

# THE STANDARD

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## MEDITATION

### Salvation By The Foolishness Of Preaching

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, if pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

I Cor. 1:21

I do not think that many men, or devils for that matter, would object to the general statement that the world needs salvation.

There is an unsafe side to living, existing, being.

Things are so horribly unsafe that it were really better for innumerable hosts of men and angels if they had never existed.

Things are in such a state that it really is not the Church of Jesus Christ alone which calls this globe the valley of tears.

And it is getting worse by the day.

The time is at hand when men shall seek death and fail; they shall expressly blaspheme the Name because of great, scorching heat, because of pains and sores, and because of the plague of hail that will fall on their defenseless heads. (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21.)

Things are in such a state and always have been that from time immemorial men and devils have endeavoured to be "on the safe side." They sought a kind of salvation.

Witness your countless relief-committees, relief-boards, relief-programs, conservation camps, emergency committees, flood-control, quaranties, embargoes, safety campaigns, pacts among nations, naval-ratios, worldcourts. This list could be trebled or quadrupled.

And although all these refer to the physical side of life exclusively, let no one think that the psychical side of man is overlooked by the world. Hosts of men and woman are submitting to the promised panacea of psychoanalysis or other psychopathological gestures of soul-salvation. Because the auto-diagnosis of the world is that the body is sick and the soul weary. Indeed, their harp is turned to mourning and their organ into the voice of them that weep.

And because the world knows that it needs salvation of a kind, it always has submitted, nay, sometimes has eagerly grasped the coat of countless "saviours." The saviours are coming unto their kingdoms.

Sometimes salvation is sought by and through impersonal salvatores: education, socialism, communism, nazi-ism, fascism, with their restraint by law, power of arms, muzzling of free speech and free press; crazy distribution of riches for all, birthcontrol, or even race suicide, philosophy, be it either the contemplating type of dreamy speculations or the stern, rigorous species of self-abnegation and stoicism.

And they all have their heaven of heavens in view. The world is really not original, neither indeed can be. They seek a heaven, be it the happy hunting grounds, sensual paradise of the Moslems where houris are the delights of the faithful, Nirwana, Utopia, "dolce far niente" of non-existence or the soul's sleep of eternity, absolute annihilation, or what other fantastic images of the sick brain of wicked man might paint and relish.

Man seeks salvation.

And that is also his wisdom.

Wisdom is the way, the best way, which one chooses unto the best possible end.

And all the gifts, talents, power, intellect and ingenuity of the world were employed in the finding of and the walking on the way of salvation which would haply lead to their heavens.

Man hungers and thirsts and yearns for happiness. The ever recurrent wailing cry resounds in heartrending cadences of gloom, misery and despair: "Who will shew us any good?" And as many times as this cry is heard, so many times there is also an answer. And the masses of the poor worldlings stagger onwards, nay, downwards in pursuit of the countless *fata morgana* of pseudo-salvation.

For they never enter the pearly gates!

\* \* \* \*

Because in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God! (I Cor. 1:21a.)

This short sentence expresses the horrible condition of the world.

To know God, behold, it is the *summum bonum*, the

highest good for man. That is salvation, real salvation for sinful man.

Salvation, it is the satisfying of the deepest need. And the deepest need for the creature that is intelligent, that is moral and rational, the creature that is created in the image of God, is that he knows God. That is life eternal.

Therefore the Lord has made foolish the wisdom of the world.

It is God's choice of the most perfect means to the highest possible purpose to show that the world by wisdom could never attain unto real salvation, that is, to know Himself. So that even the terrible wailing of a thoroughly miserable world that grew weary of their unceasing quest for happiness might shew that God is the only good for man.

Because, dear reader, let us always remember, that the world purposely rejected and rejects the only possible way unto salvation. And that is true whether you find the world steeped in darkness of heathendom or that same world in the courts of Christendom's temple. In darkness of heathendom is the light of God's revelation in nature. And wherever and whenever that light would shine, the world would take that truth of God and hold it in unrighteousness. When God would shout from a thousand hills and sing to them in the sweet murmuring of His Godhead and power, they would harden their hearts and say: That is not wisdom but folly. We refuse to thank Him and praise Him. And they turned again to the fourfooted animals and their gods of stone and brass and cry out their misery and gloom. So that the night would hear their lament: Oh, our god, hear us and deliver!

When we saw the world in the courts of God's temple and when we told them of the only Way, they would grow more bitter than the heathen. For they have stoned the prophets and crucified the Lord. The wisdom of the world, the best man could offer in the sagacity of the Greek and judicious talent of the Roman and the selfrighteous purity of the Sanhedrin, ruled of the wisdom of God. And their ruling was: Crucify Him! Crucify Him, even where we find no guilt in Him. Crucify Him, even where the dreams of the night warns me that I must have nothing to do with Him or against Him. Crucified He must be. And they spit upon the Face of the most Glorious One.

Since then they have continuously counted the Blood impure and have trampled on the Son of God's right hand. They have expressed with their vote that Socialism and what have you will provide a sweeter heaven for the poor human race than Christ could ever prepare.

And if a handful of men were found that heard the clarion call of the heavens, and if that handful would go out of their usual way to enter the pearly gates, they would give them cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover bonds and imprisonments. They were counted as sheep for the slaughter. They murdered the Church of Jesus.

\* \* \* \*

But God by His wonderful wisdom made the wisdom of the world folly.

And you see it on every side. Old gods are cast aside for new ones.

But the wailing cry remains: Who will shew us any good? Poor, deluded, horrible world! Saviours of the world, you are fools! It is the ruling of the Judge.

Wisdom of the world, coming to superlative glory in thy unforgettable trio Socrates, Plato and Aristotles, the admitted leaders of profound salvation-thinking: God calls you fools!

Who is he that would have Athens wed the Church of Christ? Methinks, the dizziest height of folly!

Nay, but this is the wisdom of God: He saves them that believe by the foolishness of preaching.

There is then a way to receive the deepest need of my poor sin-torn heart. There is then a way to come to the knowledge of God, that is, real salvation.

The foolishness of preaching. This does not mean and cannot mean that the preaching of God is really foolish. We read here a concession, an allowance to the world and her appraisal of the Cross and its preaching. The Lord employs their vocabulary and He does so to show up their folly. It is as though God would say: You call My way of salvation foolishness? Well, by this folly I save to the uttermost. That which you trample in the mud will be the cause of eternal singing. Loud hosanna's will be sung because of this foolishness. When angels and men and regenerated creation shall see the lamb of God, standing as slain in the midst of the throne of God, they shall make heaven musical forever!

\* \* \* \*

For the foolishness of preaching is the preaching of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He knows God. He is the Prince of Life, of Life eternal.

And in order to give that Life unto the throng of the elect, He came on earth and took upon Himself to do all what was necessary in order that the children might be saved.

And the central theme of that gigantic labor was the suffering of eternal death agony on the accursed tree of Golgotha. The Christ of God, calling out of the depth of despair in deepest darkness and horrible gloom: My God, My God, Why hast Thou forgotten Me? Behold it is the Way. It is the way of salvation. It is the way out of eternal death to life eternal.

And when the world beholds that cross with its suffering Servant of Jehovah, and when they see all the horror of the vicarious Lamb of God, when they hear the Divine interpretation: This is the way out of all your death and agony, when they see all this and the Gospel story is fully told, then they laugh and scream of hilarity. It is too funny for words! Is that the Salvator of the world? Would you have us believe that this miserable spectacle will give us the much longed for Utopia? Will you have us believe that the Man Who calls Himself a worm could possibly save us? Surely your preaching is detestable and the height of folly.

But we believe.

And believing, we are saved to the uttermost, for by Him we are going to God.

Ah, when the light of the Gospel has shined in our hearts, then, oh, then we see it. For then we receive illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Beneath the awful Cross, through the darkest gloom of the outpouring of God's wrath we rest in eternal security. The Lamb of God bore the just curse away.

And the light of a new day is beaming and beckons us. We see the Sun in the blue firmament of the Covenant faithfulness.

Hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

It charms my soul to the praising of God's eternal love!  
G.V.

### Notice

We are making one index for the entire 30 volumes of the Standard Bearer from the existing 12 indexes.

We want to make it as complete and correct as possible. If you know of mistakes in the indexes please let us know. We also welcome suggestions.

Tom Elzinga  
578 West 18th St., Holland, Mich.

### IN MEMORIAM

On the evening of October 29, 1954 it pleased our Heavenly Father to take from the side of Mrs. Nicholas (Jeanette) Kunz and daughters their beloved husband and father,

MR. NICHOLAS KUNZ

May they richly experience that the Lord is a Husband of widows and a Father of the fatherless, and that His grace is more than sufficient.

The Creston Young People's Society  
The Creston Men's Society  
The Creston Ladies Society

### IN MEMORIAM

The Consistory of the Creston Protestant Reformed Church expresses its heartfelt sympathy with Mrs. Nicholas (Jeanette) Kunz and daughters, Janet and Marian, in the sudden death of their husband and father,

Mr. NICHOLAS KUNZ

at the age of 43 years and some months.

May they richly experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit in the hope of Israel, believing that our departed brother now may rest from his labors, as is written: "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Rev. 14:13.

Mr. J. King, Clerk

### IN MEMORIAM

The Ladies' Society of the Protestant Reformed Church of South Holland, Ill., expresses its sympathy to our fellow member, Mrs. Tunis Van Baren, in the loss of her mother,

MRS. ELIZABETH VAN SCHOUWEN

May the Lord comfort and sustain the bereaved in their sorrow.

John Van Baren, President  
Mrs. J. Van Baren, Secretary

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Editor — REV. HERMAN HOEKSEMA

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## EDITORIALS

### A Protest and its Reply

I further quote from the reply by the former consistory as follows:

"b) The classis erred when it stated that 'the first (statement) teaches a general promise of God to all that hear.'

"1. This is erroneous because the statement of the Rev. De Wolf does not use the word 'salvation' at all, but it says 'shall be saved.' The two statements are not identical, and may not be assumed to be such. By making this substitution the protestants and the May classis evaded the force of the Biblical expression 'shall be saved' and tried to force into the words of Rev. De Wolf 'salvation' in the comprehensive sense, including regeneration, faith, and the Holy Spirit. We must keep the Biblical expression used, and then, if one desires to lay in them regeneration, faith, and the Holy Spirit to elicit from these the damaging conclusion, that they certainly come into literal conflict with the Bible which says:

"a. 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' Mark 16:16

"b. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' Acts 16:31.

"c. 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' Romans 10:13. Taking the literal words, as we are obligated to do, we find comparable statements in the writings of both the protestants (Standard Bearer, Vol. 21, p. 434 Geneda Geen Aanbod, p. 108; Rev. Hoeksema uses this kind of an expression looking upon the past where history has already proved the counsel of God by the irreversible outcome. He writes, 'O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways, Ps. 81:12-14. There does follow upon this text all kinds of promises of God, entirely conditional and contingent upon these verses. The Lord should have subdued their enemies, and caused them to triumph over them that hate them, fed them with honey from the rock and the finest of wheat.' Een Kracht Gods tot Zaligheid, p. 170)."

Let me say, first of all, that I cannot possibly understand what in this connection the quotation by the former Consistory of Kalamazoo from my book, „Een Kracht Gods Tot Zaligheid," has to do with the whole matter, except that they always like to quote me by hook and by crook. In this book I exactly emphasize that the gospel is no general offer of salvation, but is particular and only for the elect. Following that which the former Consistory of Kalamazoo quotes from that book I wrote (and I translate):

"But of an offer you do not read a single word. How the esteemed editor of *De Wachter* can read in these words a general and well-meaning offer of grace is a riddle to me. If you read the text in connection with the verses that follow, then it is plain that we are taught here the following:

"1. That God's people had not been obedient to the voice of the Lord and did not want Him.

"2. That therefore He delivered them into the good pleasure of their own heart and caused them to walk in their own counsels.

"3. That this would have been entirely different if the people of God had walked in His ways and had heard His voice. Then God would have subjected their enemies to them and would have fed them with the finest of wheat and satisfied them with honey from the rock.

"This latter can also be expressed as follows: God promises His salvation to those, that walk in His ways and listen to His voice. And the last are always only the elect. What therefore you have in these verses is nothing else than an announcement of the curse over those, that do not walk in His ways, and a particular promise for those that do so. I kindly ask the Rev. Keegstra to elicit anything else from these words than a sure promise of God for God's obedient people."

Once more I say that it is a mystery to me how the former Consistory of Kalamazoo can possibly quote these words in support of, or even in comparison with, the statement of De Wolf that God promises to everyone of you that if you believe you shall be saved. It literally has nothing to do with it. In fact, what I wrote in „Een Kracht Gods Tot Zaligheid" stands in direct opposition to that statement of De Wolf.

Secondly, however, the former Consistory of Kalamazoo does not prove their contention that the Classis erred when it stated that "the first statement teaches a general promise of God to all that hear." This judgment of the Classis has nothing to do with the question whether you take salvation in the comprehensive sense of the word or in the narrower sense of future salvation. Fact is that the Rev. De Wolf stated: "God promises," and that he applied that promise of God to "every one of you." If that is not a general promise to every individual hearer that was in his audience at the time, I like to know what it is. It is true that he aded "if you believe." But this does not alter the fact that the promise of God was made general, and that the condition was to be fulfilled by the hearers. Anyone that reads this statement will admit that it means that as far as God is concerned, He will save all the hearers. It is a most general offer of salvation to all. But whether they will actually be saved has nothing to do with the promise of God, but with the will of the individual hearers. Such is the meaning of the first statement, and no one can elicit anything else out of it.

The rest of this paragraph I will not quote. It simply would be a waste of time and space. I will simply inform the readers that it contains nothing but a long quotation from my pamphlet, "Calvin, Berkhof, and H. J. Kuiper, A Comparison."

The last part of the reply of the former Consistory of Kalamazoo to brother Meninga deals with the second statement of the Rev. De Wolf. I will first quote this part of the reply to the end.

"2) The second statement:

"a) The classis also erred in finding cause to condemn statement two of the Rev. H. De Wolf:

"1. Classis erred in substituting 'translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son,' in the place of the original phrase: 'enter the kingdom of God.'

"2. Classis erred in assuming that 'entering the kingdom' is always to be understood as including its initial entrance by regeneration, or 'regeneration in its narrower as well as in its broader sense.' This is contradicted by such Biblical statements as:

"a. 'From the time of John the Baptist the kingdom of heaven is forcefully assaulted and forceful men take it by force.' Matt. 11:12.

"b. 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' Luke 13:24.

"c. 'Not everyone that sayeth Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' Matt. 7:21.

"3. These passages clearly show that it is wholly arbitrary to define the expression 'entering into the kingdom' as always referring to the initial entrance by regeneration.

"b) The idea is also found in the early writings of the protestants, Rev. H. Hoeksema, see Standard Bearer, vol. 12, p. 435, where he also speaks of, besides an initial entrance, a continual, a daily entering.

"c) This same is found in the writings of the Rev. G. Vos: Standard Bearer, vol. 13, p. 67.

"3) With respect to the so-called grounds from Scripture and the Confessions which the classis adduced, it should be pointed out that these grounds do not prove that the statements are per se heretical, but that said grounds can only be used to condemn the statements as distorted and reconstructed by the protestants, Rev. Hoeksema and Ophoff, and by the classis.

"c. That the consistory is not upholding any statement or supporting any heresies.

"1) That is plain from a and b.

"2) It must also be understood that much of the present separation and distress in the churches is not caused by the statements as such, but by the illegal and church political wrong actions of Rev. Hoeksema and the men that follow him, even to the point of deserting the Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches.

"d. That the Consistory has not left the communion of the Prot. Ref. Churches. The recognition of the Rev. De Wolf and his consistory as the only and legal consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan was not an act of schism or separation but an act of right and justice."

In answer to all this, let me briefly state the following:

1. That the Classis did not err in substituting "translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son" in place of the original phrase "enter the kingdom of God," because it simply was never guilty of such a substitution. In its final decision the Classis said: "The second

teaches that our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the kingdom of God." It did not substitute anything, therefore, but quoted the literal statement made by the Rev. De Wolf. It is true, it added to that the perfectly correct explanation: "which means that we convert and humble ourselves before we are translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son." But it is entirely untrue that the Classis substituted anything whatsoever.

2. The former Consistory of Kalamazoo tries to interpret the statement made by the Rev. De Wolf as referring to a gradual or repeated entering into the kingdom of God. For this it quotes texts that have nothing to do with the whole matter, and that simply reveal that the Rev. Knott and his former Consistory are themselves confused and do not understand the Scriptures. If they challenge this statement, I will elaborate and prove it. If not, I will not take time and space for it at this time. But as far as the interpretation itself is concerned, I want to make the following remarks:

In the first place, it is not true at all that in the sermon preached by the Rev. De Wolf he made any distinction whatsoever between the principal and the repeated, or gradual, entering into the kingdom. All he had evidently and emphatically in mind is to put over his conditional theology. That he made a distinction between the principal and first entering into the kingdom of God and the repeated, or gradual, entering into the kingdom is an after-thought, and that too, not by himself, but by those that erroneously interpret his statement. His entire sermon certainly emphasized that our act of conversion is a pre-requisite to enter the kingdom of God without any distinction whatsoever.

In the second place, I want to point out that even if we refer to the gradual entrance into the kingdom or to the repeated entering in, the statement is nevertheless heretical. For even then our act of conversion is never a prerequisite to enter. Pre-requisite means that which is required beforehand. And we can never convert ourselves before we enter into the kingdom of God in any sense of the word. Always our act of conversion takes place within the kingdom of God, never before we enter. It may probably be said that it is *through* our act of conversion that we consciously enter into the kingdom, after we have been translated from darkness into God's marvelous light. But it can never be said that our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter in.

3. The former Consistory of Kalamazoo also simply states that the grounds which Classis adduced from Scripture and the Confessions, to prove that the second statement by De Wolf was heretical, are no grounds to condemn the statement, but only the statement as it was distorted by the protestants, and by the classis. This, of course, is a mere statement. And the statement is certainly not true. The grounds adduced by Classis as well as by the protestants both from Scripture and the Confessions certainly prove that the statement by De Wolf that "our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter the kingdom of God," is heretical.

(Continued on page 80)

## THE DAY OF SHADOWS

### The Prophecy of Isaiah

The prophet of the disputed chapters — Isa. XL-LXVI — over and over stresses the fact that the ability to foretell the future belongs to God alone and not the idols, and that this proves His divinity. His determining foreknowledge and power. This, too, strongly pleads for the view that the Cyrus-prophecies were uttered long before the appearance of Cyrus in history. For if the prophet who spoke and wrote these prophecies flourished in the final period of the exile, if, in other words, he was a contemporary of Cyrus, his predictions regarding this great one could be ascribed to human foresight, or he could even be accused of pretending to prophecy things that in fact were not future but past.

That the historical position of our chapters is the Babylonian captivity and that from it the prophet proceeds and not from the circumstances of Isaiah's own day, such as that Assyria was to disappear as a world power and that then the Babylonians were to lead the Jews into exile, is also held to disprove that our chapters owe their origin to Isaiah. What this comes down to is, that, seeing that our chapters do not contain a prediction of the Babylonian captivity, it is highly improbable that they were prophetically written by Isaiah. But we can just as well take the position that the total of the 66 chapters owe their origin to Isaiah and then conclude that, seeing that he already more than once had predicted the captivity in the first part of his book, he did not again foretell it in our chapters except, of course, by implication.

It is also said that it was impossible for Isaiah to utter words of comfort, instruction, encouragement and rebuke adapted for a generation of Jews that was not to appear in history until some hundred and fifty years or more after his passing, and whose circumstances were so different in comparison with those of his own generation. But it was God that prophesied. And those Jews were God's believing people, the church in the captivity of the exile. And the needs of the church are always the same essentially. What is always needed is the Gospel of Christ and the grace to live thereby. And this need our chapters supply. For they are prophecies of a salvation comprehending the deliverance of the church from all her foes and her appearance with Christ in glory. If this be understood, it will be seen that all the objections commonly raised against the Isaian authorship of our chapters have no validity.

If in order to write prophetically the disputed chapters, the prophet had to experience actually and literally the Babylonian captivity, then the chapters predicting the advent of the personal servant of Jehovah and descriptive of His sufferings should have to owe their origin to a prophet who, as a contemporary of Christ, stood at the foot of the cross.

The discourses of all the rest of the three major and the

twelve minor prophets end with a message of salvation, for the church. Is it not too improbable then, that the discourse of Isaiah should end with a message of woe for the church? And it does this, if the disputed chapters do not owe their origin to him. For in this case his prophecy closes with a prediction of the Babylonian captivity in connection with the embassy from Babylon, 39:5-8. Certainly the only tenable view is, that also the disputed chapters were uttered by Isaiah. The first part of this prophecy (I-XXXIX) calls for these chapters. It is not complete without them. They are plainly the second of the two main parts of the one Word of God with the prediction of the Babylonian captivity forming the bridge between the prophecies of its first part and those of the second.

Let us now trace the line of thought of the second main part of our prophecy. As was stated, this second part is formed of prophecies of the salvation of the church that began with the turning of Judah's captivity and that is to be concluded with the creation of the new heaven and the new earth.

#### *The introduction to the second part, chapter XL-I-II.*

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak upon the heart of Jerusalem, and call to her that her warfare is completed, that her iniquity has been paid, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins. (vss. 1, 2).

Not as yet in fact, but in the prophetic vision Judah has gone into captivity on account of his sins, and Jerusalem and the temple lie in ruins. In the language of the Lamentations, the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud of His anger, cut off in His fierce wrath all the horn of Israel, drawn back His right hand from before the enemy. And, again in the language of the Lamentations, the heart of God's people is turned within them and their bowels are troubled. That can be understood. Canaan was then the Heaven of the church. There was Jerusalem. There were God's altars. There He dwelt in His holy temple. There were the saints congregated before His face and heard and knew themselves blessed of their God. And now? The Lord has violently taken away His tabernacle, destroyed the places of the assembly, has caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and led His people into captivity.

Their mental distress is great. Words cannot utter it. But the Lord will not have it so. And therefore He bids His servants, the prophets, to comfort His people by all means, that is, to speak to them a word, glad tidings, that will relieve them of their mental distress, raise their drooping spirits, and cause them to shout for joy.

That they to be comforted are "My People" and "Jerusalem" indicates that the two are the same entity. As our verses show by the promises contained in them, this entity is first the Judah according to the election of grace in whose loins was the Christ, and second the church of all the ages still to come, thus the church as comprehending the total of



the elect by nature dead in sin but in Christ holy and blameless before God in love and seen in the Scriptures as God's very own creation in Christ eternally present to His mind in His counsel as the object of His unchanging love.

In the prophetic vision the church was in Babylon. And according to the Scriptures the church is still in Babylon. She is in the world — I speak now of the church militant — in the clutch of the World-power that in the Revelations of John appears as drunken with the blood of the saints. It is upon the heart of this people — Jerusalem — that the prophets of God must speak that they may be comforted in their great distress. It is to this people that the prophets must always cry. That is their sole calling. And that to be cried is, of course, the Gospel of Christ, the glad tidings that finished is Jerusalem's warfare, that paid is her guilt, and that she has received from the hand of the Lord double for all her sins.

Jerusalem has sins. Apart from Christ and His grace she is dead in her sins because of Adam's transgression. The law entered in and her sin abounded. When the measure of her iniquity was filled, she went into captivity and was abandoned by her God to the world-power that is Babylon, to Satan and his brood through the ages operative through this power.

But cry unto her that accomplished is her warfare, So I translate here *warfare*, but others, *time of servitude*, and still others, *slave-labor*. The word found in the Hebrew text means properly, *time of military service*, hence *warfare*, and then *struggle* and third *affliction*. All these meanings are comprehended in the idea of *warfare*. What is indicated is Jerusalem's good fight of faith in Babylon, her tears of contrition that she sheds on account of her sins, her humbling herself under the mighty hand of God, thus her confessing that the Lord is righteous in smitting her, seeing that she rebelled against His commandments, (see the Lamentations), her praying for the peace of Jerusalem and her keeping herself unspotted from the world there in Babylon and her witnessing against Babylon by her light that she lets shine. Indicated therefore is also the struggle and all the sufferings in which this good warfare involved her.

This her warfare is now accomplished. Her struggle is ended. The measure of her sufferings is full. Hence, the moment of her deliverance is at hand.

But how can this be? Her guilt, iniquity, has been compensated, paid, atoned, covered, obliterated. But by whose warfare, struggles, sufferings? By the Jerusalem in exile. Yet not actually but only typically, and actually by the warfare, struggles and sufferings of Christ at the time still in the loins of Judah. As the holy warfare and sufferings of David, so the good fight and sufferings of the church in the Babylonian exile, they were typical of the sufferings of Christ.

Indeed not by her own sufferings was Jerusalem's sins atoned. How could this be, seeing that she was led into captivity for her sins, and seeing that apart from His grace she is dead in her sins and that, accordingly, her warfare

is the fruit of His cross. The heart of Jerusalem is the Christ of God. The first to hear the glad tidings, "her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is atoned — iniquity for which He had assumed full responsibility and thereby made His very own — was He. And His cry on the cross, "It is finished," was His response to it. And therefore also Jerusalem's warfare in Babylon — a holy strife and suffering that he merited for her — is also an accomplished thing first in the point of view of right. It means, for one thing, that there is measure to it — the measure of His suffering — that He through His people is filling actually. In the vision it appears as filled, so that, as was said, the moment for the turning of Judah's captivity was at hand. And this is just as true today. For it is the last hour and the Lord comes quickly. The moment of Babylon's fall and the deliverance of the church therefore and her appearance with Christ in Glory is nigh. "Say therefore unto her that her warfare is accomplished and that she has received double from the hand of the Lord for all her sins."

Not that she received more stripes, chastizement, than she actually deserved. This cannot be the idea, for first, God is righteous and second, because of her sins Jerusalem deserved as many strokes as could be laid upon her. The thought is rather that her sins have been completely atoned, obliterated, so that nothing remains of the debt still to be paid.

#### *Redemption and return home. vss. 3-5.*

(There sounded) a voice crying in the wilderness,  
Prepare ye the way of the Lord,  
Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.  
Every valley shall be raised,  
And every mountain and hill shall be made low;  
And will be the crooked for a straight place,  
And the rough places for a level plain.

So then, the prophet in the Spirit hears a voice crying in the desert that the Lord's way be prepared and a highway be made straight in the desert for God. John the Baptist, too, was a voice crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord . . ." (Mark 1:2). From the fact that the voice as identified with the Baptist addressed itself to the people of Israel of his day in bondage to the world-power at that time Rome, and that it was a call to repentance (Mark 1:4), it follows that the same is true of the "voice" as heard by Isaiah. It was a cry to repentance directed to the church in captivity into which it had been led instrumentally by the Babylonians at that time in the possession of the world-power. It was a mandate to the effect that, seeing that the Lord was about to come to them deliver them from their bondage, they repent of their sins, forsake their abomination, turn to God and serve him with all their heart and mind and will and strength, or, in the imagery of the text, raise the valleys and lower the hills and the mountains of the desert — and they were that desert, a desert of sins and transgressions — and make straight crooked passes, and thereby con-

vert it into a straight, level and smooth highway for their God.

But of this, of course, they were just as incapable as they were of converting a desert of mountains and canyons into a level plain. For, rightly considered, the mandate thrust upon them the responsibility to free themselves from the guilt of all their sins and bring themselves into existence as creatures of a flawless moral perfection, so that, if it was up to them to make in the desert a highway for their God, they should have to continue in their bondage forever.

And yet, the impossible is going to happen. For every mountain and hill *shall be* lowered and every valley shall be raised and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. Such is the promise here.

The answer to this riddle is, of course, God. He, Himself, will prepare for Him a way in the wilderness, through the sufferings and death on the cross of His only begotten Son, whereby all the guilt of the sins of His exiles shall be covered and thereby obliterated and a life that is everlasting merited for them in the way of His perfect obedience. By Him and in His Spirit—Him the only way, the straight, level and smooth way—God will lead His captives home. In Christ He will come to them there in Babylon and bring them into His sanctuary. Or, more in the language of the New Testament Scriptures, he will break the bands of their death, redeem them from all their sins and make them to appear with Christ in glory, where His tabernacle will be with them.

So shall the Lord make a way for Himself in the desert indeed, deliver His captives from their bondage and bring them into His own house. It will be all His work in order that His glory may be revealed in Christ. That is its sole purpose. And so our passage concludes with the statement, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together! for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (vs. 5)

God's glory is the effulgence of His virtues in Christ. It shall be revealed. All flesh, the whole of humanity to a man, reprobate as well as elect, shall see together. The reach also of this prophecy extends to the end of time. Its fulfilment is the final appearance of Christ with His church, when every tongue shall confess that He is the Lord to the glory of the Father, implying that this great work of God shall be visible to all in its consumation. And all shall come to pass. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. His Word is inviolable, He being God faithful and mighty.

The voice crying in the wilderness as heard by Isaiah was the preaching of the Gospel by the prophets of God that labored among the exiles in Babylon. By it the captives—the remnant according to the election of grace—were spiritually prepared for the moment that the Lord would come to redeem them from the captivity of their exile and lead them to His Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

Such then, was the purpose of the "voice" as heard by Isaiah. And as is clear from the description of the calling of

the Baptist in Luke 1:15-17, such was the purpose of the "voice" as identified in the Gospel narratives with him. Here we read, "And many of the children of Israel shall he (John) turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him—that is, Christ—in the Spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Many were truly converted by John's preaching.

Both John and the prophets went before the Lord to prepare for Him a people. Accordingly, he and they were preparers of the way, the latter of the Lord when in the Old Dispensation He was come to redeem His people from a typical captivity, the Babylonian, and John of the Lord when in the fulness of time He was come in the flesh to redeem His people truly from all their bondage, bondage to sin and death and Satan also as operative through the world-power.

All that is written of John proves conclusively that the "voice crying in the wilderness" was a call to repentance directed to the church in Babylon.

Christ had need of a people prepared by His God to receive him. They were the firstfruits and as such the pledge that all that the Father had given Him would come unto Him.

G.M.O.



#### EDITORIALS

(Continued from page 77)

And I challenge the former Consistory of Kalamazoo to prove the contrary, particularly in the light of 1 and 2 above.

In the light of all that we have written about the reply of the former Consistory of Kalamazoo to brother Meniga, it should be very plain to all that can read that the former Consistory of Kalamazoo is certainly upholding the heresies preached by the Rev. De Wolf and condemned by Classis. Nor it is true that the main issue in the present separation is church political. On the contrary, it is certainly doctrinal, and concerns the heresies of the Rev. De Wolf and those that support him, including the former Consistory of Kalamazoo. That we deserted the legally called Synod of the Prot. Ref. Churches is so ridiculous that no one will believe it. Not we, but Classis West and all its schismatic actions were the cause of the separation.

And therefore, I conclude that the former Consistory of Kalamazoo has certainly left the communion of the Prot. Ref. Churches, as is evident from the fact that they recognize De Wolf and those that follow him as the legal Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in spite of the fact that this consistory was condemned by Classis and that the true and legal representatives of the Consistory were received by Classis in October, 1953. Moreover, I am convinced that the former Consistory of Kalamazoo does no longer teach the true Prot. Ref. doctrine. And I predict that this will become evident more and more, as time advances.

H.H.



## FROM HOLY WRIT

### Exposition of II Timothy 2:14

The passage which we will this time consider contains instructions from Paul to Timothy in regard to what must be constantly held before the attention of the church in order that she may truly walk in godliness, steadfast in the truth in Christ Jesus. The church must be built and established in Christ and walk in all good works of faith and gratitude. The saints in Christ must walk in the good works which have been before prepared for her that she should walk in them.

Such is the general thrust of this passage.

But shall the church walk in all godliness then she must be under the nurture of good and sound doctrine; she must be under inspired Scriptures, which are profitable for instruction, reproof, correction, in the entire pedagogy to righteousness in order that the man of God be thoroughly equipped unto every good work.

The church needs the proper equipment to walk as saints in the light. She must be fed on the truth as it is in Jesus, the gospel of our salvation. She may be fed on nothing less. Woe to any preacher who does it otherwise. Hence, the warning is in order, given in II Timothy 2:14, *"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them in the sight of the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear them."*

We should observe that Paul is really very positive in the text. He tells Paul that he must put the believers in constant remembrance of "these things." We ask: what things? The answer is found in the context, the verses 8-13, where Paul cites briefly the entire Gospel of the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as this was promised before by God through prophets in Holy Scriptures and in the fulness of times was fulfilled in Christ, His Son! Furthermore, the Apostle cites the meaning that this has in his own suffering for the Gospel's sake, which he endures, that the elect with him may obtain salvation with eternal glory. For all who suffer with Christ shall surely be glorified together with Him. The unbreakable connection must be pointed out to the church not simply between suffering in general and some happy "beautiful isle of somewhere," but between the Cross of Jesus and His crown, for all who suffer with Christ. That "faithful word" of God concerning Cross and crown must constantly be held before the believing eyes of the hearers. That was the word which inspired men and women to die for the faith, that caused them to rejoice greatly when they suffered for righteousness' sake, knowing that their reward is great in the Kingdom of glory. The sufferings to come upon Christ is theirs but also the glory to follow.

Of "these things" Timothy must put the congregations in remembrance.

In view of this battle they must be instructed unto god-

liness. In the hope of the final resurrection they must press on. But then they will need to have the living hope in their hearts, that after the battle has been won the crown of glory shall be ours. That and that only gives heart in the battle. Thus Abraham, Isaac and Jacob pressed forward, seeking a better land, that is, an heavenly country. And Timothy must be strong, rather, he must be strengthened in the grace in Christ. He must instruct others to preach, men who are of such natural and spiritual calibre that they are able to instruct others.

But always and again "these things" must be held before the church. Says Calvin on this verse: "It means that the summary of the gospel which he gave, and the exhortations which he added to it, are of so great importance that a good minister ought never to be weary of exhibiting them; for they are things that deserve to be constantly handled, and that cannot too frequently be repeated. 'They are things' (he says) which I wish you not only to teach once, but to take great pains to impress on the hearts of men by frequent repetition.' A good teacher ought to look at nothing else than edification, and to give his whole attention to that alone . . ." And in a sermon on this passage Calvin writes: "When any person comes to the sermon, let it not be to something that tickles the ear, or that gives pleasure; but let it be to make progress in the fear of God, and in humility, and to excite to prayer, and to confirm him in patience. If we have heard an exhortation today, and if tomorrow it is repeated to us, let us not think that this is superfluous, let us not be annoyed at it; for every person who carefully examines this subject will find it to be highly necessary for him to be reminded of the lesson which he had learned, that he may practice it well. If, therefore, God refreshes our memory with it, he has conferred on us a great favor. That is what we have to remark on this passage when Paul says 'remind them of these things.' For undoubtedly he intended to prevent what we frequently meet with, when it is said, 'We have heard this before. Is not that a very common remark? Where is the little child that does not know it?' Such things are said by those who would be fed with useless questions. But here the Holy Spirit desires that what is useful should be brought forward every day, because we have not sufficiently understood it, and because it must be put in practice."

Hence, always and again the minister must hold before the Church the glorious truth of the reality that Jesus Christ is in the completed state of having been raised from the dead. He is the firstfruits of them that have fallen asleep. That Christ is now no longer in the grave but that he has ascended on high is the central truth of the glorious good tidings. This is the truth of the Gospel of which angels sang in Bethlehem Ephratha, and it is what Christ Himself explained to the travelers to Emmaus, when he pointed out to them that the Christ, the Messiah, ought to have suffered all these things, to be raised from the dead the third day and thus enter into His glory. And beginning from Moses and all the prophets he explained unto them the things written concerning Him-

self. Such was the preaching of Paul in Antioch of Pisidia (read Acts 13) and such was Paul's labors everywhere. Read of Paul's labors in Thessalonica in Acts 17. It is through this resurrection of Christ that we have been born anew unto a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away. I Peter 1:3. In view of this hope, of which they must always be ready to give an account, Paul must "put them in remembrance of *these things*."

Yes, of these things put them in remembrance! These are the words that are health-affording to the believers, to the "hearers." Only where the hope of seeing God is kept in mind is there a walk of godliness. Says John "and everyone that has this hope upon Him *purifies* himself as He is pure. Notice: not the subjunctive: let him purify, but the indicative: he purifies! In view of this healthy state and well-being of faith and hope we must constantly be put in memory of the *central truth of the Gospel*, the resurrection of Christ and all its future glories. That only tends to godliness. Despair breeds wickedness even as the law is the power of sin, but hope gives birth each day anew to godliness through the grace of Jesus Christ. And so the "faithful saying" concerning the Cross and Crown, the suffering, with Christ and the being glorified with Christ must constantly be brought to the attention of the "hearers."

In this hope of the Gospel we *ought* to walk! Through exhortations God causes us to walk in the good works of faith and love and hope; God *confers* grace through exhortation to the elect, bringing them through patience unto the eternal day, and causing us to walk in that way of sanctification through which we shall see the Lord. For this "putting us in remembrance of these things" is the *Media Gratiae*, the Means of Grace, by which the Holy Spirit reproves, corrects, places us in the pedagogy of righteousness, that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped unto good works.

But shall we be thus thoroughly *furnished* (equipped, fitted out) unto every good work, then we must have as part of our equipment the healthy concern that we do not engage in word-battles, that is, *striving about words*. Since the truth of the Gospel is written in words, holy words (*iera grammata*, II Tim. 3:15). Paul cannot mean that we should not diligently seek to attain the meaning of the words of Scripture. These words are the vehicle through which the fulfilled Promise of God in Christ's death and resurrection is announced to us, and the hope of glory. We have our Lexica in Greek, Hebrew and Latin etc. And no one will dispute the fact that it is necessary to consult a good dictionary to determine the derivation, the current usage of a word or term. Fact is, that no one, worthy of the name of a preacher, should make a sermon on any text if he has not studied the terms. Any man who seeks diligently to be a workman, approved of God, and that has no cause to be ashamed of his work in the Ministry of the Gospel, will surely busy himself with a "word-study" of Scripture. For such is the requisite of all right handling of the word along straight paths.

(„Langs zuivere banen"). It is a remarkable thing that in the mere study of "words" the church has never had any battles. In this sense Paul could, evidently, not have meant the "striving about words to no good use." Words have a definite meaning in a given context in the Scriptures and they serve as means to teach us the Gospel of our salvation. In this sense we need not be so fearful for any battle about words.

The battle about words is never the earmark of those who wish to live under the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is able to make us wise unto salvation through *faith* in Jesus Christ. It is the earmark of those who depart from the faith in Jesus Christ, from the sound words of doctrine and their profitableness of hope and godliness.

This is evident, first of all, from the fact that Paul's injunction to Timothy that he charge the church before the Lord, that they do not engage in battle over words, is subjoined to the admonition that he "put in remembrance of these things." The remembrance of these things is incongruous with strife about words, which are to no profit, that subvert, are a "catastrophe" to the hearers. These strifes simply bewilder the hearers no end and cause them to stampede like frightened cattle. It does not fit in with the logical service of God, so that we approve what is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God.

Secondly, we may be certain, that such "striving about words" is characterized by Paul as being "profane babblings" of men who will not stay in the truth unto godliness, but who will proceed to further ungodliness! This is a sure fruit of all who walk in this profane babbling! Solid study is gone. One might better listen to the prattlings of children. At least that is no catastrophe in the hearers. Such who strive about "words" and care not for the body of the truth in Jesus, we must shun.

Thirdly, the motive of such striving about words is never a *godly* one! It does not belong to one who strives to present himself acceptable before God; to one who teaches the truth in Jesus in all meekness and gentleness, bearing in long-suffering and patience with those who resist themselves. It is characteristic of the man, who does not know, that in the games only those receive the crown, who strive lawfully! To this class belongs Hymaneus and Philetus, men who concerning the truth have erred. They wrested the Scriptures, in their battle about words, to their own destruction. They philosophized until they had no future resurrection to look forward to, and no cleansing of themselves because of this hope of the fathers.

Of these men we must beware!

Where such men subvert the hearers they will to give their own meaning to words. Their souls are not aflame with the joy of the Holy Spirit in the truth of the Gospel. They are very selfish men. They cannot deny themselves, take up Jesus' Cross and follow Him for the truth of the Gospel's

(Continued on page 86)

## IN HIS FEAR

### More Straws

Another straw.

And this is a very, very evil one!

We hesitated a long, long time before coming to the conclusion that this matter also ought to be shown up for what it is worth and for its exceeding sinfulness. We have now become convinced that these things also must not go unchallenged.

It is not because we are interested in being vindicated before the bar of man's judgment. It is not that we enjoy exposing the corruption that has been perpetrated these last few years. But in answer to some who have asked us whether we think that our articles are to the glory of God, we wish to state all that we have written was written not in a spirit of malice but In His Fear. It is because many are still being deceived by the evil practices and grasping of straws for defense by those who will neither confess their heresy nor their awful act of schism that we write these things, while personally we would rather fill this department with other practical observations. And we would consider ourselves remiss in our duty if we did not warn our readers and show them how they are giving moral and financial support to a movement that before God has no right to sail under the Protestant Reformed flag. While they remain—whether here in Michigan or in that which formerly was Classis West—in such a movement, or at this late hour still dare to join a movement so manifestly evil, they are opposing both the truth, as our Covenant God gave it to the Protestant Reformed churches, and all reformed church polity.

And especially if you take the stand of Rev. Blankespoor that the issue is solely a church political one, then this movement has no right whatsoever to exist. For the evidence continues to pile up that there is not even the semblance of reformed church political procedure in their whole course. Read again the amazing testimony in Rev. Vanden Berg's article of November 1, which also, by the way, is an answer to our challenge, to that which illegally calls itself Classis West, to give us one authority that will maintain that its action in September 1953 was legal. This passage of Monsma and Van Dellen says quite the opposite. And how could that Classis dare to recognize, without investigation and with so little deliberation, Rev. De Wolf and his deposed elders?

However, the matter we have first in mind as another straw, which in deperation was grasped by those who are sinking under the deluge of truth and fact, took place a long time ago. And, we repeat, we show its sinfulness and worthlessness for defense only because it is evident that many were and still are deceived into ignoring and overlooking its evil.

We, personally, were shocked when Rev. De Wolf's cross bill was first published. We were shocked not only by the

evil content of it but especially by the fact that he dared to make that his defense. And, no doubt, many of his followers were also shocked and momentarily, at least, hesitated in their allegiance unto him. At any rate, so disturbed were many of his followers that he was forced to make an explanation of some of its contents in a Reformed Guardian article.

We refer not simply to the slanderous remarks about the Rev. H. Hoeksema, which even his enemies know are not true, but especially to the fact that this cross bill, and Rev. De Wolf by it, repudiates our history since 1924. We have reference to that article 4, which reads as follows: "Defendants further show that the said Herman Hoeksema, while occupying the pulpit in the said East Street Holland Christian Reformed Church, by his acts and conduct and by his refusal to acknowledge the duly constituted authorities of said church and its decrees and pronouncements, caused a schism in said church and a splitting of the membership which attended said church while he was its pastor. That the said Herman Hoeksema and his followers took possession of the church property located on Eastern Avenue and insisted that he, said Herman Hoeksema, and others, were entitled to the use of the church edifice and parsonage, and did for a long time following said schism occupy said premises." (By decision of the Supreme Court of the State of Michigan, Rev. De Wolf. Why do you not look up the facts?)

Such an evil accusation, such a statement of untruth surely needed explanation(?)!

Indeed!

They were <sup>grasping</sup> at straws and in desperation willing to sieze upon a thing like this (Rev. Kok, please note) to hold on to property which they were illegally holding.

And that explanation(?) of Rev. De Wolf makes it worse rather than better. He ridicules the Rev. Hoeksema's interpretation though he does not call it the wrong one. But if it is the wrong one that leaves a far worse alternative. That makes it all the more apparent that they were grasping at straws and that in a very evil way. It also explains why they had to go back to the same lawyer who was instrumental in separating the Protestant Reformed constituency from its property in 1925 by convincing the court that these things were true that are stated in article 4. By your act of hiring this lawyer, Rev. De Wolf, you said that it is true, though by word of mouth you deny it(?).

But look once at Rev. De Wolf's defense of this article. It reads as follows: (Reformed Guardian, Vol. II, No .1.)

"Now the reader will note that we are dealing here with a legal document that states a legal opinion as determined by the court. The articles that follow also clearly indicate this fact. According to the decision of the courts in 1925, the Rev. Hoeksema and his followers, in which also we were included, were not entitled to the properties. (On that basis, Rev. De Wolf, you surely should not have used this in your cross bill, for you and your followers created schism and refused to abide by that which the *Protestant Reformed*

churches declared to be the plain teaching of Scripture and the confessions. Did you forget the decisions of Classis East of May, 1953, in re your heretical statements, when you swore to this cross bill?) The reason was this, (so the explanation of Rev. De Wolf continues and underscores our remarks in the above parenthesis) that the Rev. Hoeksema refused to submit to an accepted doctrine in the Christian Reformed Church. (And you refused to call literally heretical that which the Prot. Ref. Churches called literally heretical and declared required an apology.) The Rev. Hoeksema attempted to prove that he was the continuation of the true Christian Reformed Church. (And you dared, though the situation was quite different and half of the Consistory agreed with the decisions of the Classis, you with no more than half dared to say that you were the true continuation of the Protestant Reformed Churches with heretical statements condemned by the Classis! What is more, in 1924 it was the Classis that drew up heretical statements and the Rev. Hoeksema refused to subscribe to them. You, *with careful deliberation*, so much so that you could tell others before preaching the last heretical sermon that you were going to offend some by what you intended to say, manufactured those statements that the Classis condemned.) The courts, however, refused to accept this. In the judgment of the courts the Rev. Hoeksema had departed from the accepted standards of that church (and we proved that you did from the accepted standards of the Protestant Reformed Churches) and, by his refusal to submit to what the courts judged to be the legal authorities of that church, he forfeited the right to the properties upon the basis of the following article in the Articles of Association of the Eastern Ave. Church."

Somewhat later, after quoting those Articles of Association, Rev. De Wolf continues thus:

"This is history. It is legal history as recorded in the records of the courts of our land. Does the Rev. Hoeksema or any of his present followers want to deny that this is history?" (That is not the question, Rev. De Wolf. It is also history that the Sanhedrin declared Christ worthy of death. The question is, if you do not agree with the Rev. Hoeksema's interpretation of your oath in regard to these things, then why do you make use of a thing *that you do not believe yourself* as evidence in court?)

He continues, "That is the historical fact to which the cross bill refers. And that is all that it states in this particular statement which the Rev. Hoeksema has called into question. The cross bill does not state whether these things are just or unjust. It does not enter into the moral aspect of the case in any sense of the word. It simply states the fact as that has been established by the courts. The court found that the Rev. Hoeksema caused a schism, a separation. Does the Rev. Hoeksema deny this? It found that he refused to acknowledge the duly constituted authorities of the Christian Reformed Church and its decrees and pronouncements. Does he deny this? Whether before God he had the right to cause

this schism. (Wait a minute, Rev. De Wolf. Now you are saying are you not? that the decision of the courts is correct that the Rev. Hoeksema was a schismatic.) And refuse to acknowledge the authorities above referred to as actual authorities, is another question. Upon this question the cross bill does not express an opinion . . ." From here on Rev. De Wolf goes off on a tangent and speaks about the leadership of the Rev. Hoeksema because of his condemnation of this article in Rev. De Wolf's cross bill. There is only this statement of him that follows at the bottom of the column that still ought to be noted. He states, "It is with a comparison between the legal position of 1925 and today as determined by the articles quoted above, (these are the Articles of Association in question in 1925 and those drawn up for the congregation after organizing into a Protestant Reformed Church) that the cross bill concerns itself."

That explanation (?) apparently satisfied many of his followers who did not take the time to think it through. But its evil is very apparent to anyone who will stop to ask the question, "If Rev. De Wolf disagrees with the decision of the Supreme Court of the State of Michigan taken in 1925, and believes that the Rev. Hoeksema did the right thing before God, why use this as evidence in the Superior Court of the same State of Michigan in order to have him condemned? Does a man who deals honestly appeal to decisions which he knows and believes to be wrong as *evidence*? Does one who is truthful quote the decision of others with which he does not agree to get a point of advantage for himself? Does he then say? Well I did not make that decision, I simply told you that so and so, in this case the Supreme Court of the State of Michigan, said so.

We have more on this, for there are many sides to it that bear thought and consideration. This we plan to do in the next issue.

J.A.H.

#### WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On November 22, 1954, our beloved parents:

HERMAN DeVRIES

and

CLARA DeVRIES—nee KUIK

will commemorate the 25th anniversary of their marriage.

We are grateful to our Covenant God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon them and us; and we trust and pray that, if it be His good pleasure, they may be graciously spared for one another and for us, for many years to come.

Their thankful children,

John  
Gerald  
Martin  
Donald  
James  
Ted  
Frank  
Henry  
Maurice

Randolph, Wisconsin.

## Contending For The Faith

### The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE SECOND PERIOD (300-750 A.D.)

#### THE CHURCH

##### *Constantine the Great.*

It is not our purpose in these articles to give a full and complete appraisal of the life and person of Constantine, the Great, recognized as the first Christian emperor. That is not necessary in a series of articles which treat the history of doctrine. Besides, to do such would be extremely difficult for the undersigned. Constantine can and must be judged in the light of his time and age. And to judge him, to form an objective appraisal of this famous historical character is difficult. If Emperor Constantine were a Christian (he is called the first Christian emperor because he embraced Christianity as his religion in distinction from heathenism), then we may certainly say that his Christianity was not of a very high character. To the Greek church which honours him even as a canonized saint, he has the same significance as Charlemagne to the Latin church (we must remember that the "Greek" represents the Eastern part of the Roman empire in distinction from the "Latin" or western part of this old Roman empire.)

The conversion of Constantine to Christianity dates back to October 28, 312, when he, in the battle of the Milvian Bridge, conquered Maxentius, his rival for supremacy over the entire western part of the Roman Empire. Historians, however, inform us that he showed an inclination toward Christianity already before this date, and must have expressed himself as follows: "My father revered the Christian God and uniformly prospered, while the emperors who worshipped the heathen gods, died a miserable death; therefore, that I may enjoy a happy life and reign, I will imitate the example of my father and join myself to the cause of the Christians, who are growing daily while the heathens are diminishing." I do not believe that we need not doubt that this low, utilitarian consideration weighed heavily in the mind of Constantine. In this battle of the Milvian Bridge (approximately ten miles from Rome) Constantine was confronted by his arch-enemy for the crown, and outnumbered three to one. It is at this time that the famous and familiar incident of the miraculous cross must have occurred. The precise day and place cannot be fixed, but the event must have occurred shortly before Constantine's final victory over Maxentius in the neighborhood of Rome. This occurrence is variously described. A certain Lactantius, the earliest witness, some three years after the battle, speaks only of a dream by night

in which the emperor (it is not stated by whom, whether by Christ, or by an angel) was directed to stamp on the shields of his soldiers the "heavenly sign of God," that is, the cross with the name of Christ, and thus to go forth against his enemy. Another gives a different version of this "miraculous" incident. On his march from Gaul (France) to Italy (the date and spot are not specified), the emperor, while earnestly praying to the true God for light and help at this critical time, saw, together with his army, in clear daylight towards evening, a shining cross in the heavens above the sun, with the inscription: "By this conquer," and in the following night Christ Himself appeared to him while he slept, and directed him to have a standard prepared in the form of this sign of the cross, and with that to proceed against Maxentius and all other enemies. This meant that the sign of the cross would henceforth replace the sign of the eagle which had until now adorned the shields of the soldiers of the Roman Empire.

This famous tradition may be explained either as a real miracle implying a personal appearance of the Christ, or as a pious fraud, or as a natural phenomenon in the clouds and an optical illusion, or finally as a prophetic dream. Let us look into these possible explanations a little more in detail. We do this because of the tremendously important role which Constantine has played in the history of the Church. One cannot doubt the importance of the Edict of Milan which was issued by Constantine in the year, 313, and which edict is inseparably connected with the battle of the Milvian Bridge and the famous sign of the cross which he is reputed to have seen upon the eve of that important victory. The possibility of a miracle sign in the heavens might be justified by the significance of the victory as marking a great epoch in the history of the world and of the church, namely the downfall of paganism and the establishment of Christianity in the Empire. However, this version of the incident at the Milvian Bridge does not appear acceptable to the Church of God. One can hardly compare this incident, for example, with the appearance of Christ to Paul on the way to Damascus. Constantine had already revealed an attitude which was favorable to Christians, although it may be conceded that his friendliness toward Christians was utilitarian in nature. Besides, had Christ appeared to him would He not have exhorted him to repent, presupposing now that this incident marked Constantine's repentance? Yet, the emperor was not baptized until shortly before his death. This fact, that he was baptized only shortly before his death, in the light of his reputation as the first Christian emperor, is a strange fact indeed. And, as we shall see later, there are other strange incidents in the life of this Constantine, the Great.

Continuing with the various possible interpretations of the sign immediately prior to the battle of the Milvian Bridge, we quote now from Schaff's History of the Christian Church as he discusses this incident. Our quotation is from Vol. III, pages 24-28, as follows:

"The opposite hypothesis of a mere military stratagem or intentional fraud is still more objectionable, and would compel us either to impute to the first Christian emperor at a venerable age the double crime of falsehood and perjury, or, if Eusebius invented the story, to deny to the "father of church history" (Eusebius is generally regarded as the "father of church history" — H.V.) all claim to credibility and common respectability (the implication of this statement is that if this "sign of the cross in the heavens" as given to Constantine by Christ, either in a dream or actually were merely concocted as a military stratagem or as an intentional fraud, then one would be compelled either to impute to Constantine the double crime of falsehood and perjury or, if Eusebius invented the story, to deny to the "father of church history" all claim to common respectability — H.V.). Besides it should be remembered that the older testimony of Lactantius, or whoever was the author of the work on the Death of Persecutors, is quite independent of that of Eusebius, and derives additional force from the vague heathen rumors of the time. Finally the *Hoc vince* (by this conquer — H.V.) which has passed into proverbial significance as a most appropriate motto of the invincible religion of the cross, is too good to be traced to sheer falsehood. Some actual fact, therefore, must be supposed to underlie the tradition, and the question only is this, whether it was an external visible phenomenon or an internal experience.

The hypothesis of a natural formation of the clouds, which Constantine by an optical illusion mistook for a supernatural sign of the cross, besides smacking of the exploded rationalistic explanation of the New Testament miracles, and deriving an important event from a mere accident, leaves the figure of Christ and the Greek or Latin inscription: *By this sign thou shalt conquer!* altogether unexplained.

We are shut up therefore to the theory of a dream or vision, and an experience within the mind of Constantine. This is supported by the oldest testimony of Lactantius, as well as by the report of Rufinus and Sozomen, and we do not hesitate to regard the Eusebian cross in the skies as originally a part of the dream, which only subsequently assumed the character of an outward objective apparition either in the imagination of Constantine, or by a mistake of the memory of the historian, but in either case without intentional fraud. That the vision was traced to supernatural origin, especially after the happy success, is quite natural, and in keeping with the prevailing ideas of the ages. Tertullian and other ante-Nicene and Nicene fathers attributed many conversions to nocturnal dreams and visions. Constantine and his friends referred the most important facts of his life, as the knowledge of the approach of hostile armies, the discovery of the holy sepulchre, the founding of Constantinople, to divine revelation through visions and dreams. Nor are we disposed in the least to deny the connection of the vision of the cross with the agency of divine Providence,

which controlled this remarkable turning point of history. We may go farther and admit a special providence, or what the old divines call a *providentia specialissima*; but this does not necessarily imply a violation of the order of nature or an actual miracle in the shape of an objective personal appearance of the Saviour. We may refer to a somewhat similar, though far less important, vision in the life of the pious English Colonel James Gardiner. The Bible itself sanctions the general theory of providential or prophetic dreams and nocturnal visions through which divine revelations and admonitions are communicated to men (Schaff here refers to Old Testament passages which speak of the Lord's revealing of Himself to men through visions and dreams. The question must be asked, however, whether these passages apply exclusively to the time of the Old Dispensation—H.V.)" Before we continue with this quotation from the History of the Christian Church by Philip Schaff, we wish to quote this account of the event which occurred in the life of this Colonel James Gardiner. Schaff remarks that "no reflecting person will on that account doubt the seriousness of Gardiner's conversion, which was amply proved by his whole subsequent life, even far more than Constantine's was." This account of the event in the life of Gardiner was according to the account of Gardiner's friend, a certain Dr. Philip Doddridge, who learned the facts from Gardiner, as Eusebius from Constantine. However, we will quote this account in our following article.

H.V.

#### FROM HOLY WRIT

(Continued from page 82)

sake. They grow weary of being reminded of "these things." They must hear something "new."

No, they did not intentionally bring a "catastrophe" in the Church of Christ. Paul employs a term in the greek which shows that this subverting of the hearers is the result. It is: *epi katastrophee toon akouontoon*, that is, *so that* the hearers are overthrown. They no more hear the central truth of the glorious Gospel. In the righteous judgement of God they fell into the snare of the Devil. And where this Devil's work of striving for words is seen, there is the teaching of a different doctrine, (*heterodidaskalei*) which cannot be health-affording in hope and faith, but is a sickly doting about questions, a morbid concern about words, which have nothing to do with the pedagogy to salvation in Christ Jesus, but in the judgment of God subvert the hearers. Where you have subverted hearers you have to deal with men, who are filled with suspicion, strife, railings, blasphemy, wranglings, men of corrupted minds bereft of the truth! I Tim. 6:4, 5.

Wherefore I charge you before the presence of God and of Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead: preach the Word!

G.L.



## The Voice of Our Fathers

### The Canons of Dordrecht

#### PART TWO

#### EXPOSITION OF THE CANONS

#### FIRST HEAD OF DOCTRINE

#### OF DIVINE PREDESTINATION

Article 14. As the doctrine of divine election by the most wise counsel of God, was declared by the prophets, by Christ himself, and by the apostles, and is clearly revealed in the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, so it is still to be published in due time and place in the Church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed, provided it be done with reverence, in the spirit of discretion and piety, for the glory of God's most holy name, and for enlivening and comforting his people, without vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the Most High. Acts 20:27; Rom. 11:33, 34; 12:3; Heb. 6:17, 18.

It requires a generous measure of good-will to accept the above translation as a faithful rendering of the original Latin formulation. In my opinion, — and the Dutch rendering would seem to support this opinion, — the article is certainly corrupted by the insertion of the word “provided” about midway in the sentence. For although it is true that the English translation states factually that the doctrine of election “is still to be published,” yet by inserting the word “provided” it changes this factual statement into a conditional sentence, and at least leaves the impression of raising some doubt as to the preaching of this doctrine. When one reads the word “provided,” he very easily mentally changes “is still to be published” into “*may* still be published.” And the intention of this article is certainly not to present the preaching of election as optional, and that too, only under certain provisions. For those who can follow the Latin, let it be noted that the grammatical construction of the main clause here is that of the gerundive, or future passive participle, with the verb “to be.” And this construction invariably denotes necessity and obligation. And in the original Latin there is no term that could be rendered by “provided;” instead, there is just a series of phrases which denote the manner in which it is necessary to preach the doctrine of election. In this respect the Dutch version is much clearer; and our official English version could well be improved upon. The only other correction worth mentioning concerns the phrase “and for enlivening and comforting his people.” This should be: “and for the lively comfort of his people.”

The main proposition of this article is, as was already indicated in our remarks on the translation, that this doctrine of divine election *ought to be preached*, or rather, set forth,

propounded. It goes without saying, of course, that by “this doctrine of election” the fathers mean the doctrine of election that is maintained and expounded here in the *Canons*, not just any doctrine of election, and certainly not the Arminian doctrine of a conditional, non-decisive, and revocable election. Undoubtedly the fathers had in mind an argument of the Arminians also when they framed this article. And that argument was that such a doctrine, i.e., of sovereign and eternally unchangeable election, ought not to be preached because it would lead to passivism and dead orthodoxy, would snuff out every incentive and incitement to an active life of faith and conversion. And now, having made it clear that this doctrine does not make men careless and profane, (see Art. 12 and 13), they also insist now that this doctrine must be preached in the church. It is not impossible, however, that the fathers also had in mind some of their own number, who were not inclined toward the Arminian error, but who committed the very grave error of seldom or never preaching election and teaching this doctrine to the youth of the church, although they claimed to believe this truth. It may safely be said that the large measure in which Arminianism conquered the church at that time was due in some degree to such a silence on the part of some who nevertheless meant to be Reformed. Often in history the church has suffered loss and defeat by default, by its own failure vigorously to maintain and expound the truth.

A greater evil it is, however, — and in regard to this evil the *Canons* are by no means outdated, — when men who are at heart Arminian claim to believe the truth of sovereign predestination, but deliberately attempt to kill that truth by silence in the pulpit and in the catechism class. This is not at all uncommon in our day. And the terrible result of this practice is that the entire cargo of Arminianism is smuggled into the Reformed church. On this subject we agree wholeheartedly with the Rev. J. G. Feenstra, who, commenting on this article, writes as follows (I translate from the Holland): “There is nothing more dangerous than when a truth from God's Word is passed by in silence, is silenced to death (doogezwegen). That is the very worst. I would rather that they openly oppose it, than that they silence this truth to death.”

“In genuine Reformed preaching one cannot keep silence about this truth. The doctrine of election belongs to the fundamental matters of God's Word.

*Silencing of the truth goes hand in hand with undercover importing of false doctrine . . . .”*

With this we must agree. And let it be noted that this article makes the preaching of the truth of election absolutely binding in the churches. He who subscribes to the Reformed confessions when he takes office or makes confession of faith binds himself to the confession that it is not optional, but obligatory to proclaim the doctrine of election set forth in The First Head of Doctrine of our *Canons*. This is once more emphasized for office-bearers in the Formula of Subscription itself.

Such, then, is the main proposition of this article.

And it is of force because it is founded upon the Scriptures. The fathers take pains to point this out: "As the doctrine of divine election by the most wise counsel of God, was declared by the prophets, by Christ Himself, and by the apostles, and is clearly revealed in the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, so it is still to be published . . . ."

Only one of the Scriptural references (evidently added later in both the English and the Holland versions) has any bearing upon this statement. That is Acts 20:27, where the apostle Paul declares in his farewell to the elders of Ephesus whom he had called to Miletus: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." But it is not difficult to point out that the claim that this doctrine was proclaimed by the prophets, by Christ Himself, and by the apostles is correct. Actually the wellknown protevangel of Genesis 3:15, concerning the divinely instituted enmity between the seed of the devil and the seed of the woman, is already a declaration of the divine purpose of predestination. Furthermore, the entire history of the old dispensation is a revelation of God's electing sovereignty. Abraham is chosen and called. Isaac is the child of the promise, not Ishmael. Jacob has God loved, while He hated Esau. Israel is chosen from among the nations, although it was not better nor more honorable than other nations. Confer: Gen. 3:15; Exodus 33:19; Deut. 4:37; Deut. 7:7; 65:4; Ps. 89:3, 4, 19; ff.; Ps. 105:6; Isaiah 6:9-11; Isa. 40:1; 41:8; 42:1; 43:1-7; 43:21; 44:1-8; 45:4; 46:9, 10; 48:9, 10; 49:16, and many other passages. That our Lord Jesus Christ Himself revealed the Father in the clear consciousness of the truth of predestination, and on more than one occasion found solace in this precious truth when the enemy opposed Him and sought to destroy Him and His cause, and when it seemed as though His work was frustrated by the turning away of many that first followed Him and listened to His preaching, — that is evident at more than one point in the gospel narratives. Cf. Matt. 11:25-27; Matt. 13:11-16; Mark 4:11, 12; John 6:37, ff.; John 10:26-30; John 17:6, 9, 11, 12. And it is to be noted in this connection that the Lord Jesus openly *proclaimed* this truth. Finally, we may briefly note that also the apostles proclaimed the very same truth. A few of the many available Scriptural references will suffice: Roman 8:28-39; Rom. 9:11; Ephesians 1; I Peter 2:5-10. These examples, both in the Old and in the New Testament could be multiplied without any difficulty.

Concerning the above references let us observe the following. First of all, the intention of the fathers in this article is not merely to show that the doctrine of election is Scriptural. This, of course, is also true; and these passages can serve as proof-texts for the doctrine set forth in the *Canons*. And this means at the same time that if the contents of the preaching is to conform to the Holy Scriptures, it is not possible to avoid proclaiming the truth of election. A minister, for example, who preaches through the entire

epistle to the Romans could never avoid the doctrine of eternal predestination as it is there plainly set forth by the Holy Spirit. But secondly, the question here is: must the truth of election be *preached*? And this question the fathers seek to answer in the light of Scripture. The question is: is it a sound principle of homiletics, of the science of the art of preaching, to preach election? Or is it a sound principle not to preach it, even though it is the truth of Scripture? And the fathers, proceeding on the basis that Scripture must also determine the principles of the method and manner of the preaching of the Word, answer that the former is correct: it is very plain from Scripture that the truth of sovereign election *has always been proclaimed in the church, and therefore must still be proclaimed today*.

To one more element of this main contention of the *Canons* we must call your attention, before we turn to the question as to *how* this truth of election must be preached. And our remarks center on two closely related expressions in this article. The first is the phrase, "by the most wise counsel of God." And the second is the cause, "for which it was peculiarly designed," the word *which* referring to the church. It is very evident that the reference is to the visible church on earth. That church is the gathering of believers and their seed. And the truth of election, the article says, was peculiarly designed (*destinata est* in the Latin) for the gathering of believers and their seed on earth. It was intended for the lively comfort of God's people. It is from every point of view the heart of the gospel, the heart from which the church lives. And it has been rightly termed the *cor ecclesiae*, the heart of the church. That God has caused this truth to be proclaimed in all the ages of the church is therefore a revelation of His infinite wisdom. That prophets and apostles and Christ Himself proclaimed this truth in time past was no accident, but took place according to the most wise counsel of God and by the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It was the infinitely wise counsel of Him Who always knows what is best for His church, therefore, that caused this blessed truth to be proclaimed to the church in the past, and that has preserved the infallible record thereof for us in the Holy Scriptures. Should, then, men attempt today to be wiser than God, and foolishly decide that this truth should not be proclaimed in the very church for which it was peculiarly designed?

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

#### IN MEMORIAM

The Choral Society, of the Hope Prot. Ref. Church, hereby wishes to express its heartfelt sympathy with one of its members, Mr. Anthony Langerak in the loss of his mother,

MRS. ANTONIA LANGERAK

May our God abundantly comfort the bereaved by His Word and Spirit and powerfully strengthen them in the hope of the saints.

Janice Kooienga, Secretary

## DECENCY and ORDER

### The Ministry Of The Word

(Continued)

#### *The Idea Of The Office*

At present we are discussing the sixteenth article of our church order which treats the office of the ministry of the Word. We have already mentioned various duties required of the minister because, as we said, the intent of this article is more to set forth the functions of the ministerial office rather than to define or circumscribe the office itself. Be that as it may, before we proceed to discuss these functions more fully, we must attend briefly to a few other matters. The first of these is the idea of the office as such.

In general an office, any office, may be defined as the position of authority in which one functions as a representative of a higher power having the right to impose his will upon others and demand of them obedience. Thus, for example, there is the office of the policeman. He is the representative of the law or government. He has the right to impose the will of the law upon the citizens and demand obedience. And he has the power to inflict punishment upon those that are disobedient. Such is his office.

Now, the authority of the office of the ministry of the Word is God. This authority God has vested in His Son, Christ. Christ is The Minister Of The Word. Forcefully this is expressed in Hebrews 1:1, 2, "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, that in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things . . ." Jesus tells us, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." (John 6:38) Christ declares the Father unto men, demanding of them obedience and executing judgment upon all who refuse to hear the gospel of God. This He does through those whom He has given unto the church . . . apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, and pastors and teachers.

(Eph. 4:11). The office of the ministry then is the position in which one, representing Christ, declares unto men the will of God, commanding men everywhere to repent of evil and pronouncing the judgments of God upon all who are refractory. The office is never to be separated from the church and to be swayed by the likes and dislikes of the people. He is God's servant. He represents the Lord. He may never forget this. His function is to demand obedience to Christ in all things even though often this causes him to lose his popularity and is the occasion that his carnal parishoners object and rebel to hearing the Word of Christ. Said Paul to Timothy, "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained." (I Tim. 4:6) Such is the nature and idea of the calling of the minister of the Word.

This office of Christ is usually distinguished in a three-fold manner the prophetic, the priestly and the kingly. These are not three separate offices but rather three different aspects or functions of the one office. Even so Article 16 distinguished the office of the ministry of the Word in a three-fold manner for this office is properly a reflection of the office of Christ. "The prophetic aspect of the minister's calling is expressed by the words, "to continue in the ministry of the Word and sacraments." The priestly function is "to continue in prayer." The kingly duties consist of "watching over his brethren, the elders and the deacons, as well as the congregation, and, with the elders, to exercise church discipline." Again, these may not be separated. They belong together. In respect to all of this the minister's calling is to represent Christ in the midst of the church and kingdom of God in this world and, upon His authority, promote the welfare of that cause to the best of his ability and to the utmost of his power. Truly, this is an exalted office and glorious task. Who is sufficient unto these things?

#### *The Qualifications of the Office*

To function in this office certain qualifications, natural as well as spiritual, must be met. Concerning these qualifications we wrote rather extensively in the Standard Bearer of July 1, 1953 and, consequently, will not repeat here what was written at that time. It should be evident that all of the qualifications for the office of the ministry of the Word are essentially contained in the *calling of God*. To serve in the ministry is to function as God's representative and to act upon His authority. To do this one must be called of Him and in that calling God, not man, provides what is necessary to acquit one unto the task. It will, therefore, be sufficient to consider the following important quotation from the Dogmatics of Rev. H. Hoeksema, *Locus Ecclesiology*, pg. 99, in which he writes of the necessity and importance of the calling in relation to the offices in the church.

"In order to function in a certain office, it is necessary that one be called by the King of His church. This is necessary because no one may encroach upon that office. For to function in a certain office it is essential that he be appointed officially, in order that he can also function officially, that is, with the authority of Him that sent him and called him to the office. In the second place, this calling is necessary both subjectively and objectively because of the difficulty and the responsibility of the task of an office bearer. He who serves in the church of Christ as an officebearer and who takes his task and calling seriously, bears a very heavy burden. And, in the third place, this calling and the consciousness of this calling is necessary in order to remain steadfast over against all opposition from within and from without, in the congregation and in the world. In the midst of all such opposition nothing but the certain conviction that he is called to his office by Christ Himself can make him steadfast and immovable. This calling to a certain office in the church is both subjective and objective, internal and external. To the

internal aspect of the calling belongs the abiding desire to serve the Lord in His vineyard, and that, too, as officebearer, a desire that must, of course, have its root in the fear of God. In the second place, we may say that to the internal aspect of the calling also belongs the consciousness of a certain measure of gifts, both natural and spiritual. And to the external aspect of the calling belongs, in the first place, the fact that the Lord Himself opens the way to reach the fulfillment of the desire to serve in a certain office. But, above all, the foregoing must finally be sealed by the calling of the church. Without the calling by the church, there is no calling to any office whatsoever. The apostles were, of course, called and sent directly by the Lord. But after the period of the apostles, the power to send and to ordain office bearers rests only in the church of Christ. And, therefore, no matter how strong the desire of anyone may be to function in a certain office, he cannot consider himself to be called by the Lord unless he is called and ordained by the church."

One who is thus called is qualified for the ministry of the Word. It is in this consciousness that the apostle Paul speaks more than once of "God having put him into the ministry." To safeguard against mysticism we must, however, add to this one more thing. That is *preparedness*. The minister must be prepared. He must be thoroughly equipped for the task of preaching. He must not only possess various gifts and talents, natural and spiritual, but these must be developed. And this preparation is not something that is limited to the course of study which he follows and finishes in the seminary but must continue all through his life. For every sermon he preaches he must be thoroughly prepared. He is a minister of the living Word of God, which is fathomless in depth and riches, and that Word he must minister to the living church of God according to their specific needs in particular times and circumstances. For this task and calling he must be thoroughly prepared. Only then can he approach the pulpit with confidence and open his mouth widely saying: "Thus saith the Lord."

#### *Functions of the Office*

Although without any question the chief function of the minister of the Word of God is preaching, yet, it is also evident that he must do considerably more than that. Or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say that he must minister the Word of God in many different ways and under various circumstances. As overseer he must bring the Word in a disciplinary manner unto those that walk in sin. As catechete he must bring that Word in a palatable form for instruction to children of varying ages. As shepherd he ministers that Word of comfort and peace to the distressed and dying. And so there is more but always his task is fundamentally, "Preach the Word, in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." (II Tim. 4:2)

Next time, D.V., we will begin to discuss some of these separate functions of the office of the ministry. G.v.d.B.

### **Fall meeting of the Ladies League**

The Fall meeting of the Ladies League of the Protestant Reformed Churches was held October 14, 1954, at our Hudsonville Protestant Reformed Church. Our meeting was opened by singing Psalter number 330 and Psalm 68, verse 10, after which our president, Mrs. F. Harbin, opened with prayer and read II Thessalonians chapter two. Our president then introduced the speaker, Reverend J. A. Heys, of Hope Protestant Reformed Church, who spoke on the topic, "The Anti-Christ as the Man of Sin," as based on the passage read, namely II Thessalonians 2:3.

1. His Sinful Origin: He was conceived and born in Paradise, and as the false Christ opposed to Christ he sets himself up as prophet, priest, and king. He tries to displace Christ out of the lie, and under the power of the lie with his depraved nature he craves to be like God and be his own power. The world is striving to bring out the Anti-Christ in the attempt of man to get away from the curse of God, without God, through science, education, and politics; yea, in every way but the way of the cross.

2. His Evil Achievement: In Paradise you have the infant of sin, an act of complete and utter hatred against God. Adam and Eve by their own ingenuity tried to cover their sin. The three ungodly sons of Lamech, by their own achievements, tried to take away God's curse; not by seeking God, but in their own sinful way. The Anti-Christ uses everything of this world and in this world to fight against God and His Church. With the advancement in electronics, television, and radar, it is not difficult to understand the possibility of the Anti-Christ having contact with all his people all over the world and knowing whether or not they are bowing down to him as described in Revelation chapter 13.

3. Utter Destruction: Must we live in fear and dread of all this and be afraid to bring forth children? No, for Anti-Christ never reaches his aim because his number is 666 and never will reach 700. As covenant mothers we must remember he is mere man and every step of his way is controlled by God; and, Christ shall have dominion.

After this very edifying talk, opportunity was given to ask questions relative to the speech.

During the singing of Psalter number 17, a collection was taken for our Hope and Adams Street Protestant Reformed Schools. We enjoyed two vocal numbers by a duet from Fourth Protestant Reformed Church. Roll call revealed all of our churches were represented, and also a guest from South Holland, Illinois. A short business meeting was held, after which Reverend Heys closed with prayer. Refreshments were served by the ladies from the Hudsonville and Holland churches.

We pray that God may bless us in the future as we feel He has blest us in the past, and that He may give us grace to be faithful until the day of His coming.

Mrs. Peter Decker, Secretary

## ALL AROUND US

### *The South India Surrender.*

The Rev. George Stob, in the Reformed Journal of October, 1954, has written a rather lengthy criticism of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church re its decision to abandon the South India Mission field. Obviously because of its great length (some four and a half pages), we cannot quote the entire article. Nor is this necessary. However, because it contained some interesting observations and left some food for thought, we deemed it well to call the attention of our readers to some thoughts the article expressed.

Rev. Stob pulls no punches as he sharply criticizes the decision of the 1954 Synod in this case. He says in effect: "If we judge honestly, I believe it will appear that our abandonment of South India was not necessary, not advisable, and not in any sense justifiable. The abandonment was a surrender, a flight from solemn obligation."

In the closing paragraphs of his article the Rev. Stob remarks: "Part of the tragedy of this whole affair is that it will unsettle the missionary interest and the missionary giving of many of our people. We have asked our people time and again to pray fervently for our mission to India, and we have assured them that God did most certainly answer our prayers. But now, after a trial of only a few months, we have abandoned the field. What did our prayers mean? Did God answer them? Or was it an ironic bit of circumstance that gave us an open door through which we could run out more quickly than we walked in?"

"Our people have given generously for the mission to South India. They had been doing it for years. Our money investment in South India was huge. Altogether it must have totalled more than 100 thousand dollars. To what end if when we meet a bit of difficulty we drop the whole thing? Is this responsible missionary administration? Can the Christian Reformed Church be trusted with the gifts of her people?"

These are sharp questions, indeed, evidently intended to move the church to once more return to India and continue the work. This is plain from the last paragraph in the article: "Or shall we hope that all is not lost, and that the prayers and the gifts and the hearts that have been given to South India will still make it a focus of missionary interest? And shall we hope that we will awaken again to a recognition that we still have a call to India from which we cannot quite so easily be discharged? Shall we hope for a return to South India, if God does not count us wholly unworthy?"

It appears that for some fifteen years or more a certain Mr. Arthur V. Ramiah had conducted a faith mission in India. He was working there independently. And in 1947 Mr. Ramiah spent some time in this country in the interest of his mission. He succeeded in getting the Mission Board of the Christian Reformed Churches to bring the Indian

field to the attention of Synod that same year, urging the church to take over this field. Rev. Stob writes:

"The Mission Board was authorized by Synod to continue to investigate. The Board did so, and finally asked the Rev. John O. Schuring, then in Ceylon, to make a visit to India and give a first-hand report of conditions and possibilities on the field. Rev. Schuring made a two-week visit to India in 1950, and submitted a long report to the Mission Board. Persuaded by Rev. Schuring's report, by letters from Mr. and Mrs. Ramiah, and by urgings from the "Ramiah Club" in Grand Rapids, the Board recommended to the Synod of 1950 that our Church take over the Mysore and Bellary fields in India."

There were several objectors to the Board's proposal at the Synod, nevertheless the Synod decided to take over the field on the basis of the conditions set forth in the report of the Board. The conditions were two in number: 1. That the indigenous plan should be followed, i.e., as much as possible the field should be manned by native workers and native resources. 2. That a force of two ordained men should work on the field for a two or three year period before any finality should be reached as to a permanent mission there. At that time a well documented report of the field could be obtained on which Synod could base its final action.

Mr. Ramiah, it appears, was not at all satisfied with this arrangement. He wanted greater financial aid from the Church. The Synod of 1951 therefore made some adjustment. The Rev. Harry Boer, then professor-elect of Missions, registered his objections to the Board's proposal to augment financial assistance. He claimed the proposal was "not an adjustment but a complete surrender of the principle on the basis of which the Board was instructed . . . to conduct its negotiations." He claimed that it no longer followed the "indigenous Mission policy."

In 1952 two missionaries signified their calling to go to India to work there: Candidate B. Ypma and Dr. P. Y. De Jong. Later two others were prepared to go. Still later the Board of Missions proposed to send four more missionaries. All of which left the impression that India was a great field, and the people of the Christian Reformed Church were made aware of these facts as well as exhorted to give and pray for the venture.

Rev. Stob reminds his readers that in 1951 when Synod decided to take over the field, it appointed Mr. Ramiah not only the sole administrator and supervisor of the mission, but also made him treasurer and distributor of large subsidies allocated by Synod for this work. It appears that Mr. Ramiah, to put it in the words of Rev. Stob, "saw himself greatly reduced in position, prestige, and power" when the missionaries arrived on the field. They had the Treasurership transferred from Mr. Ramiah to a certain Miss Bosch evidently one of the helpers on the field. We gather from the article that the missionaries complained that the Ramiahs "cared only for money, were charged with planning exorbitant expenditures, and of 'playing favorites' among the work-

ers by giving favors and raising salaries on the basis of their personal dislikes."

Because of this disruption a special committee from the Board made an urgent plane flight to India in September 1953 to help straighten out the matter. The committee failed however and the missionaries soon returned and the whole case was referred to the Synod of 1954 which Synod decided to abandon the field.

Rev. Stob laments the fact that so much effort and money was spent on this venture, and sharply criticizes the Church for this action of abandonment for the reasons Synod produced. Whether the Reverend is completely justified in this we are not able to say with any assurance because there may be another side to the issue which we do not know. But this much is plain, that if the Church proceeded to spend all this effort and money on such meager investigation and information it surely should be rebuked. We may take a lesson from this mal-administration by the church also as far our own mission activity is concerned. It seems to me that a field should certainly be thoroughly investigated before it is decided upon. We too have made serious mistakes that should not be repeated. Think of the Canadian debacle!

#### *De Wolf Gets Help From A Baptist.*

Recently the Saturday evening Grand Rapids Press published on its church page an advertisement of the Wealthy Street Baptist Church, of which the Dr. Otis Fuller is pastor, relative to the services he was to conduct the next day and especially his Sunday evening topic. I do not recall the exact words of the ad, and I'm sorry now that the paper in which the ad appeared was not saved so that I could refer to it. But in effect he told the readers of the Press that he was going to speak Sunday evening about the controversy that took place in the Protestant Reformed Churches, and he would inform his audience who, in his opinion, was right: De Wolf or Hoeksema.

I happened to tune in the radio broadcast that emanates from his church on Sunday morning and heard him say some more about his Sunday evening subject, all of which was intended to encourage people to attend that service. Dr. Fuller it seems is inclined to the sensational. He wants a large audience. So he picks out topics for the church page that will attract the curious. Of course there are a considerable number of Reformed, Christian Reformed, and Protestant Reformed people living in close proximity to Wealthy Street Church. And I suppose the preacher manages to net the curious also of these churches by his bombastic methods.

Naturally I was preaching in my own church that Sunday evening and therefore could not hear what he had to say. But it is reported by those who did hear him that, as we expected, he held his hand over De Wolf. I am told that while he was blasting away at the doctrine maintained in our churches which condemned De Wolf, the Doctor was waving about on the platform three or four Reformed Guardians, a pam-

phlet disseminated by the De Wolf group which is supposed to be a defense of "truth and justice." These were evidently the source of the Doctor's information. On the basis of what these Reformed Guardians revealed, Dr. Fuller was ready to decide who was right, De Wolf or Hoeksema. As you may well guess, he did not hesitate to give his blessing to De Wolf.

Yep! Dominie Hoeksema lost again! O, Dr. Fuller believes too in sovereign election. He certainly would emphasize it that God sovereignly predestinates who shall be saved and who shall not. But at the same time, according to him that's none of the preacher's business. He ought to preach as though that doctrine did not exist. Accordingly, Dr. Fuller would insist that it is a condition to salvation that a man believe. He sees nothing wrong with De Wolf's statements that "God promises to every one of you that if you believe you will be saved," and, "one must convert himself before he can enter into the Kingdom of God." Fuller must have nothing of the doctrine of Hoeksema that denies these statements.

That should afford Rev. De Wolf c.s. great comfort shouldn't it? That a Baptist minister who is arminianistic in his preaching, who has apparently no understanding nor love for the Reformed covenant conception, should give him the right hand of fellowship has really put a feather in his hat.

Wouldn't his audience have been surprised though if Dr. Fuller had announced that Sunday evening that he had decided in favor of Hoeksema. That's what he should have done if he really wanted to be Calvinistic and Scriptural. But, of course, he would first have to get rid of his arminianism before he could do that. There is a Dutch expression which is often applied to a man who is Reformed which translated is "Reformed Feelers." A Reformed man has Reformed Feelers that sense immediately when another is Reformed or not. I suppose one could also speak of Arminian Feelers. And I suppose, too, that Dr. Fuller has them. He could sense immediately that De Wolf talked his language, and as far as those two statements are concerned, was preaching his doctrine. If Rev. De Wolf really wants to be Reformed, he should take no comfort from this.

M.S.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

### A Misrepresentation

In the report of a certain Classis (?), signed by J. Blankspeer, S.C., appearing in Concordia, October 21, 1954, is found the following notice:

"3. A letter from the 'Oak Lawn Prot. Ref. Church' was read and discussed. This consistory accuses us of many things because of our actions in the past, relative our sad history. Classis placed the matter into the hands of a committee to prepare an answer."

To anyone acquainted with the letter referred to in this



notice and the truth concerning the circumstances from which this letter originated, the above report is obnoxious because of its flagrant misrepresentation. The impression is left that the Oak Lawn Consistory writes smearing, accusing letters; that the purpose of her letter is to hurl uncalled-for charges.

The truth of the matter is that our letter was, in the first place, a reply to a letter we received from this alleged Classis and signed by B. Kok and E. Knott. In this letter they claimed three things: (1) That Classis East in May, 1953, *initiated* disciplinary proceedings against the office-bearers of First Church, (2) That Classis East in October, 1953, approved an *illegal* suspension and deposition of office bearers, and (3) That Classis East in October, 1953, grossly violated Art. 31 D.K.O. in unseating loyal and legal delegates. Because these claims are utterly untrue the consistory of Oak Lawn felt it necessary to answer them.

In the second place, the letter of Oak Lawn was not an "accusing letter" but, on the contrary, a serious attempt to expose the fallacy of these claims and to convince these brethren of their error, calling them to repentance.

We print the letter of Oak Lawn's Consistory in its entirety and ask our readers: (1) to judge whether or not Oak Lawn is guilty of writing "accusing letters" and (2) to judge the validity of the three fold claim of the group that alledgedly calls itself Classis.

The letter follows:

May 6, 1954

To the Alleged Continuation of the Classis  
East of the Protestant Reformed Churches  
c/o E. Knott, Clerk

Dear brethren:

In regard to the missive sent us over the signatures of Bernard Kok and E. Knott on April 7, 1954, we are constrained to reply as follows:

In regard to the three reasons you submit for your separatistic action in the missive referred to, we call attention to the following pertinent facts of which you appear to be wantonly ignorant.

1. Your charge that, "Classis East at its sessions of April and May, 1953, *initiated* disciplinary proceedings against office-bearers" is entirely false and cannot be substantiated by facts. The objective truth is:

(a) That the Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church condemned as heretical two sermons preached by the Rev. De Wolf and asked of him an apology and retraction. This is borne out by the minutes of the Consistory of Oct. 22, 1952, Art. 8; Oct. 27, 1952, Art. 22; Nov. 17, Art. 8; The grounds of the decision in Arts. 7 and 8 of Dec. 1, 1952; Art. 15 of Dec. 15, 1952. (Minutes attached)

(b) That on the basis of these decisions by the Consistory and Art. 80 of our Church Order, Rev. De Wolf and those that support these heresies are worthy of suspension and deposition from office.

(c) That the Consistory ran roughshod over these decisions without proving them to be contrary to the Word of

God or our Church Order and without ever rescinding them. Against this action of the Consistory protests were lodged and brought to Classis East.

(d) That it should be evident to you that it was certainly within the jurisdiction of the Classis to give advice in re the matter of suspension and deposition as they did. In substance Classis merely advised the Consistory to maintain these decisions which had never been rescinded and to enforce them, i.e.:

1. The decision to ask a retraction and apology.

2. Or to proceed with suspension and deposition as Art. 80 D.K.O. requires must be done where heresy is maintained.

(e) That on June 1, 1953, the Consistory of the First Prot. Ref. Church, with one dissenting vote, adopted this advice of Classis East and in subsequent meetings of the Consistory carried out this their decision.

(f) That the difficulty lies not, as you allege, in Classis initiating discipline; nor in illegal actions by the Consistory; but very clearly in the fact that Rev. De Wolf and his supporters have been and continue to be rebellious and defiant of proper ecclesiastical law, authority and order.

2. Your allegation that "Classis East erred by giving its approval to," what you call, "this illegal action" is also without basis in fact. We must call your attention to the following:

(a) That the evident thrust of the portion of Art. 79 D.K.O. which you quote is to avoid abuse and partiality. No consistory, although it has the inherent right to do so, suspends or deposes without consultation with the neighboring consistory. This is a reasonable safeguard.

(b) In the case in question the Fourth Consistory ruled: "That in so far the Consistory has the right to proceed with suspension on the basis of the Classical decision." We wish to make plain that whereas the protests treated by the Classis were against actions of the Consistory in which they refused to carry out their own decisions and, whereas, Classis properly advised them to do so, it, therefore, in the very nature of the case was unnecessary for the Consistory now to seek counsel with only one of the churches represented in the Classis except in so far as they were called upon to judge whether the accused had complied with the decisions requesting an apology and retraction. Whereas it was self evident to the Fourth Consistory that they had not done so, the Consistory of the First Church was violating no principle of Church Order when they proceeded to suspend and depose.

(c) And, therefore, your allegation that Classis erred when she approved of this action is unfounded. Classis East did the only proper thing in approving this legal course. The only other alternative was that Classis sanction the actions of rebellious and insubordinate office bearers and if she had done this we could agree with you that she would have erred.

3. Likewise, your accusation under point 3 is grossly untrue. You charge that "Classis unseated loyal and legal

delegates merely because they could not submit to a decision of Classis against which they had conscientious objection." You further aver that by doing so "Classis denied them all rights of appeal and thus violated Art. 31 of the Church Order." The facts in this case, however, as borne out by the minutes of Clasis East, are the following:

(a) That these delegates refused to acknowledge that Classis East had not become schismatic by seating delegates C. Hanko and G. Bylsma.

(b) That these delegates were requested to do so and thereby recognize the Classis to which they could then appeal and protest as they saw fit *at the next session* and attempt to prove that the decisions made were contrary to the Word of God or the Church Order.

(c) That when they refused to do so they forfeited, by their own action, their right to remain seated as delegates as well as their right to appeal. Isn't it clear, brethren, that one cannot appeal or protest to a body whose legal existence they do not recognize? And, therefore, if Classis East had become schismatic, these delegates, even from their own point of view, neither could nor would desire to appeal. A schismatic body has no authority. And certainly delegates cannot function in a body which they do not recognize as legal and neither can they desire sincerely to protest and appeal to a body they refuse to recognize legally exists.

It is our belief that these charges of yours are in actual fact an effrontery attempting to cover or justify your own sin of separating from us and refusing to walk with us in the proper way of submission and protest. The above answer will then also serve as a reply to your "Declaration of Continuation" which at this time we need not discuss for whereas it has been shown that your reasons for this action are groundless, it follows that your "Declaration" itself is illegal, false and contrary to all good order. Your course of ecclesiastical mutiny has rent asunder the church of Jesus Christ. From this sin we beg you to return and plead with you by the mercies of Jesus Christ that you may come back to the truth which you have shamefully forsaken. Then our hearts will rejoice and we will render thanksgiving to the God of all grace Who is able to do above that which we ask or think.

The Consistory of the Oak Lawn  
Protestant Reformed Church

(Excerpt of Minutes referred to in Letter)

Oct. 22, 1952, Art. 8—"Motion made that this consistory maintains the sermon of Rev. H. De Wolf delivered Sunday evening Sept. 14, 1952, is partially heretical and not Reformed as expressed in grounds presented in the protest of Rev. H. Hoeksema and this consistory condemns the sermon as such." (Art. 14—Motion put to vote and carried)

Oct. 27, 1952, Art. 22—"Motion made to adopt the following as a request to be made of Rev. De Wolf for the contents of a statement he shall make publicly from the pulpit: "I am sorry that in a sermon I preached on April 15,

1951, I made the statement that, 'God promises to all of you salvation if you believe,' implying a general conditional promise, which is contrary to all our confessions, I promise henceforth to refrain from such statements and to teach that the promise of God is unconditional and for the elect only.'

'I am sorry that in that sermon I preached on Sept. 14, 1952, I preached the error that our act of conversion is a prerequisite to enter into the kingdom. For this is contrary to the Word of God, John 3:3-5, Col. 1:13, as well as to all our confessions. Cf. esp. Canons III-IV, 10-12. I promise that henceforth I will refrain from such unscriptural and unreformed teaching. (Art. 24—voted and carried)

Art. 8, Nov. 17—"Motion is made to present Rev. De Wolf with the form of the apology recorded in Art. 22 of meeting held Oct. 27 and request of him that he make an apology from the pulpit using the thrust of that apology but permitting him to use the choice of his own words in doing so. Further, the Consistory requires of him to acknowledge and reply to this request by our next meeting being held Monday evening, Nov. 24. (Art. 9—is carried.)"

Dec. 1, 1952, Art. 7—"Substitute motion is made to request Rev. De Wolf to submit himself to an examination in accordance with and as prescribed in the Formula of Subscription of the Prot. Ref. Churches. Grounds: (1) There are certainly sufficient grounds for suspicion. (a) The sermon of April 15, 1951 condemned by the Consistory. (b) The sermon of Sept. 14, 1952 also condemned by the consistory. (c) His refusal to apologize appealing to what he believes without referring to his erroneous statements. (2) He faithfully promised to submit to such an inquiry if it should be required of him." (Art. 8—carries)

Dec. 15, 1952, Art. 15—"Motion is made to rescind our former actions declaring Rev. De Wolf's sermon of Sept. 14 is partly heretical. Motion is DEFEATED."

Rev. G. Vanden Berg

### Humbug!

This term characterizes much, if not all, of what is of late being produced by both the *Reformed Guardian* and *Concordia*. If I were addicted to the use of slang in the public press, I would use another word: *hokum*. Both terms denote a fraud, a hoax, or, in other words: pure bunk.

My reference is, in the first place, to just one statement in the *Reformed Guardian*, Vol. II, Number 3, Page 4, by the Rev. J. Blankespoor: "Therefore it is often called the Episcopalian system or the Presbyterian system of Church government." There is, of course, much more "humbug" in this issue of the so-called defender of truth and justice. But this one statement is enough ground for denying any man either the intellectual or the ethical right to say anything whatsoever about matters of church polity. I suppose that there is many a poor soul among our people who is rather taken aback by such terms as "presbyterian" and "episcopalian," and who is dazzled by the apparent learning of a man who employs such terms. But one wonders how long people

will continue to stand for such humbug in supposedly Protestant Reformed circles. For the presbyterian and episcopalian systems of church government have absolutely nothing in common. They are terms which can by no stretch of the imagination be substituted for each other. If the Rev. Blankespoor would go to any of the several churches which maintain the episcopalian form of church government (that is, church government by a system of bishops), and suggest that they have the presbyterian form of church government, they would certainly with all haste categorically deny his statement. And a church which is presbyterian in government, (that is, church government by elders, basically), and suggest that they are after all episcopalian, he would meet with the same down-right disavowal. The simple fact is that the form of church government maintained in our churches from the very beginning, and maintained (with some corruptions) in all Reformed churches in name has always been called the presbyterian form of church government. Even the supreme court of the State of Michigan declared once that it was hard to imagine a more presbyterian church government than that set forth in the articles of the Church Order of Dordrecht!

And of course, one who betrays such untrustworthiness in setting forth the fundamental principles of church polity cannot be trusted at all to instruct babes in matters church political.

But what is it, Rev. Blankespoor? Gross ignorance? Or a deliberate and wicked attempt to deceive the simple? Of this I am certain, that you never learned such church polity at the feet of the Rev. Ophoff. For he taught our students that our churches maintained, and that rightly, the "presbyterian-synodical form of church government." And if I am not mistaken, you sat in court and heard him quoted to that effect by Mr. Tubbs.

My second reference is to the present series of editorials written by the Rev. J. Howerzyl in *Concordia*. It is not my intention to criticize the contents of these articles in detail at this time. But I do want to point out that when he makes 1924's fundamental issue that of "world-and-life-view, of the antithesis, of God and His calling to the Church to come out and be a separate people," he too betrays either the grossest ignorance of our history, or he deliberately twists history. If what the Rev. Howerzyl writes is true, it is highly questionable whether there would be Prot. Reformed Churches today. But he forgets „het puntje van het Eerste Punt." Whatever the reason may be for this error, I am certain that the Rev. Howerzyl never learned these things when he and I together attended the Prot. Ref. Seminary, — neither from the Rev. Ophoff nor from the Rev. Hoeksema.

But whatever else may be said, this much is true, both the above mentioned writers produce in one word: humbug!

Or, if you will: hokum!

Be not deceived!

H.C.H.

## CHURCH NEWS

### *News from the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan*

Sunday, Oct. 17, was indeed a day of joy and gladness for our Congregation at Holland. For about a year we have been without a shepherd because of the unfaithfulness of him who has taken a stand with the schismatics not only, but of whom we may conclude was one of the ring leaders thereof; who tried his best to tear us apart from the pure manifestation of our Prot. Ref. truth which we hold dear to our hearts.

Due to these circumstances, now for a whole year already we were compelled to seek temporary place of worship. We are thankful to our Covenant God that He has provided bountifully, and altho there has been a strain on our small Consistory without a Shepherd to lead us, yet through God's grace and guiding hand we came through wonderfully. We cannot help but see the guiding hand of our Triune Covenant God in all this. He has not only provided for us a Shepherd, but looking back has prepared him for us, one of God's Servants coming from another denomination, who in their confessional standards are far from us, and while still in his other charge the Lord called him and led him to the fold of our Protestant Reformed Churches. He laid down his former office willingly and entered our Prot. Ref. Theological School, in which he was taught for three full years, and declared a Candidate for the Ministry in our Churches after being examined by our Synod. This training in our Theological School, was in addition to his former graduation from the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church of Philadelphia, Pa.

The Lord moved the Congregation of Holland to extend to Candidate James McCollam a call, and after a short period of consideration he joyfully accepted, and at our last held Classis of Oct. 6 and 7 he successfully gave an excellent account of himself. It was truly a joyful occasion for all those who witnessed this blessed event. At this Classis our Congregation was advised to proceed with his ordination as Minister of the Word and Sacraments, to which we were very grateful and left no stones unturned. The Consistory of the Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church was immediately contacted for the use of their Church Building for the Ordination ceremony, which was joyfully granted. And the date of that occasion Friday evening, Oct. 15, will not easily be forgotten. You can be assured that a large audience was present including a wonderful attendance from our neighboring Churches. The Rev. Vos our Moderator preached the sermon, and Rev. Schipper read the form of installation, and the laying on of hands took place by a large number of Ministers and Professors present, after which the Doxology was sung and the benediction pronounced by our newly ordained pastor, Rev. J. M. McCollam. Again we say a blessed occasion and our God has made all things well.

On Sunday evening, Oct. 17, Rev. McCollam preached

his inaugural sermon, his text was taken from Romans 1:16, "The Gospel as a Power of Salvation." Again we lift our eyes on high for all the blessings bestowed on us. Although small in number we are again a Congregation, one in spirit and one in faith. We wish to express our thanks and deep appreciation publicly for all the faithful help we received in this past year, from all our Professors, Ministers, and Students who preached for us and served us with advise, especially Rev. Vos our Moderator, for his excellent service.

May the God of all peace cause us at all times to put our complete trust and confidence in Him, and give us the full assurance that He will never forsake us His Beloved Church, as He has promised.

Consistory of the  
First Protestant Reformed Church  
Holland, Michigan  
by Peter Schipper, Clerk

### Report of the Western Ladies League

Our Fall meeting of the Ladies League of Protestant Reformed Churches, which was held October 23, was opened by singing several numbers after which our president, Mrs. H. Veldman, opened with prayer and read Rev. 3:1-13, and a welcome was extended to all the ladies present.

Minutes of our previous league meetings was read after which the treasurer gave the financial report. Our ladies then voted for a theme song for our league. Psalter No. 298 was chosen as our theme song. Our president then introduced the speaker for the afternoon the Rev. H. C. Hoeksema. His topic was "Holding Fast" based on Rev. 3:11.

"Holding Fast." *What?* To the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. It is a precious possession and worthy of being kept. A gospel revealed to us in 66 books of the Bible and not a gospel to be sketched on the thumb nail. God infallibly leads his people in his truth to the crown of salvation by his grace alone. We as covenant mothers must be repeatedly admonished to instruct our children of this precious possession which controls us in all things in this life.

*Why?* Not because salvation is dependent on man. Not that. The elect believer never fails to reach the goal, but only because of the faith which was implanted in us. He reveals in us the riches of his grace overagainst the dark background of the world. We, as christians, must expect a continued battle and it will flare up repeatedly.

*How?* The answer is by God's redeeming grace and saving faith. Then the holding fast will follow in the home, school, prayer, etc. By way of constant struggle and persecution we pass through this world, to the crown of Christ. We must be aware of our unique privilege as mothers of his

covenant children holding fast that no one take our crown.

After this edifying speech of Rev. H. C. Hoeksema we enjoyed a trio from our Edgerton Ladies Aid. Next Rev. H. Veldman most capably answered the questions supplied by our various societies. The questions answered by him were as follows.

1. Why are hymns prohibited in our churches?
2. In Rev. 3:5 we read, "And I will blot out his name out of the book of life." Does this imply it is possible?
3. What does the bible say of Christians attending fairs?
4. In Ezekiel 33:18 and 19. Can a truly righteous man die in his sin? Who is the wicked man in verse 19?
5. Matthew 24:22 — What is meant by the term "And except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved?"
6. At what age should children attend church?

A musical number was then supplied by our Hull society. A Psalter number was then sung during which a collection was received for the "Reformed Witness Hour." Our meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. H. Veldman. The afternoon was concluded by refreshments served by our Ladies Aid of Doon, Ia.

We feel that God has richly blessed us in an afternoon of true Christian fellowship. May He continue to bless us and grant us a rich measure of His grace. May this and future activities be done to the glory of His name.

Reporter: Mrs. R. Brunsting.

### CONTROVERSY MAY BE A DUTY

"Controversy in religion is a hateful thing. It is hard enough to fight the devil, the world, and the flesh, without private differences in our own camp. But there is one thing which is even worse than controversy, and that is false doctrine tolerated, allowed, and permitted, without protest or molestation. It was controversy that won the battle of the Protestant Reformation. If the views that some men hold were correct, it is plain we never ought to have had any Reformation at all! For the sake of peace, we ought to have gone on worshipping the Virgin and bowing down to images and relics to this very day! Away with such trifling. There are times when controversy is not only a duty but a benefit. Give me the mighty thunderstorm rather than the pestilential malaria. The one walks in darkness and poisons us in silence, and we are never safe. The other frightens and alarms for a little season. But it soon clears and it clears the air. It is plain Scriptural duty to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." (Jude 2)

by J. C. Rule in "Southern Presbyterian Journal"