

THE STANDARD

Bearer

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MEDITATION

BLESS THE LORD

"Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death."

PSALM 68:19, 20

The context of my text will be found in verse 18: "Thou hast ascended on high. Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them."

What wealth of truth is stored up in that one solitary verse!

You find in it the full Gospel: the ascension of Christ; His cross; His Pentecost for the rebellious, and the realization of God's eternal Covenant!

That is the reason why my verses might be called, the call to bless God!

* * * *

Why should we bless His Name?

Listen to the text: Who daily loadeth us with benefits!

Where shall we begin, and where shall we end?

There is no end to its catalog. Let us see:

There is the whole world before your wondering eye. There is life, air, space, the earth and its fulness, there is fire and water, clothing, food and drink, with all manner of deliciousness, there is shelter, sleep, and safety. There are the hosts of friends and relatives, among them the sweet ties of father, mother, brother and sister, there is honor, dignity, name and position. And there is favor with man. There is success, comfort and peace. There is your reputation among the children of men. There is your mind, heart and body with its proper proportions.

And I know that I have skipped very much of all those things. Who shall make the correct catalog?

Look at the extent.

He loadeth us! In the Dutch we read: He *over-loadeth* us! It was one of the most loved of our psalmbook.

Oh yes, He loadeth us, *yom yom!* *Yom* means day. And that's the way the Holy Ghost penned this down for us: God overloadeth us with all the dainties of life day day! A great abundance which is new every morning!

Every day is like every other day. No matter where you look, or in what age, or among what peoples: *yom yom*, the same thing! A great flood of good things comes down from heaven upon the children of men.

Listen to James: Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. James 1:17.

Or listen to the Psalmist in Psalm 107:7, 15, 21, 31, four times no less, "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

It's all the same story.

Beloved readers, can you not see that the mouth of the whole world will be stopped when we finally will see the greatness and the extent of what God has been doing throughout all the ages of history?

Attend to this: the entire catalog such as I gave to you at the beginning of this little talk, and infinitely more, is a GIFT! I wish I could write those words in diamonds!

You have nothing of yourself. You merit nothing of yourself. You can gain nothing at all. From second to second, all is fully given to you. You cannot even think anything as of yourself. And that is true whether you are an elect or a reprobate, whether you are a babe in the cradle or the rarest and wisest of God's creatures. It is true of Moses as well as of Judas, of Abraham and of Lot, of David and of Doëg!

Daily loadeth He us with His benefits.

But our poet has much more in mind than the over-load of God's good gifts. Primarily he is thinking of salvation.

And that brings to mind something which beggars description.

You may stand in the very center of the shower of God's good gifts so that you are full of good things, surrounded by good things, pursued by good things, and still be unspeakably miserable.

Gifts as such do not make us happy.

If you have the sum total of all good gifts, or, as Jesus would say, if you gain the whole world(!) and lose your own soul, what profit would all these riches be?

In order to have any of God's good gifts benefit you, you have to have the grace of God.

The mistake of our poor brethren was that they thought that gifts as such make a man happy. They saw grace in the gift. They identified the gift and the grace of Jehovah.

And that is a sad mistake.

Return to the list I made at the beginning. Look at them all, and note that you may be very miserable with all of them, or with any of them. To have the list in *toto* or in part does not assure you that God is in love with you.

Or turn the whole business around: suppose that you see a man such as Heman, the Ezrahite. I do not think you will do it, but you should stop right here and first read Psalm 88 in full. There is a man who was pursued by misery and sorrow from his early youth to the very moment when he composed this psalm. It's the darkest psalm out of the whole book. There surely is nothing like it, either in the book of psalms or in any other book of Holy Scripture. Read it. Read it often. Sing it, meditate on it. It is wonderful for you.

Here is a man who is seemingly passed by of God. And it seems as though everything is united against him. Usually we hear the dark dirge at the beginning of a psalm, followed by his story of help, in order to finish with the song of praise and glory to God.

Not in psalm 88. The end is dark and dreary. Read it!

All the things I mentioned at the beginning were also Heman's portion, but all was soured in his very mouth. All things seemed to be arrayed against him.

Listen! I will quote the worst of all the verses: "I am afflicted and ready to die *from my youth up!*" Do you note that the darkness and suffering of Heman was not a mere momentary thing, a passing fancy, or a temporary affliction. O no.

Now look at the great kings and emperors of that same world who would bask themselves in the good things of life all the day long. They ate and they drank, and they whored

and they fornicated, they sang and they made music, they laughed and they danced for long, long decades.

Here is the point: Heman with all his misery was a deeply happy man. And those great of the earth were very unhappy. And the difference is in the grace of God which the one had, and the other missed.

Read the first line of Heman's dark and dreary psalm, and wonder.

Here it is: "O Lord God of my salvation!"

That's the difference.

Heman had grace, and that grace worked salvation, even through tears and suffering all the day long. He is happy in heaven at this moment.

Belshazar had no grace, but was cursed all the day long. He is weeping right now in hell.

Look at Jesus!

There He goes with the cross on His neck. Listen to the crowd, the mob, the laughter and mockery!

But Jehovah said in the halls of the inapproachable light: I love Thee, My Son!

Grace is the power of God working salvation in me.

Sometimes through the sunshine and the laughter, but sometimes through the darkness and the somberness of the dungeon.

"Some subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, women received their dead raised to life again!"

Yes, sometimes heaven smiles at us, and we smile in great thanksgiving.

But sometimes "we were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy) they wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

One kind of people, namely, the graced of the Lord. But some experienced that grace in the sunshine, and the others in the shadow.

But whether you walk with God in the light of day or in the darkness of the tombs, you have by His grace the salvation of God.

Gifts are wonderful, but if you have grace with those gifts, you have salvation.

Gifts are wonderful, but if you lack grace with those gifts, you had better start to cry and weep.

Let us see:

If you have grace with your gifts, you recognize the Giver. That first.

If you have grace with the gifts, whether they are gifts in the darkness or in the light, they lead you to salvation, to God.

And that salvation is really this: the whole new world of God's good pleasure. It means that you have a place in the new world, and there you shall stand unto all eternity singing the praises of God.

Salvation means that the breach of Adam's sin and corruption is healed forevermore.

It means that Jesus paid for your sin, and that He renewed your life as the eagle's.

It means that you are elevated from the earthly Paradise to the heavenly Paradise of God.

It means that you are brought to the bosom of God.

To speak in the style of the psalm, it means that the Lord opened the door of death, and beckoned you from out of that awful chasm.

Thereupon He led you forth into the light of His love.

And you are walking to the heaven of heavens.

G.V.

AN OUTPOURING OF SORROW

Lord, the God of my salvation,
Day and night I cry to Thee;
Let my prayer now find acceptance,
In Thy mercy answer me.
Full of troubles and affliction,
Nigh to death my soul is brought,
Helpless, like one cast forever
From Thy care and from Thy thought.

Unto Thee with hands uplifted
Daily I direct my cry;
Hear, O Lord, my supplication,
Hear and save me e'er I die.
Wilt Thou wait to show Thy wonders
And Thy mercy to the dead?
Let me live to tell Thy praises,
By Thy loving-kindness led.

Friend and lover are departed,
Dark and lonely is my way;
Lord, be Thou my friend and helper,
Still to Thee, O Lord, I pray.
Lord, the God of my salvation,
Day and night I cry to Thee;
Let my prayer now find acceptance,
In Thy mercy answer me.

Psalm 88:1, 3, 5

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

Bless the Lord 193
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

As To Being Protestant Reformed 196
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

The Book of Revelation 198
Rev. H. Hoeksema

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES —

Joseph and Potiphar 201
Rev. B. Woudenberg

FROM HOLY WRIT —

Exposition of Romans 14, 15 (13) 203
Rev. G. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR —

Punishment or Praise 205
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

The Church and the Sacraments 207
Rev. H. Veldman

THE VOICE OF OUR FATHERS —

The Canons of Dordrecht 209
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

FEATURE ARTICLE —

Calvin and the Burning of Servetus 211
Rev. R. Veldman

ALL AROUND US —

"Taxation and the Churches" 214
Will Religion Be an Issue in the 1960 Elections? 214
Another Attempt to Unite the Liberated and Synodicals 215
Correction and Instruction 215
Rev. M. Schipper

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES 216
Mr. J. M. Faber

EDITORIALS

As To Being Protestant Reformed

We were discussing the very important idea of the covenant.

And in this connection we naturally came across the idea of the promise which is closely related with that of the covenant. In fact, as we saw the last time, Heyns identifies the two. About this idea of the promise we must still say a few words, especially in comparison with the so-called "well-meaning offer of grace and salvation" which we Protestant Reformed people repudiate.

The promise of God is certainly no well-meaning offer of salvation to all that hear the gospel.

The Scriptures often speak of the promise. In fact, the promise of God is the chief contents of the gospel. The two are often virtually identified. Thus it is, for instance, in Gal. 3:8: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." This last clause is, as you understand, simply the promise to Abraham and to his seed. The gospel, therefore, is the same as the promise. The same is true of Acts 13:32, 33: "And we declare unto you glad tidings (or: we preach the gospel), how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." From these words it is evident: (1) that the promise is the chief contents of the gospel; (2) That the central realization of the promise is the resurrection of Jesus Christ; (3) That this is also the promise in the second psalm. Sufficient evidence there is in the passages that the gospel and the promise are virtually identified.

Sometimes the Bible speaks of the promise, at other times it speaks of the promises. But always it refers to the same promise. When it uses the singular, it denotes that the promise is the resurrection of Jesus Christ; (3) That promises in the plural, it wishes to express the manifold grace of God revealed therein. Thus, in the epistle to the Hebrews we read that the saints of the old dispensation had not yet received the promises but had seen them afar off and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. But in the same chapter the author speaks of the promise (singular): "And these all, having received a good report, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

This promise is all-comprehensive. It includes all the blessings of salvation. Centrally, the promise is Christ. For thus we read in Gal. 3:16: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of

many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." It is evident that, if Christ is the very essence of the promise, all the blessings of salvation are included in the same promise. Hence, the Bible speaks of the promise of the Holy Ghost, that is, the Spirit of Christ that applies all the blessings of salvation to us. It speaks of the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come, I Tim. 4:8; and of the life eternal; of the promise of his coming, II Pe. 3:4; of the promise to enter into his rest, Heb. 4:1; of the promise that Abraham should be heir of the world, Rom. 4:13. It speaks, moreover, of the Holy Spirit of promise, Eph. 1:13; of the children of the promise, Rom. 9:8; and of the heirs of the promise. All these passages abundantly show that the promise is, indeed, all-comprehensive and that it includes all the blessings of salvation.

Beautiful in this connection is especially Heb. 6:13-18. For this passage emphasizes that the promise of God is absolutely sure to all the heirs of the promise and that it will be realized unto them without fail. For there we read: "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them the end of all strife. Wherein God, willing to shew more abundantly unto the heirs of the promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." Notice that in this passage (1) The promise of God is absolutely sure and unconditional; (2) The two immutable things of which the text speaks are the oath of God and the immutability of His counsel; (3) The promise is sure, therefore, not for all men, but only for the elect, the heirs of the promise.

How, in the light of all this, even Reformed men can speak of the promise as a general offer of grace and salvation, as is also adopted in the "First Point" of 1924, and add to it that it is well-meant on the part of God, I cannot understand. It is true that the Synod of 1924 appealed to the Canons of Dordrecht to sustain their notion of a well-meant offer of salvation. But, in the first place, the Canons never speak of a general promise for all men but only of the general preaching of the same. For thus we read in Canons II, 5: "Moreover the promise of the gospel is that whosoever believeth in Christ crucified, shall not perish but have everlasting life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of his good pleasure sends the gospel." Notice that (1) The promise is presented here, not as general, but as particular: it is for those that believe in Christ crucified, which certainly is not all men; (2) That this particular promise must be preached generally, to all men without distinction; (3) That the Canons add that even the general preaching of this particular promise is

directed, not by men, but by God. There is, therefore, in this part of the Canons, no well-meant offer of grace and salvation whatever. And, in the second place, it is true that Canons III, 9 uses the term "offered" in the following words: "It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of Christ offered therein." But it is also evident that, in these words, the term offer is used, not in the modern sense, but in the sense of original Latin *offere*, meaning *to present*. In the preaching of the gospel Christ is, indeed, presented to all men.

But why is it so important to insist that the promise of God is particular and may not be changed into a general well-meant offer of grace and salvation? The reason is simply that the former is Scriptural, as we have shown, and the latter is not; the former is Reformed, the latter is Arminian. The term well-meant offer on the part of God presupposes, in the first place, that God, as far as He is concerned, is willing to save all men, at least in as far as the gospel is preached to them. And this is neither Reformed nor Scriptural. Reformed is what the Canons teach in II, 7: "But as many as truly believe, and are delivered from sin and destruction through the death of Christ, are indebted for this benefit solely to the grace of God, given to them in Christ from everlasting, and not to any merit of their own." And especially in Art. 8 of the same chapter: "For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing upon them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given to him by the Father; that he should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, he purchased for them by his death; should purge them from all sin, both original and actual, whether committed before or after believing; and having faithfully preserved to the end, should at last bring them free from every spot and blemish to the enjoyment of glory in his own presence forever."

That is Reformed and nothing else is as far as the preaching of the gospel and the promise of God is concerned.

And this is quite contrary to the notion of a well-meant offer of grace to all men.

This is also the teaching of Scripture.

Thus, for instance, in the well-known passage of Rom. 8:29, 30: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Or, to quote just one more passage. "For by grace are ye

saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

That is Scriptural and nothing else.

And a well-meant offer of grace and salvation can never be harmonized with the Word of God.

But, in the second place, such a well-meant offer of salvation on the part of God also presupposes the will and ability on the part of everyone that hears the gospel to accept the offer.

If I offer an excellent meal to one whose stomach is full of cancer, am I not mocking the poor man? If I play an excellent and beautiful piece of music for one that is stone deaf, is not my performance ridiculous? If I show some beautiful pictures to a man that is totally blind, am I not foolish?

Well, the natural man is stone deaf and totally blind spiritually. He cannot spiritually hear and see.

You object that, nevertheless, the gospel must be preached to such men that cannot hear? I admit. And this is possible because, although they are spiritually deaf, they can hear with their natural ear and understand with their natural mind. But if God does not open their ears spiritually and spiritually enlighten their minds, they can never receive Christ and the promise of the gospel.

Now, suppose that you preach the well-meaning offer of grace and salvation. Then you say in your sermon: "God, on His part, offers everyone of you eternal life if you, on your part, only come to Christ and believe." Does not this well-meant offer on the part of God presuppose the will and ability on the part of man to accept the offer?

But this is not Reformed or Scriptural.

As far as our Reformed Confessions are concerned, I refer you to Canons III, IV, 3: "Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor dispose themselves to reformation."

That is Reformed.

But the same is true of Scripture.

In John 6:37 we read: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And in vs. 44 of the same chapter: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."

I could quote much more, but let this be sufficient.

It ought to be clear that the notion of a well-meant offer of grace and salvation is neither Scriptural nor Reformed.

H.H.

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Beast out of the Earth

Revelation 13:11-18

And if we compare this with what we find in the words of the passage we are now discussing, we shall find that this is actually his character. In the first place, his very appearance is deceiving. He looks like a lamb, and one would receive the impression, therefore, that he is in some way affiliated with Christ, the great Prophet, and that the words he speaks are the words of Christ. But he speaks like the dragon, that is, he derives the contents of his prophecy and teaching not from Christ, but from the devil, from hell itself. He is a prophet. He speaks for someone else. But the one for whom he speaks is the first beast, who exercises all the authority of the devil and received it from him. In his presence and in behalf of him he speaks and exercises his authority. In his sight and in his behalf he does his great signs and wonders. For him he persuades men to establish an entire worship, and erect an image. And he makes that all that refuse the image are killed. In a word, this prophet persuades men to kill the saints of the Most Israel. Elijah stood before Jehovah; this prophet stands for the opponent of Jehovah. Elijah spoke the truth of God; this prophet speaks the lie of the dragon. Elijah persuaded men to break down the image of Baal and serve and worship the true God; this prophet persuades men to forsake Jehovah and make an image for the first beast and the dragon. Elijah persuaded men to kill the priests of Baal; this prophet persuades men to kill the saints of the Most High.

How must we conceive of the realization of the second beast in history? In order to answer this question I would say, in the first place, that the beast as a whole does not represent a single person, a single individual. I know, there are interpreters who urge this very strongly; but it is not necessary to maintain this, nor is it very probably the interpretation. We found in explanation of the first beast that it did not simply refer to an individual king or emperor or governor, but just as much to the kingdom or world-power under the sway of that government. And the same must be borne in mind here. I do not think it impossible that in the future some great philosopher will arise that will dominate almost any intellectual movement of his time, so that all others follow him. But this beast does not represent a single individual, but rather all the power of false philosophy and science and religion combined. In the future all science

and philosophy and all religion shall be united into one science and one philosophy and one religion. There shall be no more difference of opinion. Just as politically the world shall be one, so it shall be one intellectually and religiously. They shall all have the same ideas about things. They shall all admire the same science. They shall all have the same religion. There will be a new religion. Already we hear of it in our own time. And that new religion shall embrace all things; it shall be universal. All creeds and all denominations and all sects shall be blended and united into one, so that there shall be no more strife and ecclesiastical contention. It shall have a universal creed, laying down the precepts and principles for every sphere of life. It shall lay down rules for our individual life, just as the Christian religion. It shall lay down the principles for our home life, just as the Christian religion does. It shall reveal principles for the life of society and for the life of nations. It shall lay down the rules for religious life in particular, tell all men how they must worship and what they must worship. It shall be a new system of thought and religion, with a new creed, universal in its scope, and, at the same time, with a new god. That new god will be the beast, the great world-power, whom all shall admire and worship and for whom all shall erect an image, in order that they may worship the same. And thus it is also plain that the first beast has need of the second. The universal world-power, being based upon the unity and voluntary submission of all, has need of the power of false prophecy, of this universal science and religion. For the moment men shall begin to differ principally in regard to their religion and worship the disintegration of the world-power shall have begun. The second beast must serve the first, is indispensable to the first. The world-power has need of false science and philosophy and religion to maintain his authority and the integrity and unity of his kingdom.

If we understand this, it is not very difficult to comprehend the action of the second beast. In the first place, we read in the text that he doeth great things, signs and wonders, and that it is exactly through these that he succeeds in gaining men for his cause and deceiving them. Naturally a prophet must do signs and wonders. These must establish his prophetic authority, the truth of the things he speaks. So it was with Moses before Pharaoh, and at the same time with the magi of the king. They performed signs and wonders to impress the authority with which they appeared. So it was with Elijah on Carmel, with Christ as a prophet, with the appearance of the apostles in the midst of the heathen world. They all performed signs and wonders in order that these might corroborate the truth of their message. So it is also in the antichristian world-power. This second beast performs signs and wonders. So it was foretold already by Daniel the prophet. The Antichrist will perform marvelous things. So it is prophesied by Christ Himself: "For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if

possible, even the elect." Matt. 24:24. So it was also foretold by the apostle Paul, who predicted that the man of sin should manifest himself in great signs and wonders. And thus we find it in the words of our text. The second beast, the false prophet, the power of this false philosophy and science and religion, shall do things that will astonish the world and that will cause all men to flock to him, to listen to his prophecy, and to worship the beast. What shall this power do? There are interpreters that take it all in the literal sense of the word and that claim that this second beast represents a person that will actually perform miracles. We are not inclined that way. All that is necessary is to assume that this great power will do things that will corroborate his teachings, and thus establish the universal kingdom. He will not only talk, but he will show that he can do things in harmony with the message he brings. He will apply his science and philosophy and show that man is extremely powerful. He will bring fire from heaven. Why not? Through the power of electricity man has already done great things. In the future he may actually be able to extract the fire from the clouds of heaven and bring it down in the sight of all men. He will provide men with all the commodities and all the conveniences and pleasures modern science can invent, so that they can fly through the air without danger, speak with their fellow men in the remotest corner of this great kingdom without trouble, enter into the bowels of the earth and plow through the depths of the sea. It is that false philosophy that will discover all the powers of creation and bring them into use, so that all men shall wonder at the great things it does. And wondering at its action, they shall follow him and believe his message and obey his command.

This is evidently the sole, ultimate purpose of these signs and wonders, that men may believe and follow the beast. For we read in the words of our text that by these he so deceives men that they make an image of the beast. Notice that this false prophet does not make the image, but that under his influence, speaking for the beast and performing signs and wonders in his name, men make such an image. This image is, of course, a representation of the beast itself, so that whosoever worships the image worships the beast, and who worships the beast worships the dragon. Exactly of what this image shall consist we do not know at present. The idea of an image through which the world-power is worshipped is nothing strange. The emperors of the Roman Empire had such images made, through which they were worshipped as gods. And to come to more recent times, in the French Revolution we well know how images of the great leaders of that revolution were made and worshipped, how men paid religious worship to the images of liberty, equality, and fraternity that were made, and how in the Notre Dame of Paris the goddess of reason was actually worshipped by the great of France. And therefore, there would be nothing strange if in these latter days there would be once more such idol-worship in the literal sense of the

word. At all events, some sign, some ensign, some device, representing this universal world-power will be conceived of and made and distributed all through the dominion of Antichrist, that they may pay divine honor to it and worship the beast. Before that emblem of the universal world-power all men shall bow down. Still greater things this false prophet is allowed to perform. He gives to that image a spirit, a breath of life. Also this cannot be definitely explained with a view to its realization. How this universal idol shall speak, I know not. But that is of minor importance. We know the purpose of it all. The text tells us that this image is given a breath of life in order that it may speak and that those who do not worship the image may be killed. There are still saints of the Most High on earth; the remnant of the seed of the woman is still there. They are not yet taken to heaven. And they, of course, refuse to go along with all this beautiful and worldwide movement. They refuse to adopt the philosophy of the second beast. They refuse to wonder at its great signs. They refuse to adopt its religion. They refuse to worship the beast and the dragon. And therefore they cannot be tolerated. They must be discovered, so that this great universal kingdom may be rid of them. And therefore an image must be made, some universal ensign. And that universal ensign must be displayed everywhere. Wherever you turn you can see it in this kingdom of the Antichrist, and all humbly bow down before it or in some way pay it divine honor. But the saints of the Most High refuse to worship the idol. And thus it speaks. The universal insignia is the means through which it becomes evident who do not worship the beast, so that they may be killed. Distinction, separation, must now be made between the seed of the woman and the followers and worshippers of the beast. And this universal idol must serve as the means through which the distinction is realized.

In close connection with this idea is the idea of the sign. When by means of the image distinction is made between the followers of the beast and those that refuse to worship him, the faithful followers receive a sign. Of little importance it is for us at present to determine exactly in what this sign shall consist. It may be that the kingdom shall literally provide for some brand or badge or button which the beast's faithful followers shall be allowed to wear and with which they shall be allowed to appear in modern society. In our age of badges and buttons this idea is not far-fetched. But it also may be that this is all symbolism, to denote that there shall be a visible difference in the manifestation of the followers of the beast and the followers of Christ. Certain it is that the difference shall be there and that the difference shall be very plain. The false prophet, the power of false science and philosophy and religion, shall see to it that the distinction is very public and evident to all, so that only his followers may share in the blessings of this great kingdom. Just as only followers of Christ, baptized in His name and confessing Him faithfully, shall share in the blessings of the kingdom Christ will establish, so also the followers of the beast shall only reap the benefits of this universal world-

kingdom. The rest, that do not wear the mark of the beast, shall be excluded, shall be boycotted in every respect. They shall not be able to buy or to sell. Of course, all things are under control of the first beast, of this great and universal world-power. The very necessities of life are in his power. And he can surely allow or prevent to buy and sell according to his good pleasure. The saints of Christ, that do not worship the image, that refuse to receive the mark of the beast, shall not be able to do business, shall not be able to live along with that great society, shall not be able to buy the necessities of life. They shall be outcasts, mocked at, held in derision, thrust aside, ousted from society, and killed. They shall be terrible days. More terrible shall they be than any form of persecution the children of God have ever experienced. There shall be no place for them on earth. They shall be left without a helper on earth. So terrible shall these days be that, in the first place, many shall fall that appeared to be children of the Most High, and that, in the second place, the very elect would not be able to resist, were it not for the fact that the days are shortened.

Finally, we must still discuss the name of this great beast which all its worshippers bear on their foreheads or in their right hand. We read: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." Many and varied are the interpretations given of this number; and we shall not tire your attention by enumerating them all. A very favorite interpretation is that which is given by an old church father, Irenaeus, and accepted by many of our own time. The interpretation is as follows. The letters of the Greek alphabet were used as numbers. If this is taken as the basis of the interpretation, we find that the letters in the word *Lateinos*, or Latin, together give us the number 666. And therefore the name of the beast as it is spelled by this number is Latin, and denotes the kingdom of the Latins, or of the Roman Empire. But even this interpretation we cannot possibly accept as true. For, in the first place, however ingenious it may be, it is nevertheless more or less arbitrary. On this basis I can also construe other names that are just as suitable, that also amount to the number 666, but that simply are formed by a different arrangement of the same letters. But in the second place, notice that our text does not say, "Here is a riddle; let him that is bright solve it," but plainly states: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast." And therefore we must have something different. And, in the third place, we should not lose sight of the fact that the numbers in Revelation have symbolical significance and that they stand also in this case for a higher spiritual reality.

Let us then notice, in the first place, that the mark of the beast, the number of his name, the number of the beast, and the name of the beast all denote identically the same thing. The beast has a name. And the name in Scripture always denotes character and being. The name of this beast has

been impressed upon his followers, so that also they may be distinguished as his subjects. And that name is the same as is expressed in the number Six hundred sixty-six. Now what is the meaning of this number?

Six is the number of the creature in all its fulness. In six days God created the world; and in six days creation was completed. The fulness of creation has come to realization in six days. But the full week is not expressed in the six, but in the number seven. The seventh day is the day of consecration and adoration of God, on which the creature was to lift itself from the sphere of the mundane and consecrate himself to the Creator. On the seventh day man was to bring the glory of all God's work to Him. It was hallowed. But the seven is lacking in the six. And therefore it speaks of the fulness of creation and all the powers of creation, but without God and without the service and glory of God. The world with all its fulness, with all its powers, but without God, under the influence of sin,—that is the symbolism of the number six. Ten, as we have had occasion to notice more than once, is the number that denotes a complete measure of anything according to the decree of God, whether it be a measure of time, or power, or development, or anything else. Now notice that Six hundred sixty-six is six, plus ten times six, plus ten times ten times six. Ten times six would denote the world and all its fulness, without God, developed according to the measure of God's plan. And ten times ten times six denotes that same development in the highest degree, coming to its fullest consummation. And therefore the idea is not so difficult. God has created a world, in order that this world should glorify Him and be consecrated to Him. But that world tore itself loose from Him, refused to glorify Him; and man now developed the kingdom of the world without God. God allows that kingdom of the world to develop to its full extent. Although man has fallen away from Him, He nevertheless allows him to exercise dominion over the earthly creation and to bring to light all the hidden powers and talents of creation to their fullest degree. And that kingdom we have in this antichristian beast. These beasts represent the highest development of the sovereignty of man apart from God, developing all the powers of creation without God and under the devil. It is the climax of development of the man of sin. It is the kingdom of man, of the creature, without God, without the seven. And therefore his number is Six hundred sixty-six, the number of man indeed.

H.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Southwest Protestant Reformed Men's Society extends its sympathy to its fellow member, Mr. Richard Kooiker, in the death of his wife,

MRS. RICHARD KOOIKER

May our Heavenly Father sustain them in their hour of sorrow. "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21.

Rev. M. Schipper, President
Mr. Isaac Kuiper, Secretary

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Joseph and Potiphar

And the Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian.

And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all that he did prosper in his hand.

And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand . . .

And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.

GENESIS 39:2-4 AND 20

With a grieving heart Joseph watched his brothers receive from the Ishmaelites twenty pieces of silver, the price for his life, so that he might be carried as a slave into the land of Egypt. Many tears must have blurred his vision as he took his last parting glimpse of the land which his fathers had learned to love as their promised inheritance from God. He was yet very far from the discernment with which in later years he would comfort his brothers concerning this transaction, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." God was beginning to unfold in the life of Joseph one of His wonderful and amazing plans of redemption, infinite in wisdom and grace. Through Joseph personally God was going to save Jacob and his children, not just from a famine in the land of Canaan, but from the temptations of a people whom they did not have the strength to resist. In Egypt and Goshen He would set them aside by themselves for over 400 years that they might grow up into a great and separate nation. Through this all God was preparing the setting for one of the greatest types of salvation the old dispensation would ever know, when He would call His chosen people out of bondage and with a wonder of grace bring them to their promised inheritance. But Joseph was young, inexperienced and human. His mind could not foresee the way of God, nor begin to discern even the least of these plans of God. All that Joseph could see was the hatred of his brothers and the coldhearted avarice of the Ishmaelites. The only comfort for him was to believe what he could not see, the goodness and love of his God.

Faith and trust in God were all that Joseph had as he was carried away into Egypt. Everything stood in contrast with his prior experiences. Before he had been the favored son of his father's household, pampered and clothed in elegant robes. Now he was little more than a piece of merchandise to be placed on the block and sold to the highest bidder. It was sufficient to try the faith of the most mature believer, to say nothing of a lad barely come to years of discretion. Many

must have been the times when his heart cried out, as have many others in moments of faltering courage, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence, for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning" (Ps. 73:13,14). Such are times too heavy for man's strength to bear, and only the grace of God can make one stand. That grace was with Joseph and through it all he stood.

Joseph was sold at last to Potiphar, and there too the grace of God continued to uphold him. Potiphar was a holder of large possessions and acquired many slaves to labor within his household. In his house many temptations began to array themselves against Joseph. He was far from the land of Canaan, and there was little reason to expect ever to see his father's house again. His religion and his God were unknown to all and the tenets of his faith unfamiliar. The temptation was always there to lay aside that which made him different and to adapt himself to the ways of the land. Human wisdom always presents that as the best way to gain general acceptance. But Joseph stood fast in his faith. He was far removed from his brothers in God's covenant, but the Lord Himself he considered to be close. Loneliness fled as he was satisfied to find his only real fellowship of life with his God. Laying aside all bitterness and resentment, he labored as unto his God and not for acceptance among men. With all diligence he applied himself to even the lowliest duty that was given into his hands.

Soon the distinctiveness of Joseph became evident, for all of the work prospered unusually in his hand. Neither was he one to take the glory of it all for himself. Openly he confessed that the prosperity of all that he did could be accredited only to his God. Every occasion that availed itself he used to testify of his faith. It was not long before even Potiphar knew of the distinctiveness of this newly acquired slave and the professed reason for it. Although Potiphar himself was a wicked and idolatrous man, he could not but acknowledge Joseph's integrity and diligence, and the extraordinary prosperity that came from all that he did. The testimony of Joseph was evidently true that God in heaven was with him in all that he did.

Potiphar was not one to let an opportunity such as that pass by. He tried putting more important matters in Joseph's hand, and they too were made to prosper. More and more as Joseph grew older matters of greater importance were intrusted to him. Each time they were handled properly with honesty and thoroughness. The whole of Potiphar's household began to fall under the influence of Joseph. One promotion after another followed from the hand of his master. Broader and broader grew Joseph's sphere of influence and greater became the effect of his blessing. Finally the time came when Joseph received the highest position in Potiphar's household. He was made overseer over all that Potiphar owned. The servants and slaves were placed under Joseph's direction; the wealth was left for him to direct; the lands were for him to manage; and the blessing of God's hand

rested upon it all. For Joseph's sake it all was made to prosper. Through this means God was preparing Joseph to the day when he would be given the rule over all of the land of Egypt. The purpose of God was directing his life each step of the way.

As Joseph was being promoted in the house of Potiphar, he was also growing to maturity both physically and spiritually. Physically his body came into the strength of manhood, and the beauty of his mother Rachel could be seen in him. We are told, "Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured." There are only two other men in Scripture, David and Absalom, whose physical appearances are so described as being beautiful. Joseph was a handsome and attractive man. But spiritually he was also strong and filled with grace. He was wholly dedicated to living in harmony with the will of his God.

Potiphar's wife was an Egyptian, and the Egyptians were notably immoral people. Being a woman of sin, she was constantly looking for an object after which to lust. When Joseph first came into their home he scarcely received from her even passing notice; but as he blossomed into manhood and, receiving her husband's confidence, arose more and more to prominence in their household, she began to be attracted to him. First it was merely passing attempts to attract his attention; next it was plotted efforts to place herself in his way; soon it was outwardly seductive approaches. To this all, the righteous soul of Joseph was completely unresponsive. This only made her all the more determined, until she came to Joseph with an open invitation to adultery. To this he could not remain indifferent. Although she was mistress of the household and in a position to do him much harm, he was bold to reprimand her. Three reasons he gave to point out the wickedness of her suggestion. First, he was but a slave in his master's house. His master had given him many privileges, and he would not betray his master's confidence by doing the one thing that was not allowed. Secondly, and more important, was the fact that she was Potiphar's wife and he would not defile their marriage relationship. But finally, and most important, adultery was forbidden of God and he could not disobey the Lord.

But Potiphar's wife was a wicked woman with no feeling for the reasoning of the righteous. Joseph's refusal made her all the more determined. "Day by day," we read, she renewed her invitation. To this Joseph remained determinedly resistant and even avoided appearing in her presence. Finally, however, there came a day when Joseph's duties brought him into the house and, either by coincidence or by her subtle planning, she was there alone. Taking hold of his outer garment, she sought to force herself upon him. Feeling the need for immediate and drastic action, Joseph slipped from his coat and leaving it behind fled from the house. Foiled in this her boldest attempt, her lust for Joseph turned into furious hatred. Immediately she cried out with a loud voice summoning the other servants. "See," she said, "he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came

in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice; and it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out." It was a desperate attempt to convince the servants that Joseph was evil. She was not content just to lie about him, but included deprecating references to his nationality and the implication that now all of the women of the household were in danger. She hesitated not even to say that the fault was ultimately her husband's for bringing Joseph there as if his wickedness was self-evident. To all this the servants remained singularly unresponsive. Undoubtedly they were aware of Joseph's integrity and equally much of her evil inclinations. But none dared to question her statement for she was the mistress of the house.

Potiphar's wife next waited for the return of her husband. When he came she showed him Joseph's garment and told him her story. "The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me; and it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out." In response to this we are told that Potiphar became very angry. That a man would become angry after hearing a story such as his wife related, we can of course understand very easily. Nonetheless there seemed to be also a mitigating force at work. Perhaps he realized that such an event was not apt to happen without the active participation of his wife, especially when the man was one of Joseph's integrity. But he could not take the word of a Hebrew servant overagainst his Egyptian wife. This much he could do, however, instead of exacting from Joseph the usual punishment for such a crime, the death penalty, he sufficed to put him in the king's prison, a prison over which he had direct control as captain of the king's guard.

Once again Joseph was brought into affliction due to the fact that others were wicked and he was righteous. Especially at first his suffering in prison was very severe. We read in Psalm 105, "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant: whose feet they hurt with fetter: he was laid in iron." It was a hard way that the Lord laid before Joseph. For the second time he was brought into extreme suffering through no fault of his own. The Lord was purging and building him unto a yet greater task. He was tasting deeply of the truth that "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Heb. 12:6).

B.W.

Lord, let thy day of power be known,
Thy people be confessed;
Eager and valiant — priests each one
In holy garments dressed.

Countless they shine as dews from heaven
When eastern skies grow bright —
More glorious than those dews are given
Sparkling in morning light.

George Rawson, 1876

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Romans 14, 15

XIII

(Romans 15:22-29)

We will now continue with our exposition of the last section of Romans 15. We noticed in the former essay of this section that this is really the close of the letter of Paul to the Romans. Paul is motivated only by the love of Christ in these labors, and by the consciousness of his exalted calling unto the office of apostleship.

In this closing section Paul connects his purpose and plan to visit the saints at Rome with the over-all aim of himself to preach the gospel where Christ had not yet been named. It is in view of this great aim of the apostle that he also intends to preach the gospel in Spain.

We believe it in the interest of clarity to quote this entire section which yet remains in this Chapter 15, and which we now will discuss, to wit, the verses 22-29. It reads as follows: *"Wherefore also I was hindered these many times from coming unto you: but now having no more any place in these regions, and having these many years a longing to come unto you, whensoever I go unto Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey, and be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company) but now I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem. Yea, it hath been their good pleasure; and their debtors they are. For if the gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things. When therefore I have accomplished this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will go on by you into Spain. And I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ."*

Paul says that he was "hindered" these many times to come to the believers, the church at Rome in the past. What hindered him was not geography, or any peculiar machinations of evil men or of Satan. It was the fact that all Paul's work took time. And Paul could not be everywhere at once. Certain work simply had to wait. And Paul did not proceed in an arbitrary way. The *rule* for Paul was to preach Christ and the gospel where Christ had *not yet* been named! Thus he executes his apostleship to the Gentiles as stated in Isaiah 52:15: ". . . and they who have not heard shall understand." Hence, this method of preaching was a *principle* of the Scripture and not some human strategy.

Repeatedly Paul had thought of the brethren in Rome. But always the objective fact of the multitude of labors, according to the rule just cited from Isaiah 53:15, simply stared Paul in the face. And as long as the objective facts were such that there were still places in Asia Minor, Mace-

donia and Achaia where Christ had not been preached, Paul could not leave for Rome where the gospel was, evidently, known.

Here we have some strong motives in considering where to labor. Certainly where one is *most* needed! Surely here are motives also for the preacher today. Present *status quo*, ease, comfort, surroundings, nearness of family do not enter in. Also here the rule is: no one has left father, mother, brother, sister, who has not received an hundredfold in this life and in the life to come. What a glorious rule whereby to live is here laid down by Paul. Surely we cannot today preach where the name of Christ has not been named. I remember distinctly that twenty-five years ago I took a call, one out of three, because, as a brother in the church put it, "the need is so great." I have never regretted that decision. May the Lord grant our ministers grace to live according to the principle: where the need is greatest! Then there is the glory of challenge in the name of Christ.

Paul is not fickle!

Elsewhere he says: with me nay is not yea. II Cor. 1:18.

But now the objective *situation* has changed. The gospel had been fulfilled from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum. The work is finished here as far as Paul is concerned, that is, when measured by the rule cited above. Now he can come as far as the rule is concerned even to see the saints at Rome. For now he will go and preach Christ even in Spain. This too he will do according to the rule to preach the gospel where Christ had not yet been named. The visit to Rome is thus subservient to the great work of the apostle. What unity of purpose! What great zeal and love herein manifested! Here we see what can be done, by a man of like passions as we, when Christ strengthens!

When the Romans see this great over-all plan of Paul they shall also the better understand the *hindrance* of which Paul speaks more than once in this letter. Romans 1:10, 11, 13.

However, Paul cannot immediately come to Rome on the way to Spain. He must first go to Jerusalem once more. He goes there to *minister to the saints*. It is the great unity of both Jew and Gentile that Paul has in mind. The middle-wall of partition has been broken down. Judaizers may seek to oppose Paul and seek to maintain this wall, and some weak brethren in the church at Jerusalem may not trust Paul's labors among the Gentiles, so Paul will seek to "seal the fruit" of his labors also in Jerusalem. Both Jews and Gentiles must see in the "fruit" of Paul's labors the "fulfillment" of the gospel. (See former essay.) And thus all will need to exclaim: "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." II Cor. 9:15. There must be no schism in the body of Christ. We have noticed this in connection with the matters of "adiaphora" in the earlier essays in this series. Both Jew and Gentile must be one. For it is not first the Jew and *then* the Gentile, but it is first the Jew and *also* the Greek. Both are at one table of Christ, whether in far-off Macedonia or in Jerusalem!

Is it not wonderful that Paul may report that they of Macedonia and of Achaia *thought well* (it was their good pleasure) to take up a collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. There seems to have been more than one dearth in the land of Palestine. See Acts 11:27-30. That such a dearth was actually in Jerusalem certainly was not by chance. That too was of the Lord, who gathers, defends and preserves to himself his church. And it must surely also serve that purpose. It must become the great occasion for the demonstration of the principle of the unity of the church, and for the dispensation of God wherein they who have abundance have nothing too much, and they who have little have no lack. II Cor. 8:15, Ex. 16:18.

Possibly there is here a very subtle, yet needed, suggestion to the Roman church to emulate this example of the Macedonian and Achaian churches. At any rate what must "be sealed," sealed in the minds of the Jerusalem saints, is that this money collected for them at this time is more than some social security money, more than relief from some philanthropic agency. It must be "sealed" in their mind and heart that this is the "fruit" of grace. It is more than mere *gift*. What Paul says in Phil. 4:17: "Not that I seek for the *gift*; but I seek for the *fruit* that increaseth to your account" is here to the point. Is it not in the fruit that the tree is known? And if this is fruit which proceeds *out* of faith which works by love, is this then not evidence that these brethren in Europe-land, Macedonia and Achaia, also are ingrafted into Christ by a true and living faith?

Thus Paul would *seal* this fruit in the poor saints at Jerusalem.

And thus there will be a *double* harvest as Paul expressed this very articulately in II Corinthians 9:12: "For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God."

When once the saints in Jerusalem see this help from the churches in Europe (the Gentiles) in its proper light, as the *fruit* of faith, they will see that this is a just reward of grace of God to them. For this is then a return of their own liberal sowing (II Cor. 9:9). For the Gentiles had received the spiritual things from the Jews. Salvation is out of the Jews. John 4:22. It is simply the truth that having cast their bread upon the waters the Lord caused them to find it after many days.

Small wonder that Paul made so much of this collection of the Gentile churches, and that he so jealously and scrupulously guarded it. That is why we read of the various men who accompanied Paul in bringing these collections to Jerusalem. Do we not read of these collections in II Cor. 8 and 9. Does Paul here not develop that classic gem on "giving" in the church. I once preached two sermons on these chapters and the testimony of some in the congregation was: for the first time in our life we have seen the Scriptural and spiritual motive of giving!

Paul does not have any illusions about the prejudices of the Jews and about the Judaizers in the church at Jerusalem. He follows the rule therefore of: *ora et labora!* Pray and work is the order of the day. For Paul requests the intercessory prayers of the Romans in his behalf. It is true: they are neither givers nor receivers of this gift to the saints in Jerusalem. However, they can direct their fervent prayers to God for Paul in this journey, that he may be delivered from those who are disobedient to the gospel. Of this we hope to see more in our next essay.

Meanwhile Paul looks forward with great and earnest expectation to his coming to Rome. He had already intimated at the beginning of this letter that he looked forward toward coming to the Romans, "in order that I might have some *fruit* in you also as in the rest of the Gentiles." Rom. 1:13b. Now Paul underscores that he is confident that he will come in "the fulness of the blessedness of Christ." Christ will work great blessing through his work there, he is confident. The full store of blessings Christ will give these saints also.

Little, however, did the apostle know under what circumstances he would indeed be delivered from the hands of disobedient men; that this would entail bondage. It was along the way to Jerusalem that he became more and more aware of this turn of events in the providence of God. In Acts 20:22, 23 we read that Paul says to the elders of Ephesus, "And now behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify of the gospel of the grace of God." And, again, in Acts 21:8-13 we read of the prophecy of the four daughters of Agabus concerning Paul, do we not? Briefly this is stated in verse 11: ". . . thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

Verily, thus the subsequent history of Paul was.

It is not known from the Scriptures whether Paul ever went to Spain. The argument out of silence (*ex silentio*) is the weakest there is. We shall not try to determine where so many have fallen into the pitfall of speculation. We rest content with what we know.

Paul came to Rome. It is a very, very meaningful phrase that we read in Acts 26:16: "And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him."

How different from Paul's long-time desire!

Was there a measure of disappointment? In the home of Phillip in Caesaria it had been said: "The will of the Lord be done." Acts 21:14b.

And: Our disappointment is God's appointment!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Punishment or Praise

There are times when the question arises, Shall we punish for the evil or shall we praise for the good? Shall we encourage the backward child by speaking a word of praise for what he has accomplished, or shall we call his attention again to his failings and make him suffer his punishment? Will we arrive at our desired goal with that child by the encouraging praise or by making him understand and never forget that to fail brings punishment?

That question and that problem arises in other spheres than in the instruction of the child as well. All in authority at one time or another, to one degree or another have been placed before this question. And down through the ages there have been different schools of thought in regard to this matter.

There are those who take the stand that at no time and in no way is man ever to be praised for anything. Punish him when he does wrong; but you will seldom find a place where a word of praise is fitting. This stand you will never find in the world. The world is always lavish with its praise. In the world the performer is loudly applauded by the clapping of hands. In fact it is considered impolite and lacking in culture not to give some little token of applause at least. And at times the clapping, the shouting and even whistling can be measured in minutes. Great ovations are given to men for their achievements. Indeed there are times when some will boo the performer and even hurl overripe fruit and the like at him. But these things are frowned upon by the "cultured and refined"; and these same "uncouth" displayers of their dislike and contempt will be equally demonstrative and outspoken in their praise of that of which they approve. They may boo some, but they will never deny that there is room for praise upon men for their deeds and achievements.

It is in the church that you will find those who take the stand that never, no never is there a time or place for praise to be spoken to a man. After all, does not the church teach that all are sinners, all are conceived and born in sin? "There is none that doeth good," Psalm 14:1, the last part. "There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no not one," Rom. 3:10-12. In light of this how can we praise man? What is there in him for which we could in truth praise him? God we can praise. He only is worthy of praise, and Him we must praise for all that which He is and for all that which He does. Our song should be, "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow."

Then there are those who take the stand that there are a few instances when we may praise man but it is a very

dangerous thing and to be done oh, so sparingly and carefully. God is pleased, so the argument runs, to create us in Christ unto good works which He has before ordained that we should walk in them. By His grace His people can indeed do things that are praiseworthy. And when they do, we may thank them for what they have done in our behalf. But be oh, so very careful not to speak a word of praise in connection with that expression of thankfulness. If you have enjoyed the sermon preached; if you have been comforted by the sick call; if you have enjoyed the song sung; if you have been edified by the paper read; if you have been lifted by the prayer offered in your behalf, render your praise and thanksgiving unto God, but be sure that the man through whom He performed this work is excluded when you express how much you have been benefited. After all, so the argument still runs, he is a sinful man and you will only make him conceited and proud. You may freely criticize every move he makes. You may be as emotional as you like about his faults. You should as quickly as possible rise up in protest to everything that does not look right to you; and he must be told as soon as possible and in no uncertain terms. You may not keep still, and a word of condemnation may not be kept back. You have no obligation to encourage him. You must be very phlegmatic, sluggish and unmoved as far as letting him know that he has benefited you in any way. You do not owe him anything like that. But be quick when you do praise him for his excellent paper in Men's society, for his firm stand over against the lie, for his liberality and goodness to the poor, be sure at the very same time to remind him that he is a sinner and also has serious shortcomings. Still better, when he has done a praiseworthy thing, speak that praise to others rather than to this man, and let the doer of this good deed hear only indirectly that you think that his work was excellent. There is a little room for praise but it must be handled far more carefully than criticism. Criticism will not cause him to become proud and conceited; but praise always turns a man's head, and then instead of continuing in his good way, you will encourage him to depart into that evil way of pride.

That there is an element of truth in this we will not deny. One can stand a whole lot more praise than another. So, too, one can stand a whole lot more of adverse criticism than another. It is likewise true that we do wrong when we invite and promote pride whether that be in the office bearer in the church, the common member or even our children. But then we should also present our adverse criticisms with the same care and caution. For usually the man who cannot receive praise without becoming puffed up is the type that cannot receive adverse criticism without falling into deep discouragement. And above all we should be careful and honest with ourselves and be sure that it is not our pride that moves us to criticize and our conceit that urges us not to praise the man to his face.

Then again there is the other extreme which would dis-

card all or at least most of the punishment. It does not advocate lavish praise or even continual praise, but it avoids as much as possible all discipline either of the child or of the wayward member in the church. This view would retain discipline for the extreme cases, that is, when the matter gets so glaringly evil that it embarrasses not to discipline, but it insists that you keep hands off when the sin is first practiced. Make no mention of it to the man, or else if you must say something because he injured you, be sure at the same time to praise him for some good thing he has done so that the sting of the mentioning of his evil is taken away. The idea behind it is that by being "nice" to the man you are far more apt to win the man to your way of thinking than if you rebuke him and show him the error of his way. Never mind calling his attention to the error. Call his attention to the good he has done and encourage him to keep that up. Then the evils will fall away as he practices the good in order to continue to receive your praise. This, essentially, is also the principle upon which well nigh all missionary activity in this day is based. Go tell the heathen that God loves him. Sing to him of the love of God. Picture to him God in all His mercy, love, tender compassion and kindness. You will win this heathen's heart by flooding him with such tender thoughts of God. After this you can begin to speak about sin in general, and maybe in due time of the specific sins of that man, but begin with the love of God and let it continually echo through all your instruction to that heathen (or unconverted fellow citizen).

Now we do not, of course, intend or desire to deny or minimize to any degree that love of God and its beauty and wonder. Any "preaching of the gospel" which ignores and denies that love of God for His people is no preaching of the gospel. The whole of the good news of the gospel centers in and revolves around that love of God. That you must preach to fallen man or you do not speak God's language. We do deny, of course, that you may say to every man that you meet that God loves him. That certainly is not true at all! God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son is absolutely true. But note that the text speaks of the world and not the earth. The devil belongs to the world, though he is not an earthly creature. Dare we say that God so loved also the devil that He gave His only begotten Son? And how will we explain Jesus' words, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou has given me; for they are thine"? To explain it in such a way that God becomes a changeable God definitely is unscriptural and an insult to the Immutable Jehovah. God does not lose His love for these after they show that they spurn His love. Were He such a God Who could change or be changed by the actions of men, what assurance have we that even in the New Jerusalem we will not cause Him to change and cast us out of the glory to which we have attained? And how can we trust anything which He says, if He is a God Who can change? Nay, He is unchangeable in His love, and of that unchangeable love we may sing, and it is and must be an

essential part of our preaching. However, this does not rule out the fact that our approach to the unconverted can be just as effective when instead of proclaiming the love of God for His people we proclaim His unchangeable wrath against sin. Instead of singing His praises for His love as our means of approach to the unbeliever, we can come with the pronouncement of His furious wrath upon sin, and then we can proclaim Christ as the sin-bearer Who suffered the wrath of God for our sins.

Let us consider that in Scripture this approach is repeatedly used. Jonah was sent to Nineveh not to announce the love of God for all men, nor even the love of God for His people in Christ. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh and speak of God's love. And even when God brought him there in that wonderful way of the storm, the journey in the fish's belly and by being deposited safely on the land, he preached his sermon without any interest. And the content of his message was God's wrath upon sin and judgment.

So you see, the problem is there. Shall we speak God's praise or shall we speak of His wrath on the mission field? Shall we do both evenly? Shall the one or the other be our method of approach? And in the sphere of discipline the problem is also present and viewed differently: Shall we seek to get better behaviour and a return from a sinful way by sweet words and by an assertion that we love that wayward individual because God loves him, or shall we speak plainly, mince no words and show as clearly and strongly as possible the evil of the way? More simply stated, Is it true that "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar"? That is, is it true that the fact that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar applicable to the matter of discipline? Punishment or praise? Which is the way of the fear of the Lord? Which is the wise way? Of these things we would have more to say, D.V., next time.

J.A.H.

IMMORTALITY AND RESURRECTION

I keep before me still
 The Lord Whom I have proved;
 At my right hand He guards from ill,
 And I shall not be moved.
 My heart is glad and blest,
 My soul its joy shall tell;
 And, lo, my flesh in hope shall rest,
 And still in safety dwell.
 My soul in death's dark pit
 Shall not be left by Thee;
 Corruption Thou wilt not permit
 Thy holy one to see.
 Life's pathway Thou wilt show,
 To Thy right hand wilt guide,
 Where streams of pleasure ever flow,
 And boundless joys abide.

Psalm 16:2, 3

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

THE TIME OF THE REFORMATION

VIEWS ON THE CHURCH

We concluded our preceding article with the remark that the main principles of the Reformation are usually considered to be two, namely the formal and the material principle. And we planned, the Lord willing, to look at these two principles in this article.

We shall now call attention first of all to the formal principle. When we speak of the formal principle we mean that the Reformers acknowledged only one source of authority: the Holy Scripture. Maintaining this principle they stood opposed to Roman Catholicism, False Mysticism (Quakers, Anabaptists, etc.), and to Rationalism.

First of all, the Reformers took a stand which was directly opposed to the stand of the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church acknowledged, besides the Word of God, also tradition as a source of authority. On this subject of tradition Hodge, in his Systematic Theology, Vol. I, 108-110, writes as follows:

"The word tradition (paradosis) means, (1) The art of delivering over from one to another. (2) The thing delivered or communicated. In the New Testament it is used (a) For instructions delivered from some to others, without reference to the mode of delivery, whether it be orally or by writing; as in II Thess. 2:15, "Hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle;" "Withdraw yourself from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." (b) For the oral instructions of the fathers handed down from generation, but not contained in the Scriptures, and yet regarded as authoritative. In this sense our Lord so frequently speaks of "the traditions of the Pharisees." (c) In Gal. 1:14, where Paul speaks of his zeal for the traditions of his fathers, it may include both the written and unwritten instructions which he had received. What he was so zealous about, was the whole system of Judaism as he had been taught it.

In the early Church the word was used in this wide sense. Appeal was constantly made to "the traditions," i.e., the instructions which the churches had received. It was only certain churches at first which had any of the written instructions of the Apostles. And it was not until the end of the first century that the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles were collected, and formed into a canon, or rule of faith. And when the books of the New Testament had been collected, the fathers spoke of them as containing the traditions, i.e., the instructions derived from Christ and His Apostles. They called the Gospels "the evangelical tradi-

tions," and the Epistles "the apostolical traditions." In that age of the Church the distinction between the written and unwritten word had not yet been distinctly made. But as controversies arose, and disputants on both sides of all questions appealed to "tradition," i.e. to what they had been taught; and when it was found that these traditions differed, one church saying their teachers had always taught the one thing, and another that theirs had taught them the opposite, it was felt that there should be some common and authoritative standard. Hence the wisest and best of the fathers insisted on abiding by the written word, and receiving nothing as of divine authority not contained therein. In this, however, it must be confessed they were not always consistent. Whenever prescription, usage, or conviction founded on unwritten evidence, was available against an adversary, they did not hesitate to make the most of it. During all the early centuries, therefore, the distinction between Scripture and tradition was not so sharply drawn as it has been since the controversies between Romanists and Protestants, and especially since the decisions of the Council of Trent.

TRIDENTINE DOCTRINE

That Council (the council of Trent; and "tridentine doctrine" refers to the doctrine as set forth by the Council of Trent. — H.V.), and the Latin Church as a body, teach on this subject, — (1) That Christ and His Apostles taught many things which were not committed to writing, i.e., not recorded in the Sacred Scriptures. (2) That these instructions have been faithfully transmitted, and preserved in the Church. (3) That they constitute a part of the rule of faith for all believers.

From extracts taken from the acts of the Council and also from excerpts of the writings of Bellarmin and Petrus a Soto, it appears, 1. That these traditions are called unwritten because they are not contained in the Scriptures. They are, for the most part, now to be found in the works of the Fathers, decisions of councils, ecclesiastical constitutions, and rescripts of the Popes.

2. The office of tradition is to convey a knowledge of doctrine, precepts, and institutions not contained in Scripture; and also to serve as a guide to the proper understanding of what is therein written. Tradition, therefore, in the Church of Rome, is both the supplement and interpretation of the written word.

3. The authority due to tradition is the same as that which belongs to the Scriptures. Both are to be received "pari pietatis affectu et reverentia." Both are derived from the same source; both are received through the same channel; and both are authenticated by the same witness. This authority, however, belongs properly only to traditions regarded as divine or apostolical. Those termed ecclesiastical are of less importance, relating to rites and usages. Still for them is claimed an authority virtually divine, as they are enjoined by a church which claims to have been endowed by Christ with full power to ordain rites and ceremonies.

4. The criteria by which to distinguish between true and false traditions, are either antiquity and catholicity, or the testimony of the extant Church. Sometimes the one, and sometimes the other is urged. The Council of Trent gives the former; so does Bellarmin, and so do the majority of Romish theologians. This is the famous rule established by Vincent of Lerins in the fifth century, "quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus." On all occasions, however, the ultimate appeal is to the decision of the Church. Whatever the Church declares to be a part of the revelation committed to her, is to be received as of divine authority, at the peril of salvation." — end of quote of Hodge.

This Tridentine doctrine, the doctrine as expressed and set forth by the Council of Trent, is set forth by this Council in its fourth session, April 8, 1546, under the heading: Decree Concerning The Canonical Scriptures, and we quote: "The sacred and holy, oecumenical, and general Synod of Trent, — lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost, the same three legates of the Apostolic See presiding therein, — keeping this always in view, that, errors being removed, the purity itself of the Gospel be preserved in the Church; which (Gospel), before promised through the prophets in the holy Scriptures, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, first promulgated with His own mouth, and then commanded to be preached by His Apostles to every creature, as the fountain of all, both saving truth, and moral discipline; and seeing clearly that this truth and discipline are contained in the written books, and the unwritten traditions which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand: (the Synod) following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence, all the books both of the Old and of the New Testament — seeing that one God is the author of both — as also the said traditions, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession.

And it has thought it meet that a list of the sacred books be inserted in this decree, lest a doubt may arise in any one's mind, which are the books that are received by this Synod. They are set down here below: of the Old Testament: the five books of Moses, to wit, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; Josue, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kings, two of Paralipomenon, the first book of Estras, and the second which is entitled Nehemias; Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, the Davidical Psalter, consisting of a hundred and fifty psalms; the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Canticle of Canticles, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Isaia, Jeremias, with Baruch; Ezechiel, Danial; the twelve minor prophets, to wit, Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacue, Sophonias, Aggaeus, Zacharias, Malachias; two books of the Machabees, the first and the second. Of the New Testament: the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and

John; the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke the Evangelist; fourteen epistles of Paul the apostle, (one) to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, (one) to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians, two to the Thessalonians, two to Timothy, (one) to Titus, to Philemon, to the Hebrews; two of Peter the apostle, three of John the apostle, one of the apostle James, one of Jude the apostle, and the Apocalypse of John the Apostle.

But if any one receive not, as sacred and canonical, the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church, and as they are contained in the old Latin vulgate edition; and knowingly and deliberately condemn the traditions aforesaid; let him be anathema. Let all, therefore, understand, in what order, and in what manner, the said Synod, after having laid the foundation of the Confession of faith, will proceed, and what testimonies and authorities it will mainly use in confirming dogmas, and in restoring morals in the Church.

Decree Concerning the Edition, And the Use, of the Sacred Books.

Moreover, the same sacred and holy Synod, — considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions, now in circulation, of the sacred books, is to be held as authentic, — ordains and declares, that the said old and vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many ages, has been approved of in the Church, be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons, and expositions, held as authentic; and that no one is to dare, or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever.

Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, it decrees, that no one, relying on his own skill, shall, — in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, — wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, — whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures, — hath held and doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers; even though such interpretations were never (intended) to be at any time published. Contraveners shall be made known by their Ordinaries, and be punished with the penalties by law established." — end of Quote from the Acts of the Council of Trent.

H.V.

IN MEMORIAM

The Radio Committee of the First Protestant Reformed Church wishes to express its sincere sympathy to one of its members, Mr. Peter Reitsma, in the death of his sister,

MISS ALICE REITSMA

May he and his family find comfort in the promise of Jesus, "In my Father's house are many mansions: . . . I go to prepare a place for you." — John 14:2.

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

Article 15. The carnal mind is unable to comprehend this doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, and the certainty thereof; which God hath most abundantly revealed in his Word, for the glory of his name, and the consolation of pious souls, and which he impresses upon the hearts of the faithful. Satan abhors it; the world ridicules it; the ignorant and hypocrite abuse, and heretics oppose it; but the spouse of Christ hath always most tenderly loved and constantly defended it, as an inestimable treasure; and God, against whom neither counsel nor strength can prevail, will dispose her to continue this conduct to the end. Now, to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, forever. AMEN.

The above translation is inaccurate in more than one respect both as to its language and its emphasis. And we can best offer our corrections by giving our version of the entire article.

This doctrine concerning the perseverance of the saints and believers, and the certainty thereof, which God, unto the glory of his own name and the consolation of pious souls, has most abundantly revealed in his word and impresses upon the hearts of the faithful, the flesh does not comprehend, Satan hates, the world ridicules, the unskilled and the hypocrites seize in abuse, and erring spirits oppose. But the bride of Christ has always loved it as a treasure of inestimable price, and has steadfastly defended it; and God, against whom neither counsel can avail nor strength prevail, will take care that she does so further. To this God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be the honor and glory forever. Amen.

It is evident that this article is of a somewhat different nature than the preceding paragraphs of this Fifth Head of Doctrine. A similar article is found at the conclusion of each chapter of the *Canons*. In this article no new aspect of the truth is set forth and explained; rather does the article form a conclusion to the entire chapter. And it is a very fitting conclusion, and one to which we do well to take heed. For in it there are several instructive elements. In the first place, it becomes evident that the entire doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, and the certainty thereof, is a *confession of faith*. This may be easily overlooked in our

involvement with the doctrine as such. We tend to become so preoccupied with the doctrine as such and with the exposition and understanding of it that we overlook the fact that these are very really matters of our faith and of our confession. Hence, it is very proper that this be expressed at the conclusion of the chapter. The *Heidelberg Catechism*, due to its very subjective approach, does this constantly. And the *Netherland Confession* begins its articles with "We believe . . ." The *Canons*, in the body of each chapter, simply set forth the truth objectively, in order, at the conclusion, to affirm that the truth set forth is a matter of the faith of the church. In the second place, and in close connection with the preceding, it is evident that the outlook of the *Canons* is intensely spiritual, and that the battle for the truth here set forth is considered as a spiritual battle. It is not simply a question of what you believe over against what I believe, a question of one opinion over against another, both opinions being equally valid and allowable. It is not a question of one church against another, but one that concerns the faith of the holy catholic church. It is not a subordinate point of doctrine, about which there is room for difference of opinion and exchange of views within the framework of the church's confession. It is not a matter of theological bickering and hair-splitting, which ought not to be allowed to be the occasion of separation. But it is a question of the truth of God over against the lie of Satan, involving a battle of the flesh against the spirit, and necessitating defense over against erring spirits, heretics. It is, therefore, to the church, the bride of Christ, a tenderly loved treasure of inestimable price, part of the heritage of the truth, the gospel of her salvation. In the third place, the article bespeaks a believing optimism, or confidence, that this truth shall stand in spite of all opposition, that the church shall be faithful to it, and that too, because God Himself will maintain the cause of the truth through His church. And finally, as every creed worthy of the name must, this confession ends in God, as is plain from the doxology in this article. After all, the matter of utmost concern in the faith and confession of the church is not merely her own salvation, but the honor and glory of her God. For its sake the church must stand fast in the faith regardless of any other consideration. And antithetically, with rejection of every God-dishonoring error, the church must persevere in the confession of the truth for the sake of the glory of God's name, no matter what may betide.

In connection with the above, let us study a little more in detail the contents of this last article.

First of all, the article calls attention to the subject under discussion, and that too, in a way which serves to explain both the opposition of the enemies of this truth and the zealous cherishing and defense of this doctrine by the faithful. Notice, in the first place, that it speaks of *this doctrine*, referring to all the preceding articles of the Fifth Head of Doctrine, and including not only the truth of perseverance as

such but also the truth of the certainty of perseverance. In this connection the article mentions the "saints and believers," not, of course, as two different classes, nor, to be sure, in contradistinction from the elect, but in order to emphasize two things: 1) That it is historically the saints who are preserved; and, 2) That it is the conscious believers who enjoy the certainty of perseverance. In the second place, the article points out both the objective and subjective ground of this confession. Objectively, God has revealed this doctrine most abundantly in His own Word. This is always the solid ground of the church's confession: God's own revelation. And subjectively, this truth is impressed upon the hearts of the faithful. In the third place, the article speaks of the purpose of this doctrine, namely, the glory of God's own name, and the consolation of pious souls. The glory of God's own name is involved because the perseverance of the saints, and the certainty thereof, is from beginning to end the work of absolutely sovereign grace. This goes a long way toward explaining the opposition to this truth that is mentioned later in the article. And that this truth is for the consolation of pious souls is quite obvious. It means the certainty of their everlasting salvation and glory, and that too, as a certainty which is their assurance in this present time. This too explains the opposition to this doctrine: the enemy seeks to deprive God's people of their consolation. And it also explains why the church has always tenderly loved this truth, and defended it steadfastly. It is especially this truth of perseverance, and the assurance thereof, that is so very precious to the saints in times of trial and persecution. As a previous article has stated, "If the elect of God were deprived of this solid comfort . . . they would be of all men the most miserable."

Secondly, the article speaks rather in detail of the opposition against this doctrine. In fact, it is rather striking that the article adds phrase upon phrase in speaking of this opposition, and speaks of it more than at the conclusion of the other chapters. Perhaps we may mention two facts to explain this somewhat. First of all, the Arminian attack against this doctrine was more insidious, in a way, than against the other truths involved. And, in the second place, it is in the very nature of this doctrine that the enemy would seek to destroy it and deprive the church of it. We may indeed say that if the enemy could deprive the church of this doctrine of perseverance and its comfort, he would have the battle won. For then it would be impossible for the church to persevere any longer. She would have neither the ground nor the incentive to persevere. And from a theological viewpoint we may explain this opposition from the fact that in a way the absolute sovereignty of divine grace comes into its sharpest focus in this truth. What I mean is this. The Reformed doctrine of perseverance emphasizes strongly that even after the elect have been redeemed and delivered, chosen and atoned for and converted, even then it is still a matter of pure, sovereign grace, and not at all of the will

and power of man. One might be inclined to say that here at last, in the matter of persevering in the salvation once obtained, there is room for some small element of man's work! But no! The door is shut completely on anything of man. It is all of God! And therefore the opposition to this truth is severe and strong.

Quite properly the fathers begin by mentioning that the flesh cannot receive or comprehend this truth. This does not mean, of course, that the truth of perseverance is so involved and complex that it cannot be naturally understood. But it means that there is no spiritual receptivity in the heart of the natural man for this doctrine. The natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. And it is fitting that this is first stated because it puts the saints on a line with all others as far as their natural state and condition is concerned. The fathers do not boast here of the fact that *they* comprehend this doctrine while others do not. No, it is not of the flesh, not of man whatsoever. And therefore the believers have no reason to exalt themselves conceitedly above those who oppose this truth. Secondly, they note that Satan, the adversary, who always seeks to destroy God's cause in the world, hates this doctrine. Of course! This doctrine, above all others, means that he can never succeed in his opposition. And besides, if only he can deprive the saints of the certainty of their perseverance, he has them in his clutches and can make them capitulate in the face of persecution and suffering. Small wonder that Satan hates it. And because it speaks of a certainty and a hope that is otherworldly and that is from a carnal viewpoint absolutely futile, the world (Satan's subjects) ridicules it. How futile, they say, to hold to such a doctrine when it is evident that the saints go down to defeat and suffer the loss of all! And finally, the unskilled and the hypocrites abuse it. For they find in it an occasion to be careless and profane. But this too is opposition. It is the attempt of Satan to discredit this doctrine and bring ill-repute upon it. All this belongs to the fierce opposition which the faithful church must face when she confesses this truth.

But can this opposition succeed? Never! This very doctrine is the guarantee of it. Hence, first of all, the bride of Christ has always held this doctrine dear, loved it tenderly, esteemed it a precious treasure, and defended it steadfastly. Never was there a time when the faithful church let go of this truth. And never shall there be! For God Himself, Who preserves His church to the very end, the God against Whom neither counsel nor strength can prevail, shall see to it that His church, no matter how small a remnant she may become, will continue to love and defend this doctrine. The outcome is certain.

And the issue is inevitable: "To this God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be the honor and the glory forever! Amen."

H.C.H.

CALVIN AND THE BURNING OF SERVETUS

The name of Michael Servetus is best known, by friend and foe of Calvinism, not for his intellectual prowess and scientific accomplishments, nor even for the diabolical heresies which he fathered and propagated, but for his execution near Geneva at the hand, more or less, of our own illustrious John Calvin. For four centuries now the latter's disciples have been apologizing for this affair and struggling to present it in the best possible light, — more, perhaps, than the facts in the case call for. During the same time his enemies have been pointing to this incident, with relish, to demonstrate Calvin's monstrous character and doctrine and to cast a dark shadow on the memory of this man of God.

It may be well that we be reminded at once of the fact, that had Servetus not escaped from prison, under strange circumstances, this same execution would have taken place only months before in Vienne, France, at the hands of the Roman Catholic Church. As it was he was sentenced to death and, since the man himself had eluded them, burned in effigy. The Roman Catholic Church, therefore, would not want to cast the first stone at Calvin.

That Servetus was a heretic of the worst sort, one who ridiculed and viciously attacked some of the most fundamental doctrines of our historic Christian faith, is beyond question. His denial of original sin, infant baptism, predestination, sovereign grace and many other doctrines merely belonged to his lesser evils. His most vicious and shameless attacks were reserved for the blessed and most vital truth of the Holy Trinity. God is not three Persons in one divine Essence. That only makes Him a three-headed monster. Christ and the Holy Spirit were not divine persons. Jesus was a mere man, not the eternal Son of God. The son of the eternal God, yes! So are we all. The eternal Son of God, no! While the flames are beating about his body we hear him cry out, "Jesus, thou son of the eternal God, have mercy on me!" Even in that late hour Farel wanted him to say: "Eternal Son of God." Rather than do so, he died on the stake. The Holy Spirit is not a divine person either; only the power and influence of the one-personal God. All Trinitarians are simply "tritheists and atheists." Their God is a three-parted, divided, composite God, Who is no God at all — merely three idols of Satan. He could not have been a greater blasphemer.

What are some of the facts in the case? Who was Michael Servetus and what, in brief, was his history? For some of the data I am indebted to Thea B. Van Halsema, whose recent publication, "This Was John Calvin" I would like to recommend for your instruction and edification. Written in popular and fascinating style, you will find it most interesting and informative.

Michael Servetus was not unlike Calvin in several respects. Like Calvin, he was a man of medium size, thin and pale. Like Calvin he was the son of a notary, the brother of

a priest, student of law and of theology as well. Like Calvin, Servetus too was a brilliant scholar and highly educated, far ahead of the age wherein he lived. He was a theologian, philosopher, geographer, physician, scientist, astronomer and astrologer, — and more or less he excelled in all. He is still known today for his research and conclusions in the field of the circulation of the blood. He had a broad knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew and spoke Spanish, French and Italian fluently. In addition, he was highly familiar with the Bible and the writings of the church fathers. In short, Servetus was a most formidable adversary.

Servetus was born in the year 1511 at Trudela, in Navarre, Spain, but spent little of his life in his own native land. At the early age of 18 he already came to the beliefs that later cost him his life. At the age of 20 Servetus published his first book, wherein he set forth the heresies enumerated above. The Protestant leaders considered this book one piece of blasphemy and Luther, Melancthon, Bullinger, Zwingli, etc. all opposed it. So did the Roman Catholic Church and the Supreme Council of the Spanish Inquisition ordered the heretic returned to Spain for trial and inevitable execution. Servetus was at a loss to know what to do. The whole world was against him. Finally, however, the difficulty was resolved by the simple device of changing his name to Michel de Villanovenus, after the town of his birth, Villaneuve. For the next several years he lived in peace in the French town of Vienne. He edited books on various subjects; labored and lectured extensively; practiced medicine and contributed significantly to medical science. No one suspected who this model citizen, "devout" Catholic and brilliant scholar really was.

Finally and inevitably, however, his true identity came to light. At Vienne Servetus wrote another book. He was now approaching the age of 35. In this book he reiterated all his previous heresies and maintained that all Christianity which existed previously was corrupt, that the Reformation was unchristian, and that all who differed from his views were damned. For some reason he sent a manuscript to John Calvin. Perhaps this was intended as an act of defiance. The two had corresponded much during that period, but the attitude of Servetus was consistently hostile and insulting. What Calvin thought of this forthcoming book is evident from this excerpt from a letter to his friend Farel, "Servetus has just sent me, together with his letter, a long volume of his ravings. If I consent, he will come here, but I will not give my word, for should he come, if my authority is of any avail, I will not suffer him to get out alive." Six years later this book was published under the initials M.S.V. (Michel Servetus Villanovenus).

To make a rather long story short, the true identity of this so-called Villanovenus finally became known to the Roman Catholic Church. He was arrested and condemned. In April 1553 he was imprisoned to await his sentence. Servetus, however, escaped. It might be more accurate to say that he

was permitted to escape to guard the archbishop and other noted friends in the Catholic Church against further embarrassment, since these had for years been his dear friends. In spite of his escape, however, the city court of Vienne sentenced Servetus to death and burned him in effigy.

Four months later the heretic made his appearance in Geneva, the city where Calvin lived and labored. Just what it was that induced him to go there no one knows. Perhaps it was because he had heard that Calvin was having his troubles in Geneva and that his foes were working for his expulsion. Perhaps it was because he hoped to find support for his heresies among the Libertines of that city. Perhaps it was out of sheer curiosity.

This turned out to be his fatal mistake. Arriving at Geneva on a Sunday, Servetus too attended church, the church where Calvin was the preacher. The latter was advised of the heretic's presence and at once requested the council to arrest him. Calvin himself drew up a document of 38 accusations, which he presented to the Little Council of Geneva, before which the heresy trial took place, and which he defended with all his tremendous power and conviction. After some two and a half months of argumentation, and with no little difficulty, Servetus was finally condemned and sentenced to death by burning. Calvin pleaded with the Little Council to substitute beheading for burning, but to no avail. Also, he visited the heretic in his cell and begged him to repent. This, too, was to no avail. On the 27th of October, 1553, Michael Servetus died on the stake.

What shall we say about all this? In our answer to this question we must seek to be honest. We may not make Calvin less guilty than he was. By the same token, we may not make him more guilty than he was. If it is wrong to minimize, it is no less wrong to exaggerate.

That Calvin took an extremely active part in the trial of Servetus, no one should want to deny. Consumed with zeal for the house of God and the cause of His truth, it was he who requested the council to arrest Servetus, who drew up the articles of indictment from the heretic's own writings, and who defended these accusations when he faced his adversary before the Genevan court.

That Calvin favored and hoped for a death sentence is another fact, that cannot well be denied. It is true that he pleaded for decapitation rather than the torturous death of the stake, but this only proves that he agreed with the penalty as such. In a book written to defend his conduct in the case of Michael Servetus we find these words from the pen of Calvin: "Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt." For this, then, Calvin will have to be held responsible, even though this implies responsibility for not being farther ahead of his own age than he already was. If there were no more, this would be sufficient to justify the monument now standing on the spot where Servetus was

burned, bearing this inscription: "As reverent and grateful sons of Calvin, our great Reformer, repudiating his mistake, which was the mistake of his age, and according to the true principles of the Reformation and the Gospel, holding fast to freedom of conscience, we erect this monument of reconciliation on this 27th of October, 1903." That date marked the 350th anniversary of this tragic incident.

However, that Calvin "ordered" the death penalty, as the World Book Encyclopedia tells us, may be more than anyone is able to prove. It is most doubtful that Calvin's influence in Geneva at the time of Servetus' death was equal to the giving of such an order on his part. It was not great enough to change the form of death from burning to beheading. Is it likely, then, that it was great enough to order the death sentence itself? There was a time when Calvin's power in Geneva was virtually unlimited. At the time of the trial and conviction of Servetus this was by no means the case. He found himself in the throes of a great struggle against the Libertines. There were many in the Little Council, the court that had the fate of the heretic in its hands, that hated Calvin and were sympathetic toward Servetus. In fact, it seemed entirely possible that Servetus would be freed to propagate his damnable heresies at will. All this was plainly reflected, too, in the attitude of Servetus himself. In spite of being confined to a filthy prison, his spirits were high. When offered the choice of returning to Vienne for trial or remaining in Geneva he did not hesitate to choose the latter, relying as he did on the support of the Libertines. He became so bold and defiant as to demand that Calvin himself be tried for heresy and that his possessions be confiscated and given to him.

What finally turned the tide against Servetus was the decision of the Little Council to seek advice from the churches and councils of other Swiss cities. This action was taken contrary to the advice of Calvin and in the hope and expectation that the replies of these cities would be mild enough to enable them to free Servetus. However, what was intended to help the heretic actually proved to be his undoing. One church and council after another condemned Servetus and insisted that his blasphemies should be stopped. In our city, replied Berne, the penalty would be death by fire. This handcuffed the Little Council and they saw no other course open to them than to pass the sentence of death.

What remains, therefore, is Calvin's active part in the trial of Servetus and his acquiescence to the death sentence. And what shall we say about this?

Looking back from our 20th century vantage point we could wish this incident had never taken place, and that the great Reformer had been even farther ahead of his age than he already was. Hindsight is always so much better than foresight.

However, certain things should not be forgotten. Other Protestant leaders also approved the death sentence for

heretics like Servetus, even a man as mild-mannered as Melancthon, who wrote: "The church of Christ will be grateful to you. Your government has proceeded in the death of this blasphemer according to all laws." Calvin lived in a different day than ours, a day when men were of the unalterable conviction that heretics and others should be prosecuted by law, even unto death. Some were banished from the cities where they lived. Others were imprisoned or punished in other ways. The Libertine, Jacob Gruet, who wrote that all christendom was a fable, that Christ was only a deceiver, and that heaven and hell were but figments of the imagination, was beheaded in 1547. Another was banished for denying Calvin's doctrine of predestination. And so it went in those days. With this Calvin was agreed. He did not believe in state rule over the church; nor did he believe in the rule of the church over the state. But he did believe that the magistrate had the calling to enforce the first table of the law as well as the second, and he did believe that those who propagated damnable heresies and thereby would lead whole masses astray should be punished to the fullest extent. Remember, too, that Servetus himself maintained this same principle. He sought to have Calvin imprisoned for heresy "until the trial be decided by his death or mine." Remember above all, that Calvin was a man, who fought like a lion for the cause of his God and labored without consideration of gain or personal safety for the truth he loved. What the Rev. Ophoff wrote in one of his articles is so true: "Calvin was the kind of a man, who would have gone through with Servetus' case, though the latter had been his very son."

R.V.

Announcement

The Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School will be in need of teachers for grades 2, 3, 4, and 5, 6 and 7, for the school year 1960-1961.

Contact Mr. D. Meulenberg
1743 Moelker, S. W.
Grand Rapids 4, Michigan
AR 6-3742

Notice

All Synodical and Classical announcements will be published free of charge. All other announcements, In Memoriam, Anniversaries, Meetings, etc., should be accompanied by \$2.00 fee, and should be sent to J. Dykstra, 1326 W. Butler Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

The R.F.P.A. Board

Notice for Classis West

Classis West of the Protestant Reformed Churches will convene, the Lord willing, in Oak Lawn, Illinois, on Wednesday, March 16, 1960, at 9:00 a. m.

The consistories are reminded of the rule that all matters for the classical agenda must be in the hands of the Stated Clerk not later than 30 days before the date of Classis.

Anyone needing lodging is requested to write to Rev. G. Vanden Berg, 9402 South 53rd Court, Oak Lawn, Illinois.

REV. H. VELDMAN, *Stated Clerk*
817 Webster St.
Redlands, California.

IN MEMORIAM

The Mr. and Mrs. Society of the Southwest Protestant Reformed Church extends its sincere sympathy to our fellow members, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Kooiker in the loss of their mother,

MRS. RICHARD KOOIKER

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deut. 33:27.

Rev. M. Schipper, President
Mrs. Don Lotterman, Secretary

OUR GLORIOUS KING

I will extol Thee, O my God,
And praise Thee, O my King;
Yea, every day and evermore
Thy praises I will sing.
Great is the Lord, our mighty God,
And greatly to be praised;
His greatness is unsearchable,
Above all glory raised.
Each generation to the next
Shall testimony bear,
And to Thy praise, from age to age,
Thy wondrous acts declare.
Upon Thy glorious majesty
And honor I will dwell,
And all Thy grand and glorious works
And all Thy greatness tell.
Thy mighty acts and terrible
Shall men with awe confess;
Of Thy great goodness they shall sing,
And perfect righteousness.
Most gracious and compassionate
Is God Who reigns above;
His wrath is ever slow to rise,
Unbounded is His love.

Psalm 145

ALL AROUND US

"Taxation and the Churches"

Christianity Today, January 4, 1960 issue, presents an editorial under the above title. The editor is reflecting on the response an article appearing in an earlier issue of *Christianity Today* evoked in which a certain Dr. Eugene Carson Blake advocated "the repeal of exemptions which enable churches to engage tax-free in unrelated business activities and to compete unfairly with commercial firms," and "voluntary contributions by the churches graduated annually from one per cent to 10 per cent of the estimated real estate tax on their properties, in order to share the public's tax burdens now often accelerated by extensive church property holdings."

The editor reports that the warning sounded by Dr. Blake "that exploitation of tax exemption may lead ultimately to 'revolutionary expropriation of church properties' achieved considerable notice in religious and secular papers, and that Dr. Blake's proposal "for full taxation of profits from unrelated business activities," received "virtually unanimous support."

It appears both from the writing of Dr. Blake and the reflections by the editor of *Christianity Today* that there are churches, and the editor believes chiefly Roman Catholic Churches, which are exploiting the tax-exemption for unrelated business. Again, there are business corporations which "have been turned over to church organizations with the apparent objective of evading Federal taxes." The feeling is expressed that "it is unfair to levy up to 52 per cent Federal corporate tax against business firms while competitive church owned efforts are tax-exempt. For example, "Loyola University, New Orleans, operates a radio and television station at such tax advantage over commercial competitors."

The editor, however, notes with alarm that if the Federal government should change its policy to eliminate the exemption for churches, many smaller and innocent churches are going to be hurt, in fact, they will not be able to continue. Moreover, he notes that such a change presents the grave danger of giving way to statism. And then, of course, our highly cherished ecclesiastical freedom would be gone.

Our personal feeling is that if there are churches violating the tax-exemption law, the government has a perfect right to penalize them. But by the same token that the government must wield its sword, let the innocent be protected. We agree with Dr. Blake that the churches which are in business to make money, whether the business be real estate or any other business, they should be subject to the tax law, the same as any other commercial business. That is only fair. It only goes to show how far the nominal church has departed from her divinely given calling and purpose.

Will Religion Be an Issue in the 1960 Elections?

This question has been raised recently in many papers, religious and secular, and the answers expressed are both affirmative and negative. The greatest concern seems to be with respect to the office of the presidency. Will the next president of the United States be a Catholic or a Protestant? The reason for all the concern is occasioned by the possibility that the young, vivacious, and popular senator from Massachusetts, who is a Catholic, may have his hat in the ring.

It has been for many years a political proverb "as Maine goes, so goes the nation." This year, however, as one commentator expresses it, the slogan may be "as New Hampshire votes in the March 8 primary, so will go the election." Senator John Kennedy, strong Democratic candidate for president and a Catholic, is on the ballot in that primary. New Hampshire has 2.5 registered Republicans for each registered Democrat. The commentator continues, "If Kennedy narrows this spread by drawing a heavy Democratic vote, his followers will claim a potent voter appeal for their candidate."

U.S. News and World Report of January 25, 1960, has quite a bit to say on the subject. It reports on a poll that was made of 10,947 ministers of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to whom a questionnaire was sent. The following statements with their response express their feeling:

"1. The religious affiliation of a presidential candidate is irrelevant — To this, 57 clergymen agreed; 875 disagreed.

"2. A Protestant minister might support a Roman Catholic candidate if the candidate gave assurance he would uphold the principle and practice of separation of church and state — To this 469 agreed; 445 disagreed.

"3. A Protestant minister should not vote for a Roman Catholic candidate under any circumstances — To this statement, 379 ministers agreed; 301 disagreed."

The above quote shows that religion is a relevant matter in the choice of a president.

In the same issue of the magazine above referred to, appears another article the purpose of which is to show that the matter of religion is a deciding factor in elections to public office.

The case of the election of a governor in Louisiana recently is reflected on with facts and figures. The two contestants in that race were Mayor de Lesseps S. Morrison of New Orleans, a Roman Catholic, and a former Governor, James H. Davis, a Protestant; both were Democrats.

The figures show that Morrison, the Roman Catholic, carried all of the 15 counties in which there was a majority of Catholic voters, and he carried only 7 of the 49 counties in which there was less than a majority of Catholic voters. And of the 7 counties which were predominantly Protestant which he carried there were definite political reasons for winning. The reporter is convinced as the Democrats in Louisiana were convinced, that Davis won the election on the religious issue.

The article further suggests that the Democratic party

in the U.S. will probably think twice before taking a chance on a candidate whose religious back-ground may well be the deciding factor in the presidential election.

Rev. Gerrit Hoeksema, writing in *The Banner* of January 1, 1960 on the question: "A Catholic for President?" does not hesitate to express his conviction that the answer must be: No! His main argument seems to be that "Protestantism has been throughout history a much truer and firmer defender of religious and political liberty than the Roman Catholic Church."

From all the above mentioned opinions, it appears that religion will be an issue in the forthcoming election of 1960 if the candidates proposed will be Roman Catholic. At any rate, the undersigned, who is neither a Democrat nor a Roman Catholic, has already made up his mind to vote for the nominee who is both Republican and Protestant.

Another Attempt To Unite The Liberated And Synodicals

Dr. R. Danhof gives the first of two articles in *The Banner* of January 15, 1960 on the subject: "Renewed Attempt at Merger in the Netherlands."

He relates the history that caused the split in 1942 in which the late Doctors Schilder and Greydanus and their followers were deposed and separated from the Reformed Church of the Netherlands. Since that time there have been two separate groups: the Gereformeerden or Synodalen, and Gereformeerde Kerken onderhoudende Artikel 31 also called The Liberated Churches of the Netherlands.

Dr. Danhof notes that since that split there have been several attempts made to heal it, but to no avail. Reconciliation has been made in certain localities, but no settlement of differences on a denominational scale.

According to him, the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken of 1959 in Utrecht has made another attempt to heal the breach by appointing delegates to contact the Liberated group "to bring them back into the fold." Dr. Danhof reports that the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands sought advice in regard to the Dutch ecclesiastical difficulties at the Ecumenical Synod held in 1946 in Grand Rapids, but that Synod did not help. And the delegate from the Christian Reformed Church of America to that Synod gave out the information that the Christian Reformed Synod of 1946 "did not desire its delegates to the Ecumenical Synod to take part in this matter."

It would stand to reason that the Christian Reformed Church would assume a "lay hands off" policy, because they had already placed themselves in the precarious position of jumping in the frying pan or to the fire. They would maintain the friendly and sisterly relation of long standing with the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodicals), while at the same time they were busy swallowing up the Dutch immigrants from the Liberated Churches into their own church which came to this country or to Canada. It would not do for the Christian Reformed Church to show partiality to either group.

Many of our readers will recall how that in the years

1947 to 1950 there was considerable attraction of the Liberated group to our Protestant Reformed Churches. This attraction was greatly enhanced by the efforts of the late Dr. K. Schilder. Until we learned of the essential doctrinal differences between us and them, we admit considerable attraction to the Liberated group. We believed, and still do, that they were mistreated church politically by the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken as our leaders were similarly mistreated by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church and local Classes in 1924 to 1926. It stands to reason that where there are those who have been aggrieved by the same kind of ill treatment that they will be attracted to each other. Since 1950, however, it has become plainly evident that though we could perhaps agree on church-political matters, there was no living in the same house with them on doctrinal matters.

Our personal feeling is that the two churches in the Netherlands will never get together unless one or both of them agrees to forget entirely the past and to erase the differences between them on both scores, doctrine and church polity. As we see the situation from here, the union looks hopeless.

Correction and Instruction

We are indebted to a reader of *The Standard Bearer* and a member of the Christian Reformed Church for the correction of a statement we made in our article of January 15th under the title "More Debate Respecting Infallibility," and for enlightenment as to the religious background of a certain Rev. Francis E. Mahaffy concerning whose article in *Christian Economics* we gave a rather lengthy quote in the same issue of the S. B. above referred to.

The statement the brother sought to correct was the following: "This debate had its occasion in the publication of two articles appearing in a publication of Calvin Seminary called *Stromata* in which a student, now a minister in the Christian Reformed Church, posited views on inspiration which evoked considerable comment and criticism." The brother informs us that we are in error on one point. The student is not a minister in the Christian Reformed Church, but is still in the Seminary in his Middler year. We are happy to make this correction.

As to the identity of Rev. Mahaffy, particularly his religious background, my informant tells me that he is of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. I'm glad to know the church he is affiliated with, and perhaps our readers will be happy to know this too. But really it doesn't make any difference to me what church the Reverend comes from or represents; if he speaks the truth *The Standard Bearer* will compliment him. If he doesn't, *The Standard Bearer* will tell all its readers about it.

Once more, we thank the brother for his criticism and information, and we invite him to call again when he thinks it is necessary, or even when he doesn't. We are pleased that he reads *The Standard Bearer*. M.S.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

Jan. 20, 1960

The Congregation of Edgerton extended a call to Rev. B. Woudenberg; Rev. C. Hanko received the call from Hull; Randolph chose Rev. H. Hanko from a trio which also included the Revs. G. Vanden Berg and M. Schipper.

REPORT OF CLASSIS EAST held January 6, 1960
at First Church, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Rev. B. Woudenberg, chairman of the October Classis, led in devotions. All the churches were represented by two delegates except Grand Haven which had only one delegate present.

Rev. C. Hanko, following order of rotation, led this session of Classis.

Most of the matters before Classis were of a routine nature.

Randolph and Grand Haven asked for classical appointments, and the following schedule was adopted:

RANDOLPH — Jan. 17, M. Schipper; Jan. 24, open; Jan. 31, R. Veldman; Feb. 7, open; Feb. 14, B. Woudenberg; Feb. 21, open; Feb. 28, H. Hanko; Mar. 6, C. Hanko; Mar. 13, open; Mar. 20, G. Lanting; Mar. 27, open; April 3, G. Vos; April 10, A. Mulder.

GRAND HAVEN — Jan. 17, open; Jan. 24, C. Hanko; Jan. 31, G. Lanting; Feb. 7, open; Feb. 14, G. Vos; Feb. 21, open; Feb. 28, M. Schipper; Mar. 6, A. Mulder; Mar. 13, open; Mar. 20, R. Veldman; Mar. 27, B. Woudenberg; April 3, H. Hanko; April 10, open.

Classis also treated the following subsidy requests: Creston \$2500, Grand Haven (with minister) \$3200, Holland \$3200, Kalamazoo \$3900. Classis granted these requests and advised the Synod of 1960 also to grant them.

A brother addressed a letter to Classis against his consistory which Classis declared was not legally there since no copy of same was given to his consistory and also because his consistory had no time to treat his protest.

Rev. B. Woudenberg was appointed counselor for the church at Grand Haven whose minister, Rev. G. Lanting, had accepted the call to Holland.

Classis elected the following ministers and elders as delegates to the forthcoming Synod: Ministers: *Primi*, Revs. G. Vos, M. Schipper, H. Hoeksema, C. Hanko. *Secundi*, Revs. H. Hanko, B. Woudenberg, G. Lanting, R. Veldman. Elders: *Primi*, H. G. Kuiper, H. Meulenberg, A. Langerak, H. Zwak. *Secundi*, G. Pipe, J. Lanning, M. Swart, A. Talsma.

Rev. C. Hanko was chosen primus delegate ad examina and Rev. A. Mulder secundus delegate. The terms of primus delegate Rev. M. Schipper and secundus Rev. C. Hanko had expired.

The report of the committee to thank the ladies of First

Church for their excellent catering services was received for information.

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

Classis decided to meet next time on the 6th of April, D.V., in Hope Church.

The chairman made a few appropriate closing remarks, and Rev. G. Vos closed the meeting with thanksgiving to
M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

The Deacons' Conference was scheduled for January 22 at Hudsonville. The speaker, the Rev. G. Vos, was to speak on the topic, "What are the fundamental requirements of a deacon."

Holland's congregation is announcing the completion of the purchase of a parsonage to house their new minister's family. It is located at 111 E. 22nd St., Holland, Mich.

"Saved By Grace" was the title of the hymn sung at the Jan. 14th meeting of the Hope Prot. Ref. School Circle. The thirty-nine members present sang that hymn "in memory of our beloved sister in the Lord, principal of our Hope School, Miss Alice Reitsma, who was called to her eternal home in the early morning hours on Dec. 21, 1959." The program sheet handed out at the meeting was headed with this text from Rev. 14:13: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

From Hope's bulletin, announcing a collection to be taken to help Lynden pay for their parsonage: "We who have property of our own ought to help our fellow saints who have not, especially when it is difficult for them to pay for such large projects. In this way we reveal the unity of faith and love."

Prof. H. C. Hoeksema spoke on the after recess program of the Sr. Mr. and Mrs. Society of First Church, Jan. 20. The subject of his talk was "Teaching Our Children To Pray." We understand that the Professor had given that talk previously to the Jr. Mr. and Mrs. Society.

From Lynden's bulletin, the Sunday that Lord's Day 45 was treated: "Nothing is revealed to us to be expected from the Lord for which we are not likewise enjoined to pray; so true it is that prayer digs out those treasures which the Gospel of the Lord discovers to our faith." (Calvin)

We note from the bulletins that many of our churches have issued their 1960 Church Directories; the first one to reach us was from Doon's pastor; that directory also includes in its last pages the birthday and wedding anniversaries of the members of the congregation.

Finally, this comforting passage from Holy Writ, "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." Prov. 19:21.

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.