

THE STANDARD

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MEDITATION

THE PROPER MOOD

*"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies,
and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed
unto Thy servant." — GEN. 32:10a.*

The words of my text were spoken at a crucial period of Jacob's life.

God had given Jacob a very brief, but beautiful, message while dwelling in the land of Laban. Here it is: "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee." Chapter 31:3.

He had dwelled with Laban in Mesopotamia for twenty years, and while having nothing but his staff when crossing Jordan on the way to Laban, he had been greatly blessed. In the same text which is written above my meditation, Jacob said: "for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." He had wives, twelve sons and one daughter, men-servants and women-servants, many oxen, asses, and flocks, so that Jacob had become great.

But Laban's eyes were not as yesterday and before, and his sons spake: "Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's!"

And therefore the Lord who loved Jacob had given him this short message: Return!

But two very sore troubles came upon him.

First Laban pursued him. But God helped Jacob, and Laban returned to Mesopotamia.

But now another enemy appeared: Esau, and four hundred men with him.

Listen to the Holy Scriptures: "Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed."

And, as usual, Jacob appears before the face of Jehovah, and tells Him his troubles. Listen to him: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which

saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee!"

And then follows my text.

And this text is of such a nature that it can very well serve us to get into the proper mood for the change of the seasons.

* * * *

I am not worthy!

This is not a correct translation of the Hebrew. It is really a commentary of the word the Holy Ghost used. Literally Jacob said: I am *less* than all mercies, etc.

But it carries in it the same idea as unworthiness.

Today we would say: O Lord, I am most insignificant in the face of all Thou doest with me!

And that is Scriptural. God's Word tells us that we are a nothing and vanity. And also this: He hath chosen the things *that are not* to shame the things that are!

However, it is worse than that.

Job testifies in the face of the glorious Godhead: I am a running, fetid sore! And Paul likens himself to a body of death!

Look at what we are at best: a piece of red clay: Adam!

How different is man's idea of himself as he is by nature. The church of Laodicea shall be our guide: I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing! But they did not know that they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked!"

What is this? It is the "pride of life"!

That natural pride of life was instilled in us by Satan at the dawn of history. It has grown throughout the ages. Its fruit, its foul fruit is seen on every side. And the end is when this same shall sit in the Temple of God, and shall say: I am Jehovah God!

That is the man of sin, anti-christ.

But Jacob says: I am less than all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shewed unto me!

I am unworthy!

How did Jacob ever come to such a lowly and humble view of himself?

The answer is in just one word, beloved. It is this: grace!

There is all the difference.

When you have the grace of God you see two things very clearly: first, you see your fall from God, corruption, sin and damn-worthiness. And, second, you see God's justice, holiness and righteousness.

And then it is easy to say with Jacob: I am unworthy!

You will say to me: but when we are born again and converted, and when the grace of God dwells in our hearts and minds, then we certainly do good works!

Yes, my dear brother, I agree with you. Jesus would say: by their fruits ye shall know them. And Jesus will say at the end of the ages: you have ministered unto Me! Matthew 25:34-36.

I agree to all that, and yet I would say: look, evaluate, weigh and number: what have you done!

Look at the most noble thing you ever did in your life. Carry it to the light of God, the light that beams from His face in Jesus Christ. Liken it to the good works of Jesus.

And then you will say: O God! Forgive my good works!

O, I know; I agree: the above sentence is a contradiction in terms. And yet: I think you know exactly what I mean.

Listen to this: Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags! And I dare not put in print the real translation of those filthy rags.

That is YOU!

Are you not less than all the mercies God bestowed upon you?

O God! I am unworthy!

* * * *

"... of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant."

"Mercies," says the English text. Literally, the word is "benefits," even as the Holland text has "weldadigheden."

God is the very Fountain of all love and lovingkindness. It is God's yearning to bless His own, and there is a veritable shower of blessing going toward His church from age to age. All things work together for good unto those that love God.

Jacob, the saint who speaks here, stands in the midst of the rain of blessings, and in the midst of that shower he looks at himself and says: O God, I am not worthy of the least of those mercies (benefits) and all the truth (faithfulness) which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant.

When we see that, we can easily see how another saint

cried out: O, how great is the good! For body and soul, for time and eternity, for us and our children, for the church that is now and for the church of every age, it is all good, goodness, love, lovingkindness, mercy and faithfulness.

The greatest of all this good is the gift of Jesus Christ. And if we have Him, then all the rest is freely given us. Even as Paul testifies: "Shall He then not with Him freely give us all things?"

Also truth, or rather, faithfulness.

That gift is the very foundation of His most glorious name.

The faithful Covenant God: Jehovah, the I am that I am!

And you will also say: I am less than all these benefits and that truth!

For here is the crucial point: this faithfulness is shewed unto us every day in the face of our unfaithfulness. Do we not fall short every day? And does not this faithfulness overwhelm us then?

Look at Peter! He stands there among the soldiers, swearing and cursing, and all the while Jesus is praying for him, on His way to the awful cross.

Hence, we are less than insignificant, in the face of such beauties.

* * * *

"Which Thou hast done in thy servant." That is the correct translation.

And that is oh so important.

Remember, God shows everything to all. Seeing they see, and that means that they see thoroughly. And yet they do not observe. Hearing they hear, and that means that they hear thoroughly, and yet they do not understand.

And that is not the idea here at all.

No, but mercy is *done* to Jacob. Truth is *done* to Jacob.

And so this saint thanks God for all the work which He hath done into him.

What does this mean? This: God saw all the misery of Jacob. He saw all the evil of both Esau and Laban, and God yearned to deliver him out of all his troubles. And He actually did deliver him. That is the meaning.

Note, once again, the time of the prayer. Esau is on the way with 400 men. And Jacob was sorely afraid.

And Jacob pleads on God's faithfulness. That is, he asks God to remember not his sins, but to act from pure love and lovingkindness toward him. And he even points God to all He has already *done* in him.

And that calls for forgiveness, forgetfulness of all Jacob's sins and transgressions.

And that is exactly the way God works with us. He

gladly forgives us all our sins. He casts them into a veritable ocean of forgetfulness.

* * * *

Yes, we stand again at the threshold of a new year. The old year is wellnigh spent.

And, looking back on our way which we came, we see the thousands and thousands of our transgressions.

And what little good was done by us. And the little we did actually do which was good is a present, a gift of grace.

And so we also have to go to God. And ask Him to shew unto us His benefits and His faithfulness which is *to be done in us*.

And then we will see Jesus Christ.

For He is mercy and truth personified. He is the very Face of Jehovah.

That is the joy of the Gospel. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11.

If that Christ dwells in our inmost heart and mind, then all is well.

Then we will sigh, looking at the past year and years, but we will smile through our tears, for we know that Christ did not die in vain. Our sins are washed away in His precious blood.

And we can also look ahead. Christ is the Ebenezer, the Stone of remembrance. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. I Sam. 7:12.

Our Christ is our Ebenezer. *Hitherto* concerns the past, but is also our assurance for the future. God is always for us, hence, no one can really be against us. The future, beloved, is complete salvation. God be praised! Amen.

G.V.

Announcement

Classis East of the Protestant Reformed Churches will meet, D.V., on Wednesday, January 6, at 9 A.M. in the First Prot. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Delegates from the respective churches of this classis will please take notice.

REV. M. SCHIPPER, *Stated Clerk*

And blessed be His glorious Name,
Long as the ages shall endure;
O'er all the earth extend His fame.
Amen, Amen, for evermore.

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CONTENTS

MEDITATION —

- The Proper Mood145
Rev. G. Vos

EDITORIALS —

- Attempt to Discipline148
Rev. H. Hoeksema

AS TO BOOKS —

- Het Calvinisme (Calvinism).....150
Luther's Werken (Luther's Works).....150
Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life.....150
Rev. H. Hoeksema

OUR DOCTRINE —

- The Book of Revelation.....151
Rev. H. Hoeksema

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES —

- Joseph Sold By His Brothers.....153
Rev. B. Woudenberg

FROM HOLY WRIT —

- Exposition of Luke 1:57-66.....155
Rev. G. Lubbers

IN HIS FEAR —

- Freedom of Speech (5).....157
Rev. J. A. Heys

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH —

- The Church and the Sacraments.....159
Rev. H. Veldman

FEATURE ARTICLE —

- Church and School161
Rev. C. Hanko

DECENCY AND ORDER —

- Questions of Article 41.....164
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

ALL AROUND US —

- "The Only Theology the Bible Knows".....166
"Needed: A Philosophy of Christian Education".....166
For the Next Census.....167
Drug Price Investigation.....167
Rev. M. Schipper

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES.....168

Mr. J. M. Faber

EDITORIALS

Attempt to Discipline

I promised in my last editorial that I would present and briefly discuss the protest of Mr. Tom Glasgow against Dr. Ernest Trice Thompson, professor at Union Theological Seminary.

The protest concerns several basic and very vital truths such as: The inspiration of the Bible, vicarious atonement, the fall of man, the virgin birth of Jesus, and the miracles in Scripture.

In a foreword Mr. Glasgow writes:

"The statements and facts herein set forth are made with solemn realization of their potential and far reaching significance. Serious charges are made against a popular and able Seminary professor, Dr. Ernest Trice Thompson. If these charges are true, his popularity and ability make them the more serious. If these charges are untrue, I shall have done an able teacher a grave injustice. I have earnestly endeavored to be fair. To that end and to avoid any possibility of inaccuracy because of misunderstanding or potential, though unintentional, misquoting by the students of his class room who disagree with his statements, I have confined all quotations herein set forth to the written statements of Dr. Thompson himself."

I may add here that under each item of the protest Mr. Glasgow adduces several examples only of which is quoted in the pamphlet I received on the matter. Thus on the inspiration of Scripture the author of the protest refers to what Dr. Thompson wrote on the text in Matthew 18:16, 17: "If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouths of two or more witnesses every word be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them take it unto the church . . ."

On these words Dr. Thompson wrote: "If the words of Matthew 18:16-17 were actually spoken by Jesus, they cannot be taken as a rule that must always be followed."

Mr. Glasgow calls special attention to the little word "if" that introduces this sentence. And he writes: "What on earth does this 'IF' mean in the writings of a Seminary professor . . . Also, after he assumes that this passage from Matthew may be authentic, where is Dr. Thompson's authority to state that these words 'cannot be taken as a rule that must always and invariably be followed' !! Are we—and especially our Seminary professors at liberty thus boldly to question such a passage of Scripture and then, when conceding that possibly Jesus did say what Matthew plainly states, to declare the Master's positive injunction is to be modified as we may decide or elect."

It is evident that Dr. Thompson does not believe in the

infallible inspiration of the words of Holy Writ. He does not simply refer to the original autographa of the writers themselves, nor does he suggest that there may be an error in the text (which there is not), but he represents Matthew himself as falsifying or misquoting the Lord. According to him, it is possible that Jesus never spoke these words but that Matthew simply put them into His mouth. If we may thus play with the words of Scripture at random we have no written Word of God left.

And, by the way, Mr. Glasgow represents Dr. Thompson again and again as an able teacher. But, in my opinion, the fact that he thus distorts the words of Scripture and assumes the possibility that Jesus may not have said what Matthew makes Him say, without ground or reason, does not show much scholarly ability.

The next item of Mr. Glasgow's protest concerns the truth of vicarious atonement. Dr. Thompson had written as follows:

"We must not say that He felt Himself guilty, or that he was punished or that he was exposed to God's WRATH, for all such language involves an intolerable confusion of what is possible for the sinful and the sinless."

The protestant quotes in this connection Isa. 53:5: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." And he also quotes from the Standards of his Church; from the Larger Catechism: "Christ . . . having also conflicted with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness felt and bore the weight of God's WRATH, he laid down his life an offering for sin" And from the Shorter Catechism: "Christ's humiliation consists in his . . . undergoing the WRATH of God."

Again, it is evident that the statement by Dr. Thompson quoted above contradicts Scripture, not only in Isa. 53, but throughout. But it also stands in conflict with the Confessions of his Church to which he signed his name and which he is supposed to maintain and defend. And the latter is downright dishonesty.

But once more, I am constrained to remark that the words by Dr. Thompson certainly do not reveal him as such an able teacher as Mr. Glasgow presents him to be. Of course, the words of Dr. Thompson contain only a brief statement and, perhaps, it is not fair to judge him by this. Nevertheless, no able teacher would, to my mind, make a statement like that which is quoted. What is this intolerable confusion of which Dr. Thompson speaks? Is it confusing to teach that the Son of God in human nature suffered and bore the wrath of God for the sin of all His people and that He bore that wrath as the perfectly sinless One, in the love of God and thus vicariously atoned? I have the impression that the subject of vicarious atonement, whether he believes this truth or not, is not clear in his own mind. And, surely, it is one of the first requirements of an able teacher that the subject

which he teaches is clear before his own consciousness. Otherwise he simply confuses his students.

The next subject to which the protestant calls our attention is the Fall of Man.

About this Mr. Glasgow quotes Dr. Thompson as follows:

"... the woman gave also to her husband and he did eat... How are we to understand this story? Is it to be taken as a literal fact, or is it to be interpreted as an allegory? We cannot afford to be too dogmatic. It may be that we have here the story of man's fall as it actually happened, that is Satan spoke to man through the mouth of a serpent, as today he sometimes speaks through the mouth of a friend. It may be, on the other hand, that we have the essential facts, dramatically pictorially presented, as in the case of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness."

Mr. Glasgow remarks in this connection that Dr. Thompson frequently presents what is historical narrative in Scripture as an allegorical record. He certainly does so in the above quoted paragraph in regard to Jesus' temptations. It is also evident, although he does not explicitly state this, that he does not believe the historicity of Genesis 3.

But does Dr. Thompson reveal himself here as an able teacher? He does, if it may be regarded as a characteristic of the ability of a teacher to sow doubts in the minds of his students as he does in the above quoted paragraph. Personally, I do not believe that this is the case. A teacher ought to have clear and definite convictions, especially when he instructs in the Word of God, and should be able to express those convictions clearly. This Dr. Thompson does not do. Although he surely suggests that the narrative in Gen. 3 may be an allegory, yet he does not definitely state this. And this, to my mind, is pernicious.

For the rest, I may remark that there is nothing new in the suggestion of Dr. Thompson that the narrative in Gen. 3 is not to be regarded as historical. Others, who believe, or rather pretend to believe in the Bible as the Word of God, have offered the same interpretation before him. And this is true, not only of Gen. 3, but of all of the first three chapters in Genesis. However, if the first three chapters of Genesis are not historical but allegorical, no one is able to say what is the meaning of the allegory. And, besides, if the narratives of creation and the fall are not to be regarded as statements of actual facts, we must discard the whole of Scripture as the Word of God.

The next item in the protest of Mr. Glasgow concerns the virgin birth.

About this Dr. Thompson has the following to say:

"The prophecy in Isaiah about the virgin with child certainly did not refer primarily to the miraculous birth of the Saviour. It referred, as can plainly be seen from the context, to a child that was to be born in Isaiah's own day, to a young woman, not necessarily a virgin..."

It is not clear from these words whether Dr. Thompson means to deny the virgin birth as such. In order to determine this, we would have to read the above words in their context which is impossible for us. Besides, he writes that the text in Isaiah 7:14 "did not refer *primarily* (italics mine, H.H.) to the miraculous birth of the Savior, which seems to suggest that it may also refer to this.

It is evident that Dr. Thompson believes that the word translated by virgin in Isaiah 7:14 may just as well refer to a young married woman. This, to say the least, I doubt very much. In the Hebrew the word is ALeMAH. The primary meaning of this noun is: a girl, a maiden, a virgin. It is true that Gesenius in his lexicon also says that, in Isa. 7:14, it may be and ought to be rendered by a youthful spouse or wife. This I do not believe for the following reasons:

1. Isaiah 7:14 speaks of a sign which the Lord Himself will give: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Now, in the first place, a sign is a wonder in or related to the kingdom of God. It is a wonderful event by which one may recognize that the kingdom of God is near. But how could such a wonder be recognized in the fact a young married woman would bring forth a son? Surely, there is nothing special or wonderful in this! But, in the second place, this virgin must call the name of the son whom she shall bring forth Immanuel, which is not a name of any human being but only of the Son of God in the flesh.

2. The masculine form of ALeMAH, virgin, is ELEM. And this, in the Old Testament refers to a youth, a young man of marriageable age but not yet married. So the feminine form ALeMAH refers to a maiden of marriageable age but not yet married.

3. The New Testament translates ALeMAH by *parthenos* and this certainly cannot mean anything else than virgin. Cf. Matt. 1:23. Mr. Glasgow calls attention to this passage in his criticism of the statement of Dr. Thompson and rightly so. The latter, in his statement calls attention to the immediate context of Isa. 7:14. But why did he not consult the broader context of Scripture in general? If he had, he would have come to the conclusion that the text in Isa. 7:14 certainly did not refer to a married woman, unless he takes the position (as he did before) that Matthew himself was mistaken or that he probably could not read Hebrew.

4. The entire context in Matt. 1:18ff. We read there: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying,

Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS."

Commentary on this passage is entirely superfluous.

For all these reasons I cannot agree with Gesenius' Lexicon and his reference to Isa. 7:14. It is clear as crystal that Isaiah refers not to a married woman but to a virgin.

And Dr. Thompson as an able Bible teacher certainly ought to study Isaiah 7:14 in the light of all Scripture instead of only in the immediate context. H.H.

AS TO BOOKS

Het Calvinisme (Calvinism) by Dr. Abraham Kuyper, published by J. H. Kok, Kampen, the Netherlands. Price f 1.50.

This little book is a republication, complete but in small form, of the well-known six Stone Lectures which Dr. Kuyper held in America in 1898. It is years ago that I read these lectures and enjoyed them. For the purpose of this review I simply perused them and as I did so I was so surprised that, in the main, I remembered them so well. The lectures speak of Calvinism in History, Calvinism and Religion, Calvinism and Politics, Calvinism and Science, Calvinism and Art, Calvinism and the Future. The style is characteristically Kuyperian, easily flowing, oratorical and even somewhat flighty, quite different from the Dutch style of today.

Although I do not agree with all that Dr. Kuyper presents in these Stone Lectures, yet I gladly recommend this little volume to all that are able to read the Holland language. H.H.

Luther's Werken (Luther's Works), translated from the Latin by Dr. C. N. Impeta. Published by J. H. Kok, N.V., Kampen, the Netherlands.

This is also a small volume. It contains Luther's The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, A Letter to Pope Leo X, and The Freedom of the Christian. In an introduction the translator informs us that he intended to reproduce the style of the author as faithfully as possible, and this makes the reading of this little book all the more pleasant. I heartily

recommend it to the reader that is acquainted with the Dutch language. H.H.

Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life, by Ronald S. Wallace. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. Price \$5.00.

This book I heartily recommend to the general reader, not only for reading but for study. The book itself is a very thorough study of the subject: Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life. It faithfully and abundantly quotes Calvin throughout the book. It is not the author's purpose to criticize but merely to present Calvin's own view of the Christian life. He has tried to comprehend all that Calvin himself taught on the subject under his doctrine of the person and work of Christ "as involving once-for-all sanctification and destiny of His Church," p. VI. Hence, he treats such subjects: the vicarious offering and sanctification of Christ as priest and king; the participation of the Church in the sanctification of Christ; self denial and bearing the cross; participation in the resurrection and glory of Christ; the true order of man's life in the restored image of God; the Church sanctified by the Word and the Sacraments; the attitude of faith in conflict and suffering; progress toward perfection; perseverance to the end. These are but a few of the subjects treated, but it may give our readers an idea of the rich contents of this book.

Of special interest to me, because we were just treating the subject in our Seminary, is what we read of Calvin's view of the Word and the preaching of the Word in the Church, p. 206 ff.

Once more, I heartily recommend this book to our readers for reading and study. H.H.

The kings and nations raged in pride;
He spake, the earth did melt away;
The Lord of Hosts is on our side,
Our father's God, our strength and stay.

Come see the works of God displayed,
The wonders of his mighty hand,
What desolations He has made,
What ruin spread through all the land.

Through all the peopled earth He makes
The dreadful scourge of war to cease,
The implements of battle breaks,
And makes the nations dwell in peace.

Be still, ye nations, bow in fear,
And know that I alone am God;
To us the Lord of Hosts is near,
Our fathers' God is our abode.

Psalm 45:5-8

OUR DOCTRINE

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

PART TWO

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Power of the Antichrist

Revelation 13:1-10

He has but one aim, and that is to thrust the Almighty from His throne, deprive Him of His sovereignty, and to be God instead of Him. And He therefore is the author and accomplisher of this power. And that he gives it his power and throne and authority would be sufficient to conclude that his kingdom and dominion is anti-God and anti-Christ in character. But this is also plain from other portions of the text. In the first place, let me call your attention to the fact that this beast has names of blasphemy inscribed upon his seven heads, that he received a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and that he actually opens his mouth to blaspheme the name of God and of His tabernacle, namely, those that dwell in heaven. To blaspheme the name of God is to deny His name, His sovereignty, His power, and all His virtues. Nebuchadnezzar was blaspheming when he said in the pride of his heart that he himself was the author of mighty Babylon. And so this kingdom and its head will blaspheme the name of the Most High. It will deny that God and His Christ have anything to do with that world-kingdom, and it will maintain that all that is in the world is the result of the power of man and the manifestation of his glory. In a word, it will try to expel the very name and authority of the Almighty from His own works. And the same it will do with the saints that have already gone into glory. It will deny that there is such a thing as glory in the hereafter. It will refuse to speak of it, and it will not tolerate to have it mentioned. It will banish their very remembrance. All that is connected with God and His name and His worship it will not tolerate.

Secondly, I would call your attention to the fact that this power is its own god. They worship the beast: "And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him." That is, again, in general all the inhabitants of the earth shall at that time worship the existing state of things, and centrally also the government that is at the head. They will put all their trust in the antichristian beast. They will expect the very necessities of life from him. They will turn to him in trouble. They shall worship and admire him and give divine honor and praise to him in gratitude of heart. They shall worship the beast and its image, and through it all they shall worship the dragon. Must I prove that this is the realization of all that has been pictured to us in the Scriptures concerning

Antichrist? If so, let me first call your attention to still another feature. They shall make war with the saints. There are still saints on earth. And they shall be witnesses. They shall refuse to submit to the power of Antichrist. Not that they shall fight with the sword and rise in political rebellion. No, not that; but they shall refuse to worship the beast, and they shall uphold the sovereignty of the Almighty and of His Christ in those days. They shall refuse to change their religion and their worship and their testimony. And they shall maintain that not Antichrist, but Christ is King. And therefore they shall be hated. Then shall be fully realized what Christ said, "Ye shall be hated of all nations." Antichrist shall make war with them and overcome them. They shall be hard days, — days so hard that the elect would not hold out if the days were not shortened. Days of persecution they are. We shall learn more about them in future discussions. Let it now be sufficient to prove that this world-power is anti-God and anti-Christ and anti-kingdom and anti-saints.

Thus Antichrist in its final consummation is pictured to us everywhere in the Word of God. In Daniel 7:25 we read of him: "And he shall speak words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change the times and the law; and they shall be given unto his hand until a time and times and a half a time." And in Daniel 8:23-25: "And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper to do his pleasure; he shall destroy the mighty ones and the holy people. And through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace he shall destroy many; he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand." Or, still stronger, in Daniel 11:36 we read: "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods; and he shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished, for that which is determined shall be done." Or, to quote no more, turn to the New Testament and read what Paul says in II Thessalonians 2:3-4: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." And again, in vs. 9 of the same chapter: "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." Surely, there is no doubt about the fact that all these passages wonderfully harmonize with all that we learned about the beast that cometh up out of the sea, and that this beast is the anti-

christian power in its final and full consummation, and that it will consist of a wicked and universal world-power, with a central government, doing wonderful things, but rising against the Most High and against Christ and His people.

Finally, we probably may ask for the historical realization of this passage. Let me say, in the first place, that according to all Scripture that power as such is in the world already, and has been in the world all through this dispensation, as the power of Antichrist. The mystery of iniquity is already working, Paul warns. And John, writing to the Christians of his time, says: "Everyone that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is the spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh, and now is already in the world," I John 4:3. And so, as I have also explained before, I take the period indicated in the text. Time is given to the power represented in the beast of forty and two months. In this period of his making or continuing his power I include all that has gone before, all the attempts that have been made to establish this world-power in opposition to Christ and His kingdom in the entire period of the new dispensation. It may very well be that this forty and two months, of which we read more than once, now in the form of twelve hundred sixty days, now in the form of three and a half years, or times, now in the form of forty and two months, will in the future also have another meaning which we cannot now determine. But certain it is that it first of all points to this entire dispensation. For in this entire dispensation the power of iniquity and the spirit of Antichrist is already in the world. In this entire period the two witnesses give their prophecy. In this entire period the church is in the wilderness of her separation. In this entire period the beast that rises up out of the abyss and that culminates in this beast that is pictured to us in the present chapter is present. And therefore, let no man beguile you also in this respect. He is in the world already. He works in the world. He has made many bold attempts already to reach his culmination. And his final manifestation will be but the consummation of a long process of development.

But on the other hand, let me also warn you not to make the mistake of finding him already in his full manifestation and power. Never yet has there been a power as is pictured here. Never yet was there a universal world-power that had free sway over every nation and people and tribe and tongue. Never yet was there a nation whom all the peoples worshipped, never was there a kingdom or dominion that had power over all the forces and resources of creation, so that no one could even buy or sell in any part of the world except by the grace of this antichristian power. And this also applies to the present. Let no one beguile you. This antichristian power is not yet in its full reality. No single nation represents it. The world-power will not be realized by sword or cannon, so that there would be a tyrannical government lording it over a groaning lot of subjects. But it will be a kingdom or government established by common consent

and agreement, in which all admire and worship the beast. And again, the war this government or dominion will wage is not against any world kingdom, but against the saints of the Most High that refuse to worship the beast. And such a power does not yet exist.

In the third place, let me also warn you that the time is at hand. We know not how soon, but soon it will be. All the signs of the times point to such a tremendous power, such a league of the nations that has control over all things, to such a unity of all religion, in which man is exalted and the Christ of the Scriptures is blasphemed and His blood trampled under foot. And therefore I would say: the time is at hand! Watch therefore! Let no one beguile you; but watch!

Finally, if you ask why this complete picture of the Antichrist is given us in Scripture, my answer is: in order that we might clearly recognize it when it is revealed. And what then must we do when we see it is come? Must we oppose it, must we fight it with the sword? That, of course, is completely impossible. It will come. It must come. And to oppose its coming is entirely vain. Its coming is irresistible. And the battle is not one of the sword. But as the text has it, he that is for captivity, into captivity he goeth; and if any man shall kill with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. No, we cannot oppose the power of Antichrist by main force. When that world-power cometh and reigns supreme, we shall be submissive to the last, as far as God and our conscience permits. But here is the patience and the faith of the saints, that in all these times they remain faithful, and refuse to deny the Christ. They wait for the day of His coming. May God give us grace to be found faithful at all times, and watching and praying, so that no one may take our crown.

H.H.

IN MEMORIAM

The Board of the Hope Protestant Reformed Christian School, in the name of the School Society membership, expresses its heartfelt sympathy to the family of

ALICE REITSMA

whose earthly pilgrimage ended December 21, 1959.

May they find peace and comfort in the words of Jesus when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." John 6:47.

Ted Engelsma, President
John Kalsbeek, Secretary

Whate'er the mighty Lord decrees,
Shall stand forever sure,
The settled purpose of his heart
To ages shall endure.

— ANONYMOUS

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Joseph Sold By His Brothers

Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver; and they brought Joseph into Egypt. GENESIS 37:28.

The relationship between the various members of Jacob's family had fallen into a very evil way. In a sense it was maybe Jacob's own fault. He had shown definite favoritism to Joseph, the son of his beloved Rachel, and in this way had given his other sons occasion to be filled with envy and jealousy toward their younger brother. But in an even greater sense it was the responsibility of these older brothers. We would not believe that they were as yet unregenerate men, but it was undoubtedly true that even though they were regenerated they allowed themselves to fall very deeply into the ways of carnality. The trouble started already when they first came into Canaan from Haran. The children of Jacob began to associate themselves much too closely with the Canaanitish inhabitants of the land and consequently began to adopt their habits and ways of life. Thus when the time came that Jacob began to show definite favoritism toward their younger brother, they were too deeply entrenched in the ways of the world to evaluate the situation anymore from the point of view of faith. They would not be kind and understanding with their father's weakness, but they allowed themselves to become consumed with jealousy and finally hatred. The home life of Jacob's family was torn asunder by the resulting tensions.

As time went on the situation became ever more acute. Sin has its way, once it has gained entrance, of building up until it rages almost completely free from all control. It is exactly what happened in Jacob's family. At first it was nothing more than a case of petty jealousy, the brothers complained and chided about the favoritism which Joseph received. Gradually, however, this bitterness and resentment grew to the point where they could no longer speak a decent word either to or about their younger brother. As the ten men worked together in the field, no jest was received with more general favor among them than one which reflected unfavorably upon Joseph. No matter what Joseph did or said was picked up by them to be related among them over and over again with bitter sarcasm and irony. Joseph's elegant coat and dreams were of course the finest grist for their mills. It came to the point that it was absolutely impossible for Joseph to do anything without it being interpreted by them in the worst possible terms.

Jacob it seems was not aware of the degree of animosity which had developed between his ten oldest sons and his youngest. He must have realized that there was a certain

amount of tension between them, especially after Joseph had reported to him concerning the evil way in which the other sons were living. It was perhaps for that reason that he did not send Joseph along with the others when they left to graze the flocks in the fields of Shechem. He did not realize, however, how strong this hatred had become. Neither should we consider this strange. In all likelihood the ten brothers did not realize it themselves. We can not believe that there was a premeditated determination to slay Joseph on the part of any of his ten brothers. In fact each in his heart maintained a principle of love for him. It was just that in their communions together the brothers would not admit to this. Each sought to outdo the other in condemning their favored brother.

It was some time after the ten oldest brothers had left for Shechem with the flocks that Jacob became concerned about them. They were gone somewhat longer than had been expected, and he began to wonder if all was well. With hardly a moment of hesitation he decided to send Joseph after them to find how well they fared. He knew that the others did not appreciate Joseph very much and did not care to have him with them in the field; but there was little reason to consider it very serious. Moreover, Joseph was now about seventeen years of age and quite capable of caring for himself at least on a relatively short journey such as this. Calling Joseph to him he said, "Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again." After the manner of a young man, Joseph was eager to comply. He welcomed the adventure which the journey promised and appreciated the responsibility which was entrusted to him. With a light and willing heart he set out upon his way.

Arriving at Shechem, Joseph was for a time confused. He searched throughout the territory, but his brothers were nowhere to be found. Soon, however, this problem also resolved itself for he met a man who had been with his brothers shortly before they left that district. Upon request from Joseph, he told him that his brothers had left Shechem to graze the flocks at Dothan. Immediately Joseph set out to follow them there.

From a great distance the brothers saw Joseph approaching. It was not difficult to identify him because of the long robe which he wore, so different from the clothing ordinarily worn in the field. No sooner was Joseph recognized than the jesting began. Each tried to outdo the other in sarcastic slurs about him. It was a common game among them. There was no limit; neither honesty nor integrity restrained them; any remark was received which reflected badly upon Joseph. "Behold, this dreamer cometh." Always they came back to those dreams again; they bothered them more than anything else. Deep within themselves they were afraid that they were dreams of revelation from God which was exactly what they didn't want them to be. Hours had been spent together by them ridiculing those dreams and trying to give reasons

why they could never be fulfilled. As they saw him approaching now, all of this old animosity boiled up anew. Suddenly one of them spoke up, hardly realizing what he said, "Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams." With a stunned silence the thought struck home. Each felt deep in his heart what a terrible and repulsive idea it was; but none dared to speak up against it lest he should displease the others. They had always agreed on the desirability of bringing those dreams to nought; and for that it seemed this plan would be effective. With feigned enthusiasm each added his agreement. Caught up in a plot of intrigue, they consented to do unitedly what each individually neither dared nor cared to do. Ten men of God had given themselves over to an evil way of life, and there was left nothing to restrain them from doing that which each knew within him was a terrible sin.

Finally Reuben, burdened by the sinfulness of that which they planned, could contain himself no longer. "Let us not kill him. Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him." Reuben could not bear to shed the blood of his younger brother. His intentions were already clear in his mind. If they would cast Joseph alive into a pit and leave him to die, he could return later after the others were gone and release him. Still there is something sad about these words of Reuben. How much better it would have been if he had told his brothers outright that their intentions were evil and should not be followed. Had he with boldness stood up for the right, he might well have dissuaded them completely. But rather he made it sound as if essentially he was in agreement with the expressed intentions except that he did not want to actually shed their brother's blood. The effect was to actually encourage them in what they were doing.

Tremendously hard must have been the scene which took place when Joseph finally approached his brothers. The lad came to them eagerly, happy to have found them after many days of searching. Now that he had arrived he was overflowing with questions concerning their welfare. To his happy greeting there came back only a sullen silence. They had not the heart even to express anger as they stood there committed to a plot which none in himself really wanted to perform. There was just rough hands grabbing him, tearing off his coat, carrying him, and finally casting him down into the deep pit of a dried-up cistern. The feeling of Joseph we can hardly picture, the amazement, the fear, the tears and pleading, and finally the lonesomeness as he lay in the solitude of the dark pit, cast there by his own brothers. Terrible was the end to which the tensions in Jacob's family had finally come.

They were ten troubled men who left the mouth of that pit that day. Every moment drove deeper into their hearts the consciousness of what a terrible thing they had done.

But now there seemed no turning back, for should they release Joseph their father would learn what had happened and that they couldn't allow. Moreover, each one had to struggle with his conscience alone, for pride would not let them reveal to each other that they had any qualms at all. First a few faint attempts to joke about the matter and pass it off lightly, and then over them falls the heavy stillness of men suffering under the voice of their own consciences. Silently brooding, there is nothing to be said to each other. Reuben separates himself and steals away to look for an opportunity to approach Joseph's pit without being seen by the rest. The others just sit, together but in their guilt so very much alone.

Almost in contrast was the experience of Joseph in the pit. From an external point of view his suffering was much more evident. On his face the lines of pain were visible, tears streamed from his eyes, moans of anguish came from his lips. Joseph was forsaken of his brothers, and he felt it. Nevertheless, he had something which the others did not. He could still pray to God in his misery and know that God would answer. The grace and mercy of God were there to comfort him. Though he was but one, he was not so much alone in his sorrow as were the ten. He felt the presence of God in his life while the others felt only his wrath.

Soon afterward as the children of Jacob sat in their camp eating bread, they looked and saw a company of Ishmeelitic merchants making their way toward Egypt. At that sight the mind of Judah began to work in much the same way as Reuben's had. He began to devise a plan by which Joseph could be saved alive without exposing himself to the brothers as one who had gone soft on Joseph. "What profit is it we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?" he said. "Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh." To this they readily consented for all by that time had sorely repented within himself for what they had done. Although it was in itself evil enough that they should sell their brother for a slave, it did seem to them the better of two evils. Eagerly they hastened to the pit and drew Joseph from it. Thinking at least for a moment that now they would be free from his blood, they took from the hands of the Ishmeelites twenty pieces of silver exchanging for it their brother to be carried as a slave into Egypt.

All this time Reuben was away from the others. He was waiting for them to leave the vicinity of the pit so that he could return to release Joseph. When finally he returned to the pit, it was too late, Joseph was already gone. Rending his clothes, he returned to the others crying out, "The child is not; and I whither shall I go?" Overwhelmed with strong feelings, he no longer cared to keep his intentions from the brothers. He told them that he had had no desire to slay Joseph but only to deliver him. Soon it came out from all. They had all felt much the same, but they had proceeded with the plan for the sake of appearance before the others.

(Continued on page 163)

FROM HOLY WRIT

Exposition of Luke 1:57-66

We have just recently celebrated Christmas day. In it we commemorated the birth of births. It was the birth of the Son of God from the virgin Mary. Of him we confess, believing the testimony of God concerning His Son, "this is the true God and eternal life," I John 5:20b. He is Emmanuel, God-with-us! And nothing really has any meaning for us in the Scriptures that does not directly or indirectly preach this Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

However, this does not mean that the birth of John, John the Baptist, does not have special meaning for us. This birth has meaning and significance for us exactly in relationship to and subservient to the birth and coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Was this birth of John and his appearance upon the scene of the history of salvation not so important that Isaiah some few centuries earlier wrote of him, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God"? (Is. 40:3.) And did not the last of the prophets, in the Old Testament Canon, speak of the coming of John, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:1, Matt. 11:10).

And was this birth not so important, and so wonderful an event in the "glad-tidings" of salvation, that it was accorded a special place in the record of Luke, who writes concerning the things which are most certainly believed amongst us? Did not the Lord suddenly come to his temple in the days of Herod, king of Judah, and appear to the aged Zacharias, as he stands ministering at the altar of incense? And is this birth of John not foretold, and how he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, and that he shall be "great before the Lord"?

Small wonder that the event of John's birth is recorded to us, and how the announcement of his birth was such that it was noised abroad in the land of David, in all the hill-country of Judea! And that this fact of the impression that it made upon the remnant according to election, is given us in the *Gospel* of Luke.

The sacred record is worthy of being repeated. It reads as follows: "*Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcize the child; and they called him Zacharias after the name of his father. And*

his mother answered and said, Not (so); for he shall be called John, And they said unto her, there is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying: His name is John. And they marveled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake and praised God. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout the hill country of Judea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him." Verses 57-66.

From the very nature of the abundance of material in this little passage, it will not be possible for us, within the allotted space given us in *The Standard Bearer*, to reflect on all the details in this passage. We will rest content with simply pointing out, what seems to us, to be some of the more salient points in the text.

I believe that it may safely be said that this passage teaches us that we are here dealing with the birth of a wonder-child. His birth is a sign and miracle of God!

In the first place, we believe, this is evident from the name that is given this child. It should be noticed that Gabriel, announcing the birth of John to Zacharias in the temple, has explicitly stated: "And thou shalt call his name John," Luke 1:13b. Two things stand out here. (1) That the meaning of this particular name should be noticed. Not every parent in Israel, who gave this name to his son, would not do so in the full consciousness of its implication. But in this instance such should indeed prove to be the case! For the meaning of the name *John* is "Jehovah is gracious"! The covenant God remembers his promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of old. Thus God speaks through the prophet Malachi: "For I am Jehovah, I change not: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed," Mal. 3:6. And this covenant faithfulness is expressed in this name. It is really the same message, be it dated later in the history of salvation, as was proclaimed by God to Moses at the burning bush! (Ex. 3:1-14.) (2) That the angel Gabriel tells Zacharias explicitly "*thou shalt call his name John*"! Zacharias is to give this name to this son, in the full consciousness of its implication in the light of all that had been told him concerning this son. It must be a *confession of faith*! Zacharias and his son are thus set for *signs* in Israel. He must virtually say with Isaiah, "Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me, are set for signs in Israel." Did not Isaiah name his one son "Maher-shalal-hashbaz", meaning: *in making speed to the spoil he hasteneth to the prey*, referring, of course, to the speedy overthrow of Resin, king of Damascus, and Pekah, king of Israel, as they are confederate against David's house?! And did Isaiah not consciously name the other son, "Shear-jashub", meaning to express the gospel message: *a remnant shall return*! A remnant according to election will return out of Babylon!

And David's house shall stand. Thus also Zacharias must give this son the name "John," confessing in faith, "The Lord is gracious"! He is indeed a wonder-child, expressing that God will work in him, as the "voice in the wilderness," great works of mercy and grace.

In the second place, the very manner of John's birth indicates that he is a wonder-child. Was this birth not after the very *pattern* of the birth of Isaac? Was John not born from a woman, whom time had proven to be a barren woman! And was she not known among her kinfolks and acquaintances as such, even as far away as in Nazareth? Yes, Elizabeth's barrenness was a rather established fact! It certainly was such in the mind of both Zacharias and Elizabeth. Besides, was she not advanced in age? Was not all hope of having children a matter of the past? Did not God have to perform a miracle in this case of Elizabeth and Zacharias? A child of the promise, brought forth from the dead. Is that not the wonder of grace portrayed in his very birth?! Does not God raise the dead to life, and call the things that are not as if they were? Romans 4:17.

Another important aspect indicated in the text is that the birth of John is viewed by the neighbors and cousins as being the Lord's *great mercy* upon Elizabeth.

Let us try to understand the text just a bit.

The text does not say that the neighbors simply rejoiced with Elizabeth because she had given birth to a baby. They were profound people. They saw deeper. They saw in it the *mercy* of God, which he shows to whom he wills. Read the text, "And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her." They rejoiced with Elizabeth in the great mercy shown to her! That's the text.

The Lord in mercy had remembered Elizabeth, and he had delivered her from her reproach. Oh, indeed, she was a righteous woman before the Lord. She kept all the commandments of God blamelessly. Yet, she felt that the *Lord* had withheld children from her. And that was her affliction. But now the Lord had magnified his mercy to her. Had she had children earlier in life this mercy of God would not have stood out in such bold relief. Now it is *manifestly* the mercy of God. It is something which every one noticed. It is *mercy* of God.

Mercy is a virtue of God. It is closely associated in Scripture with the grace of God. Yet, they are not identical in meaning. Grace refers more to the actual efficaciousness of God's power whereby He saves us. Mercy is the divine motive and impulse. It is the great longing to save the object of love, the yearning bowels of God's infinite and rich compassion. God took pity upon Elizabeth. And, yet, here is a pity in which the neighbors and kinfolks can share with her. This rejoicing with her was fellowship of saints. It was the exercise of the same among pious women who

looked for the promised mercies of God, in a child which was to be born unto them!

It was also manifested mercy to Zacharias. He had been smitten with dumbness. But he had been told that it was only to be for a season. He looked for the time that he might speak in faith. One thing upon which both Elizabeth and Zacharias agreed was that the child must be named *John*! The Lord is gracious. This child would be great before the Lord. More than a prophet. And when the women beckon to the father of John what his name shall be, he writes and says: "His name is John".

Zacharias had learned much during the past few months. The one outstanding thing that he had learned was: "For nothing shall be impossible with God." The text does not say so explicitly. But the connection indicates as much. Zacharias must have related at this occasion what had befallen him in the temple. He must have explained in his "glorifying God" that God is true and every man a liar. That the Lord had just reasons to smite him with dumbness because of his unbelief. And he must have humbly confessed to God, and related here before the neighbors and friends the things which God had foretold concerning this child. That he was to be a Nazarite, that no razor would come upon his head, and that he would not drink strong drink!

Small wonder that great fear fell upon all who heard these things. And it is to be understood that among the remnant according to election in every hamlet and village, in all the regions of the hill country of Judea, these things of the birth of John, its announcement by Gabriel in the temple, the subsequent dumbness of Zacharias, the name which was given the child, Zacharias' miraculous and timely recovery of speech, and the praises uttered, were noised abroad. It went from mouth to mouth!

And it was the first stirring of life. The breaking of the dawn. Always here-to-fore the morning had come and it was still night. Israel came out of captivity but they were still in the midst of and under the dominion of the enemies. But now the Lord was going to do great things. Daniel's prophecies will be fulfilled. God's promises to Abraham shall be realized. And David's house shall stand forever. There is a hushed expectancy in the air!

And Zacharias prophesies. He gives utterance to these truths which live in the hearts of the remnant according to election. They are the "violent" who will presently take the kingdom by force. For the kingdom is powerfully brought forward.

And John will signal this in his preaching. They will come to Jordan. In the spirit and power of Elias John will speak. And the way of the Lord shall be prepared. A highway in the desert for our God!

And the people said: What manner of child shall this be!

G.L.

IN HIS FEAR

Freedom of Speech

(5)

One of the things that will characterize the last days, according to the prophecy of Daniel is that "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," Daniel 12:4b.

That the first part is true in the day in which we live is underscored by the deafening roar of the Boeing 707 or the Convair 880 jet plane. This is evident when we consider that the word "run" need not be taken in that literal sense, since the very word used by Daniel may also be translated "to go to and fro." Today men speed from one corner of the earth to another. And more people are on the go today than at any time before in the history of the world. Formerly many lived and died inside the county in which they were born and never crossed the line. Countless numbers of others never crossed the border of their native country. Still greater was the number of those who never left their continent. But today world travel is common-place. Daniel's words are being realized before our very eyes.

And so is that other half of the statement quoted above of Daniel. Today knowledge is increased and that on so many planes and in so many areas of our complex life. Today the man in the street knows so much more about a variety of things than was known by the learned of years ago. It is not simply the scientist, the college professor, the man with several degrees behind his name that knows more than those of generations gone by; but exactly because of the freedom of the press to publish men's findings and knowledge far and wide, it is available to the masses. And you hear the uneducated or little-educated speaking of stratosphere, of radiation, of atoms, of supersonic speed, of carbon-14 and of electronics. Today you hear mere children talking intelligently of scientific matters that in ages gone by were known and discussed only by the few learned ones. You may today subscribe to magazines; you may purchase an encyclopedia; you may go to the library and page through textbooks on well nigh every subject or even take them home for careful perusal and study. Knowledge indeed is increased in the day in which we live. And because of our freedom of the press, ours is praised as the best informed nation on this globe. Our children have the best textbooks. All the news is given us in our bulky, photograph-enriched newspapers. Attractive, lucid magazines will interpret the news for you; and the ideas of a few individuals are not only presented to the masses, but are embraced and received as the proper interpretation and way of thinking about the problems of our day.

And our calling? Well, there are two sides to that calling. There is on the one hand our calling to receive all

this knowledge in His fear, and on the other hand there is our calling, if we are in the position to teach others, to teach these things in His fear. The freedom of speech which our government allows us must never be used in such a way that we no longer live in His fear. And that latter part of our calling is by far the more significant one. Those in a position to teach and do not do so in his fear not only sin in teaching but become responsible for the sins of those whom they have taught to receive the lie and to practice evil. For, as we quoted Jesus' words last time, it were better for such that a millstone had been hanged around their necks and that they had been cast into the depth of the sea. From that moment on their freedom to speak would be gone and they would not have induced others to embrace the lie and to practice sin. This does not excuse those who receive such teachings, for all must hear as well as speak in His fear.

Let us then be very critical of what we hear in this land of freedom of speech and remember that the unbeliever, the tool of the antichrist, the false prophet and spokesmen of the devil are also afforded the right and freedom to speak as they please. A word or two of warning is not at all out of place. Because knowledge is increasing and unbelieving men are free to spread their interpretation of facts that have been discovered and to present their theories, we and our children are constantly being bombarded by the servants of the antichrist and by the spokesmen of the father of lies with propaganda for the cause of the kingdom of darkness. We must ever be alert to the fact that the forces of darkness ask no quarter, that the devil never takes a vacation or gives up in the fight and that his unwavering purpose in all his work is to seek to destroy our faith, to undermine our trust in God and to get us to perform things that will deny God His glory.

Let us understand, first of all then, that hearing all this propaganda of the unbelieving scientists in His fear means that we do not seek to harmonize the Word of God with these statements of finding and theories of the ungodly. That the world which does not love God and His Word and has no respect for that Word will give the Scriptures a subordinate place and insist that Scripture must be so interpreted that it does not deny man's "scientific" findings is to be understood. And let us remember that these very Scriptures in I Timothy 6:20 speak of the "oppositions of science falsely so called." It is not all science that calls itself such. It is not all knowledge and wisdom that goes under the name of science, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Therefore, as we said, it is to be expected that the world will raise its theories above the Word of God and insist that we so interpret the Scriptures that they do not oppose these ideas and philosophies of man. But that there are those in the sphere of the Church who not only embrace these ideas but even in their positions as teachers of covenant youth will strive to inculcate them into their minds, surely can never be permitted and must be condemned in no uncertain terms!

Yet that is exactly what is being done today. Our children are being told in school that we do not know how long ago it was that God created the heavens and the earth. Granted that we do not know to the year, we surely can say "approximately six thousand years ago." By saying we do not know, we leave the child ready for the error that it was millions or billions of years ago instead of thousands of years. Indeed, some have no fear openly to advocate these periods either by making each day of creation week a billion years or more; by speaking of two separate creations, one in the beginning that left the universe in a chaotic state for billions of years, a void and waste place and another some billions of years later; or by the clever though equally evil idea that although the days were each twenty-four hours, there were periods between these days that lasted for billions of years.

We maintain that he who has respect for God, he who stands before Him in reverence, he who approaches the matter in His fear cannot possibly take any of these stands and will never *dare* to teach it to covenant youth. In His fear we dare not do so wickedly no matter whether it receives the approval of our Classes and Synods, our school boards and school principals and is even taught by them or not. In His fear we will always seek to interpret that which God leads ungodly men to discover in the light of the Scriptures. In His fear Scripture will be the authority before which I place all the writings and speech of man.

Perhaps your argument is that Scripture does not say anything specific about this matter and says that a thousand years are as one day with the Lord. Your argument is that unless we find more time in the creation week than we formerly did, we cannot explain carbon-14. You want to say that God created all things, you want to confess Him as the Creator but you also want to accept the words of those who do deny these things. You say we must give an answer to these findings of the scientists and have an explanation that is reasonable, for God is a God of reason.

Undersigned in no way claims to be a scientist or even to have a "scientific" bent of mind. But by God's grace he does know that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and therefore is not only afraid of all this philosophy of man but understands it as folly and wishes to make it plain to you. And that folly of trying to solve all these things by "reappraising" the doctrines of the Church through all the ages concerning this creation of the world in six days of twenty-four hours each is apparent in this one inescapable principle: Then you must also deny the Virgin Birth of Christ and His resurrection from the dead! And indeed, the one error of changing the truth concerning the creation of all things to harmonize with the philosophies of wicked, unbelieving men will come to that and has already taken a monumental stride in that direction by questioning and even denying the infallibility of the Scriptures. Of course! Every godless scientist of yesteryear and of today will tell you that no child can be conceived by a virgin. It has never happened

and all the scientific findings of men will support the fact that it simply is impossible. And a return to life after three days of one who lost so much blood and had a spear thrust into His vital organs is something utterly impossible. Well, then shall we go to the Scriptures and reappraise our thinking about these two important points of doctrine? Shall we agree then with that revised version, that corrupted translation, which makes Isaiah 7:14 declare that a young woman shall conceive rather than that a virgin shall conceive? Why the one and not the other? In fact "scientific" knowledge of the way of the birth of the child and its requirements is far more definite than of the period of time when these scientists so-called claim that no rational being lived on the earth, and in fact there was even no life.

Let every teacher, professor and parent who wants to change the stand of the Church through all the ages concerning this creation week in order to be in step with "science" ask himself why he does not do the same with the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ. After all the word "virgin" can and may be translated also as "young woman." Let all those who meddle with the truth of God creating all things in six days, limited by evening and morning to constitute twenty-four hours each give reason why they should not also say that the virgin birth is out of step with science and that we ought to rethink this "impossible" thing and not retain it any more in our thinking and teaching.

What have we gained by agreeing with "science so called"? We are more reasonable in our approach to these things? Well, then be reasonable also in the approach to the Saviour's birth and resurrection. Nay, we have gained nothing and lost much, and stand in danger of losing all. We have lost our freedom to speak God's praises and instead reveal ourselves as those who feel free to work with the spokesmen of the father of lies to seek to undermine the faith of God's people in an Almighty and All-wise God.

J.A.H.

O Lord, thou art our home, to whom we fly
And so hast always been, from age to age;
Before the hills did intercept the eye
Or that the frame was up of earthly stage,
One God thou wert, and art, and still shall be
The line of time, it doth not measure thee.

— BACON

In him is only good,
In me is only ill,
My ill but draws his goodness forth,
And me he loveth still.

— ANONYMOUS

Contending For The Faith

The Church and the Sacraments

VIEWS DURING THE THIRD PERIOD (750-1517 A.D.)

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

MARRIAGE

(continued)

In our preceding article we quoted from the decrees and canons of the Romish Council of Trent which set forth the Romish doctrine of the sacrament of matrimony. But two Scriptural passages are quoted in these decrees, Eph. 5:25, 32 and Matt. 19:6. The Lord willing, we will have occasion to return to these passages of Holy Writ. However, these decrees and canons also set forth the Romish doctrine of celibacy, Rome's doctrine of the abstinence from marriage in accordance with religious vows. Rome, although professing, on the one hand, to maintain the sanctity of the marriage state, even to the extent of maintaining that the bond of matrimony cannot be dissolved on account of adultery, has also issued a decree denying the right to marry to the clergy and others who have solemnly professed chastity. Rome not only denies the right to marry to the clergy, etc., but that church also issued this decree which resulted in the breaking up of thousands of marriages and which decree was directly responsible for countless miseries and heartaches.

Some of the reasons which are advanced by Rome in support of its doctrine of celibacy are familiar. Rome contends that a married clergy is connected with the world by social ties, and concerned for the support of the family; and unmarried clergy is independent, has no home and aim but the church, and protects the pope like a standing army. Another reason for this celibacy concerns the power of the confessional, which is one of the pillars of the priesthood. Women are reluctant to intrust their secrets to a priest who is a husband and father of a family. However, Rome must certainly have difficulty to explain the example of Peter, who, it is claimed, was succeeded by all the popes, and who, according to Scripture, was married. But, we now wish to quote at length from the History of the Christian Church, Vol. V, pages 39-45, in which quotation the horrors of this Romish decree are vividly set forth.

"Gregory completed, with increased energy and the weight of official authority, the moral reform of the clergy as a means for securing the freedom and power of the Church. He held synod after synod, which passed summary laws against simony and Nicolaitism, and denounced all carnal connection of priests with women, however legitimate, as sinful and shameful concubinage. Not contented with synodical legislation, he sent letters and legates into all countries

with instructions to enforce the decrees. A synod in Rome, March, 1074, opened the war. It deposed the priests who had bought their dignity or benefices, prohibited all future sacerdotal (priestly) marriage, required married priests to dismiss their wives or cease to read mass, and commanded the laity not to attend their services. The same decrees had been passed under Nicolas II and Alexander II, but were not enforced. The forbidding of the laity to attend mass said by a married priest, was a most dangerous, despotic measure, which had no precedent in antiquity. In an encyclical of 1079 addressed to the whole realm of Italy and Germany, Gregory used these violent words, "If there are presbyters, deacons, or sub-deacons who are guilty of the crime of fornication (that is, living with women as their wives), we forbid them, in the name of God Almighty and by the authority of St. Peter, entrance into the churches, *introitum ecclesiae*, until they repent and rectify their conduct."

These decrees caused a storm of opposition. Many clergymen in Germany, as Lambert of Hersfeld reports, denounced Gregory as a madman and heretic: he had forgotten the words of Christ, Matt. 19:11, and of the Apostle, I Cor. 7:9; he wanted to compel men to live like angels, and, by doing violence to the law of nature, he opened the door to indiscriminate licentiousness. They would rather give up their calling than their wives, and tauntingly asked him to look out for angels who might take their place. The bishops were placed in a most embarrassing position. Some, like Otto of Constance, sympathized with the married clergy; and he went so far as to bid his clergy marry. Others, like St. Altmann of Passau, were enthusiasts for sacerdotal celibacy. Others, like Siegfried of Mainz, took a double attitude. Archbishop Anno of Cologne agreed with the Hildebrandian principle, but deemed it impracticable or inopportune. When the bishops lacked in zeal, Gregory stirred up the laity against the simoniacal and concubinary priests. He exhorted a certain Count Albert (October, 1074) to persist in enforcing the papal orders, and commanded Duke Rudolph of Swabia and Duke Bertolf of Carinthia, January, 1075, to prevent by force, if necessary, the rebellious priests from officiating, no matter what the bishops might say who had taken no steps to punish the guilty. He thus openly encouraged rebellion of the laity against the clergy, contrary to his fundamental principle of the absolute rule of the hierarchy. He acted on the maxim that the end sanctifies the means. Bishop Theodoric of Verdun, who at first sided in the main with Gregory, but was afterwards forced into the ranks of his opponents, openly reproached him for these most extraordinary measures as dangerous to the peace of the Church, to the safety of the clerical order, and even to the Christian faith. Bishop Henry of Spire denounced him as having destroyed the episcopal authority, and subjected the Church to the madness of the people. When the bishops, at the Diet of Worms, deposed him, January, 1076, one of the reasons assigned was his surrender of the Church to the laity.

But the princes who were opposed to Henry IV and de-

posed him at Tribur (1076), professed great zeal for the Roman church and moral reform. They were stigmatized with the Milanese name of Patarini. Even Henry IV, though he tacitly protected the simoniacal and concubinary clergy and received their aid, never ventured openly to defend them; and the anti-pope Clement III, whom he elected 1080, expressed with almost Hildebrandian severity his detestation of clerical concubinage, although he threatened with excommunication the presumptuous laymen who refused to take the sacrament from immoral priests. Bishop Benzo, the most bitter of imperialists, did not wish to be identified with the Nicolaitan heretics.

A contemporary writer, probably a priest of Treves, gives a frightful picture of the immediate results of this reform, with which he sympathized in principle. Slaves betrayed masters and masters betrayed slaves, friends informed against friends, faith and truth were violated, the offices of religion were neglected, society was almost dissolved. The peccant priests were exposed to the scorn and contempt of the laity, reduced to extreme poverty, or even mutilated by the populace, tortured and driven into exile. Their wives, who had been legally married with ring and religious rites, were insulted as harlots, and their children branded as bastards. Many of these unfortunate women died from hunger or grief, or committed suicide in despair, and were buried in unconsecrated earth. Peasants burned the tithes on the field lest they should fall into the hands of disobedient priests, trampled the host under foot, and baptized their own children.

In England, St. Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, died 988, had anticipated the reforms of Hildebrand, but only with temporary success. William the Conqueror made no effort to enforce sacerdotal celibacy, except that the charge of concubinage was freely used as a pretext for removing Anglo-Saxon prelates to make room for Norman rivals. Lanfranc of Canterbury was a Hildebrandian, but could not prevent a reformatory council at Winchester in 1076 from allowing married priests to retain their wives, and it contented itself with the prohibition of future marriages. This prohibition was repeated at a council held in London, 1102, when Anselm occupied the see of Canterbury. Married priests were required to dismiss their wives, and their children were forbidden to inherit their fathers' churches. A profession of chastity was to be exacted at ordination to the subdiaconate and the higher orders. But no punishment was prescribed for the violation of these canons. Anselm maintained them vigorously before and after his exile. A new council, called by King Henry at London, 1108, a year before Anselm's death, passed severe laws against sacerdotal marriage under penalties of deposition, expulsion from the Church, loss of property, and infamy. The temporal power was pledged to enforce this legislation. But Eadmer, the biographer of Anselm, sorrowfully intimates that the result was an increase of shocking crimes of priests with their relatives, and that few preserved that purity with which Anselm had labored to adorn his clergy.

In Spain, which was as much isolated from the Continent by the Pyrenees as England by the sea, clerical celibacy was never enforced before this period. The Saracenic invasion and subsequent struggles of the Christians were unfavorable to discipline. A canon of Compostella, afterwards bishop of Mondonego, describes the contemporary ecclesiastics at the close of the eleventh century as reckless and violent men, ready for any crime, prompt to quarrel, and occasionally indulging in mutual slaughter. The lower priests were generally married; but bishops and monks were forbidden by a council of Compostella, in 1056, all intercourse with women, except with mothers, aunts, and sisters wearing the monastic habit. Gregory VII sent a legate, a certain Bishop Amandus, to Spain to introduce his reforms, 1077. A council at Girona, 1078, forbade the ordination of sons of priests and the hereditary transmission of ecclesiastical benefices. A council at Burgos, 1080, commanded married priests to put away their wives. But this order seems to have been a dead letter until the thirteenth century, when the code of laws drawn up by Alfonso the Wise, known as "Las Siete Partidas," punished sacerdotal marriage with deprivation of function and benefice, and authorized the prelates to command the assistance of the secular power in enforcing this punishment. "After this we hear little of regular marriage, which was replaced by promiscuous concubinage or by permanent irregular unions."

In France the efforts of reform made by the predecessors of Gregory had little effect. A Paris synod of 1074 declared Gregory's decrees unbearable and unreasonable. At a stormy synod at Poitiers, in 1078, his legate obtained the adoption of a canon which threatened with excommunication all who should listen to mass by a priest whom they knew to be guilty of simony or concubinage. But the bishops were unable to carry out the canon without the aid of the secular arm. The Norman clergy in 1072 drove the archbishop of Rouen from a council with a shower of stones. William the Conqueror came to his aid in 1080 at a synod of Lillebonne, which forbade ordained persons to keep women in their houses. But clerical marriages continued, the nuptials were public, and male children succeeded to benefices by a recognized right of primogeniture. William the Conqueror, who assisted the hopeless reform in Normandy, prevented it in his subject province of Brittany, where the clergy, as described by Pascal II, in the early part of the twelfth century, were setting the canons at defiance and indulging in enormities hateful to God and man. At last, the Gregorian enforcement of sacerdotal celibacy triumphed but at the fearful sacrifice of sacerdotal chastity.

H.V.

He hath been my joy in woe,
Cheered my heart when it was low;
And with warnings softly sad
Calm'd my heart when it was glad.

— ANONYMOUS

CHURCH AND SCHOOL

When we speak of the school, we mean the existing Christian Schools, or more specifically, our own Prot. Ref. Schools. And when we speak of the church we have in mind the local congregations with their consistories, as their families are represented in the school. We could express it this way, what is the relation between the church as institute and the Christian School at any given place?

This problem is more complex and more important today than would appear on the surface.

As you can readily see, there are many questions involved. Such as, should our schools be church schools or private schools? Is it better to speak of parochial schools or parental schools? Do the church and the school each have a different creed? Does the church have control of the school, does it have supervision over the school, or does it merely give the school its moral and financial support? Or again, do they exist as independent units, or should there be some cooperation between them?

A SEPARATE DOMAIN.

Let me state the problem once more.

There can be no doubt about it but that there is a very intimate relationship between the church and school as far as constituency is concerned. The members of the church send their children to the school. The children of the church are instructed in the school. Members of the church serve on the school board, and are teachers of the school. In one word, the church as organism expresses itself also in the school. There is therefore also a close relationship between the function and purpose of the church and school. The church trains the child with the emphasis on doctrine with a view to confession of faith as a member of the church in full communion, while the school instructs the child with doctrine as a basis for all its training, but with a view to the place that the child shall take in secular life. The two are very closely related, since, as we all maintain, God establishes His covenant with His people in the line of continued generations. The covenant of God is realized in the church and is the basis for all real Christian instruction.

But that makes the problem the more acute. Since the same members of the church make up the church as institute and the organization of the Christian School, what is the relation of the institute, or let us say, of the consistory of the church to the school?

As you may know, there is an article on this subject in the Church Order. I am referring to article 21.

What you may not know, and what may also surprise you, is the fact that this article read quite differently in its original form as it was adopted by the Synod of Dordt, 1618-19. At that time the article read: "*The consistories*

shall see to it that there are good school teachers, who not only teach the children reading, writing, languages and free arts, but also instruct them in godliness and in the Catechism."

That is strong language. The consistories must see to it that there are school teachers. They must appoint school teachers. And good school teachers at that. Moreover, these teachers must instruct in the subjects commonly taught in the elementary grades, but also "in godliness and in the Heidelberg Catechism." That would seem to place the school under the direct authority of the church and commit to the school the instruction that rightfully belongs to the church. In one word, that sounds very much like a church school.

But in order to understand this article we must know something about the history. At the time of the Reformation, the schools were controlled by the government, but the Catholics had charge of appointing the teachers from each parish or district. The schools were Catholic public schools. Since the Reformed fathers objected to submitting their children to this Romish yoke, they made the rule that wherever possible good teachers should be appointed. By this they meant that consistories should see to it that teachers of Reformed persuasion were placed in the schools. They sought to establish Reformed public schools. The Synod of Dordt even expressed that the Heid. Catechism should be taught in the home, in the school, and in the church. Teachers should be sound in doctrine, pious in their walk, ready and willing to sign the confessions. Ministers and elders should regularly visit the schools and have supervision over them. Thus for many years the schools were government controlled, but under the supervision of the local church.

In the early part of the 19th century, the government of the Netherlands introduced the idea of neutrality in the schools, insisting that no specific doctrines might be taught there. As a result, Christian Schools came into existence as independent schools, or private schools. And because of the past position of the church, that the schools should be under her supervision, the Christian Schools actually became church schools or parochial schools. That was the idea carried over by the early immigrants who established the Christian schools in our own country.

It was mainly through the influence of Dr. A. Kuyper that this situation was changed. As you know, Dr. Kuyper was a strong proponent for "sphere sovereignty" as applied to home, school, church, and state. He maintained, and correctly so, that every sphere has its own authority, and that authority must be limited to its own sphere. It is not the calling of the state to prepare and control the instruction of the child, since to the state God has entrusted only the sword power to maintain law and order. Nor is it the calling of the church to provide for the secular education of the child, since to the church are entrusted the keys of the kingdom, the preaching of the word, the sacraments and

Christian discipline over its members. But to the parents is entrusted the sole responsibility of the instruction of the child, particularly in secular matters, so that the school is nothing more than an extension of the home.

It is hardly necessary for us to prove this position from the Scriptures. That was the command of God to Israel both in Deut. 4:9, 10 and Deut. 6:7, 20, that parents must diligently teach their children the word and commandments of the Lord. Also in the New Testament, particularly in Eph. 6:4 and Col. 3:20, 21 parents are instructed to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

According to this principle, Christian School societies were organized for the establishment and supervision of Christian schools. In 1914, article 21 of the Church Order was revised to read: "*The consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian Schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant.*" You will notice that in this revision the word "school teachers" was changed to "schools." The consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian schools. Moreover, the idea is introduced that the instruction of the children is the obligation of the parents, not of the state or the church. And finally, nothing is said about instruction in piety and in the Heidelberg Catechism, but simply that all the instruction shall be according to the demands of the covenant.

With that I think we can all agree. Church and school have a separate existence, are a separate domain, and the one should not intrude upon the authority or domain of the other.

A MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Yet this by no means dissolves our problem. In fact, in many ways it only accentuates it. The question still remains, what responsibility does the church have to the school, and what responsibility does the school have to the church? The answer to that question has actually divided the church into two separate camps today.

There are those who maintain that the church must maintain supervision over the school and the school must recognize the authority of the church. They argue: (1) That the church is the pillar and ground of truth and is therefore the only competent judge of Christian education. (2) The members of the church are also the parents in the school society, pupils in the school, teachers or principals or board members. The vow that was made at baptism was made before the church. And therefore the church is responsible to see to it that they all live up to that vow. (3) The church supports the school and must therefore insist that this money be used for the purpose for which it was given. How this should be carried out is often left to local circumstances, but I shall return to that later.

On the other hand, there are those who defend an ab-

solute separation of church and school, so that the one is entirely independent from the other. They insist: (1) That also others than those of Reformed persuasion can be members of the school society and of the Board, can instruct and be instructed in the Christian Schools. (2) That the Bible and the Three Forms of Unity are sufficient basis for the church, but they are not sufficient basis for a Christian School. The school should be based on Scripture, but should also not hesitate to base its instruction on the findings of science and the philosophy as developed by the great thinkers of every age. The creeds of the school should also recognize the science of pedagogy, etc. The church should give the Christian Schools their moral and financial support, but as for the rest should allow them to be free and independent. Those who take this position appeal to the fact that our schools are parental schools, or private schools, and they are ready to accuse those who take another position as being guilty of defending the old error of church schools. They insist that it is not the calling of the school to help any particular denomination to grow and remain healthy, but rather to instruct the child with a view to the position he must hold in the midst of this world. The final outcome must be that the school will be Christian only in name.

Now I am sure that we agree with the first group rather than with the second. Rather than to maintain that church and school are entirely independent from each other, we would hold that there is a mutual responsibility of the one to the other.

The church certainly does have a responsibility to the school. Even our Church Order states that the consistories must see to it that there are Christian schools. And not only that, but also that there are good Christian schools. This is also to be understood. Life is a unit. We may not make the false distinction between the spiritual and the secular, as if the church is only interested in the life of its members in the church, and not in their daily walk. At the time of Confession of Faith as well as at baptism the members of the church confess to believe and promise to maintain the doctrine as taught in this Christian church. The church is therefore also interested in having its members live up to that vow.

And, likewise, the school is responsible to the church. There may be no conflict between the instruction of the church and the instruction of the school. The parents have vowed that they will maintain the doctrine of the church, and they must certainly do that in the instruction of their children. The teachers have vowed to maintain that doctrine, and they are also duty bound to do so in their instruction. No compromise is possible in the sphere of education, no more than in any other sphere of life. Therefore we are certainly correct in insisting on having Protestant Reformed education for our children. And both church and school must insist on that. That is their mutual responsibility to each other.

A NECESSARY COOPERATION

From this follows, that to carry this out requires a necessary cooperation between the church and the school.

As far as the church is concerned, she must insist on sound covenant training for the children of her membership.

She can do that in various ways, but always through the parents. She may never impose her authority directly upon the school. Thus, for example, the church must emphasize the necessity of sound covenant training in the prayers and sermons from the pulpit. Consistories can also stress this matter on family visitation by a more personal discussion with the parents. If necessary, the consistories can encourage meetings where these matters are discussed, and where efforts are put forth to establish schools or improve existing schools. It may even be a good idea that members of the consistory are also members of the school board, or that a committee from the consistory pay a friendly visit to the school at regular intervals. And, of course, the consistories must give the school their complete moral and financial support.

As far as the school is concerned, she also must cooperate with the church in every way possible. The school board may not be lax in supplying the school with teachers who are sound in doctrine and upright in walk. Especially in our day the school board must insist that the teachers are not given to the evolutionistic theory of long periods of creation or of an old world. Those responsible for the instruction of the covenant seed must hire only those teachers who believe implicitly in the infallibility of the Scriptures, who know and love the truth of God's sovereign grace, and who adorn sound doctrine with a godly walk. I need only mention that instruction in Bible history is good, but is not enough. All the subjects that are taught must be taught according to the truth of Scripture.

The closer the cooperation between the church and the school the better it will be for our Christian homes. There, too, unity and harmony are maintained only by a basic unity between the church and the school.

The closer the harmony between the church and the school the better it will be for our churches. The future of the church depends upon a united front against the onslaughts of error. The children who are being instructed today are the parents of tomorrow.

And, last but not least, the closer the unity between church and school the better it is for the school itself. A school founded upon the truth of Scripture cannot go wrong in the instruction of the covenant seed. God commends His blessing there.

C.H.

Office-Bearers Conference

The Office-bearers Conference will be held January 5 at the First Protestant Reformed Church. All present and former office-bearers welcome. Topic: "The Duty of the Elders as Watchmen on the Walls of Zion." Speaker: Prof. H. C. Hoeksema.

T. ENGELSMA, *Secretary*

A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

(Continued from page 154)

It was a sad group of men that turned their faces toward home that evening. They saw no other alternative but to continue with their plan. Dipping Joseph's coat in the blood of a goat, they then brought it to their father. "This have we found," they told him. "Know now whether it be thy son's coat or no?" Little were they prepared for the greatness of the sorrow which filled their father at this news. Clothed in sackcloth and ashes he mourned day after day. Wretched men, they tried to comfort him; but what comfort could they give in their hypocrisy. They could talk to their father; they could speak of a providential visitation of God, but themselves they knew it was their own sin. Many were the years of grief which they would have to experience before they would know for truth that what they had intended for evil God intended for good. Yet it would only be in that day that they would receive complete peace again.

B.W.

Both death and life obey thy holy lore,
And visit in their turns as they are sent;
A thousand years with thee they are no more
Than yesterday, which, ere it is, is spent;
Or as a watch by night that course doth keep,
And goes and comes, unwares to them that sleep.

—BACON

Come thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy grace,
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Calls for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above:
Praise the mount — oh fix me on it,
Mount of God's unchanging love.

—C.H.S.

Some token of thy favor show,
Some sign which all my foes may see;
And fill with blank confusion know,
My comfort and my help in thee.

—ANONYMOUS

DECENCY and ORDER

Questions of Article 41

The Help and Judgment of the Classis

The last time we were discussing the question of Article 41 of the Church Order: "*Do you need the judgment and the help of the Classis for the proper government of your church?*" We stated then that we consider the position untenable that holds that a Consistory must first take a definite stand with regard to a certain problem before the Classis can give that Consistory its judgment or help in the matter. The delegates to Classis from a certain Consistory may not be instructed to answer this question affirmatively and then proceed to present to the Classis a problem with which the Consistory is currently confronted and which the latter has not resolved. That would be making the Classis a "*Question Box*" and this is considered wrong. It has not been permitted and in our history as churches it has occurred on numerous occasions that the delegates of a Consistory were sent home with their problem unresolved because the Classis refused to treat the matter since the Consistory had not as yet taken a definite stand.

We said that we regard this position as wrong. Our reasons for this were given in our last article as two-fold. Firstly, if this is maintained, the only way that a serious problem of the Consistory would come to the attention of the Classis is by the way of protest. No Consistory would bring a problem to Classis under Article 41 that it had already solved. This makes the asking of this question rather absurd. Secondly, a Consistory that is deadlocked on a vital issue cannot bring its problem to the Classis because it cannot first make a decision. Hence, where "help and judgment" are *really needed*, it is denied when this position is maintained.

We have one more objection to this position. To present it we will once more use a hypothetical case. There is a Consistory that is confronted with a rather serious problem that in many respects affects the entire congregation. All are waiting to hear what the Consistory decides. Some are inclined toward one side of the problem and others are leaning the other way. There are signs of division in the congregation. The problem is very serious and the consistory is not at all unanimous in regard to a solution although the majority in the Consistory could pass a resolution with respect to the matter. The whole Consistory, however, is agreed that the judgment of the Classis, as an outside and neutral party, would be desirable but this it cannot get unless it makes a decision first. And this the Consistory is a bit hesitant to do because of the situation in the congregation and the fact that within the Consistory itself there is no unanimity of opinion. Now suppose that the Consistory makes a decision in a

matter of this nature and that ultimately this decision proves to be a wrong one. Would it not result in endless and complicated difficulties in the congregation which would very likely become impossible to untangle after some time? Much of the consequent trouble could have been avoided if another course in the treatment of the matter had been possible. Would it not have been much better in such a circumstance if the Consistory could temporarily refrain from taking a definite stand in the matter and first go and seek the *help and judgment* of the Classis? To be sure, eventually the Consistory would have to decide the matter and resolve the difficulty in the congregation but it could then do so with the counsel and guidance of the broader gathering of the churches. In this way error as well as much trouble might have been prevented and this is much to be preferred to the creation in a congregation of trouble that later has to be straightened out after irreparable damage has been done.

For these reasons, therefore, the Classis should not turn away a Consistory that comes to it in good faith with a request for help with regard to a particular difficulty. On the other hand, however, the Classis must not be overly hasty in offering assistance and advice with regard to every problem that is presented to it under the question of Article 41. Our position is not that a Consistory can raise any question or problem and expect that the Classis will stand ready with a solution. We do not advocate that Classis functions in the place of the Consistory. We are not seeking some place where the Consistory can simply dump all its problems. We rather agree fully with the following remark taken from Rev. G. M. Ophoff's notes on "*Church Right*." He states:

"As to the question itself, the judgment and help that a Consistory seeks of the Classis should have a bearing on concrete cases, otherwise there will be no end to matters concerning which such judgment and advice is sought. The following remark is in order. The Consistory should not get into the habit of leaning on the judgment of the Classis but should learn to stand on its own feet. It should not form the habit of going to Classis with its matters of local interest but should train itself to deal with them independent of Classis. It should learn to rely on its own judgment."

Therefore we feel that a Consistory that asks help and advice from the Classis with respect to a particular question or problem should be given that assistance only with the following stipulations:

(1) The Classis must first determine that the question raised has to do with a concrete case. Classis cannot enter into all kinds of academic issues however interesting or important these may be. She must give help only in concrete situations where help is needed. Thus she must carefully determine before entering the matter that the question raised rises out of an actual existing circumstance in the congregation of the Consistory that presents the problem. Classis must be convinced that the Consistory has a real problem and, therefore, actually needs "help."

(2) The Classis should be satisfied that the Consistory has done its very best to resolve the difficulty. This does not mean that the Consistory has succeeded or even arrived at a definite stand with regard to the problem but only that a serious attempt has been made to arrive at a solution. If it becomes evident in the course of this investigation that this has not been done, the Classis should instruct the Consistory to do so before seeking the judgment and help of the Classis. If, however, Classis is convinced that the Consistory has done its best and still has failed to arrive at a solution, she should be ready to give the assistance sought. There must be a reasonable certainty that the Consistory is not shirking its duty. If the Consistory is doing its best but is having difficulty in the execution of its tasks, it is proper that the Classis render the desired and needed assistance.

(3) Normally the president of the Classis replies to the question asked and then the Classis can either concur or dissent in the judgment expressed. Another way is that a motion containing the requested advice is made from the floor of the Classis and, after a proper discussion of the matter, is voted on. If it passes it becomes the answer of the Classis to the problem presented. There is, however, a third alternative which is, in our opinion, to be preferred especially in problems that are rather involved and may even be somewhat explosive on the local scene. This is that the Classis refrain from expressing a definite judgment in the matter immediately and instead appoints a committee which it authorizes to meet with the Consistory involved in an attempt to help them resolve the difficulty. Such a committee can study the problem much more thoroughly and can investigate the situation involved so that the solution ultimately reached will be more effective for good upon the situation than a decision made by the Classis on the spur of the moment and passed on to the Consistory. There is a more personal touch to this method of rendering "help and judgment" and in cases where the relationship in a congregation is strained because of trouble, this personal touch can prove to be a healing salve.

In conclusion, therefore, we state that as far as the question: "*Do you need the judgment and help of the Classis for the proper government of your church?*" is concerned, there is a two-fold duty here. On the part of the Consistory, it must always be borne in mind that she is obliged to do her utmost to solve her own problems and must use this question only as a last resort. Where this is properly observed, the Classis will not be unduly burdened with all sorts of questions. On the part of the Classis it must be remembered that the motive of this question she asks of the delegates is that the churches may exercise a mutual supervision and that, therefore, when that supervision unveils a troublesome situation in a particular congregation, she should be ready to assume the obligation *to help* to her utmost. If the Classis is of this disposition in the matter, the consistory that is confronted with a real problem will not loathe to present that

problem to the Classis. Where the Classis does not assume her obligation to "*help and give judgment*" where needed, Consistories may well begin to feel that it is useless to bring their difficulties in the open since they will only be told to go and solve their own problems anyway. This can only have an ill-effect. It is far better that the Classis gives a bit of advice and help in a situation where it is really not needed than that situations in the churches that really demand assistance go unaided. Hence, here too, the rule of Scripture may well apply: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).

Synodical Delegates

Following the questions of Article 41 there is added yet the following: "And, finally, at one but the last meeting and, if necessary, at the last meeting before the (particular) Synod, delegates shall be chosen to attend said Synod."

This rule is observed in our churches when in Classis East the Synodical delegates are chosen at the January Classis and in Classis West at the March Classis. In the former case there is still another meeting of the Classis prior to the Synod while in the West it is a matter of necessity that these delegates are chosen at the last meeting before Synod since there are only two Classis meetings held each year.

Since this matter of Synodical delegates comes up again in connection with Article 50 of the Church Order, we may refrain from commenting on it now except to point out that the above decision of the Church Order specifically states that the delegates are to be "*chosen*." They are to be elected by ballot. They are not to be appointed by the president of the Classis or selected by some system of rotation. Election by ballot is the proper method to be used in selecting delegates to synod. Delegates chosen in another way are not legally selected.

G.V.d.B.

Blest be the Lord Who daily
Our heavy burden bears,
The God of our salvation
Who for His people cares.
Our God is near to help us,
Our God is strong to save;
The Lord alone is able
To ransom from the grave.

Psalm 68:2

ALL AROUND US

"The Only Theology the Bible Knows."

Under the above title the Rev. H. J. Kuiper presents a well-written article in the December, 1959, *Torch and Trumpet*. Rev. Kuiper is reflecting on another article appearing in this same issue of *Torch and Trumpet* written by Dr. J. I. Packer, an English Calvinist. The latter asserts that the only theology the Bible knows is the Reformed Faith. Kuiper not only agrees, but magnifies this concept in his *Timely Topics*.

We liked especially the emphasis Rev. Kuiper evinces in the following quote: "It is the only theology which does full justice to the most basic of all truths: that God is God — the self-contained, self-sufficient, absolutely sovereign God who works all things after the counsel of his will; who is supreme over all, has the right to do in his world and with man as he pleases; whose 'dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom from generation to generation . . . who doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?' (Daniel 4:34, 35)." This, according to Kuiper, is basically the only theology the Bible knows.

We liked this emphasis because it expresses succinctly our Protestant Reformed theological conception. To depart from this concept in the slightest detail, we are convinced, demands the judgment that one is neither Reformed nor Biblical.

But we are not so pleased with what Rev. Kuiper further declares in his article when he says: "Reformed theology is the only theology which does justice to the work of the Holy Spirit in the unsaved, in whom he checks the full development of their sin. Common grace is one of the unique teachings of the Reformed faith."

This, the Rev. Kuiper cannot prove from Scripture, nor can he prove it from the Reformed Creeds. We challenge him to produce one article of Reformed faith that shows common grace to be one of its unique teachings. All we can discover in the Reformed Creeds, which express our Reformed faith, is the condemnation of common grace. Our creeds know of only one common grace, the one embraced by Arminianism. Perhaps Rev. Kuiper knows of creeds we have never perused. If that be the case, we shall be happy to be instructed.

Moreover, we would be especially delighted to have Rev. Kuiper show us the harmony between these two concepts: namely, between the concept that God is God on the one hand, who creates the wicked for the day of wrath, who counsels that sin shall develop until it reaches its acme in the man of sin; and the other concept, that that same God

restrains the full development of the sin of the ungodly. Or, would Rev. Kuiper tell us perhaps that here we have to do with another mystery?

"Needed: A Philosophy of Christian Education."

In the same issue of *Torch and Trumpet* referred to above, Walter A. De Jong seeks to answer the question: "Do We Really Need Christian Schools?" Pointedly he discloses the facts that while the Christian School movement is still making considerable progress, there is a growing disinterest in respect to Christian education. He deplores the facts that many teachers are seeking employment in the Public School System, that the present Christian Schools do not have their own text-books, and that apparently the present Christian School System has as yet no set philosophy of Christian Education.

It is especially with a view to this last fact that he writes:

"From the above it is sufficiently evident that we as supporters of Christian schools are not clear on what we mean by a Christian education. It seems to me that if we want to justify the tremendous expense of maintaining separate schools we ought to strive for a clearer understanding of their distinctive function. We cannot accomplish this unless we are serious about wanting to formulate a philosophy of Christian education. No school can formulate its goals without a basic philosophy behind them. The Christian school is no exception in this matter.

"It has been said that we shall never arrive at a philosophy of Christian education. If this is true, we shall find it difficult to justify our schools on the basis of a Christian education *per se*. Unless we strive toward a formulation of a philosophy of Christian education we shall always be at a loss to defend the existence of our Christian schools beyond that of practical expediency."

Mr. De Jong notes further that he plans to give the readers of *Torch and Trumpet* in future articles some indispensable basic tenets for Christian education. We will be looking for these articles, especially to see whether they will express views that can be acceptable as basic tenets for Christian education.

If my memory serves correctly the National Union of Christian Schools published some years ago a rather large volume which intended to set forth a philosophy of Christian education. It was concerning the philosophy set forth in this book that the teaching staff of a local Christian School in the community where I was serving requested that I criticize the philosophy for them. Pleased with the invitation I did not hesitate to accept, and I had pleasure of meeting twice with them.

Two things especially I recall that brought me no little amazement. The first was the predominant tenet set forth in the book which I severely criticized, and the second was the abounding ignorance the staff evinced in respect to both the

principles of Christian education and the application of these principles.

The book, as I recall, posited as a fundamental principle of Christian education that the child must be considered a disintegrated image-bearer. Further, it is the duty of Christian teachers to rebuild that disintegrated image-bearer. I distinctly recall that I informed the teachers in no uncertain terms that they had better get busy with the reformulation of a sound-Scriptural philosophy of Christian education, and that they had better first be instructed themselves in the application of principles before they attempt to apply them. One teacher showed me a book which contained almost throughout pictures of so-called pre-historic animals, dinosaurs, etc., and asked me how she could teach the children from that book. I told her that if I were she I would throw the book out the window and never look at it again. I advised her that if she had no better text book she could much more profitably use the Holy Scriptures.

Yes, indeed, Mr. De Jong is right. The great need for Christian education today is a philosophy of Christian education. But let it be heeded, that that philosophy must not be a philosophy of man.

For the Next Census.

U.S. News & World Report of December 21, 1959, p. 6, reveals: "What The Census Taker Will Want To Know," when the 1960 census gets under way.

"In the latter part of March, each household will receive an advance census report by mail. This is a four-page form to be filled out in advance of the census taker's call. It will ask, for each member of the household: name, address, sex, color or race, birth date, marital status, etc. Also requested is information on the size of the dwelling, number of bathtubs and so on. In some big cities, homeowners will be asked how much they think their homes are worth, and renters how much rent they pay.

"On April 1, 1960, census takers will visit 55 million households to collect the information.

"At every fourth house visited, the enumerators will leave an additional form to be filled out and mailed. It will ask, among other things, the income of members of the household."

On the same page of the above mentioned magazine we are informed that Congress has been told that the average self-employed American reports only 75 cents of each dollar he earns when making out his federal income tax return. Further, that tax cheating by farmers, professional persons and business proprietors is costing the Government about 10 billion dollars a year.

Perhaps the above mentioned plan for taking the next census is a subtle detective maneuver to crack down on some of the chiselers on income tax. At any rate, the maxim: "Always tell the truth and you don't have to remember what you say," had better be studied by those who tell big lies about April 15th of each year.

Drug Price Investigation.

First it was Quiz Programs, then it was Payola, now it's Drug Prices that Congress is investigating. A revealing article appears on pp. 43, 44 of the December 21, 1959, *U.S. News & World Report* under the caption: Are Drug Prices Too High?

First it was Sulfa, then it was Penicillin, then it was Cortesone. Now they tell me there is a new Cortesone out, much more potent than the older model. Drugs, drugs, drugs, we all need drugs. There is a drug for this and drug for that. Indeed, the pill factories are busy these days, not only in the preparation of already marketed drugs, but also in the invention of new ones.

According to the report of the investigation, we are paying dearly for these pills. Here is the story on one of the newest drugs used in the treatment of rheumatic disorders, including arthritis, Meticortelone by name.

"The Subcommittee's counsel and staff director said that Meticortelone could be produced by its manufacturer, Schering Corporation, of Bloomfield, N. J., at a cost of just 1.6 cents a tablet. Yet, he said, its cost to druggist is 17.9 cents a tablet and the maker's recommended retail price is 29.9 cents a tablet.

"Another Subcommittee staff member testified that the markup over manufacturing costs is 1,118 per cent to druggists and 1,883 per cent to patients who buy the pills on prescription.

"The Senators were told that another smaller drug manufacturer sells the same drug under a different name for 2.7 cents a pill."

The companies who make the pills explain that they have to have what they ask for their products because they spend huge sums in making these discoveries. Moreover, the cost of labor is considerably higher in this country than in others. For example, "Druggists, it was testified, must pay \$170 for 1000 Deltra tablets (used for treatment of arthritis — M.S.) whose ultimate cost to consumers is \$283. At the same time, the Subcommittee was told, a Mexican firm is able to prepare and sell 1,000 prednisone tablets (the same as above — M.S.) for as little as \$13.61."

It was also revealed that the same drug under a different label was sold in Britain "for the equivalent of \$7.53 for a bottle of 100 tablets, as compared with a price of \$17.90 in this country."

It looks to me like an investigation is necessary *alright*. In spite of the need for pills, it hurts me to think that every one I swallow has been helping these transgressors of the Sixth Commandment take more of my money which could be put to much better use.

M.S.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

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

December 20, 1959

Rev. G. Lubbers, our Missionary, declined the call extended him by the church in Edgerton, Minn. Rev. R. Veldman has received a call from Grand Haven. Rev. G. Vanden Berg has declined the call from Hull.

The December *Beacon Lights*' Hymn Sing was held at First Church, Dec. 13. Edw. Ophoff led the singing of selected Psalter numbers and Christmas Carols. The ardor of the singing audience was not abated when the offering was taken, as evidenced by the \$79.00 contributed to the support of *Beacon Lights*. Featured were a vocal duet by Mr. and Mrs. C. Jonker, and a piano-organ duet by Mary Pastoor and Bonnie Bylsma, both being of the high quality expected from them.

The Hope School children rendered their annual Christmas program at First Church, Dec. 19. They presented a message in word and song based on the Heidelberg Catechism. The theme throughout was, "God's Way Out." The program was dedicated to Miss Alice Reitsma, principal of Hope School, who wrote and arranged the contents of the presentation a few years ago, and who led the school in its rendition at that time. Miss Reitsma who is also well known to us as the editor of the Church News Column in *Beacon Lights*, is at this writing critically ill and very weak, but, according to today's bulletin, witnesses that her faith in God's promises remains firm. (P.S. Miss Reitsma passed away Dec. 21.)

The Protestant Reformed Men's Chorus gave another outstanding program Sunday evening, Dec. 20, at First Church. The program consisted of a baritone horn solo by Robert Decker, a vocal solo by Arnold Dykstra, congregational singing, and ten numbers by the chorus. The choral numbers sang the praises of the God of our Salvation, Who sent His Son into our flesh that first Christmas Day. They did so with arrangements of traditional carols such as, "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring," "A Child This Day Is Born," "Silent Night," and other favorites. The closing number, "Bless the Lord, O My Soul!" was a fitting climax to the evening, an evening of true spiritual joy.

The installation of Rev. G. Lanting into his Holland pastorate is scheduled to take place Dec. 22, with Rev. C. Hanko preaching the sermon, and Rev. A. Mulder reading the form for installation. Rev. Lanting's new address will be: 111 E. 22nd St., Holland, Michigan.

The text of Rev. Heys' farewell sermon was taken from Acts 20:32, "And now brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His Grace." The text of his inaugural sermon in South Holland, scheduled for the 27th were the

words: "... and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints," taken from the 11th and 12th verses of Ephesians 4.

Did you know . . .

That the Rev. C. Hanko was the speaker at the Dec. 11th meeting of Hope P.T.A.?

That Hudsonville's Sunday School children gave their Christmas program Sunday evening, Dec. 20?

That the ninth graders of Adams School, with the assistance of parents and teachers, served a fish supper to several hundreds of hungry patrons in the school's all purpose room, Dec. 11?

That Hull's congregation scheduled a farewell program in honor of Rev. Heys and family on Dec. 17; and, that South Holland planned a welcome social for their new minister Dec. 28; and that after Dec. 21 his new address will be: 463 East 164th Place, South Holland?

That Seminarian J. Kortering has been very busy supplying the pulpits of ministers away on Classical appointments?

That Hope's Choral Society scheduled their Christmas Program for Dec. 27?

The after recess program of the Doon's Ladies' Society was a discussion on, "What is the Second Part of the examination which we must perform before we partake of the Lord's Supper?" The subject was treated by answering the three questions: "What is the heart that must be examined?" "What must one truly believe?" "How is this confession opposed to Arminianism?" One wishes that their bulletin would also print the answers given to these questions so we could pass them on to you for our mutual benefit.

The December "Indian Summer" weather enjoyed in Michigan gladdened the hearts of Southeast's Building Committee, for the builders were able to accomplish much in that unexpected warm spell. The church, when completed, will be furnished with pews designed to seat 317 worshippers.

Do you agree, that we have again been guilty of robbing God of His reasonable service in the season just past, being swept along with the world in her empty celebration which succeeds in covering up the blessedness of our joy announced by the angels in the fields of Ephratah?

Let this be our New Year's prayer for one another: "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

— II Thess. 2:16, 17

. . . . see you in church.

J.M.F.