot was placed at Joseph's disposal. It was second in elegance only to the chariot of Pharaoh. Whenever Joseph rode in this chariot, servants were sent before him to command obeisance from the people, for Joseph came with the authority of the king. Fifthly, lest racial prejudices should be held against Joseph, he was given an Egyptian name, Zephnath-Paaneah. Finally, even more to encourage Joseph's acceptance by the people, he was given an Egyptian wife of high birth, Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. Thus Joseph was thoroughly established in the court of Pharaoh. As Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt."

We marvel that Pharaoh, a heathen king, could put such immediate and complete trust in Joseph, a foreigner and a former inmate of his prison. The mere fact that Joseph had interpreted his dreams and given him a bit of sage advice would hardly seem to explain it. But then we recall the words of Solomon, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Pr. 21:1). God had willed that Joseph should be the ruler of Egypt, and also Pharaoh would be made to serve this purpose. None can resist God's will. Nonetheless, we should not explain this as merely the overruling power of God's providence. There was more to it than that. We note that Pharaoh did not ascribe mere earthly wisdom to Joseph but acknowledged that it was "the Spirit of God" that worked in him. Furthermore we learn from Psalm 105 (vs. 22) that Pharaoh appointed Joseph to "teach his senators wisdom." Surely Joseph was not satisfied to instruct those "senators" in mere intellectual knowledge. As far as the wisdom of the world is concerned the wise men of Egypt had much more knowledge than Joseph; but there was one thing that Joseph had which they did not, that was the knowledge of God. Of that knowledge Joseph was always most ready to speak. He instructed the wisemen of Egypt in it, and Pharaoh did not disapprove. Finally we know that when Jacob came to Egypt he gave his blessing to Pharaoh. We would conclude, therefore, that for a short time in the history of Egypt, God saw well to gather his elect out of that heathen nation. As in the house of Potiphar and in the cells of the prison, so Joseph in the court of Pharaoh was a preacher of righteousness. For a brief moment in history Egypt, like Nineveh in later years, was made a type of the gathering of the Gentiles. It was a foretaste of the day concerning which Isaiah would write, "In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto

the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation, yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it" (Isaiah 19:19-21). Pharaoh acknowledged the wisdom of Joseph because the grace of God was working in his heart.

In this way also, we can understand the marriage of Joseph to Asenath. Was Joseph unequally yoked together with an unbeliever? Surely he would have never consented to a marriage such as that. He had refused to corrupt the house of Potiphar with adultery; surely he would never have allowed his own house to be polluted with the service of idols. But Asenath was not an unbeliever. She was one of those who under the preaching of Joseph came to see the vanity of the religion of her fathers. She forsook, therefore, her idols for the God of Joseph. Only thereafter did Joseph take her to be his wife, and the blessing of God rested upon their marriage.

The first thing which Joseph did after receiving his office from Pharaoh was to visit all the different parts of the land of Egypt. This he did even before the seven years of plenty were begun. The purpose was to become thoroughly familiar with the land and with the people, so that, when the problems of gathering and distributing the grain would come to him, he would be able to evaluate them correctly.

Soon the years of plenty did come, and Joseph's time was fully occupied with gathering the excess in safe and proper storage. These were not just good years, a bit better than average, they were years which overflowed in plenty. There was a touch of the miraculous in the way that the land brought forth its fruit. Many times the average crop was reaped by the workers. It was necessary for Joseph to keep very close watch over all of the land to keep the people from wasting that which was extra. Year after year under the careful supervision of Joseph the storage cities were filled with their treasure. Not only did Joseph take the fifth part of the crop to be held in the possession of the government, but he taught and instructed the people on their part to put up for the years of famine which were to follow. With his example it was necessary to show the people that the years of plenty were not to be taken for granted or wasted. As much as possible had to be kept for the future. So great was the amount of food placed in storage that it exceeded the ability of the Egyptians to count it.

We see in Joseph a beautiful example of a Godfearing ruler. Although all of the wealth of Egypt was at his disposal, he applied himself diligently to the work which he was given to do. He would not take advantage of the favors that were his, but bore himself always as a willing servant faithful in his work. God had prepared him well for the position which he filled. Normally to be lifted from the position of a slave in a prison to ruler over all the land would be a very dan-

gerous experience. Easily one's heart becomes filled with pride, and he begins to think that somehow his good fortune is due to his own personal excellence. But Joseph had been purged beforehand from the inclination toward such pride. From the favored position in his father's house, he was sold as a slave into Egypt. When again he rose into favor in Potiphar's house, he was cast down into the depths of a dungeon. Thus Joseph was taught how impossible it was for him to care for himself. He was left with only God in whom to trust. Thus when finally he was raised to a position of highest glory, he knew that it was due not to himself but to God. With all meekness he used his position as a servant and not for his own satisfaction. He was an example to all of a meek and a Godly life.

Gradually the pattern and purpose of Joseph's life was beginning to come into focus. Joseph remembered the dreams which he had had in his youth. At the time his brothers had laughed and mocked him for them; they had seemed utterly impossible. As a slave in Potiphar's house, and especially within the darkened walls of Pharaoh's prison, they had seemed more impossible than ever before. Still he had not been able to escape the conviction that those dreams had been a revelation from God. Often he had pondered those dreams in the hours of his suffering but had not been able to understand. Now, however, this was suddenly changed. The fulfillment of those dreams began at least to appear possible. In his new position of authority, his brothers had only to come out of Canaan and they might easily bow before him as the dreams had foretold. Why it had to be, he did not know, but the possibility was clearly evident. For that reason also Joseph did not use his influence with Pharaoh to obtain permission to visit his family in Canaan. There he would meet them as equals, and the purpose of God, revealed to him from his youth, was that they should bow down before him. With patience he would wait for the fulfillment of the way of the Lord.

Thus when God blessed him with the birth of a son, he named the child Manasseh; "for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." The idea was not that his love for his father, or even for his brothers, had grown dim; actually he longed to be reunited with them. But the sting had gone out of that memory. It meant that he no longer held any evil feelings toward his brothers for their sin; and, even more, he was now able to distinguish that behind the deed of his brothers there had been the hand of God guiding things toward an end that He had long before ordained. Joseph was content in the way of the Lord. So when his second child was born, he named him Ephraim, "for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." It was not the riches that had come to him. It was not the power and glory of his newly acquired position. It was the knowledge that he was being led in the way of the Lord. Surely that was the fruitfulness of his life in which he could rejoice.

B.W.

## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of I Corinthians 15

#### II.

(I Corinthians 15:12-19)

In our first essay in this series we noticed that Paul lays a sure foundation for his entire polemic concerning the truth of the gospel, the resurrection from the dead. What we have here is a beautiful model for all Christian *apology*; only thus can the truth of the gospel be successfully defended against all the onslaughts of unbelief. One must stand foursquare in the truth of what is *revealed* in the Scriptures.

That must be the *status quo*!

Such must be the *point of departure* in all argumentation for the truth. We cannot meet the enemy on the basis of *his* arguments; such a conflict is decided in favor of the enemy ere it is really begun. One thus grants unbelief the right of argumentation. This Paul does not do for one minute. His starting point is in the *truth* of the Gospel.

And then there are two pillars of the truth which stand, and which were preached and believed. They are (1) that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and (2) that Christ arose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures. (See verses 3, 4.)

That this was *preached* by Paul and all the other eye-witnesses of the living and glorified Lord, and that this was *thus believed* by the Corinthians, is the end of all contradiction. Thus the Apostle had received the gospel-message from the Lord, and therein the believers were saved.

Those who deny this, in earnest, simply are branded unbelievers. For either they are deniers of the truth, or Paul and the witnesses of the resurrection are false witnesses. It is an either-or situation. Here is no open forum where unbelief and faith can discuss the questions of life and death. Here is the church, the pillar and ground of the truth, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.

In this passage under consideration Paul will show *to the believers* to what dire consequences the denial of the resurrection of the dead must needs lead. The passage here under consideration reads as follows:

*"Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up if so be the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.*

*If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable."*

Looking at this passage it strikes our attention that Paul shows here the dire consequences for *life* and *death*, if Christ is not risen from the dead. In a very masterful way he shows the consequences that this has for the (1) content of the Gospel, (2) the preachers and witnesses of the resurrection, (3) the believers of the Gospel and who hope in Christ. What a complete triad. All education posits these three: (a) subject matter, (b) instructor, (c) pupil. In the verses 12-14 Paul shows the consequences for the content of the Gospel if Christ is not raised. In verse 15 the apostle demonstrates the dire consequences for the preachers of the Gospel, if Christ is not raised. Finally, in the verses 17-19 he shows what awful and far-reaching implications this would have for the believers, if Christ be not raised.

When Paul here thus reasons he does not reason as a mere logician; he does here not reason simply from an abstract principle, from the general to the particular. Thus for instance he does not simply say: If there be no *animals*, then there are no *cows, hogs or sheep*. That would be reasoning from the general to the particular. Or another instance: if there be no flowers, then there are no roses, lilies and violets. He does not reason from the abstract concept of "resurrection" to Christ's resurrection. Paul is not a philosopher. Paul is a witness of the resurrection. He argues not premises but facts. He argues from the one fact to the other; he reasons from cause to effect and from effect to cause! The resurrection of Christ is the cause in this case, and the resurrection of the believers is the effect! He reasons from the fountain to the water, and conversely. If there is no water then there is no fountain! If finally, the dead do not rise, those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, in the blessed resurrection, then that must be proof that Christ never arose as the resurrection and the life.

Here we see the truth demonstrated that a matter is not true because it is logical, but that it is logical because it is true. We believe and, therefore, we know!

Notice the grand starting point. "Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead . . ." This is a conditional sentence. It states that matter in this condition as a *condition of fact*. Christ is preached that he is raised from the dead. Then all denial and questioning of this truth is *per se* heretical. And it is a heresy of no mean consequence. It will result in the loss of everything that the believer holds dear, and of what is preached.

For notice, that the grand truth of the gospel is that Christ is *risen*. He is in a constant and abiding state of glory at the right hand of God! See verses 4, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20. In all of these passages Paul employs the perfect tense. The degree of action is here considered fulfilled and finished *up to the present moment*! He is now in the glory which he had from God before the foundation of the world. He is exalted far above all principality and might and dominion,

and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

Such is the *fact* of what is preached.

However, then no one can truthfully say: there is no *resurrection*, blessed resurrection from the dead.

For notice that the truth of the resurrection is really, from a certain point of view, the very *center* of the Gospel story. It is the *turning point* from all defeat into victory. If no resurrection, then also no gospel of *victory over death*. Death is in such a case not swallowed up of life. Then death has the victory. Then there is no glad-tidings.

Does not Paul say, "If Christ is not raised . . . our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain also"? Is then our faith based upon a glorious *fact*? Is it based at all upon a fact? Of course not! In that case there is not any truth at all to what is proclaimed. It is empty of all content! Then we do not have a living Lord, but a dead Christ. Then Christ's death was not the propitiation for our sins, it had no power, it fulfilled no divine justice of God. Then the Cross is powerless to save, and to lead to the resurrection. All the preaching is then empty. Yes, and faith is then also empty. We believe then a nothing!

Let not the deniers of the truth of the resurrection then pride themselves that they would still have a message of hope, hope in a dying world!

Then all is nothing.

Both as to what is preached and as to the believing of it!!

But there is more. Then also, says Paul, "we are found to be false witnesses of God." Yea, what a tremendous hoax all preaching is. It is then the most consummate deception possible. Men are then sent to hell with an imaginary heaven and salvation. The preacher is then a deceiver than which there is none conceivably greater.

If Christ is not raised, he is still in the grave, is he not? Has anyone then possibly been able to have seen his resurrection. Is then not the common report among the Jews more possibly correct, that the resurrection is a "story" concocted by the disciples? And is then the conclusion not far more warranted that the "disciples stole the body" of the Lord, and hid it elsewhere, while the Roman watch which Pilate had ordered at the grave slept? Forsooth, then no one can truthfully say that he was an eye-witness of the resurrection! He who says that he is such a witness is a blatant liar. Nothing less! Such a person is then not simply mistaken. He cannot then say "that is the way it is to the best of my knowledge"! He is then branded before God, devils, angels and men, who are then all damned, as the greatest deceiver. They raised the hopes to the highest point, only to plunge their gullible followers into the abyss of eternal disappointment!

For if the dead are not raised Christ was not raised.

If finally the dead meet their eternal, dismal and horrible disappointment — it is because Christ was then not raised!

What cogent and powerful polemic, which appeals to the faith and hope of the believers!

And now one final master stroke of polemic on the part of Paul. Look at that great host, the innumerable hosts of the church throughout the ages. They hoped in God. Yet, we read the solemn truth in Hebrews 11:13: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest, that they are seeking a country of their own." And to this we may add what we read in Hebrews 11:39, 40: "And these all having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." Look at that "cloud of witnesses." How hopeful they are. They greet the resurrection from afar. Did not Abraham, Isaac and Jacob enter into the cave of Machpelah in this faith and hope?

Fools are they?

If Christ is not raised from the dead, they fell asleep in Christ in vain. What a terrible awakening. They expected to open their eyes in heaven, in Abraham's bosom, and they bare with the rich man in hell! All their life they cleansed themselves in vain in hope. And their number grew, and grew! But to what avail if Christ is not raised. Are they not still in their sins? Did they not *perish* in their sins?!

And are then we not simply hoping in Christ for *this* life?

There is then no future life, no ages to come!

Look at the men of this world. They live in sin. Merrily they go to hell. Is that then not better? At least they will not be disappointed. But we? Of all men we must then needs be most miserable, most pitiable. And yet there is then no one to show pity. Would one here not sing the praise of the fools? (De Lof der Zotheid.)

But, thanks be to God, such is not the case. Christ is risen. He is at the right hand of God. He lives. He is the resurrection and the life.

Thus it was preached to us and thus we have believed.

And His truth shall stand!

G.L.

#### IN MEMORIAM

In loving memory of our Mother and Sister

MRS. JUSTINA (TEN ELSHOF) VAN DER WAL

who passed away on January 2nd, 1960.

Mrs. H. Weeber  
Mrs. A. Potts  
Mrs. Wm. Venema  
Mrs. J. Fraser  
John Ten Elshof  
James Ten Elshof  
George Ten Elshof  
Mrs. C. McNeil

## IN HIS FEAR

### Punishment or Praise?

(4)

Some time ago we read a little bit of worldly philosophy to the effect that one should always remember the goal one has in mind and then conduct oneself in such a way that this goal may be reached. This advice was given in connection with a discussion of the matter of losing one's temper and of defeating one's purpose by saying the wrong thing or behaving in a way so that one's purpose was defeated. If we wish to convince one of a certain thing, and that is our goal, we should not irritate and incite that one to anger. Remembering our goal we should fashion our approach and our conduct in such a way that it serves our goal. Well, that philosophy can stand if our goal is a good one and if it is understood that our conduct to reach this goal is also ethical. Otherwise the advice can just as well be stated in that wicked slogan: The end justifies the means.

Nevertheless when we face the question of punishment or praise we must indeed have our goal in mind, and that goal must be a righteous one. Punishment or praise for evil purposes is evil, even though punishment and praise in themselves are ethically and morally good. God gives the authorities the right to punish the evil doer, and when they do so at His command, they do not sin. But the motive can be wrong, and then the inflicting of that punishment also becomes a sin. Paul realized this also and expresses it when he warns the parents in Colossians 3:21 and in Ephesians 6:4 not to provoke their children to wrath lest they become discouraged. That surely does not mean that we should let them get away with some of their sinfulness. The parent punishes in God's name and because He demands it. Now God does not wink at any sin and does not excuse any sin of any kind. He makes no distinction, and He sent His Son to the cross for all the sins of His people. He did not deem some of them so minor that they could be overlooked and passed over as not needing punishment. But our punishment of our children must always be corrective. Paul is speaking to covenant parents to whom and to whose children God has given the covenant promises, whose sins are blotted out through the blood of the Lamb. We do not, therefore, by our punishment seek to make our children pay for their sins. As we pointed out last time, Solomon declares that we apply the rod because we love our children as children of God. We love God, and we love His children. And because we love God we punish our children to teach them the fear of the Lord. We desire to see them walk in God's ways; and to their training belongs discipline upon them for their evil ways. That we do not provoke them to wrath, then, does not mean that we desist from punishing them time and again

for the same evil deed in the fear that they will be filled with wrath towards us and towards God. It has to do with the method of punishing, the way in which we go about it rather than in the application of discipline itself. In Colossians 3:21 Paul uses a word that means to rouse to strife; and in Ephesians 6:4 a word that means to irritate. These usually come in later childhood and adolescence. A little child is a most forgiving little creature. He holds no grudges. One minute he fights with his playmates, and the next minute he is the best of friends again. One minute you punish him till the tears flow freely down his cheeks. A few minutes later he is on your lap hugging you and acting toward you as though you never hurt him in your life. But let him grow up a little. He does not forget, and he takes careful note of your attitude and demeanor when you punish. He has his own pride also, and he is easily irritated and resents it when you punish him in later life as though he were still a little babe. He sees your personal anger. He sees your inconsistencies and your partiality. Joseph's brothers saw that too. He soon sees your punishing of him as the venting of your own hot displeasure rather than, as you may perhaps say to him, your God-given duty to correct him and to train him in the fear of the Lord. Indeed, we must keep our goal in mind, but that goal must be a spiritual one when we apply the rod to our children. And when punishing in that narrow sense of the word is no longer advisable as the child becomes a young man or a young woman in our home, our discipline must fit the case and clearly indicate the goal we have in mind. It must still be corrective discipline, and our children should not only understand but be able to see by our behaviour and actions that we are seeking their good not only, but that we love God and are ourselves seeking to do His will. The form of discipline for these who have now to a great extent become our own equal physically, mentally and psychically is not always easy to determine. And there is always the difference in the children's natures. The one child will respond to a few words of rebuke and blush in shame. Another child will of necessity be required to suffer certain deprivations. Certain privileges will have to be denied him for a time. No blanket rule can be given for such things. We do well to remember the words of Paul that we do not irritate and arouse to anger by our wrong behaviour and attitude in punishing.

There may be times when praise is advisable. Never can it take the place of punishment. Never can we praise the child (or the adult) for the thing that demands punishment. That is not the idea in our theme. When an individual has done something worthy of punishment, by all means do not praise him for that deed or that part of his deed. That is as wrong as to punish him for that which is praiseworthy. But there are times when the child's attention may be called to his error without making him suffer either deprivation or punishment with the rod and that he is praised for some of his actions.

Indeed there are times when praise does more harm than



good. There are moments when we desire spontaneously to praise a child or an individual. We see a work that is praiseworthy and are convinced that the man deserves a word of praise for it. We know also that the man himself considers himself worthy of such a word of praise. And it is better for us to refrain from expressing it, not because the deed is not praiseworthy but because by expressing it we will encourage pride and with it the performance of such works out of an evil motive. But there are also times when a child or an adult struggles conscientiously, fights against a weakness, exerts himself to do the thing required and fails to reach the desired goal. Such an one needs encouragement. Such must not be provoked to wrath, irritated by a complete dismissal of all his effort and desire as so much hypocrisy and wickedness. The sin into which such an one has again fallen must not be brushed aside and glossed over; but a word of commendation for his effort will not move him to walk in evil. Instead he will be encouraged to fight and to strive with more zeal and earnestness. A child especially is encouraged when his efforts are noticed. And when he makes an honest effort to do what is required of him, we may praise him with little fear of pride. It is the child who gets things easily and with little effort who is inclined towards pride when he is praised. The parent knows his own child — due to a great extent to the fact that he knows his own nature which he sees reflected in his child — and is in a better position to know whether his child will be spoiled by praise or encouraged to double his efforts upon learning that his efforts are noticed.

When it comes to punishment we cannot say, Punish if it will do some good, otherwise refrain from it. Punishment is always in order, although the form and the degree must be determined by the case at hand. Blanket rules for this are useless and impossible. We may remember that God always demands punishment. He hates all sin and because He does He opposes it with all His holy being. As a result He punishes every sin regardless of the form, the length of its duration or extenuating circumstances. Sin with Him is always sin. And we have yet to find a man who is stricter than God. Therefore we do well to be careful of our criticism of those who hold to discipline. It is not old-fashioned. It is not antiquated. It is not foolishness. It never goes out of style except for those who hate God. One of the marks of the true church is exactly the proper exercise of discipline. Jesus also rebuked the churches who were lax in their discipline in those letters to the seven churches in Revelation two and three. He praises them for their faith and stand in the midst of wickedness, but He also speaks clearly and forcefully against the failure of the church to deal severely with those who walk in ways of wickedness. Our churches, our consistories, our elders may well take heed to these letters to the seven churches and be warned by what is written therein.

Those walking in evil may resent it. Their flesh always will resent it. That flesh is ready to drink in praise and is

all ears to hear it uttered. But rebukes, warnings and exhortations are displeasing to that flesh. This does not alter the fact that it is our duty to punish and discipline as well as to praise. The law teaches us that we must love our neighbour. Surely then we ought to love the brother in the church. And what Solomon says about the parent using the rod upon his child because he loves him is true also of discipline of the adult by the church. The church that is concerned with the spiritual well-being of its members will not ignore sin and have only a word of praise for each member. That church, in love to God first of all, will rebuke and exhort, will warn and discipline the wayward. But also in love to that member it will remind of sin and not behave as though no wickedness is to be seen. That is also the spirit of the "Golden Rule." Indeed, these walking in sin do not want this done unto them; but the spiritually minded office-bearer who desires to be dealt with in true love, wants to be turned from his evil way; and therefore he takes hold of the wayward member over whom God has placed him and demands confession and a breaking away from that sin.

Praise men when it will do good, otherwise refrain from it. But discipline always because it is always good. Encourage by a word of praise when it will encourage one in the way of righteousness. But failure to discipline can only encourage into the way of evil. We need no help to further our way in the paths of evil. We do that readily enough and spontaneously enough. We are bent in that direction, our whole being is inclined in the way of evil. But we can be spurred on even further and encouraged if not even emboldened in that evil, when those in authority over us look the other way and tolerate our wickedness. If, then, we are in doubt as to whether we ought to praise or punish (discipline) and the case is not so clear-cut that we can see that praise will encourage into more striving rather than to pride and carelessness, let us use the corrective means God has given us. Let us be found faithful to Him, even if men are to call us unappreciative and "big stick" men.

J.A.H.

---

#### SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS' INSPIRATION MASS MEETING

to be held

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16th  
at HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

New location, corner West 12th and Washington Ave.

---

#### PROTESTANT REFORMED HIGH SCHOOL MEETING

Society for Christian Secondary Education

will meet at SOUTHWEST CHURCH

Thursday evening, March 31, at 8:00 o'clock

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

#### THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

#### VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

#### FORMAL PRINCIPLE

(continued)

We will now continue with our discussion of the Roman Catholic doctrine of Tradition. Our readers may recall that when we speak of the formal principle of the Reformation (the other main principle of the Reformation is the material principle, that of justification and only through faith) we mean that the Reformers acknowledged only one source of authority, namely the Holy Scriptures. Roman Catholicism recognizes, besides the Holy Scriptures, also Tradition. To this we now call attention a little more in detail.

To state the difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, we must distinguish sharply and clearly. The real question between Romanists and Protestants is not whether the Holy Spirit of God leads His Church and people into the knowledge of the truth. Protestantism does not deny development in the truth. The real question, however, may be stated as follows: Is there not apart from the revelation contained in the Bible another supplementary and explanatory revelation which has been handed down from outside of the Scriptures, by tradition? Are there doctrines and institutions and ordinances, having no warrant in the Scriptures, which we as Christians are bound to receive and obey upon the authority of tradition, as interpreted by the Church (which, according to Rome, means really the pope)?

The grounds which Rome advances for its doctrine of Tradition are several. First, Rome calls attention to the fact that there was no Bible in the church before the days of Moses, that many of the believers lived and died without ever reading and understanding the Scriptures, and that therefore many of God's people lived out of tradition. We know that Moses wrote the first books of the Bible, the first five books of the Bible, and that therefore there was not a written word of God before the time of Moses. Secondly, is it not undeniably true that the great majority of the people of God live out of tradition? This applies to various spheres of life, does it not? Does not our life, as it were, rest upon tradition? Are we not connected by tradition with the generations that preceded us and do we not take over from these generations their treasures and pass them on to our children? If this be true of various spheres of life, would it not also apply to the sphere of the church? In fact, would it not especially apply to the sphere of the church because

Christ has given unto the church His Holy Spirit and the promise that that Holy Spirit would lead the Church of God into all the truth? Thirdly, are there not several passages of Holy Writ that appear to support and teach tradition? We refer to passages such as John 16:12, 20:31, 21:25, Acts 1:3, I Cor. 11:2, 23, II Thess. 2:14, I Tim. 6:20, II John 12, III John 13, 14. Finally, Jesus has taught His disciples many things which have not been recorded or written by them but have been passed on from mouth to mouth. Church fathers, councils, and popes have recognized such an apostolic tradition from the very beginning. In fact, the church also as of today continues to live out of this living tradition. Scripture alone is not sufficient. For, besides the fact that many things have not been recorded it is also true that several writings of the apostles and prophets have been lost. The apostles did receive a commandment to witness, but they did not receive a commandment to witness by means of writing. They wrote only because they were forced to do so because of circumstances. Hence, their writings do not contain everything that is necessary for the doctrine and the life of the church. It is for this reason that we find little, if anything, in the Bible concerning the baptism of women, the celebration of the Sabbath and particularly the day when this sabbath must be observed in the New Dispensation, the office of the bishop, of the seven sacraments, purgatory, the holy and spotless conception of the virgin Mary, the salvation of heathens in the Old Dispensation, the inspiration and canonicity of various books of the Bible; in fact, dogmas such as the Trinity, the eternal generation of the Son, the procession of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of infants, etc., are not literally mentioned in Holy Writ. Expressed briefly, the Scriptures are profitable, but tradition is necessary. This is Rome's conception of the truth that the Bible is insufficient and that Tradition must be maintained to fill this void.

In our critical analysis of the Romish doctrine of Tradition we must surely be careful that we do not confound this conception with the sound conception of the doctrine of development. It is surely true that the Church has advanced throughout the ages in the knowledge of the truths of the Word of God. Hodge gives expression to this in his Systematic Theology, Vol. I, pages 116-118, as follows, and we quote: "All Protestants admit that there has been, in one sense, an uninterrupted development of theology in the Church, from the apostolic age to the present time. All the facts, truths, doctrines, and principles, which enter into Christian theology, are in the Bible. They are there as fully and as clearly at one time as at another; at the beginning as they are now. No addition has been made to their number, and no new explanation has been afforded of their nature or relations. The same is true of the facts of nature. They are now what they have been from the beginning. They are, however, far better known, and more clearly understood now than they were a thousand years ago. The mechanism of the heavens was the same in the days of Pythagoras as it was in those of La Place; and yet the astronomy of the latter was

immeasurably in advance of that of the former. The change was effected by a continual and gradual progress. The same progress has taken place in theological knowledge. Every believer is conscious of such progress in his own experience. When he was a child, he thought as a child. As he grew in years, he grew in knowledge of the Bible. He increased not only in the compass, but in the clearness, order, and harmony of his knowledge. This is just as true of the Church collectively as of the individual Christian. It is, in the first place, natural, if not inevitable, that it should be so. The Bible, although so clear and simple in its teaching, that he who runs may read and learn enough to secure his salvation, is still full of the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God; full of *ta bathee tou theou*, the profoundest truths concerning all the great problems which have taxed the intellect of man from the beginning. These truths are not systematically stated, but scattered, so to speak, promiscuously over the sacred pages, just as the facts of science are scattered over the face of nature, or hidden in its depths. Every man knows that there is unspeakably more in the Bible than he has yet learned, as every man of science knows that there is unspeakably more in nature than he has yet discovered, or understands. It stands to reason that such a book, being the subject of devout and laborious study, century after century, by able and faithful men, should come to be better and better understood. And as in matters of science, although one false theory after another, founded on wrong principles or on an imperfect induction of facts, has passed away, yet real progress is made, and the ground once gained is never lost, so we should naturally expect it to be with the study of the Bible. False views, false inferences, misapprehensions, ignoring of some facts, and misinterpretations, might be expected to come and go, in endless succession, but nevertheless a steady progress in the knowledge of what the Bible teaches be accomplished. And we might also expect that here, too, the ground once surely gained would not again be lost.

But, in the second place, what is thus natural and reasonable in itself is a patent historical fact. The Church has thus advanced in theological knowledge. The difference between the confused and discordant representation of the early fathers on all subjects connected with the doctrines of the Trinity and of the person of Christ, and the clearness, precision, and consistency of the views presented after ages of discussion, and the statement of these doctrines by the Councils of Chalcedon and Constantinople, is as great almost as between chaos and cosmos. And this ground has never been lost. The same is true with regard to the doctrines of sin and grace. Before the long-continued discussion of these subjects in the Augustinian period, the greatest confusion and contradiction prevailed in the teachings of the leaders of the Church; during those discussions the views of the Church became clear and settled. There is scarcely a principle or doctrine concerning the fall of man, the nature of sin and guilt, inability, the necessity of the Spirit's influence,

etc., etc., which now enters into the faith of evangelical Christians, which was not then clearly stated and authoritatively sanctioned by the Church. In like manner, before the Reformation, similar confusion existed with regard to the great doctrine of justification. No clear line of discrimination was drawn between it and sanctification. Indeed, during the Middle Ages, and among the most devout of the schoolmen, the idea of guilt was merged in the general idea of sin, and sin regarded as merely moral defilement. The great object was to secure holiness. Then pardon would come of course. The apostolic, Pauline, deeply Scriptural doctrine, that there can be no holiness until sin be expiated, that pardon, justification, and reconciliation, must precede sanctification, was never clearly apprehended. This was the grand lesson which the Church learned at the Reformation, and which it has never since forgot. It is true then, as an historical fact, that the Church has advanced. It understands the great doctrines of theology, anthropology, and soteriology, far better now, than they were understood in the early post-apostolic age of the Church." — end of quote from Hodge.

Indeed, how true are these two great characteristics of the Bible, the written Word of God: its perspicuity or transparency and its profundity. The Word of God is surely transparently clear. Any child of God can read it unto his own salvation and joy and peace. That Word is a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path. Its doctrines concerning sin and grace, the creation of the heavens and the earth and the re-creation of new heavens and a new earth, the salvation of the elect as merited by Christ and sovereignly and unconditionally bestowed upon them by irresistible grace, etc., are as clear as crystal. However, this is only one characteristic of the Word of God. Another characteristic of the Bible is its profundity. The Bible may be compared to a clear mountain lake which appears to be bottomless. Its waters are clear but its bottom cannot be seen. Its truths are so simple and yet they are so majestically and wonderfully deep and profound. And throughout the ages it is the privilege of the Church to look into those depths. Continually the Church grows and advances in the knowledge of the Scriptures. Continually new treasures are discovered. O, they were always present in the Word of God. But the people of God did not always see them. And the Church also advances and grows in its understanding of them. How limited was the understanding of Jesus' disciples, while our Lord was among us, of the doctrines of His coming and the spiritual purpose of that coming! How earthly and carnal they were in their conceptions! How they advanced in the knowledge of His death and resurrection, especially through the Spirit as He was poured out into the Church on the day of Pentecost! And throughout the ages the Church grows in the knowledge of those wonderful treasures that are hidden as so many golden nuggets in the Holy Scriptures.

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 2. Who teach: That God does indeed provide the believer with sufficient powers to persevere, and is ever ready to preserve these in him, if he will do his duty; but that though all things, which are necessary to persevere in faith and which God will use to preserve faith, are made use of, it even then ever depends on the pleasure of the will whether it will persevere or not. For this idea contains an outspoken Pelagianism, and while it would make men free, it makes them robbers of God's honor, contrary to the prevailing agreement of the evangelical doctrine, which takes from man all cause of boasting, and ascribes all the praise for this favor to the grace of God alone; and contrary to the Apostle, who declares: "That it is God, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unreprouable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." I Cor. 1:8.

Before we give our attention to the translation, we may remark in passing that in the present edition of the *Psalter* there are two printing errors in this article: 1) "though" is rendered "through." 2) The textual reference is not I Cor. 1:18, but 1:8. Incidentally, there are more such errors in the *Psalter*, some of them serious. For example, there is a serious omission in Article 26 of the *Netherland Confession* which changes the meaning completely. These should be corrected, and new errors guarded against, in any future edition.

There is room for correction and clarification in the above translation too. And we can best make these corrections by rendering anew the entire article. Then the reader may compare and take note of the changes. We would translate as follows:

Who teach: That God indeed provides a believing man with sufficient powers to persevere, and is ready to preserve these in him if he will do his duty: nevertheless when all those things which are necessary for persevering in the faith and which God wills (wishes) to employ for preserving faith have been put into operation, then it always depends on the free choice of the will whether he will persevere or not persevere. For this view contains evident Pelagianism; and while it wishes to make men free, it makes them sacrilegious, contrary to the unbroken agreement (harmony) of the doctrine of the gospel, which takes away from man

every reason for boasting and assigns the praise for this benefit to divine grace alone; and it is contrary to the testimony of the Apostle: "Who shall confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." I Cor. 1:8.

There is one point in the above translation which is difficult to settle. It concerns the expression, "when all those things . . . have been put into operation." In our translation we have followed the Dutch rendering: "doch al is het nu ook dat alle dingen . . . in het werk gesteld zijn." But it is possible that this rendering is too strong a translation for the Latin participle *positis*. Perhaps the idea is not that of being put into operation, but that of being given or supplied. In that case, then, the powers necessary and sufficient for perseverance are not actually put into operation by God, but they are granted or bestowed. Such, at least, is the way one Dutch commentary explains this article. Ultimately, of course, it makes no real difference as far as the meaning of the article is concerned, except that if the stronger rendering is adopted, the Arminian error becomes just a little worse. For in that case man by his free will not only chooses to use or not to use the God-given powers of perseverance, but he can by his free will interrupt those powers once they have actually been put into operation. But once again: the difference is not essential.

The main thrust of this article is not difficult to grasp, especially if in the translation it is brought out that the article concerns the will of God and the will of man. The erroneous position of the Arminians is clear; and the diametrically opposite position of the Reformed truth is equally clear here. Quite obviously we deal here with the fundamental issue of the Arminians' sovereign will of man and dependent God over against the Reformed faith's sovereign will of God and dependent man. The Arminian is at least consistent in his error, if that be any virtue. What he teaches about election he also maintains in regard to faith and conversion; and what he teaches about faith and conversion he also maintains in regard to perseverance. God's choice in election is dependent upon man's foreseen choice. God's will to save all men through a Christ Who dies for all men is dependent upon man's free will to believe and repent or not to believe and repent. And thus it is also with perseverance, according to the Arminian. God's will is that all believers shall persevere unto the end. To that end God supplies all believers with sufficient powers to persevere, and He intends on His part to employ those powers for preserving faith in the believers. But whether the will of God shall be accomplished, and whether the powers which He supplies shall reach the intended purpose, whether therefore the believers shall actually persevere to the end, that depends on the free choice of their will. Such is the Arminian position.

We may observe the following details in this view:

1) When the Arminians speak of "sufficient powers to persevere" and of "all things necessary to persevere" being

bestowed upon the believers, and even being put into operation, they refer to all those spiritual benefits which are necessary for perseverance, namely, the power not to lose the grace of adoption, the power not to forfeit the state of justification, the power not to commit the sin unto death, the power to keep the incorruptible seed of regeneration, the power not to continue and perish in one's backsliding but to come to repentance and to return to the light and to be filled with a sincere and godly sorrow for sins and to seek and obtain remission of sins in the blood of Christ, and the power diligently to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. In short, all those powers which are mentioned in the positive part of this chapter the Arminian also presents as being bestowed by God upon the believers.

2) Secondly, we may notice that the Arminians speak of "the believer," or, "The believing man." Now this in itself is not wrong, of course. But it is characteristic of the Arminian nevertheless that whenever he can use another term than "elect," he will do so. Our fathers repeatedly use such terms as "the elect" and "his own people." But the Arminian will avoid this language if possible, and speak as little as possible about election. While it is true in itself, therefore, that God bestows the powers of perseverance upon the believing man, in Arminian parlance this means that God bestows these gifts *because* of man's believing.

3) In the third place, the Arminian can leave nothing untainted with the corruption of conditionalism. Even the opening statement in this paragraph must be qualified by "if he will do his duty." That is, if only man will believe and repent, and if only man will receive and use these powers of perseverance, then God will grant these powers and is ready to preserve those powers in man. This is, of course, the usual Arminian double talk.

4) But it is that double talk which makes the Arminian error again so insidious. Mark you well, if you insist that all the powers needed to persevere are from God, and if you maintain that God must bestow those powers, and if you teach that man cannot persevere without those divinely bestowed powers—in all this the Arminian will go along with you. In fact, he not only must leave the impression that he speaks Scripture's language of a gospel of grace, but he willfully does leave that impression in order to deceive. The Arminian, in order to succeed, must proclaim his error of conditionalism and salvation by works under the guise of a gospel of grace.

5) But, though he may not always do so as clearly as in the language that is condemned in this article, the Arminian will always end by maintaining the supremacy of man. The use of these divine gifts, the effectualness of their operation, even the bestowal of them—this is all a matter of the free choice of the will. God's will is ever dependent upon and can always be frustrated by man's will.

It is in this connection that the fathers take hold of one

of the age-old and fundamental arguments of all Arminians and Pelagians in their reply to this error. This out-and-out Pelagian idea, which the church had condemned long before James Arminius appeared on the scene of history to revive it, purposes "to make men free." Their argument is that if grace is absolutely sovereign, and if the will of God prevails over the will of man, determines the will of man, then man is no more free, but is reduced to a stock and block. This is exactly the argument that is raised so frequently today also. We should beware of it. Man is indeed a rational, moral being; and his moral choice and action is always in harmony with his own will. In that sense we may probably speak of a psychological freedom of the will. But we must never forget that man and his will are not independent of God and His will. Man's will and his voluntary actions are never outside the scope and the confines of God's omnipotent will. We must not confuse freedom and sovereignty. That is the error of Pelagianism, repeated by Arminianism. And that error the fathers describe as making men sacrilegious, that is, making men robbers of God's honor. Sovereignty is a uniquely divine attribute and honor. If therefore you ascribe sovereignty to man's will, you attempt to make man God and to rob God of His honor. And that is sacrilege.

The fathers condemn this error on the ground that it is contrary to the current thought of Scripture: "contrary to the unbroken harmony of the doctrine of the gospel." This consensus of Scripture they describe as taking away from man all cause of boasting, and assigning the praise for this benefit (of perseverance) to divine grace alone. This is noteworthy. The Reformed view does not rest on isolated texts, passages that are violently plucked out of their connection and that are considered apart from the Scriptures as a whole. The strength of the Reformed view lies exactly in the fact that it is "the current thought of Scripture." And as one expression of that current thought of Scripture the fathers cite the text in I Corinthians 1:8, in which it is plain that to God alone, and not at all to man, is assigned the praise of this benefit of perseverance: *God* shall confirm you unto the end, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We may conclude on a practical note by quoting (in translation) the comment of Rev. T. Bos in this connection: "What a comfort there is in this truth for all the upright in heart. They are but all too easily convinced of their own weakness and unfaithfulness. All hope of salvation would be taken away from them if, as far as the future is concerned, they had to trust in their own will, their own strength. Now, however, they may believe that God has begun a good work in them and that therefore God has begun that good work in them in order that one day He shall save them completely, and that no one can resist His will: now they can be certain that He Who once called them out of darkness, gave them faith, and brought them into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ, will also preserve them and confirm them, that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

H.C.H.

## DECENCY and ORDER

### Church Visitation

(Article 44 D.K.O.)

In our previous article we introduced the subject of Church Visitation by quoting the appropriate article of our Church Order and the decisions appended to this article by our churches as these are found in our Church Order manual. We also quoted Rev. Ophoff's comments on this subject and observed in the light of all this that the work of church visitation is a serious labor aimed at the spiritual profit and upbuilding of the church. Mechanization must be avoided and sufficient flexibility must be allowed the visitors in this work so that they may feel free to depart from stereotyped forms in order to achieve this objective.

The work of church visitation originated in the churches of the Netherlands during the latter part of the sixteenth century. At first these churches were hesitant to introduce this work because they feared the danger of hierarchy. This was understandable. On the other hand, however, the need for some kind of supervisory work was keenly felt because in some Classes there was little regard among the churches for denominational unity. Moreover many at this time had been admitted into the ministry whose training had been inadequate and whose work therefore really needed some supervisory control. Although suggestions were made as early as 1579 to institute church visitation, it was not until 1586 at the Synod of 's Gravenhage that it was decided to recommend this work to the Classes. Even then, however, it was left optional in some provinces but in 1618-19 the Synod incorporated the present article in the Church Order and so the work of church visiting became mandatory in all of the churches.

Originally more serious attention was given to this work than is done in our present day. This is evident from the guiding principles set forth by the Synod of 1586 and which today are scarcely ever observed any more. From Rutgers' *Kerkelijke Adviezen* we learn that these principles are:

*"1. They (the church visitors) shall occasionally listen to the sermons of the minister, not only to find out whether he is pure in doctrine, but also whether he preaches in such a way that the sermons can be for the benefit and edification of the congregation. They shall further investigate whether the minister is diligent in the reading and study of Scripture, and finally, whether the minister makes use of the accepted forms for baptism and other ceremonies.*

*2. They shall carefully and with courtesy attempt to find out with the elders and deacons of the church in which the minister serves, or even from the members of the church, whether the minister is faithful in edifying the church,*

*whether he exercises Christian discipline, and whether to that end the ecclesiastical gatherings are held.*

*3. They shall also have oversight over the life and walk of the minister, and find out whether there are any quarrels and disunity in the congregation or other disorders that are detrimental to the life of the congregation and that ought to be removed as quickly as possible.*

*4. Finally, if with the members of the consistory there are found any faults with respect to the above mentioned instances, they shall first admonish them privately unto improvement and also help them unto that end, and if this is of no avail they shall report the matter to Classis."*

Following these principles, it is evident that the work of the church visitors must aim at the very heart of the life of the church, i.e., the preaching of the Word and in connection with this the walk and labors of the minister. Of course, the other office bearers of the church are not entirely excluded. That the work of church visiting, however, should concern itself mainly with the preaching and other labors of the ministry of the Word follows from the correct assumption that where the preaching is pure and edifying and the labors of the ministry properly and faithfully executed, other things will also be as they should. The reverse of this is likewise true. Where the ministry does not measure up to the spiritual standard of God's Word, a resultant state of disorder and spiritual degeneracy will exist in the church. The evidences of this are all too apparent in our day. If then the work of church visiting is to *promote the upbuilding of the congregation*, it must concern itself mainly with the ministry of the Word.

It is plain, too, from these principles that the church visitors must have a rather broad authority; something that is again lacking in the work as it is practiced today. Yet it follows from the very nature of the task to be accomplished that if this labor is to be effective at all, this authority is essential. They must make an extensive survey of the spiritual condition of the congregation. To them belongs the task of ascertaining whether or not all things are done in the various churches according to the adopted order. It is for them to determine whether the office bearers are faithful in the performance of the duties of their respective offices. Where wrong doing or neglect are found they must admonish and through their advice and assistance see to it that the evils are corrected or report their findings to the Classis so that the latter may then take the necessary steps to see to it that these things are rectified for the welfare of the congregation. Certainly such labor cannot be performed fruitfully unless it is done with a measure of real authority.

Not without reason, therefore, does the 44th Article of our Church Order delegate this important work to at least two of the *oldest, most experienced and most competent ministers*. The article itself does not state whether the church visitors are to be appointed by the Classis through its pres-



ident or whether they are to be elected. The latter practice is usually followed but regardless of which method of appointment is followed, the above rule should be carefully observed. The *Church Order Commentary* points out that in the past frequently young men were appointed who were just in the ministry and who had no special qualification for this work. The result of this was that the work was done in such a mechanical fashion that it was suggested that the questions be proposed to the consistories by a mailed questionnaire. This is simply no work for a novice. Even among the older and experienced ministers, all are not qualified for this task. Rev. H. Hoeksema states that this is a "*most difficult work that requires experience, tact and wisdom as well as strong conviction and clear insight into the truth.*" Classis, in the interest of all the churches, should be very careful to select those men who possess most of these qualities.

It has been suggested that elders may also qualify for this work. The *Church Order Commentary* states that "*No Classis would violate a principle of Reformed Church polity if it should appoint an elder for this work.*" Jansen, in his *Korte Verklaring*, informs us that years ago some of the provincial Synods of Holland had rules which definitely permitted the appointment of Elders as Church Visitors. Under the present Church Order, however, this is not permissible for it speaks only of "*ministers*" being authorized for this work. Nor may this be interpreted as though ministers act as church visitors in the capacity of ruling elders and not as teaching elders and so leave the implication that elders may indeed be appointed for this task. Obviously the authors of the Church Order had sound reason to specify "*ministers*" in this article. As a general rule ministers are more qualified and better trained for this work and this would especially be true when those are selected who possess the qualification that we mentioned before. But we should also remember that the aim of this work is the *spiritual up-building of the congregation* and this is more than a *super-visory task* to be performed by *ruling elders*. It is also an *instructional work* and therefore properly belongs to the *teaching elders*!

The term that these visitors serve is, according to the article, continuous. By this we do not mean that they are appointed for an indefinite period of time but rather that the Classis may continue the same visitors indefinitely. Usually they are appointed for one year and then re-appointed from time to time. The advantage of this is that by repeated visits to the churches these visitors come to more thoroughly know the circumstances and are better able to give advice and assistance in troublesome situations than others who would come to confront these things for the first time. A certain measure of continuity in this work is desirable.

Although the Article itself does not state it, one of the decisions of our churches appended here states that the congregations to be visited must be given at least eight days' notice of the proposed visit. This must then be announced

either from the pulpit or on the church bulletin. This notice is not simply for the consistory involved but for the whole congregation and the purpose of it is to enable the members of the congregation to bring certain matters to the attention of the church visitors. This does not mean that a member who has a complaint can ignore or by-pass his consistory and go directly to the church visitors. Of course not. The orderly procedure must be followed and that usually calls for the consistorial treatment of matters before they can come to either the Classis or the Church Visitors. But suppose that a certain member of the church is dissatisfied with the preaching. He does not charge the minister with false doctrine for then obviously it must needs become a matter of protest with the consistory but he merely holds that the preaching is characterized by a lack of study, generalities, non-edifying, etc. The consistory is made aware of this but does nothing about it. In such a case the dissatisfied member(s) may bring this matter to the attention of the church visitors who in turn would necessarily have to conduct a thorough investigation if these claims were in any measure substantiated.

Or, to use another example, there might be an unwholesome situation in the congregation that tends to break down the unity and disturb the peace of the church. The consistory may not divulge this information to the church visitors since they do not regard it as *serious* and it necessitates no disciplinary action as yet. Members of the congregation who may be disturbed about the matter may certainly appear at the meeting of the church visitors to inform them of this so that the matter is thoroughly investigated and remedied for the profit of the church.

Thus we note that the task confronting the church visitors is not one that they can expect to finish in fifteen or twenty minutes. They must be prepared, if necessary, to spend considerable time with a congregation where circumstances may require it. *Haste makes waste* also in this work.

"Let all things be done decently and in good order!"

G.V.d.B.

---

With joy I heard my friends exclaim,  
Come, let us in God's temple meet;  
Within thy gates, O Zion blest,  
Shall ever stand our willing feet.

How beautiful doth Zion stand,  
A city built compact and fair;  
The people of the Lord unite  
With joy and praise to worship there.

They come to learn the will of God,  
To pay their vows, His grace to own,  
For there is judgment's royal seat,  
Messiah's sure and lasting throne.

Psalms 122: 1-3

## ALL AROUND US

### *Roman Catholics Becoming More Tolerant?*

According to an article appearing in the *Grand Rapids Press* recently, the World Council of Churches states that it has reason to believe that "Roman Catholics are showing greater tolerance toward other churches."

The W. C. C. conducted a study which revealed "Very important members" of the Catholic hierarchy now favor complete religious liberty. It further revealed that "when this attitude becomes a prevailing one in the Roman Church, 'new ways would open toward an ecumenical understanding' between Protestants and Catholics."

The author of the study report, Dr. A. F. Carillo de Alboroz, said French Catholics are leading the movement for religious freedom. He described Maurice Cardinal Feltin, archbishop of Paris, as one of its most ardent spokesmen. Carillo said when the new opinion "becomes the official attitude of the church itself, a practical agreement with the Roman Catholic church on the real exercise of religious liberty in all countries will be possible."

The study also criticized Protestants by saying: "Too many Protestants seem to believe that all Roman Catholics (even those who defend religious liberty) are of bad faith . . . or that they have as a unique goal, political domination."

Carillo said the ecumenical movement and the World Council should "substitute for this general distrustful attitude a truly ecumenical spirit of charity and understanding."

It would seem that the above expressed opinion is an isolated one, not generally expressed in the Romish Church. Though it is true that Pope John is reported to have ideas of ecumenicity, and appears to have a more liberal outlook than his predecessors, the Roman Catholic Church is still a long way from discarding its stand sustained for hundreds of years, that it and it alone is representative of Christ in the world. Then, too, the recent persecutions perpetrated in South America against those who dared to stand up to the Roman Catholic Church would seem to belittle the report of a change of attitude.

However, we believe that the closer we come to the end of this dispensation the more the church, i.e., the nominal church, will unite. Antichrist, according to Scripture must come out of the church. So long as the Roman Catholic Church clings to the cardinal doctrine that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is come in the flesh, she can hardly be said to be antichristian. But if she becomes liberal, as we believe she is fast becoming, and she is able to unite with the liberal W. C. C., we can easily see and believe how this united church will produce this antichrist. In that case Willem Brakel and others with him would not be far wrong when they asserted that the antichrist would come out of the Roman Catholic Church. At any rate, it will be interesting

to see if there will be any further developments as predicted by the W. C. C.

### *"Air Force Training Manual Draws N.C.C. Fire."*

The February 29th issue of *Christianity Today* presents an enlightening article on the above subject which has also appeared in most of the daily papers and magazines, and which has stirred up considerable comment especially among the leaders in the National Council of Churches.

The occasion for the exchange of words between the National Council and the Department of Defense in the United States Government was the Air Force Manual recently published which expressed disparaging remarks about the N.C.C. The latter was charged in the Manual with the guilt of communistic activity against which the Air Force Reserves were warned.

Alongside of the article above referred to, *Christianity Today* also placed a copy of what the Manual said. We quote it in part.

"Subversion. Subversion is any activity by which any person or group willfully attempts to interfere with or impair the loyalty, morale, or discipline of any member of the Armed Forces, or American citizens in general.

"To establish a workable program of subversion, the Communists have discovered what they think is an almost fool-proof weapon — the front organization. Have you ever heard of . . . The Abraham Lincoln Brigade, American Youth for Democracy, The League of American Writers, American Patriots, Inc., Committee for World Youth Friendship and Cultural Exchange, The National Committee for Freedom of the Press, National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, The Voice of Freedom Committee? These sound quite American, don't they? Yet the Attorney General of the United States has officially declared them to be subversive Communist fronts . . .

"Don't join any organization or sign a so-called 'peace petition' until you are certain it isn't a Red front. You may check organizations against the subversive list in AF Regulation 124-5, 'Designation of Organizations in Connection with the Federal Employee Security Program.' This regulation lists more than 280 organizations whose political or social philosophies (not necessarily all Communistic) are foreign to the American concepts of democracy. Among these are a number of schools which presumably teach alien ideologies, such as the Samuel Adams School, Boston; the Tom Paine School of Social Science, Philadelphia; the George Washington Carver School, New York City; the Jefferson School of Social Science, New York City; the Joseph Weydemeyer School of Social Science, St. Louis; the Seattle Labor School; and the Philadelphia School of Social Science and Art. Also listed are the front organizations named earlier.

"Communism in Religion. From a variety of authoritative sources, there appears to be overwhelming evidence of Communist anti-religious activity in the United States through

the infiltration of fellow-travelers into churches and educational institutions.

"The National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. officially sponsored the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Of the 95 persons who served in this project, 30 have been affiliated with pro-Communist fronts, projects, and publications . . .

"Dr. Harry F. Ward, long a recognized leader in the National Council of Churches, was a Professor of Christian Ethics at Union Theological Seminary in New York City for some 25 years, during which time he influenced thousands of theological students. Dr. Ward was identified by Louis Francis Budenz (an ex-Communist) before the Senate Internal Security Sub-committee as a member of the Communist Party . . ." So far the Manual.

It is especially the last two paragraphs above that evoked the wrath of the leaders of the N.C.C.

According to the article accompanying the Manual Report, the Manual also quoted a newspaper editorial which "criticized a Protestant church convention for urging that Red China be recognized by the United States and admitted to the United Nations."

"The implications of this editorial are clear,' the manual observed. 'Communists and Communist fellow-travelers infiltrated into our churches. The foregoing is not an isolated example, by any means; it is known that even the pastors of certain of our churches are card-carrying communists.'

"A reservist in Trenton, New Jersey, told his minister that he was disturbed at this and other parts of the manual. The minister notified the local council of churches, which in turn called NCC headquarters in New York's Interchurch Center.

"James Wine, an associate general secretary of the NCC, immediately fired off a strongly-worded letter of protest to Defense Secretary Thomas S. Gates.

"Five days later Wine and two other NCC staff members came to Washington because, according to a spokesman, the Defense Department 'was not treating the matter with the sense of importance we thought it deserved.'

"The following day Air Force Secretary Dudley Sharp was quoted as having 'categorically repudiated the publication' as representative of Air Force views.

"Sharp also ordered the manuals withdrawn, only to learn that such an order had already been issued — six days before. The Air Force said the manual was brought to the attention of 'responsible officials by a member of the reserve forces.' An investigation was launched . . ." So far the article.

To us it appears that the charges were withdrawn because the Defense Department sensed that it was not good policy to vie with the NCC. But in spite of the fact that the charges were withdrawn, the damage is done, i.e., the NCC has been put under suspicion. And this is not something new. Various church leaders in and out of the NCC have voiced their criticism of the NCC which reputedly speaks for some 33 Protestant and Orthodox denominations in the United

States. Ever since that famous convention in Cleveland, I believe it was in 1958, when the convention advocated that Red China be admitted to the United Nations, the NCC has been severely criticized and we believe correctly so. This we believe not so much because we conclude the organization is sympathetic to communism, but because we believe it is not the church's business to put her nose in affairs that belong to the State Department alone.

#### *"Are Officebearers Bound In Their Beliefs?"*

Under this caption Rev. N. J. Monsma writes a well-documented article in the March issue of *Torch and Trumpet*.

Copiously he quotes from the Doctrinal Standards, Church Order, Formula of Subscription, and Reformed authorities on Church Polity to prove that the answer to the above question is affirmative. Professors, Ministers, Elders and Deacons who sign their names to the Formula of Subscription when they take office are indeed bound in their beliefs, according to Monsma. The reason why this is true, he asserts, is because these Confessions derive their contents from the Word of God. Monsma, it appears, will give no ground to the undenominational movements of our day who advocate "no creed but Christ" and "a return to the Scriptures." This, we believe, is commendatory.

As far as we were able to observe there was nothing in the article of Rev. Monsma to which we could not subscribe. And we believe that all our people, especially those in office, would do well to read his article which we cannot quote here in its entirety.

We do not know what motivated Rev. Monsma to write on this subject unless it is expressed in the last part of his article where he writes under the sub-title "The Function of Confessions in Assemblies." Monsma suggests that there are some who call those who refer to the Standards in the course of debate as being guilty of Dogmatism. With this he does not agree. Those who cry "Dogmatism" insist that only the Scriptures can be the authority on which decisions are made. But Monsma reminds them that the Standards themselves are expressions of Scripture, and therefore have authority. This, we believe, is the only safe rule for all ecclesiastical assemblies to follow. If this is not done, there is no possible norm for unity.

Space does not allow us to make any further comment at this time. There are, however, questions which the article provoked which perhaps on another occasion we will have opportunity to raise.

M.S.

### **Announcement**

The Free Christian School at Edgerton, Minnesota, will be in need of a teacher for grades 1, 2, 3, and 4 for the term 1960-1961.

Please mail applications to

H. MIERSMA, Woodstock, Minnesota

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

March 5, 1960

The congregation at Hull has extended a call to Rev. R. Veldman of Southeast Church in Grand Rapids, from a trio which included Revs. G. Van Baren and M. Schipper.

You who live in the Grand Rapids area are hereby reminded to come to First Church, March 17, to hear the lecture to be presented that evening by Rev. H. Hoeksema. The topic will be "The Infallibility of the Scriptures," and is under the auspices of the Men's Society of that church. If you have extra room in your car why not invite your neighbor, or friends, to ride out with you? This auditorium provides room for many hundreds of listeners, and the timely topic chosen by the lecturer will make it well worth while for a capacity audience.

At a February Men's Society meeting Creston's pastor gave a paper on the after recess program entitled, "From Wittenberg to Liepsich." It is also reported that Rev. Woudenberg plans to preach his farewell sermon March 20, when he leaves Creston to take up his labors in Edgerton.

Doon's Ladies' Society joined in a project designed to save the congregation the expense of purchasing new Psalters and Bibles. They carefully mended all the old books that showed wear so that they may reasonably be expected to last a few more years.

Lynden's pastor, Rev. Harbach, was on Classical appointment in Edgerton, Feb. 28, March 6 and 13. The Edgerton Young People's Society invited the young people from Hull and from Doon to meet with them on Feb. 29. Rev. Harbach gave a speech on Romans 3:10-18. The speaker pointed out how "God faces natural man as Judge (10-12) and renders verdict as Physician (13-18). He emphasized the complete hopelessness of natural man, yet the child of God is not without hope; and although this passage also reveals what we are by nature, we nevertheless receive righteousness through Christ. We who spiritually see our misery also see our deliverance and are properly thankful." Doon supplied a piano duet and Hull furnished a reading. After closing, the young people had a fine time playing group games, and enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by the host society. The above account was contributed by Rev. Van Baren, who added, "It was a pleasure for the young people to see and hear Rev. Harbach, and to meet together as three societies."

Found in First's Feb. 28th bulletin: "Today we commemorate with Rev. and Mrs. H. Hoeksema the 40 years of his ministry in our congregation. On Feb. 29, 1920, Rev. Hoeksema preached his inaugural sermons, and these many years he has labored hard and faithfully among us. We have

been privileged to be instructed by his keen insight into the Scriptures and benefited by his spiritual guidance in all the ways in which the Lord has led us. May the Chief Shepherd continue to bless Rev. Hoeksema and us by his ministry among us also in the years to come."

Rev. C. Hanco will spend three weeks in So. Dakota preaching in Isabel and Forbes as requested by the Mission Committee. His preaching duties in First Church will be taken over by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema and Sem. J. Kortering, the latter also teaching the catechism classes.

The Rev. G. Vanden Berg and J. Heys attended the Catechism Committee meetings, and the February Prot. Ref. Teachers' Seminar, Feb. 25 and 26. The brethren were also able to join the Adams St. School parents and friends at a Hostess Supper on the 25th. Because of the large number of diners the supper was served in two places, Adams school and First Church. The program was held in First's auditorium with a ladies' trio furnishing vocal music, and an after dinner talk rendered by Rev. H. Hoeksema. Usually an after dinner speech is appreciated for its brevity and this one gave added appreciation with its food for thought. The speaker led us in the contemplation of the marvelous gift of memory which we have received from the hand of our Creator, marveling at its power of retention and recollection; indicating how we must use that gift as it is found in our children to their education in the truths of Scripture, to the praise of God.

The Teachers' Seminar, mentioned above, was held on Feb. 25. The paper read at the last meeting by Miss Thelma Pastoor was still under discussion, treating the last point which examined the religious development of the child. A paper, "Teaching Moral and Spiritual Values" by James Jonker, was then read and discussion of the contents was begun.

The newly organized Prot. Ref. High School Society will meet March 31 at Southwest Church in Grand Rapids. In that evening meeting the society will be asked to act upon the constitution proposal, and to elect board members from a nomination to be presented by the temporary Board appointed at the organizational meeting. Opportunity will also be given to join the society at that time, so bring your friends to Southwest Church on that date. Let us realize our calling in regard to the secondary education of our children.

Rev. Lanting has re-organized Holland's Young People's Society, the first regular meeting being held Feb. 28. That was also the date of Holland's first divine services held in their new meeting place located at Washington and West 14th Sts.

Redlands' consistory has also reached the opinion that drinking the wine in unison, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, "adds to the unity of the sacrament." Wineglass holders had been newly added to the backs of the pews before the decision went into effect on Feb. 7.

. . . see you in church.

J.M.F.